

Knowing Demons,  
Knowing Spirits  
in the Early Modern Period

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Edited by  
Michelle D. Brock,  
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David R. Winter



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Michelle D. Brock · Richard Raiswell  
David R. Winter  
Editors

# Knowing Demons, Knowing Spirits in the Early Modern Period

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*In memory of Axel, Hilda and Molly*

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Michelle D. Brock  
Richard Raiswell  
David R. Winter

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PART I

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## Introduction



## CHAPTER 1

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# Theory and Practice in Early Modern Epistemologies of the Preternatural

*Michelle D. Brock and David R. Winter*

In 1710, the French abbot and polygraph Laurent Bordelon wrote a satire intended to expose the frivolous superstitions of those who read and believed accounts of demons, hobgoblins, fairies, and the like. Entitled *L'histoire des imaginations extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle*, the story centers on the credulous M. Oufle (an anagram of *le fou*—*the fool*), a merchant who spends his nights reading books of magic, charms, apparitions and divinations, thoughtlessly trusting the veracity of these texts in the face of any rational argument to the contrary. He commissions paintings of magicians and diviners surrounded by hosts of devils, specters, and phantoms in a variety of horrible and ridiculous forms. He fills his bookshelves with writings by some of the leading occultists and spiritologists from the previous century, including those of Cornelius Agrippa, Pierre de Lancre, Henri Bouguet, and Jean Bodin. Immersed in these

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anachronistic, “superstitious” images and texts, Oufle becomes variously convinced that he had been bewitched, transformed into a werewolf, and tormented by devils in the shapes of butterflies that followed him around relentlessly.<sup>1</sup>

Bordelon’s *L’histoire*—translated into English the following year as *A History of the Ridiculous Extravagancies of Monsieur Oufle*—was part of the larger corpus of works beginning in the late sixteenth century and proliferating in the early Enlightenment that rejected claims about preter- and supernatural beings maintained largely on the basis of belief, bolstered by a selective and uncritical reading of various printed texts.<sup>2</sup> This point is perhaps most clearly illustrated in Oufle’s “Discours sur les Diables,” a short tract included in the story, penned, we are told, by the merchant in an attempt to convince his brother—the tellingly named *Noncrede*—of his perfect knowledge of spirits and their marvelous operations in the universe.<sup>3</sup> Here, Oufle cites authorities as diverse as Balthasar Bekker, Martin Delrio, and Johann Wier, alongside Theodoret, Gregory of Nyssa, Apollinarius, Aristotle, and Hesiod—with some strange outliers like Leo Africanus and the Qur’an—to prove a number of popular and ill-reasoned claims about the power of devils: that they can metamorphose into monks, beggars, or lawyers; elm, oak, or frozen trees; dogs, asses, prognosticating caged birds, straw, lettuce leaves, gold; even wheels and whole rivers.<sup>4</sup> M. Oufle reads books much as Menocchio, the Friulian miller, had done more than a century earlier.<sup>5</sup>

At the core of Bordelon’s critique of the fictional Oufle, however, was not simply his gullibility or foolish superstition. It was his utter failure even to attempt to understand the beings he encounters in his books. Bordelon wrote at one point that to reason with men like Oufle—to discuss with them rationally the natural philosophical principles their

<sup>1</sup>The work was published in French separately in two volumes, the first published in Amsterdam, the second in Paris later the same year. Laurent Bordelon, *L’histoire des imaginations extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1710); Laurent Bordelon, *L’histoire des imaginations extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1710).

<sup>2</sup>As Bordelon describes the situation, “Leur fort, c’est de croire fortement les opinions les plus extravagantes & les plus bizarres, & de s’y confirmer par les histoires qui leur conviennent.” Bordelon, *L’histoire*, 2:7–8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 12–30.

<sup>5</sup>See Carlo Ginzburg’s classic *Il formaggio e i vermi: il cosmo di un mugnaio del ’500* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1976).

beliefs seem to confound—is to talk with them in a language they do not understand and which they are not inclined to study.<sup>6</sup> Oufle and his kind *knew* spirits only in the sense in which they were reported and described in a literature that was increasingly at odds with the rationalist tenor of the age, with its new modes of evidence gathering and analysis and new conceptions of proof.<sup>7</sup>

But more than this, Abbé Bordelon’s text is a lampoon of the beliefs themselves. Most strikingly, perhaps, the text features an engraving by Giuseppe Maria Crespi depicting Oufle viewing the witches’ sabbat that borrows heavily from the imagery of the 1613 “Description et Figure du Sabbat des Sorciers” by Jan Ziarnko that accompanied de Lancre’s *Tableau de l’inconstance des mauvais anges et demons*. But while Ziarnko’s illustration was intended to make visual some of the horrors recounted by accused witches to de Lancre during his time in the Basque country, Crespi’s was intended to depict the vision of a superstition-riden fool—indeed, to underscore the point, a fool in full regalia stands behind Oufle pushing him forth into the sabbat.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the force of the theologically trained *abbé*’s critique, most Europeans of the early modern era continued to inhabit a spirit-wracked world. Well into the eighteenth century, they largely accepted the premise that nature was alive with spirit activity and that, more than this, their actions could be detected across the breadth of creation.<sup>9</sup> It was a view that was grounded in scripture and refined by many centuries of rumination, belief, and experience. To be sure, the precise nature of these

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>7</sup>See James A. T. Lancaster and Richard Raiswell, “Evidence Before Science,” in *Evidence in the Age of the New Sciences*, ed. James A. T. Lancaster and Richard Raiswell (London: Springer, forthcoming 2018).

<sup>8</sup>Roland Villeneuve, *La beauté du Diable* (Paris: Pierre Bordas et fils, 1994), 204–5. See also Robert Muchembled, *A History of the Devil from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 169–70.

<sup>9</sup>On the persistence of beliefs in demons and spirits through the eighteenth century, see Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture, 1736–1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007); *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

beings—demons, angels, fairies, and ghosts—was the subject of many vibrant debates, but their general existence was assumed and experienced by people across the social hierarchy.

While the processes for ascertaining information about spirits could be a complex and deeply fraught matter, the ability to understand their operation became a fundamental element of the many and varied knowledge-making practices of the period. Natural philosophers, magical practitioners, medical specialists, layfolk, and others applied themselves to the task of learning the veritable nature and habits of demons and spirits with earnestness, albeit to different ends. Indeed, what Bordelon's work *does* capture is something of the diversity of approaches to spiritology through M. Oufle's use of a wide variety of sources from different discursive traditions. However, unlike the gullible M. Oufle (whose beliefs were neither cautious nor subtle), a large number of pre-modern Europeans appear to have made meticulous, detailed, and sometimes almost empirical readings of the precise form and scope of demonic activity in the world. Theologians and scientists, magicians, philosophers, missionaries, and artists might all elaborate their own particular views with respect to how and why demons undertook the actions they did, but in most instances their reckonings were grounded in painstaking observation, research, and debate. The reason for caution was manifest: at stake was the disposition of one's very soul. Within the ambit of the early modern world system, demons and spirits were vital constituents of creation; understanding why they functioned as they did might reveal key elements of the divine plan to a society anxiously seeking signs of salvation.

Yet the early modern era was also one of great change and upheaval. From the intellectual ramifications of the printing press to the century of religious warfare that followed on the heels of the Reformation to the first sparks of disruptive Enlightenment ideologies, this period was characterized by profound instability as venerable social, intellectual, and political structures were reworked and reoriented. At the same time, early modern Europeans experienced and reinforced important continuities, both consciously and unconsciously. Many men and women continued to believe and behave as they had for centuries in a world that remained hierarchical, agricultural, and most important for our purposes, suffused with supernatural forces.

The various reformations of the period—Protestant, Catholic, Radical, and so on—fractured consensus about these supernatural forces and generated profound questions, on the page and from the pulpit, about how

Christians might and ought to interact with spirits, both malevolent and benevolent. These questions were in no way peripheral or confined to the debates of educated elites. Indeed, outbreaks of witch-hunting and cases of demonic possession generated (and were generated by) anxieties concerning the spirit world among Europeans from across the social spectrum.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Catholic and Protestant churches alike increasingly attempted to exert control over how individuals perceived and interacted with the forces of magic and the spirit realm, although confessional methods and motivations for doing so could differ markedly.<sup>11</sup> Widespread anticipation of the Apocalypse cast a long shadow over religious life throughout Europe.<sup>12</sup>

This was also an era of discovery, evolving ideas about science, changing standards of evidence, and challenges to long-held tradition.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Two recent and excellent surveys of witchcraft in early modern Europe are Brian Levack's *The Witch-hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 4th edition (Routledge, 2016); Julian Goodare's *The European Witch-hunt* (Routledge, 2016). For demonic possession and exorcism, see Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (Routledge: London, 2004); H. C. Erik Midelfort, "The Devil and the German People: Reflections on the Popularity of Demon-Possession in Sixteenth-Century Germany," in *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Steven Ozment (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1989), 99–119; Guido Dall'Olio, "The Devil of Inquisitors, Demoniacs and Exorcists in Counter-Reformation Italy," in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, ed. Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle (Toronto: CRRS, 2013), 511–36; Brian Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>11</sup>For a discussion of the label of "superstition" as an attempt to characterize or control inter- and inner-confessional interactions with the spirit realm, see Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe, Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. chapters 11–15. See also Stuart Clark, "Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition and Society," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 45–82.

<sup>12</sup>Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth-Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Richard Landes, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>13</sup>Lorraine Daston, "Probability and Evidence," in *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1108–44; Richard W. Serjeantson, "Proof and Persuasion," in

By the early eighteenth century, debates about “reason” and “rationality” occupied the center of European intellectual discourse, engaging with and reshaping demon and spirit epistemologies.<sup>14</sup> How could one prove or disprove the existence of demons, fairies, and angels? To what extent did the devil intervene in the terrestrial realm, or was the ability to do so confined to God? Were interactions with the spirit world simply illusions, manifestations of human sin, or gullibility? Such questions were not new to the early modern era, of course. But many of the tools for addressing them—the printed page, scientific empiricism, increasingly complex understandings of matter, geography, and the cosmos, the networks of peer review—were new and, at times, disruptive to the status quo. And yet for many men and women, belief in the terrestrial reality of benevolent and malevolent spirits was no less fervent or consequential in 1750 than it had been in 1500.<sup>15</sup> In short, this was a period in which the theory and practice of knowing demons and spirits was contested, in flux, and essential.

This book, then, explores the manifold ways of knowing the preternatural beings that inhabited and shaped early modern European worlds. Its contributors examine how people across the social spectrum assayed the various types of spiritual entities that they believed dwelled invisibly but meaningfully in the spaces just beyond (and occasionally within) the limits of human perception. When these creatures—and they *were* understood to have been created things—elected to disclose their presence (or

*The Cambridge History of Science, Volume 3: Early Modern Science*, ed. Katherine Park and Lorraine Daston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 132–75; Lancaster and Raiswell, “Evidence Before Science.”

<sup>14</sup>The relationship between spirit discernment and new experimental science has been fruitfully explored by Caciola and Sluhovsky, “Spiritual Physiologies: The Discernment of Spirits in Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies of the Preternatural* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–48. For the ways in which new methods of interrogating nature informed early modern thinking about the preter- and supernatural, see Lorraine Daston, “Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 93–124; Daston, “The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe,” *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 149–72.

<sup>15</sup>On the persistence of supernatural beliefs into the Enlightenment era and beyond, see, for example, Lizanne Henderson, *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016); Jonathan Barry, *Witchcraft and Demonology in South-West England, 1640–1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012).

were forced to appear through conjuration), it was essential to know as much about them as was possible: what they were, how they operated, how they might be ranked and distinguished from one another, how they might be tested, and how, if necessary, they might be put to flight. The articles that follow deal with these priorities and concerns. This is, therefore, a book about the epistemological and experiential knowledge of spirits: the formal and informal modalities and praxes employed by early modern people to evaluate the identity, motives, and actions of discarnate beings.

Chronologically, the collection ranges from the close of the Middle Ages to the first stirrings of industrial society in the mid to late eighteenth century (ca. 1500–1750). It looks at how spirit knowledge was rewritten in the light of the profound changes of the period to reflect or challenge changing discursive priorities. To be sure, these new ways of looking at the world shifted or “reset” where the lines demarcating the natural from the preternatural were drawn. Early modern men and women and the communities of practice and belief they inhabited were obliged—repeatedly—to contest, navigate, and recast their own demonic and spirit epistemologies in the face of the novelties, contradictions, and uncertainties that arose in response to the new cultural, religious, and intellectual climate. This collection explores how these problems and experiences fed into attendant (and rapidly expanding) discourses on witchcraft, alchemy, possession and exorcism, colonialism, and beyond.

## HISTORIOGRAPHY

In recent decades, demons and, to a lesser degree, other spirits such as angels and fairies have been ushered to the forefront of late medieval and early modern historiography.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the most important of these studies remains Stuart Clark’s seminal work *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, which successfully and influentially argues that “demonology was a composite subject consisting of

<sup>16</sup>On fairies, see, for example, Lizanne Henderson and Edward Cowan *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001); Richard Firth Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars: Fairy Beliefs and the Medieval Church* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017); on angels, see Laura Sangha *Angels and Belief in England, 1480–1700* (London: Routledge, 2012); *Angels in the Early Modern World*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

discussions about the workings of nature, the processes of history, the maintenance of religious purity, and the nature of political authority and order.”<sup>17</sup> While Clark is concerned with formal demonology in the context of witch belief, his central arguments paved the way for subsequent exploration of the relationship between demons and other early modern beliefs and epistemologies. Most important, his work demonstrates that far from being aberrant or “irrational,” ideas about the demonic were integral to mainstream early modern religious, political, historical, and scientific discourses. While *Thinking with Demons* focuses almost exclusively on theoretical discussions about demons, more recent studies also examine the experiential reality of demons and spirits, asking how early modern men and women might have encountered otherworldly beings in the library or on the landscape.<sup>18</sup>

Much of this literature has concentrated on spirit knowledge in specific contexts, and few areas have proven more fruitful for scholarship than discernment and possession.<sup>19</sup> To “test the spirits” according to the biblical injunction of 1 John 4.1 and the warning of 2 Corinthians 11.14 was both a scriptural imperative and practical necessity in cases of possession, ecstasy, and prophecy. As Nancy Caciola has demonstrated, medieval discernment was determined by broader social, ecclesiastical, and

<sup>17</sup>Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), viii.

<sup>18</sup>Much of the early modern literature on demonic experiences outside of cases of witchcraft or possession has been focused on the British Isles. See Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Nathan Johnstone, “The Protestant Devil: The Experience of Temptation in Early Modern England,” *Journal of British Studies* 43, no. 2 (2004): 173–205; Frank Luttmann, “Prosecutors, Tempters and Vassals of the Devil: The Unregenerate in Puritan Practical Divinity,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 51, no. 1 (2000): 37–68; Darren Oldridge, *The Devil in Tudor and Stuart England* (Sutton: Stroud, 2010); Joyce Miller, “Men in Black: Appearances of the Devil in Early Modern Scottish Witchcraft Discourse,” in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, and Joyce Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), 144–65; Michelle D. Brock, *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland, c.1560–1700* (London: Routledge, 2016). Beyond Britain, see Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>19</sup>Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Levack, *The Devil Within*; Caciola and Sluhovsky, “Spiritual Physiologies.”

political concerns about devotion, gender, and authority.<sup>20</sup> Following the Reformation, discernment remained a critical issue across religious divides, the practice of which could be an important source and site of confessional conflict.<sup>21</sup> As the contributions in this volume illustrate, just as there was no single devil—because this identity shifted in response to discursive priorities—there was no single blueprint for interactions with the demonic and spiritual, and this uncertainty could lead to both doctrinal conflict and experiential confusion.<sup>22</sup>

This volume seeks to expand the extant literature by examining how people from across the early modern world—both spatially and chronologically—attempted to understand demons, angels, and fairies against the backdrop of the broader intellectual changes of the period. It explores the ways in which these individuals conceptualized and responded to a range of preternatural entities, while also revealing the experiential slippage between these categories. Recently, Julian Goodare has pointed out that fairies show us how the early modern spirit realm could be actively indeterminate; as the chapters below illustrate, the same could be said, to varying degrees, of angels and demons.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, from Jesuits to Calvinists to Orthodox Christians, agreement within faith traditions about the nature and appearance of spirits may have been achievable in theory, but consensus was often shattered by knowing these

<sup>20</sup>Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). For other works on medieval discernment, see Richard Kieckhefer, “The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft, and Magic in Late Medieval Europe,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24.3 (1994): 355–85; Barbara Newman, “Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century,” *Speculum* 73.3 (1998): 733–70; Rosalynn Voaden, *God’s Words, Women’s Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writings of Late Medieval Women Visionaries* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 1999); Nancy Caciola, “Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000): 268–306.

<sup>21</sup>See Clare Copeland and Johannes Machielsen’s edited volume *Angels of Light? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) for an excellent examination of issues of discernment in both Protestant and Catholic areas of early modern Europe.

<sup>22</sup>On the malleability of constructions of the devil, see Richard Raiswell, “Introduction,” in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, 23–65.

<sup>23</sup>Goodare, “Boundaries of the Fairy Realm in Scotland,” in *Airy Nothings: Imagining the Otherworld of Faerie from the Middle Ages to the Age of Reason*, ed. Karin E. Olsen and Jan R. Veenstra (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 139–69.

otherworldly beings in practice. Perhaps this experiential indeterminacy and flexibility explains the persistence of belief in and encounters with demons and spirits—and the attendant desire to know their nature—long after the so-called disenchantment of Europe.<sup>24</sup>

## ORGANIZATION

Early modern discourses upon preternatural entities (demons, fairies, angels, ghosts, wraiths, and other sorts of anthropomorphized spirits) were not static; those who accepted the existence of such beings—and in the period between 1500 and 1750, this number no doubt included the preponderance of the European population—generally did so in critically engaged ways based on varying degrees of debate, research, and experience, and according to methodologies and priorities. Indeed, throughout the period, knowledge concerning the nature, activities, and fields of action of demons and other spirits underwent intensive scrutiny and testing. Discourse surrounding spirit engagements (both those that were considered fraudulent or mistaken as well as those that were deemed accurate, authentic, and/or verifiable—that is, which conformed to the discursive principles of a particular community of practice) shifted repeatedly in response to changes in intellectual priorities, practices, and the experiential realities of various communities over time. This book demonstrates how epistemologies of spirit knowledge and discernment were reworked and reconstituted by far-reaching changes in religion and natural philosophical practice. Each of the contributors to this volume suggests how traditional arguments, beliefs, and representations were challenged by new understandings about the relationship between authority and experience, by debates over nature and the value of evidence, by new modes of knowledge acquisition, and by the sorts of conclusions that could be drawn from such apparent “facts.”

Each chapter investigates, in a specific geographical and chronological situation, how sorcerers, scholars, artists, exorcists, travelers, theologians—as well as ordinary men and women—detected, responded to, and understood preternatural presences. Incorporating a range of

<sup>24</sup>“Disenchantment” has long been the subject of historical debates, which have been recently summarized in Alexandra Walsham’s excellent historiographical essay, “The Reformation and ‘The Disenchantment of the World’ Reassessed,” *Historical Journal* 51, no. 2 (2008): 497–528.

methodological approaches such as history, anthropology, art history, literary theory, and information studies, this book collectively aims to reframe and extend the current understanding of spirit epistemologies in both theory and practice. It is for this reason that the collection is divided into two distinct but interrelated parts: “Knowing in Theory” and “Knowing in Practice.”

“Knowing in Theory” ruminates on the ideological development of spirit knowledge in Europe and its emerging colonial and mercantile outposts in the period between 1500 and 1750. Its chapters trace, in their individual ways, how discourses surrounding demons and spirits informed—and were informed by—the broader cultural, intellectual, and social trends. While each author applies a distinctive methodological and historiographical lens, and concentrates on a particular evidentiary field, the critical concerns of this section are who had the ability to acquire and articulate knowledge of demons and spirits and, accordingly, how they conceptualized such knowledge. It also addresses the issue of authority in relation to discernment, particularly how it changed and was challenged in response to new understandings of the operation of the natural world.

“Knowing in Practice” moves from the rarified setting of the library to the homelier environs of the magician’s atelier and the crofter’s hearth. It examines how new theories and models of spirit knowledge and discernment played out across a range of personal, rhetorical, and communal contexts. As in the previous part, this section of the book explores “ways of knowing” from a number of scholarly perspectives. At its core, however, the chapters focus primarily on the issue of engagement. They ask: What did it mean for Europeans to encounter the preternatural world actively on the landscape? How did those who brushed up against, summoned, or contested fairies, angels, or demons understand and characterize their encounters? What methods did they use to verify or discredit the experience? How, and to what extent, did these sorts of meetings alter, confirm, or reshape their worldviews? Thus, this section explores the ways in which experiential reality mapped onto and deviated from the theoretical suppositions of those who traced the movements and activities of spirits from a more remote vantage.

Taken together, these two sections reveal that across the rapidly evolving ideological landscapes of the early modern era, “ways of knowing” demons and spirits became heterogeneous and mutable in new ways: shifting, responding, and offering themselves up for negotiation both

at a theoretical level and in practice. Accordingly, we have structured the collection quite broadly, emphasizing methodological and topical inclusivity. Our intention has been to create a book that construes the issue of demonic and spirit knowledge across a breadth of geographical, disciplinary, and chronological contexts. This allows its contributors—and our readers—to explore how events such as the Reformation(s), the so-called Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and Europe's colonial enterprise informed—and were informed by—discourses about, and experiences with, the preternatural world. Indeed, this collection views the accumulation of spirit and demon knowledge as fundamental, even axial, to the intellectual developments of early modernity, rather than as something separable from a more legitimate (though surely illusory) “mainstream” of early modern thought or ideology. Indeed, this book views the recognition, development, and use of preternatural knowledge as critical elements helping to shape the “modern” world.

This volume's investigation of knowing spirits in theory begins in the Netherlands, with Gary Waite's illuminating chapter on the unique demonologies and religious toleration of Dutch intellectuals and clergymen in the wake of the Radical Reformation. He argues that their relative toleration and skepticism derived from a spiritualist approach to religious identity, which emerged in response to state persecution of Anabaptists and other religious dissenters in the 1530s. The most influential spiritualist voice was that of Dutch Anabaptist David Joris, whose unorthodox theology centered on cultivating one's internal spirit, a focus which entailed the depreciation of both physical practice and the exterior existence of demons and other spirits. Discerning spirits was, in a sense, still crucial, but this discernment was more individually creative than doctrinally prescriptive, concerned with manifestations of inner faith rather than external appearance or confessional allegiance. As Waite suggests, the spiritualism and skepticism of Joris and his followers had a significant and hitherto overlooked influence on later Dutch thinkers such as Bekker and Baruch Spinoza, whose ideas would eventually challenge the very existence of the demonic.

Of course, demons were far from the only category of preternatural beings that at once fascinated, frightened, and perplexed early modern intellectuals. In “Hell and Fairy,” Dan Harms throws light on preternatural taxonomies and systems of spiritual and demonic classification. He begins from the basic insight that modern scholars sometimes have considerable difficulty distinguishing fairy activity from that of other kinds

of spirit beings. He posits that despite (or perhaps because of) the considerable epistemological slippage between classes of beings, early modern observers—especially those involved in learned ritual magic—would have had fewer anxieties with respect to differentiation than modern observers, both because they were less concerned about the boundaries of Fairy (frequently invoking unclassified beings whom they referred to simply as “spirits”) and because they understood the nature, designs, and instrumentality of fairy operations in ways that aligned with their cultural expectations of how such creatures ought to behave. Nevertheless, he argues, there are ways to ascertain whether early modern practitioners sought to invoke or summon entities that we would recognize as the Fair Folk. Using material from grimoires and other magical texts, Harms assays the forms and modalities that distinguish these fairy operations from other kinds of magical rites.

While theologians, ritual magicians, and other elites drove theoretical debates surrounding the knowledge of demons and other spirits, their arguments required both the experiences and the imagery of ordinary early modern men and women. Andrew Keitt’s “Preternatural Peasants and the Discourse of Demons: Xenoglossy, Superstition, and Melancholy in Early Modern Spain” focuses on the stock figure of the Iberian rustic laborer as a site of contestation between learned and popular ways of knowing the demonic in the sixteenth century. Structuring his argument around Inquisitorial records and documents from the Spanish Church’s anti-superstition campaign—and especially on intersected discourses surrounding the critique of demonism and the analysis of melancholia—Keitt shows how Spanish interventions into debates about the preternatural realm problematize traditional narratives. In particular, he uses cognitive theory to demonstrate how historians can avoid precipitous idealizations of complex historical realities, particularly with respect to emerging, transformative cultural processes such as social discipline and disenchantment. According to Keitt, because discourses concerned with xenoglossy and melancholy cut across divisions between natural and supernatural, and because they frequently appeared in tandem, their intersection provides exceptionally fertile ground for those seeking to understand the epistemological horizons of the preternatural as well as other, broader, kinds of knowing in early modern Europe.

Of all the issues that generated an urgency to understand demons and spirits in the early modern era, few were more powerful or socially salient than witchcraft trials and attendant cases of demonic possession. Stefan

Heßbrüggen-Walter's chapter elucidates the demonological disagreements between two Protestant philosophers over the use of the "water test" during a witch trial in late sixteenth century Germany. Both men were concerned with explaining why it was that water rejected the bodies of witches based upon sound natural philosophical principles. Neither of them actually questioned that the test *did* work. Rather, the core of their disagreement was over the question of whether or not spirits needed a body in order to exist—a fundamental question faced by many early modern individuals seeking knowledge of the preternatural. Through close analysis of two spiritological tracts composed in response to a 1583 trial in Lemgo, Heßbrüggen-Walter demonstrates that demonology was not a pressing intellectual concern for jurists and theologians alone. Philosophers, too, took a keen interest in the fundamental nature of demons and spirits, applying their theoretical ideas to real-world scenarios such as the witch trials and possession cases. He suggests that present day historians of philosophy, long disinterested in early modern demonology, would benefit from serious examination of demonological debates in the context of broader philosophical theories and works.

Early modern attempts to know demons and spirits involved a range of senses, and sight was among the most essential, contested, and potentially unreliable.<sup>25</sup> After all, how did one know a demon when one saw one? Dmitriy Antonov's study, "The Damned Trinity: Judas, the Devil, and the Hell-Beast in Russian Iconography," ventures into the complex but fascinating realm of pictorial representation, that is, visual ways of knowing. Antonov elaborates the meaning and significance of a widely dispersed, but hitherto little-studied diabolical ensemble that inverted (and, in many ways, subverted) the familiar semiotic language of Orthodox Christian triune hierarchies. The result was an iconographic/ideological product designed to shock the sensibilities of the pious and to reify the rudiments of the faith for those whose access to religion was entirely or partially mediated by the enunciations of artists and sculptors. Using the work of Jérôme Baschet as a starting point, Antonov traces a complex legacy of semantic and epistemological slippage, as the "Damned Trinity" *hypermotif* (Antonov's coinage) shifted in response to theological, political, and cultural change. He notes that the motif

<sup>25</sup>On the senses and visual epistemologies, see Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

continues to have valence and currency in an era far removed from the one in which it was originally conceived.

Turning from theory to practice, in the opening chapter of Part III, Frank Klaassen's "Spirit Conjuring and Alchemy in the Sixteenth Century" traces the increasing alignment of conjuration and alchemy in the operations of magical practitioners in early to mid-sixteenth-century Britain. He notes that throughout the Middle Ages, necromancers and alchemists tended to pursue their respective arts in ways remarkably isolated from one another. Indeed, their methodologically distinct attempts to generate knowledge about spirits were rarely mentioned together in the manuscripts of the period, and the medieval biographical data related to the two kinds of preternatural experts seldom reported any meaningful degree of professional overlap. After 1500, however, Klaassen notes an increasingly discernible pattern of reliance and sympathy among practitioners of these previously discrete disciplines. The newfound sixteenth-century willingness to know spirits through interwoven praxes can be seen in the works of Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert, Edward Kelly, and, of course, the renowned John Dee. Klaassen accounts for this shift by arguing that a number of factors coalesced in the work of Renaissance occultists. Clearly, their fundamental readiness to produce grand synthetic schemata encouraged the elaboration of conceptual frameworks that accommodated previously disconnected epistemologies. This readiness, in turn, had been stimulated by a high level of tolerance throughout Britain for experimentation and exploration of the darker corners of the early modern occult.

Exploration of the darker corners of the early modern occult occurred not only in Europe, but also on the landscapes of an increasingly interconnected and colonial world. In "Edward Terry and the Demons of India," Richard Raiswell examines early modern demonic epistemology through a spatial lens. Using Calvinist divine Edward Terry's 1655 *Voyage to East India* as the focal point of his study, Raiswell argues that as Protestant Europeans began to refine their ideas concerning geography, identity, and ethnographic difference, they came to believe that they understood the workings of providence with greater precision and clarity. Indeed, Terry's early seventeenth-century visit to South Asia had shown him that there was a complementarity between the demonic microcosm and the macrocosm. Just as God occasionally permitted demons to inhabit humans as an *exemplum* for the faithful, so too had he given the devil license to operate freely in the land of the Great Mughal. India,

therefore, was the geographic analogue to the demoniac. Further, there was a similar edificatory impulse in the creator's design: India's deceptive and illusory charms concealed a hideous reality, one that was intended to offer instruction to true Christians. This being so, there would be no soteriological happy ending for the peoples of the Indian subcontinent. Their role in the divine plan was clear and immutable: their damnation was intended as a cautionary tale for other nations and *gentes*.

Taking us to another colonial and spiritual frontier, Mairi Cowan's "Jesuit Missionaries and the Accommodationist Demons of New France" explores the Jesuits' discernment of demons in Algonquian and Iroquoian communities during the mid-seventeenth century. When they traveled to New France, Jesuits carried with them a belief in universal religion, one in which God and Satan struggled over the souls of a divided world. Once among the indigenous communities, the Jesuits struggled to reconcile their recognition of meaningful differences among human cultures with their preexisting convictions about the universality of demons and the devil. To make matters more complicated, the missionaries themselves were divided on how to interpret and respond to indigenous beliefs in malevolent spirits. The result, Cowan argues, was the creation of accommodationist, flexible demonologies among both the Jesuits and the indigenous communities which they encountered. Like Raiswell's spiritual and spatial geography of India, Cowan's contribution illustrates how "knowing" demons in theory often differed from knowing them in practice, especially when encountering the views of, from the European vantage point, "strange" beliefs in foreign lands.

The expansion of spiritual and epistemological horizons beyond Europe was paralleled by experientially driven debates about engagement with super- and preternatural entities in a range of domestic European contexts such as early modern Scotland. In "Angels, Devils, and Discernment in Early Modern Scotland," Martha McGill turns to Scotland on the eve of the Enlightenment to examine how Scots navigated the complexities of discerning angels from demons. Though scholars have suggested that discernment had little importance in Calvinist theology because all apparitions were designated demons, McGill demonstrates that, in practice, such easy labels did not always apply. As she reveals, discernment remained a theoretical and practical challenge in the Reformed context, complicated further by the fact that the human soul was often considered too depraved to truly know the difference between what came from God and what came from Satan.

Of course, experiences of the spiritual realm in Scotland were intimately bound up with events in continental Europe, as religious debates rarely remained confined within borders. Michael Riordan's chapter examines debates about spiritual discernment within the community of the "French Prophets," an exiled group of millenarian Protestants living in early Enlightenment Scotland. Through a close reading of letters, religious texts, and self-writings, Riordan uncovers how these prophets and other self-styled mystics made distinctions between true and false prophecies. His findings demonstrate that despite the pejorative labels of "enthusiasm" and "superstition" used by a growing body of Scottish rationalists, prophets and mystics constantly debated and redefined the limitations of their own beliefs. Like McGill's chapter on angels, Riordan shows the continuation not only of "superstitious" beliefs well into the eighteenth century, but of Catholic ideas about discernment among Protestants of all stripes, Scottish and French exile alike. Together, McGill and Riordan complicate perceived divisions between "early modern" and "modern" and add to a growing body of work that suggests that beliefs in and debates about the supernatural world and issues of discernment persisted across the social spectrum during the early age of Enlightenment.

Nancy Caciola, whose pioneering work on medieval discernment frames many of the historiographical debates discussed herein, closes the volume with an epilogue that reflects on the evolving dynamics of spiritological discourse and experience in the early modern era. Given this collection's commitment to moving beyond neat periodization that obscures both continuities and changes in how pre-modern men and women knew demons and spirits, perhaps it is only fitting that a medievalist have the final word.

The chapters that could be written on the subject of knowing demons and spirits in the early modern era would fill far more pages than allotted in this volume. Some areas, most notably northwestern Europe, receive the bulk of our attention, while others, including Russia and colonial frontiers, draw more focused but less extensive analysis. Religious tensions and evidentiary debates are present in every chapter; crucial questions of gender and social dynamics are considered, but to a lesser extent. Undoubtedly, then, this collection will generate as many questions as answers. But perhaps this is only fitting, for early modern experiences of worlds beyond the terrestrial were as much about what was known as what remained, ultimately and tantalizingly, beyond the bounds of human understanding.

PART II

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## Knowing in Theory



## CHAPTER 2

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# Knowing the Spirit(s) in the Dutch Radical Reformation: From Physical Perception to Rational Doubt, 1536–1690

*Gary K. Waite*

After it began the revolt against Spanish rule in 1568, the United Provinces of the Netherlands developed a tolerance for religious diversity that puzzled its neighbors, along with a skepticism toward the diabolical conspiracy theories that were driving witchcraft prosecution elsewhere. The distinctive nature of the Dutch attitude toward religious difference has been noted elsewhere, such as by Willem Frijhoff who described it as the “ecumenicity of everyday life.”<sup>1</sup> I argue here that both this religious toleration and the skepticism toward the diabolical arose from the spiritualistic approach to religious identity that, while owing much to late medieval mysticism and the irenical attitude of the famed Dutch humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam, developed most fully in the wake of

<sup>1</sup>Willem Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief: Ten Essays on Religious Culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002), 140.

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governmental persecution of religious dissenters in the 1530s, especially the Anabaptists. One of these, David Joris (c.1501–1556), a highly skilled glasspainter, adopted a Nicodemite approach to religious identity that allowed dissimulation to avoid persecution. While in 1536 he had begun his Anabaptist leadership career with very intense experiences of the Holy Spirit, by 1539 he had been disillusioned with prophetic predictions, becoming a fully formed spiritualist who deprecated the letter of scripture, fused the Holy Spirit with his own mind, and denied the independent existence of demons or angels, which were essentially an individual's inner vices and virtues. Despite the complaints of the orthodox, Joris's spiritualism was widely known and quite popular, although usually detached from his name, thanks to his reputation as an Anabaptist prophet. It helped to shape attitudes toward the spirits and toward religious toleration over the next century.

Over twenty years ago, I published an article on Joris's unusual demonology, suggesting that his idea that the devil had no independent reality outside of the inner evil thoughts of each person contributed to the growing skepticism towards the diabolical witch stereotype in the Dutch Republic.<sup>2</sup> Versions of his ideas can be found among other spiritualists who emphasized inner faith over externals, such as the spiritualistic sect the Family of Love, liberal Mennonites known as the Waterlander *Doopsgezinden* (baptism-minded), and some moderate Reformed (Remonstrants) who opposed hard-line Calvinism. Since similarity of ideas is no evidence of influence, the article's conclusions were necessarily tentative.

I have now returned to the subject by exploring the radical religious roots of the early Enlightenment that are revealing how spiritualistic ideas, such as Joris's emphasis on the inner inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the internalization of supernatural beings, were transformed over the course of the seventeenth century into an emphasis on individual creativity in thought and a rejection of any external reality for the devil.

<sup>2</sup> Gary K. Waite, “‘Man is a Devil to Himself’: David Joris and the Rise of a Sceptical Tradition Towards the Devil in the Early Modern Netherlands, 1540–1600,” *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 75 (1995): 1–30. On witchcraft in the Northern Netherlands, see Hans de Waardt, *Toverij en samenleving. Holland 1500–1800* (The Hague: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1991); Hans de Waardt, “Witchcraft and Wealth: The Case of the Netherlands,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack, 232–48 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Studies of the rise of skepticism tend not to take seriously the opinions of such religious nonconformists, in part because spiritualists like Joris were intensely critical of the reliance on higher education and the biblical languages for authority over scripture—the latter he regarded as “dead letters” without the inner Spirit.<sup>3</sup> The orthodox argued that Joris’s denial of an independent devil was an implicit rejection of God and the supernatural realm, atheism in effect. Yet Joris came to his unusual demonology as a result of intensely personal experiences with the divine, followed by profound disillusionment, in the wake of which he relegated demons and angels to the inner person while the Holy Spirit was fused with the renewed individual’s mind. What role remained for the supernatural? Joris’s critics, then, had a point, and they used it to condemn later skeptics, such as the renowned Reformed preacher and Cartesian, Balthasar Bekker, author of the 1691 *De Betoverde Weereld* (i.e., *The Bewitched World*) which denied demons a place in the world.

In 1689, Bekker translated and published a pamphlet account of an English witch trial, using it to expose the absurd nature of the demonic witchcraft stereotype. In the ensuing controversy, Bekker was accused of holding to the same views as “David Joris, Hobbes and Spinoza.” Bekker naturally denied the charges since he did not regard himself as an atheist in the way that that triumvirate was frequently depicted, replying “I have never seen a single letter from David Joris’s writings; nor have I examined Spinoza, nor thought once of Hobbes, in the whole time that I was occupied with the matter.”<sup>4</sup> While Bekker may have been telling the truth, there were many other avenues along which Joris’s unusual ideas about knowing the spirits and denying demons traveled. Bekker’s Reformed colleagues had, for example, kept Joris’s demonology in the public domain through their frequent polemical efforts to suppress it. We will therefore introduce the reader to Joris, trace his unconventional ideas about the spirit world through both followers and opponents, and then return to the question of Bekker and the bewitched world.

<sup>3</sup>Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*, 2nd edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 1–8.

<sup>4</sup>W. P. C. Knuttel, *Balthasar Bekker: De Bestrijder van het Bijgeloof* (The Hague, 1906), 197–247, esp. 247, n. 1. Bekker’s work was *Engelsch verhaal van ontdekte Tovery Wederleid door Balthasar Bekker* (Amsterdam, 1689).

## DAVID JORIS

In late 1536, the Dutch Anabaptist David Joris (c.1501–1556) underwent a remarkable series of visions in which he tangibly sensed the Holy Spirit moving within him, and through this “divine light” he felt his “inner self,” causing him to expel all carnal thoughts.<sup>5</sup> These revelations convinced him to take leadership over the remnant of Anabaptists after the disillusioning destruction of the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster in the previous year. He continued to experience these ecstatic episodes for the next two years, culminating in an especially vivid experience while hiding in a ship’s hold. In this dark space, Joris spent a sleepless night in prayer until he suddenly felt divine power enter his head and push down upon him like a heavy spiritual burden so that he could “sensibly perceive the resurrection.” The spiritual power circulated throughout his body, transforming Joris’s senses so that he could see, hear, taste, smell, and touch God within himself.<sup>6</sup> The inner Spirit’s voice sounded as real to him as if it had come from the outside.<sup>7</sup> Others of his followers had similar experiences which confirmed for them that Joris was none other than a messiah, the “third David” who would complete the work of the second, Jesus.<sup>8</sup> As a divinized agent of God, Joris believed he could directly perceive the spirits. In his *T’Wonder-Boeck* (i.e., *The Wonder Book*) of c.1542, Joris provides an illustration of the stages in this process, from an infant to mature adult, that he has placed in an artist’s linear perspective so as to create a three dimensional image on the page (Fig. 2.1).

It seems that Joris’s followers were expecting him to be proclaimed the messiah on Christmas Day 1538, but the authorities intervened, arresting and executing dozens of them.<sup>9</sup> Joris escaped to Antwerp and

<sup>5</sup> “The Anonymous Biography of Joris,” in *The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris 1535–1543*, ed. and trans. Gary Waite, 31–103 (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994), 58.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 84–6.

<sup>7</sup> See also Gary K. Waite, “Anabaptist Anticlericalism and the Laicization of Sainthood: Anabaptist Saints and Sanctity in the Netherlands,” in *Confessional Sanctity (c.1550–c.1800)*, ed. Juergen Beyer et al., 163–80 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> “The Anonymous Biography of Joris,” 89–90.

<sup>9</sup> Willem de Bakker and Gary K. Waite, “Rethinking the Murky World of the Post-Münster Dutch Anabaptist Movement, 1535–1538: A Dialogue between Willem de Bakker and Gary K. Waite,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 92 (2018), 47–91. On Joris see Gary K. Waite, *David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism, 1524–1543* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990).

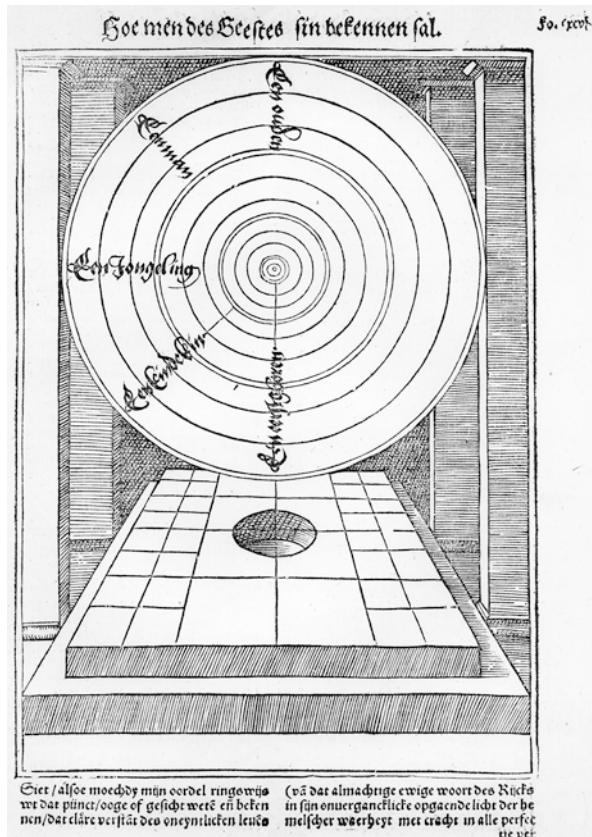


Fig. 2.1 David Joris, "How One Can Perceive the Spirit's Sense," *T'Wonder-Boeck* (Deventer, c.1542), fol. cxcvir. (Courtesy of the Universiteit van Amsterdam, Kerkelijke Collecties)

then in 1544 to Basel, Switzerland. But this massive disillusionment forced him to alter his sense of mission and theology, moving explicitly to a spiritualistic approach that emphasized the fulfillment of prophetic expectations within the individual, rather than through any physical manifestation. He now condemned wrangling over doctrine or religious rites, becoming an impassioned advocate of religious toleration and teaching that only inner spiritual development and love of neighbor mattered.

Joris wrote and published well over 200 separate titles, including his magnum opus, *T'Wonder-Boeck* printed around 1543. In his later writings, such as his *Verklaringhe der Scheppenissen* (i.e., *Explanation of Creation*), written in 1553 reprinted in the 1580s and again in 1609, Joris allowed his creativity to roam free over the book of Genesis, producing all sorts of unusual interpretative leaps.<sup>10</sup> The second edition of *The Wonder Book* (1551, reprinted in the 1580s) similarly marks a movement away from his earlier messianic claims; in this version, the third David became the Holy Spirit within each renewed individual, and his readers could now disagree with some of Joris's opinions.<sup>11</sup> His later publications read like calm and reasoned debates, advocating against the use of force in religious matters, a development assisted by his humanist friends in Basel. While his correspondence reveals that his supporters continued to regard him as an authoritative prophet or teacher, a view he did little to dispute, his writing style in many of his later publications intended for a wider audience was much less esoteric. As the German writer of *Kurtzer Auszug/Von Des beruffenen Ketzers David Georgi* (i.e., *Short Summary of the Infamous Heretic David George*) noted in 1699, the spiritualistic Reformed and then Mennonite preacher Christian Hohburg had commented in a 1669 work *Der unbekannte Christus* (i.e., *The Unknown Christ*), "there is [in Joris's writings] such a theosophistic mysticism ... that no one could read his writings without thinking that he was truly a man-God." Our German writer then admits that if one were to read Joris's writings impartially, that is without keeping Joris's reputation in mind, one "would find that Hohburg had not spoken incorrectly."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, after he moved to Basel in 1544,

<sup>10</sup>David Joris, *Verklaringhe der Scheppenissen* ([Rotterdam, c.1586]), 30<sup>v</sup>. I describe a few of Joris's creative turns in "An Artisan's Worldview? David Joris, Magic and the Cosmos," in *Commoners and Community: Essays in Honour of Werner O. Packull*, ed. C. Arnold Snyder, 167–94 (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2002). On Joris's printers, see Paul Valkema Blouw, "Printers to the 'Arch-Heretic' David Joris: Prolegomena to a Bibliography of His Works," in *Dutch Typography in the Sixteenth Century: The Collected Works of Paul Valkema Blouw*, ed. Paul Valkema Blouw and A. R. A. Croiset van Uchelen, 495–542 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>11</sup>David Joris, *T'Wonder-Boeck: waer in dat van der werldt aen versloten gheopenbaert is. Opt nieuw ghecorrigeert vnde vermeerderd by den Autheur selue* ([Vianen, 1584]), part I, 58<sup>r</sup>. On the changes, see Waite, *David Joris*, 183–4.

<sup>12</sup>*Kurtzer Auszug/Von Des beruffenen Ketzers David Georgi oder Joris. Lehr und Leben* (n.p., 1704; original edition in 1699), sig. A3<sup>v</sup>. The author notes that Christian Hohburg had observed this earlier, saying "Er ist ein solcher Theosophus Misticus oder geheimder

Joris avoided any form of organization; hence there were no battles over the “authentic Joris,” and readers could pick and choose those ideas they liked. The result was a new approach to distinguishing the spirits, whether of the divine or diabolical sort.

Apart from his own creativity and movement toward spiritualism, the question of where Joris might have gotten the idea for his demonology has been something of a puzzle. A recently published work on religious nonconformists may hold the key.<sup>13</sup> In 1532, the Strasbourg spiritualist Clement Ziegler wrote a manuscript entitled “Von der Seligkeit aller Menschen Seelen” (i.e., “Of the Salvation of all Men’s Souls”) in which Ziegler internalized the devil, saying that the evil one was “nothing more than the inclination to sin”; the accompanying images are also reminiscent of Joris’s.<sup>14</sup> Since this manuscript seems not to have been published, the question remains as to how Joris would have come across Ziegler’s ideas. The answer can be found in a trip made by Joris in 1538 to Strasbourg in a fruitless effort to win over the Anabaptist followers of Melchior Hoffman.<sup>15</sup> Since Ziegler had earlier been associated with the Anabaptists, it does not stretch credibility to suggest that Joris and Ziegler met during this visit, although Joris never acknowledged a debt to Ziegler (nor to any other human, for that matter). It seems likely that the Strasbourg spiritualist had played a role in the development of Joris’s uncommon demonology.

Gottes Gelehrter gewesen/dass seines gleichen Schrifften niemahls gelesen worden/  
ein warhaftiger GottesMann/den Got den Menschen zum Besten erwecket hat. Wer des  
Mannes Schrifften selbst unpartheyisch liest/der wird befinden/dass Hohburg nicht  
Unrecht geredet habe/ob er gleich bey vielem mit jenem in gleichem Register stehn  
mag/daran sich aber kein kluger mehr kehret.”

<sup>13</sup>Rodolphe Peter, Martin Rothkegel und William H. Brackney, *Clemens Ziegler. Christoph Freisleben, Leonhard Freisleben. Leonard Busner*, Bibliotheca Dissidentium 30 (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 2016), 65–70.

<sup>14</sup>I am thankful to Christina Moss, PhD candidate, University of Waterloo, for supplying me with images of the original manuscript. The work has been transcribed in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*, 7, *Elsäß 1, Stadt Straßburg 1522–1532*, ed. Manfred Krebs and Hans Georg Rott, 563–74 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1959).

<sup>15</sup>“The Strasbourg Disputation, 1538,” in Waite, *The Anabaptist Writings*, 183–246.

## THE RECEPTION OF JORIS'S DEMONOLOGY

Openly promoting Joris's ideas—even in the tolerant Dutch Republic—could still tarnish a reputation. This was what the Reformed preacher Herman Herbersts (1540–1607) discovered when in 1583 he was hauled up before the Reformed consistory to answer for his support of Joris's writings.<sup>16</sup> By this time, Herbersts had landed in Gouda after being forced out of positions in Bocholt, Westphalia in 1570, and Dordrecht in 1582. He opposed doctrinal rigidity and promoted religious coexistence, and he was able to finish his career in Gouda where citizens strongly supported an irenic approach to religiosity. It is likely that Herbersts was the sponsor of the printing of the second edition of Joris's *Wonder Book*.<sup>17</sup> The consistory criticized him for praising the work as “having an excellent spirit” and for following Joris in calling learned ministers *letterknechten* (i.e., servants of the letter).<sup>18</sup> In his own publications, Herbersts follows Joris in denying the Protestant notion that the pope is the Antichrist, affirming instead that each person is an antichrist as long as he or she is ruled by the lusts of the flesh.<sup>19</sup> Purifying church interiors of idolatrous items does nothing, he argues, to cast out the Antichrist, for he resides in the hearts of people. Reformed members who do not pursue inner sanctification through the mortification of the old man of sin—something Joris had emphasized—remain children of Satan.<sup>20</sup>

Even more than Herbersts, Hendrik Niclaes, the founder of the spiritualist group the Family of Love, borrowed heavily from Joris, especially in his teaching that there was no agent of evil to tempt Adam and Eve prior to their fall from grace. Indeed, it was the fall which led to

<sup>16</sup>J. Reitsma and S. D. van Veen, *Acta der provincial en particuliere synoden deel gehouden in de Noordelijke Nederlanden gedurende de Jaren 1572–1620*, vol. 2, *Noord-Holland 1618–1620—Zuid Holland 1574–1592* (Groningen, 1893), 217, 244–58. On Herbersts in Westphalia, see David M. Luebke, *Hometown Religion: Regimes of Coexistence in Early Modern Westphalia* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2016). On spiritualism in the Netherlands, see now Mirjam van Veen, “Spiritualism in the Netherlands: From David Joris to Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 33 (2002): 129–50.

<sup>17</sup>Valkema Blouw, “Printers to the ‘Arch-Heretic,’” 521–3.

<sup>18</sup>Reitsma and van Veen, *Acta der provincial*, 2:244.

<sup>19</sup>Herman Herbersts, *Een corte ende grondige verclaringe van den Antichrist* (Vianen, [c.1584]), esp. sig. Aiiii<sup>v</sup>–Avi<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., sig. Cii<sup>r</sup>–Ciii<sup>r</sup>.

the creation of the devil.<sup>21</sup> Niclaes's former colleague, Hendrik Jansen Barrefelt (Hiël) also believed that the worst devil was fleshly lust and “the earthly reason” was the “principal devil.”<sup>22</sup> In these three cases there is little doubt as to Joris's influence.<sup>23</sup> Another possible example is that of the Dutch medical practitioner Johann Wier, who corresponded with Joris and may have been influenced by Joris's spiritualism when he penned his 1563 *De praestigiis daemonum* (i.e., *On the Tricks of Demons*) opposing witch hunting. Wier did not explicitly deny the reality of an external devil, but then again, Joris often wrote as if his theology was orthodox when writing for a wide audience.<sup>24</sup>

The most famous sixteenth-century skeptic of the devil was the English gentleman Reginald Scot, who, in his 1584 *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, repudiated the idea of a creaturely devil. Like all angels, Scot argued, the devil is a purely spiritual being and so can have no interaction with the physical world. Scot argued like a strong providentialist, affirming that only God can do the things that papists and witchmongers ascribe to witches and the devil. He very likely came to his position without reading Joris's works, whose name he does not cite. It is in fact unclear to what extent Joris's demonology was known in England by the time of *The Discoverie*. English polemicists such as John Rogers merely portrayed Joris as the chicken that laid the egg that Niclaes hatched,

<sup>21</sup> Hendrick Niclaes, *Van des Minschen Heerlichkeit im Anuangk: Van synem affal/dodt/vnde van syne Wederuyrichtinge in syne vorige Heerlichkeit* (n.p., n.d.), 2<sup>v</sup>–4<sup>r</sup>, 5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> [Hendrik Jansen Barrefelt], *Sendt-brieven wt Yverighe Herten, ende wt Afvoorderinghe, schriftelijck aen de Lief-hebbers der Waerhelyt, deur den wtyloedt vanden Gheest des eenwesighen Leuens wtghegheuen*: ([Antwerp, c.1580]), 75; Hiël [Hendrik Jansen Barrefelt], *Een Geestelyke Reyse eens Jongbelincks/nac het Landt van Vreden/om daer wesentlyck in Godt innen te leven* ([Antwerp, n.d.]), 26. For Niclaes and Hiël, see Alastair Hamilton, *The Family of Love* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1981).

<sup>23</sup> In his *Kleyn-Munster* critiquing Joris, Coornhert makes no mention of Joris's demonology; Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, *Kleyn-Munster, des groot-roemigen David Jorisemrijcke ende wonderbaren schriften* (Gouda, 1590), presumably because he too taught that the devil's true work was in causing people to mistake lies for the truth. Coornhert, *Oorsaken ende Middelen vander Menschen Saligheyt ende Verdoemenisse*, in Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, *Wercken*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1630/31), 89<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Hans de Waardt, “Witchcraft, Spiritualism and Medicine: The Religious Convictions of Johan Wier,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 42 (2011): 369–91; Gary K. Waite, “Radical Religion and the Medical Profession: The Spiritualist David Joris and the Brothers Weyer (Wier),” in *Radikalität und Dissent im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz and James M. Stayer (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2002): 167–85.

making no explicit reference to the devil except to say that Satan lay behind both Joris and Niclaes.<sup>25</sup> One pre-1584 work on the Family of Love cites Heinrich Bullinger to say that the Libertines taught the salvation of the demons, a frequent accusation against Joris.<sup>26</sup> However, unless Scot read the many Latin polemics against Joris, it seems unlikely that he had direct access to Joris's demonology. There is, however, some evidence that Scot was acquainted with prominent members of the English Familists.<sup>27</sup> His work also shows considerable influence from Wier's book; if we are right to believe that Wier was hiding his spiritualism behind a seemingly orthodox demonology, then Scot may have been bringing that heterodox approach out into the open.

### ROBBERT ROBBERTSZ

Joristic spiritualism was particularly strong in the Netherlands; another example is that of Robbert Robbertsz. By profession a mathematician and geographer who trained leading seamen, Robbertsz's

<sup>25</sup> John Rogers, *The Displaying of an horrible secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques, naming themselves the Familie of Love, with the lives of their Authours, and what doctrine they teach in corners* (London, 1578), Hv<sup>v</sup>. He asserts that the Familists are “partakers of doctrines of men possessed with Sathanicall spirites.” Ibid., Jii<sup>v</sup>. Rogers does note Joris’s/Niclaes’s unusual take on creation: “For they take not the creation of man at the first to be historically, (according to the letter,) but mere allegorically: alluding, that Adam, signifieth, the Earthly man, the Garden, the Woman, the Serpent to be within man: and applying still the allegorie they destroye the trueth of the historie.” Ibid., Fiv<sup>v</sup>. Rogers also includes a pamphlet confession of two Familists in 1561 in which they allegedly asserted that angels were born of women. Ibid., sig. Kv<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> William Wilkinson, *A confutation of certaine articles deliuiered vnto the Familye of Loue with the exposition of Theophilus, a supposed elder in the sayd Familye vpon the same articles* (n.p., 1579), 76.

<sup>27</sup> David Wootten, “Reginald Scot/Abraham Fleming/The Family of Love,” in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Stuart Clark, 119–38 (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2001). Philip C. Almond disagrees, but see Peter Elmer’s new evidence on Scot’s “flexible” religious identity. Philip C. Almond, *England’s First Demonologist: Reginald Scot & The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 187–92; Peter Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 18–32. Elmer’s characterization of a Familist identity as one of an “extreme religious radical and Nicodemite” however is a straw man; spiritualists like Barrefelt and Joris had come to renounce what they considered the “religious extremism” of radical Puritanism to which, Elmer says, Scot also objected. Ibid., 23.

unconventional religious views had him forced out of his teaching position in Amsterdam causing him to move to Hoorn. In his best known prose work, *Korte inleydinge der feesten Israels* (i.e., *Short Introduction to the Festivals of Israel*) of 1593, Robbertsz interprets scriptural prophecy in a deeply allegorical fashion.<sup>28</sup> For example, Robbertsz interprets the passage of Revelation 11.7 in which the beast arises from the abyss to destroy the two witnesses as the current tendency to drive “the spirit of life” and the “spirit of wisdom” out of the two Testaments, for these are the two witnesses whose bodies are the “dead letters without life or spirit” which have dominated religion since. The devil, the prince of darkness, has been imprisoned so that his demons “or Lucifer’s angels” can cause disputation, fighting, and division over the city of Christ. They ban, judge, and damn each other—all evidence that their kingdom will soon fall. The implication is clear: for Robbertsz, demons are metaphors for the judgmental attitude and divisiveness rife among Christians.<sup>29</sup> The parallels with Joris’s works merit close attention.

In 1620, the conservative Mennonite, Pieter Jansz Twisck, who also lived in Hoorn, made the parallels clear in his *Chronijck vanden onderganc der tijrannen* (i.e., *Chronicle of World Tyranny*) in which he recounts some stories about Robbertsz and his followers so as to warn others about the dangers of spiritualistic enthusiasm. He comments that Robbertsz belonged to “no particular sect” but “regarded all as his brothers.” Other writers, Twisck notes, call him “the miracle man,” a “fool of the Heretics,” or an associate of Melchior Hoffman, David Joris, Hendrik Niclaes, “and similar mad-spirits [*dool-gheesten*].”<sup>30</sup> Robbertsz removed religious authority from learned preachers and religious organizations, which he described as towers of Babel. He asserted instead that any who believe that Jesus is Christ is to be regarded a brother, whether or not they partake of the correct sacraments or belong to a particular church.<sup>31</sup> Affronted by Twisck’s lumping him in with “mad-spirits” like

<sup>28</sup> Robbert Robbertsz, *Korte inleydinge der feesten Israels/twelck rechte Tijtkaarten zijn/ waer in ghy sien meucht hoe veel groot Jaren die Werelt ghestaan heeft* (n.p., 1593). His approach to interpreting scripture and his many figures are deeply reminiscent of Joris’s.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. Gij<sup>v</sup>–Gijij<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Pieter Jansz Twisck, *Chronijck vanden onderganc der tijrannen ofte Jaerlyckliche Geschiedenis in Werllycke ende Kercklyke saecken*, vol. 2 (Hoorn, c.1620), 1439.

<sup>31</sup> Robbert Robbertsz, *Rechte aenwijsinghe tot die ware sichtbare kercke Gods/Ende totten waren Godtsdienst/Ende wat het merck-teycken is ... door een onpertijdich Neutralist* (Hoorn, 1615), sig. Aiii<sup>v</sup>–Aiv<sup>r</sup>.

Joris, Robbertsz dashed off a series of songs defending himself against Twisck's slander.<sup>32</sup> Despite his protests, Robbertsz's perspective was very similar to Joris's mature spiritualism: advocacy of inner enlightenment through the Spirit and a depreciation of confessional affiliation and doctrinal disputation.

Robbertsz portrayed himself very strongly as a "Neutralist;" yet he did so only after he had been a member of the Frisian Mennonites, then of the more liberal *Doopsgezinden*, before finally abandoning any association with a denomination. For a time he had his own following, called the "Robbert-Robbertsz-folk," about whom Twisck tells some intriguing stories. In Warder, a village about a dozen kilometers south of Hoorn, he asserts, some members of Robbertsz's fellowship believed that at a particular time every day the devil was cast out and, at another hour, the Holy Spirit was tangibly received so that residents could sense, feel, and taste its presence—in Twisck's recounting, it tasted like honey. After that, members would be able to perform miracles of healing, gain preternatural insight, and drive out demons from the afflicted.<sup>33</sup> All this is reminiscent of Joris's ecstatic experiences in the previous century. That in his anti-Twisck pamphlet Robbertsz does not rebut these stories suggests there may have been some truth to them. Some of his readers may have taken Robbertsz's spiritualism to mean that they could discern the Spirit's voice and, moreover, receive its power to perform miracles. Such seems to have been the case a few years later with a sub-group of the Waterlander *Doopsgezinden*.

### THE TWO-WORD DISPUTE AMONG THE *DOOPSGEZINDEN*, 1627

In 1627, the Amsterdam Doopsgezind printer and innkeeper Jan Theunisz composed a few pamphlets as part of his campaign to counteract the "two-Word" hermeneutic which had come to dominate his fellowship. Concerned about a revival of Anabaptist ecstatic excess, Theunisz warned that the spiritualistic approach of elders Hans de Ries (1553–1638) and Pieter Pietersz (1574–1651) was giving confidence to ordinary members, including women, to assert prophetic or visionary

<sup>32</sup> Robbert Robbertsz, *Seven liedeckens, van Robbert Robbertsz. Gemaeckt tegen Pieter Iansz. Twisck, cronijck-schrijver tot Hoorn* ([Hoorn?], 1626?), sig. A1<sup>v</sup>, B1<sup>v</sup>–B3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Twisck, *Chronijk*, 2: 1440–2.

authority. The stories he tells in these works are evocative of those told by Twisck about Robbertsz.<sup>34</sup>

Theunisz's religious community had come to be deeply shaped by spiritualism.<sup>35</sup> The popular literature produced by Pietersz and Jan Philips Schabaelje (1585–1656), for example, emphasized the development of inner piety and spiritual perfection and deprecated doctrinal disputes and confessional distinctions, although not quite to the extreme of Robbertsz. Some Doopsgezind leaders, such as De Ries or later Galenus Abrahamsz de Haan (1622–1706), deemphasized controversial doctrines so as to associate with other groups of pious Christians. They also maintained what they called the “two-Word” hermeneutic that required the Spirit working within the believer (the inner Word or light) to fully apply the meaning of scripture. This contrasted with more conservative Mennonites who, like the Reformed followed a scriptural hermeneutic emphasizing the authority and plain meaning of the biblical text.<sup>36</sup> Pietersz's popular *De Weg na Vreden-stadt* (i.e., *The Way to the City of Peace*) of 1625 hoped to restore personal spiritual devotion as growing wealth among Mennonites led to fears of materialism. A builder of windmills, Pietersz emphasized a spiritual detachment from the things of this world and reliance upon God to provide.<sup>37</sup> Schabaelje's more skillfully composed works of spiritualistic piety and emblem books all emphasized the inner significance of the scriptures in ways that Piet Visser has seen as influenced by Hiël—and they were widely influential, in England as well

<sup>34</sup>See Gary K. Waite, “The Drama of the Two Word Debate among Liberal Dutch Mennonites, c.1620–1660: Preparing the Way for Baruch Spinoza?” in *Radicalism and Dissent in the World of Protestant Reform*, ed. Bridget Heal and Anorthe Kremers, 118–36 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017). Also Sjouke Voolstra, “The Path to Conversion: The Controversy between Hans de Ries and Nittert Obbesz,” in *Anabaptism Revisited*, ed. Walter Klaassen, 98–114 (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992); Elisabeth J. De Lange-Hoekstra, “Mennonite (Doopsgezinde) Women and Prophetic Leadership in the Early Seventeenth Century” (MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 2014), esp. 40–7.

<sup>35</sup>See Piet Visser, *Broeders in de Geest: de doopsgezinde bijdragen van Dierick en Jan Philipsz. Schabaelje tot de Nederlandse stichtelijke literatuur in de zeventiende eeuw* (Deventer: Sub Rosa, 1988).

<sup>36</sup>Cornelius J. Dyck, “The Place of Tradition in Dutch Anabaptism,” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 43 (1974): 34–49.

<sup>37</sup>Pieter Pietersz, *De Weg na Vreden-stadt*, in Pieter Pietersz, *Opera, dat is: Alles wat van dien rechtsinnigen Leeraar. Inder eenvoudigheyt beschreven is*, 3–42 (Amsterdam, 1698), 9–11. See Tom Harder, “The Way to the City of Peace: The Anabaptist Utopia of Pieter Pietersz,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 78 (2004): 525–42.

as on the continent.<sup>38</sup> Pietersz's simpler version of allegorical pilgrim literature, however, led to some interesting examples of ecstatic behavior as a number of Pietersz's "City of Peace" followers felt emboldened to act on the inspiration of the inner Spirit's voice. The stories told by Theunisz included the claim that Pietersz had developed a new type of windmill through the Spirit's instruction; that people in his group had invented a boat that could run underwater; and that they were working on ships that could sail without wind.<sup>39</sup> While Theunisz claims that investors in this last invention ended up being deceived, "oh uncertain Spirit," it does seem that Pietersz had created a new type of windmill, while the famed Doopsgezind inventor, Cornelis Drebbel, not only patented a perpetual motion water pump in 1598, but he built and sailed an early form of submarine on the River Thames in 1620 in front of King James I.<sup>40</sup>

Other stories are less savory; for example, Theunisz complains that some of the "City of Peace" men justify sexual affairs with women other than their wives with the excuse, "my spirit desires your flesh," asserting that such activity was purely spiritual (this complaint was one frequently made against Joris, and not without reason).<sup>41</sup> These people, Theunisz murmurs, interpret their dreams as prophecy, and even uneducated women are now prophetesses, commanding the rich to share their goods with the poor.<sup>42</sup> Some of these sisters even hold rebirthing services for adult men in which they simulate the contractions of childbirth until the recipient could feel he had been reborn in the spirit. Another woman interpreted her cleaning of clothing or of pots and pans as a fulfillment of

<sup>38</sup>Visser, *Broeders in de Geest*.

<sup>39</sup>Delange-Hoekstra, "Mennonite (Doopsgezinde) Women," 110; Jan Theunisz, *Der Hanssijtische Menniste Geest-drijveren historie* (Amsterdam, 1627), 6.

<sup>40</sup>Gary K. Waite, "Demonic Affliction or Divine Chastisement? Conceptions of Illness and healing amongst Spiritualists and Mennonites in Holland, c.1530–1630," in *Illness and Healing Alternatives in Western Europe*, ed. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Hilary Marland, and Hans de Waardt, 59–79 (London: Routledge, 1997), esp. 69–70; see also the Wikipedia entry on Drebbel.

<sup>41</sup>Theunisz tells these stories in *Der Hanssijtische Menniste Geest-drijveren historie*, 7–8, 22–38; see for the English translation, Delange-Hoekstra, "Mennonite (Doopsgezinde) Women," 131–51.

<sup>42</sup>Pietersz later clarified that they should not interpret his spiritual message so literally: Pieter Pietersz, *De Hemelsche Bruyloft, Handelende van't noodigen, 'tweygeren, 'tbewilligen, heerlijckheydt der seler* (Wormer-Veer, 1650), in Pietersz, *Opera*, 162.

eschatological prophecies. One deacon of Leiden, Gerrit Francken, was inspired by angels to see visions and to preach to great effect to Catholic audiences, especially when he claimed to see a vision of a crib in the sky during Christmas. On a trip to Hoorn, Francken was joined by a dog, which he allegedly regarded as an angel. Staying with a colleague in the city, Francken told his host that his dog had communicated with him in a supernatural way; the next morning, his host said to Francken, “your dog has shit vilely. Has the hidden meaning of his inspiration thus come to light?” Francken allegedly replied, “did you say that it is a dog? It is an angel of God.” No, countered his host, “it is a dog, he has shit much too vilely to be an angel.”<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, Theunisz does not make the obvious link to beliefs about demonic familiars that were so prevalent elsewhere in the era of the witch hunts. In fact, he does not mention the devil in his polemical works, suggesting that he shared with his spiritualistic brethren a depreciation of demonic spirits. Testing the spirits was, therefore, an important act for any of those who strongly believed in the individual inspiration of the Spirit or communication with the supernatural world.

For Theunisz, the difficulty in perceiving the spirits correctly made it far too dangerous for unlearned laypeople, and certainly beyond women. As a warning against such spiritualist fanaticism (*Gheest-drijveren*), he compares his contemporary spiritualistic opponents with the infamous *naaktloopers* of Amsterdam, who in February 1535 were inspired by their ecstatic prophet to remove and burn their clothing and then to run naked into the streets to proclaim the coming judgment of God.<sup>44</sup> Yet Theunisz was no conservative Mennonite, as he worked collaboratively with English Baptists, Jews, and Moroccan Muslims, a flexibility that was spiritualistic at its core.<sup>45</sup> In the end, Theunisz lost the debate and the spiritualist’s approach to biblical interpretation continued to develop within the *Doopsgezinden* and also among the Collegiants who held

<sup>43</sup>Theunisz, *Der Hanssijtische Menniste Geest-drijveren historie*, 36.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 22. On the *naaktloopers*, see Gary K. Waite, “Naked Harlots or Devout Maidens? Images of Anabaptist Women in the Context of the Iconography of Witches in Europe, 1525–1650,” in *Sisters: Myth and Reality of Anabaptist, Mennonite, and Doopgezind Women ca 1525–1900*, ed. Mirjam van Veen et al., 17–51 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 27–33.

<sup>45</sup>Gary K. Waite, “Reimagining Islam: The Moor in Dutch and English Pamphlets, 1550–1620,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 66 (2013): 1250–95, on 1274–7.

informal meetings to worship without clergy to discuss religious matters; many *Doopsgezinden* also participated.<sup>46</sup>

Theunisz likely would have described his skepticism toward the diabolical in more rationalistic terms than David Joris, and despite his disgust with the visionary authority of unlettered women, he too was faced with the conundrum of how to perceive the Spirit. For his two-Word colleagues, the focus was inward as the proper interpretation of scripture came not from the pulpit, as it did with the Reformed and traditionalist Mennonites, but from the Spirit within. How to discern whether that voice came from the Holy Spirit, or from a pretender, the devil, or was merely the wishful thinking of the individual, remained the central question. Joris's approach had been to relegate all of these possible voices to the inner person, so that, if he or she had achieved spiritual perfection, as Joris believed he had, then of course the voice was that of the Spirit, since the devil had been utterly defeated and made impotent; in this approach, the Spirit and the individual's reason had merged, making it impossible to distinguish between them. Thanks in part to the attraction of Joris's demonology, by the time of Theunisz's pamphlets the *Doopsgezinden* had similarly expelled an independent demonic presence, hence the voice of the Spirit that one may have heard was either that of the Spirit or the individual's own. In this respect, there was no real difference between the inner Word and the individual's reason or mind.

### THE NEGATIVE TRANSMISSION OF JORIS'S DEMONOLOGY

Joris's demonology was propagated not only by supporters, but also by his many learned opponents who clarified and simplified Joris's often obscure teachings so as to warn their congregants away from them. By doing so, they inadvertently spread Joris's ideas among audiences that would never have dreamed of reading his works. There is space here only for a couple of examples of this negative transmission of Joris's ideas. First, in 1599 the prominent Groningen rector Ubbo Emmius wrote an attack on the ideas of David Joris. A Dr. Hugelmumzoon, probably Bernard Kirchen, second husband of Joris's daughter, Clara, responded

<sup>46</sup> Andrew C. Fix, *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

in defense of Joris.<sup>47</sup> In 1603 Emmius countered this work, fearing that the idea that the devil had no independent reality other than as the sinful nature of humans that was taught by Joris and Kirchen would lead people to assume there were no “terrifying demons” outside an individual’s own fantasies. Taken to its logical conclusion, Joris’s denial of the physical devil implied that there was to be no final, eternal judgment of those under the devil’s power.<sup>48</sup> Emmius’s critical appraisal of Joris’s unusual demonology was frequently cited in subsequent literature.

Second, in 1621 one of the Calvinist ministers engaged in the 1618 Synod of Dort, Herman Faukel, published a rebuttal of Anabaptist beliefs in which he insinuates that the Jorists, “a particularly abominable sect,” had never been banned by the Mennonites, hence the latter were infected by Joris’s noxious opinions.<sup>49</sup> In the fourth point of his polemic, Faukel turned to the subject of Anabaptist demonology, accusing all Anabaptists of Manichaeist dualism which stipulated that demons were evil by their very nature, having not been created by God, but originating from themselves. Then he suggests that Mennonites “show their unity with the Libertines and with David Joris” since they all agree that “the demons are nothing other than the evil inclinations which are in people and which disturb the conscience.”<sup>50</sup> He cites from Joris’s major works, including *The Wonder Book* and the 1540 *Neemt Waer. Dat boeck des leuens is mi gheopenbaert* (i.e., *Behold, the Book of Life is Opened to Me*), in which Joris first explicated his new demonology.<sup>51</sup> Faukel fumes that Joris teaches that Satan has no physical substance, no living nature, except as a “deceiving and lying spirit.” All thoughts of the flesh, he continues, they call evil spirits and devils, that there will never be found any other demons than “your own flesh, sensuality, and lusts,” and so

<sup>47</sup> Ubbo Emmius, *Grondeliche Onderrichtinghe Van De Leere Ende Den Geest Des Hooft-Ketters David Ioris, Uyt Zyne Eigene Schriften En Wercken Met Grooter Neersticheyt En Getrouwicheyt Vergader: Tot Waerschouwinge Aller Vromen Ende Christgelouigen Herten* (Middelburg, 1599).

<sup>48</sup> Ubbo Emmius, *Den David-Jorischen Gheest in Leven ende Leere ... tegens den vermomden schaemtloosen D. Andreas Huygelmumzoon* (The Hague, 1603), 337–41. See Samme Zijstra, “De bestrijding van de davidjoristen aan het eind van de zestiende eeuw,” *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 18 (1992): 11–38.

<sup>49</sup> Hermannum Faukelium, *Babel, dat is Verwarringe der Weder-dooperen onder malcan-deren/over meest alle de stucken der Christelijcker leere* (Hoorn, [1621]), sig. C2v.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>51</sup> David Joris, *Neemt Waer. Dat boeck des leuens/is mi gheopenbaert* ([Antwerp, c.1540]).

on.<sup>52</sup> These references were, Faukel concludes, drawn from Gerard Nicolai's translation of Heinrich Bullinger's very famous books against the Anabaptists.<sup>53</sup> Faukel follows Bullinger in lumping Hendrick Niclaes into this gang of unconventional demonologists, for he too apparently believed "that the devils, hell, and damnation were nothing other than the remorseful and gnawing conscience."<sup>54</sup> Faukel, via Nicolai via Bullinger, has thus interpreted the demonology of contemporary Familists and *Doopgezinden* as essentially Jorist. He has, moreover, made Joris's obscurely written and deeply unorthodox view of the devil more widely accessible to a Reformed readership in the decade of the 1620s and beyond.

When Bernard Kirchen defended Joris's teaching, he acknowledged that Joris "regards and holds the power of the devil outside or without the human to be nothing against the human."<sup>55</sup> Citing also from Joris's *Behold, the Book of Life*, Kirchen comments that Joris did not disparage others who believed that there was an external devil, simply regarding such misinformed belief as unimportant. However frightening painters portray a corporeal devil to be, he is powerless "outside the person."<sup>56</sup> Joris's goal, Kirchen reminds Emmius, was to reduce fear of the devil so that people would fear God rather than Satan.<sup>57</sup> Kirchen, writing in 1600 at the height of the witch hunts in the Holy Roman Empire, makes Joris sound very much like a beacon of reason who sought to reduce fears of diabolical conspiracies that were indeed running amok. It is no surprise that Joris's major tract on the subject, *Behold, the Book of Life*, was reprinted in 1616 with a more descriptive title: *Een Cort ende Leerlijck Tractaat: waer in verhandelt wert/wat dat woort Duyvel sy* (i.e., *A Brief and Instructive Tract: wherein is treated what the word Devil*

<sup>52</sup> "Faukelium, *Babel*, 50–1.

<sup>53</sup> This is Bullinger's *Wederlegginghe ofte Getrouwe onderwijsinge, teghen alle dwalinghen der Wederdooperen, van onsen tijden* (Amsterdam, 1617).

<sup>54</sup> Faukelium, *Babel*, 51.

<sup>55</sup> Andreas Huygelmumzoon [Bernardus Kirchen], *Wederlegginghe/vnde grove onbeschaeerde vnde tasteliche Logenen van Ubbo Emmen/Rector der scholen tot Groeningen/by hem in druck uytgegeven tegen het leven vnde leere van Dauid Iorissoon* (n.p., 1600). See Samme Zijlstra, "Anabaptists, Spiritualists and the Reformed Church in East Frisia," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 75 (2001): 57–73 on 69.

<sup>56</sup> Kirchen, *Wederlegginghe*, 135–6.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 139.

means).<sup>58</sup> There were, then, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, individuals still using Joris's writings to bring an end to fear about demonic witchcraft.

### LIBERAL DOOPSGEZINDEN AND DENIAL OF THE DEVIL

In 1664, the Doopsgezind physician and preacher Antonius van Dale (1638–1708) composed a satirical play defending his fellow Doopsgezind physician-preacher, Galenus Abrahamsz, against charges of theological unorthodoxy. These included the ideas that Christ was not divine, merely an example for Christians of perfect obedience; that the godless will not burn in eternal fire; that there are no demons or “evil, autonomous [or self-existing] spirits”; and that there is no autonomous Holy Spirit—the phrase “Holy Spirit” merely signifies comprehension of the meaning of scripture.<sup>59</sup> While Van Dale's character, “Countryman,” asserts that Abrahamsz never wrote such things, he provides no statements by his friend in refutation. Abrahamsz's opponents, however, had good reason for their suspicions, for Abrahamsz emphasized the humanity of Jesus and his work as a role model rather than as a sacrifice for sin; refused to discuss the doctrine of the Trinity; relied on the authority of the inner Spirit or Word in the interpretation of scripture, rather than on precise analysis of the text; called confessions of faith fallible human creations; and said virtually nothing about the devil. Like De Ries and even Robbertsz before him, Abrahamsz's priority was not doctrinal precision but to end the confessional wrangling that tore churches apart. He worked hard to bring about Christian unity, and for this many of his opponents took his silence on controversial doctrines to imply denial; there is, for example, no mention of the devil in an edition of the doctrinal statements that had led to a union of Mennonite factions in 1649 that Abrahamsz published in 1664 in defense of that merger.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> David Joris, *Een Cort ende Leerlijck Tractaat: waer in verhandelt wert/wat dat woort Duyvel sy/ende hoe men 'tselvigh in die H. Schrift verstaen sal* ([Netherlands], 1616).

<sup>59</sup> Antonius van Dale, *Boere-praetje, Tusschen vijf Persoenen, Een Huysman, oudt Vlamingh, Remonstrant, Waterlander en Collegiant. Handelende/Of Galenus te recht voor een Hypocrijt is beschuldight* (Amsterdam, 1664), 37.

<sup>60</sup> Galenus Abrahamsz, *Antwoord Op de Vrede-Presentatie, Gedaen Door de Waterlantsche aen de Vlaemsche, Duytsche en Vriessche Doopsgesinde Gemeentens* (Amsterdam, 1664).

Other *Doopsgezinden* did tackle the question of witchcraft and the devil, especially Jan Jansz Deutel (d.1657), Abraham Palingh (1588/89–1682), and the aforementioned Van Dale.<sup>61</sup> These works have been studied already by Hans de Waardt, Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, and myself. We know that none of these writers explicitly credited Joris in their perspective, an unsurprising discovery since for them to do so would associate them with Joris and his reputation. Yet Joris's demonology and spiritualistic hermeneutic were both so well known that we can be assured that our writers were more than aware of them. For example, in 1638 the Hoorn printer Jan Jansz Deutel composed a treatise on the question of witchcraft. Deutel argues that what is being claimed about witches is greatly exaggerated, for they cannot do what is above nature, such as raise the dead or bring damaging storms, even with the aid of the devil; witches are instead mere deceivers.<sup>62</sup> He cites the well-known story of Eva Vlieghen, a woman of Meurs, who claimed that she had survived for years without eating, but who had subsequently been found to be faking her miracles.<sup>63</sup> He similarly rejects any suggestion that such preternatural events could be caused by the devil, who Deutel frequently describes as impotent (*onmacht*), a term used prominently by Joris in his passages on the devil.<sup>64</sup> For Deutel too, the devil is merely a spirit that makes lies appear as truth. Only God can perform supernatural feats.

<sup>61</sup>See Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, “Doperse geluiden over magie en toverij: Twisck, Deutel, Palingh en Van Dale,” in *Oecumenisme: Opstellen aangeboden aan Henk B. Kossen ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid als kerkelijk hoogleraar*, ed. A. Lambo (Amsterdam: Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit, 1989), 69–83; Hans de Waardt, “Abraham Palingh en het demasqué van de duivel,” *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 17 (1991): 75–100; Hans de Waardt, “Abraham Palingh. Ein holländischer Baptist und die Macht des Teufels,” in *Vom Unfug des Hexen-Prozesses: Gegner der Hexenverfolgungen von Johann Wyer bis Friedrich Spee*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Otto Ulbricht, 247–68 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992); Gary K. Waite, “From David Joris to Balthasar Bekker?: The Radical Reformation and Scepticism Towards the Devil in the Early Modern Netherlands (1540–1700),” *Fides et Historia* 28 (1996): 5–26.

<sup>62</sup>Jan Jansz Deutel, *Een kort tractaetje tegen de tooverij, als mede een verklaringe van verscheyden plaatzen der H. Scripture* (Hoorn, 1670), 5–7. Deutel's tract was first published by Deutel's son in 1670.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 12, presumably citing the pamphlet, *Een waarachtige beschrijvinge van het groot mirakel en teecken des Heeren, het welcke geschiedt is binnen de stadt van Meurs, al waar God sijnen enghel ghesonden heeft aen een jonghe dochter, ghenaemt Jefken Vlieghen* (Amsterdam, 1614).

<sup>64</sup>Deutel, *Een kort tractaetje tegen de tooverij*, esp. 12, 24–5, 36.

In a similar fashion, Abraham Palingh, a Haarlem Doopsgezind and cloth merchant, attempted to expose the foolishness of the prevailing belief in diabolical witchcraft when he published his dialogue, *'t Afgerukt Mom-aansicht der Tooverye* (i.e., *Witchcraft Unmasked*) in 1659. In his foreword to the magistrates of Haarlem, he follows Wier by pleading with them not to prosecute old women maliciously accused of witchcraft, suggesting instead that they be treated in Haarlem's hospital.<sup>65</sup> He vigorously condemns inquisitors and demonologists alike for their prosecutorial zeal. Like Deutel, Palingh utterly rejects witchcraft as a reality since he believed that demons were impotent.<sup>66</sup> Instead, witchcraft was a mere deception and the devil powerless.

Palingh had clearly relied on Wier and Scot; was Joris also a source? We have seen how Joris's type of spiritualism was a major current within the *Doopsgezinden*. In his dialogue, Palingh's own character, "Eusebius" denies—as had Joris a century earlier—the charge that he did not believe that there are demons, affirming that "I believe that there are, have been, and will be devils." Yet, just like Joris he drains the devil of any independent ability, reducing his role to that of a spiritual tempter, unable to compel humans to do anything against their will.<sup>67</sup> There can be no pact with the devil since he is not a physical creature.<sup>68</sup> However, Palingh does not adopt Joris's unusual perspective on the fall of Lucifer from heaven, which Joris placed after the Edenic fall of Adam. Yet that part of Joris's demonology could quite easily be separated from his strongly held idea that for a true Christian the devil was the impotent voice of temptation within.

Van Dale's contribution to the debate appeared in a 1683 critique of superstition and belief in witchcraft that proved deeply influential for Bekker.<sup>69</sup> His purpose in writing *De oraculis ethnicorum dissertationes*

<sup>65</sup> Abraham Palingh, *'t Afgerukt Mom-aansicht der Tooverye: Daar in Het bedrogh der gewaande Toverye, naakt ontdekt, en met gezonde Redenen en exemplen deser Eeuwe aangewezen wort* (Amsterdam, 1659), 3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 6<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 1, 9.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>69</sup> Andrew C. Fix, *Fallen Angels: Balthasar Bekker, Spirit Belief, and Confessionalism in the Seventeenth Century Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999); Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 375–88.

duae (i.e., *Two Discussions on the Oracles of the Heathens*) in 1683 and then four years later its Dutch version, *Verhandeling van de oude orakelen der heydenen* (i.e., *Discussion of the Old Oracles of the Heathens*), was to remove superstition from his homeland. According to him, the stories of the devil's supernatural activity through sorcerers and witches were false. Instead, Van Dale affirms that the devil does not need to work through witches to control the world, for he has better means to bring humanity to damnation by tempting them to pride, drunkenness, unchastity, deceit, and similar vices.<sup>70</sup> In other words, Van Dale restricts the devil's activities to the inner person. While this had been a traditional position in Christendom, the witch hunts of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had made such a stance problematical; the treatise by the prominent French Calvinist Pierre Viret, *Le Monde à l'empire et le monde demoniac* (i.e., *The World of the Empire and the World Demonical*) of 1561 had come close to this position by interpreting the cases of demonic possession in the New Testament as representations of human behavior in the last days. For example, the physically violent possessions caused by "black devils" represent the violence of tyrannical persecutors, while those "white demons" which speak out of the possessed pretending to be venerating Christ represent the false forms of religion, such as Catholicism, or even Protestants who do not fully take on the yoke of Christ.<sup>71</sup> Viret's work, however, never denies the external reality of demons and demonic possession, and it is not clear to what extent it influenced others. Nor is it known if he was aware of Joris's demonology. Yet, it is important to note that in 1665 the printer Paulus van den Houte produced a Dutch version of this tome, translated by Felix van Sambix who gave it the title *De Beseten Weereldt* (i.e., *The World Possessed*).<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Anthonis van Dale, *Verhandeling van de oude Orakelen der Heydenen* (Amsterdam, 1687), afterword, a1v, a5v; Gijswijt-Hofstra, "Doperse geluiden," 79–82.

<sup>71</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 420–2; Pierre Viret, *The Worlde Possessed with Devils, Conteining Three Dialogues* (London, 1583), for black devils, sig. Fi v, and white, sig. Gv<sup>r</sup>–Gvir, Lvii<sup>r</sup>. The original is *Le Monde à l'empire et le monde demoniac fait par Dialogues* (Geneva, 1561). Further on demonologies, see Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, Gerhild Scholz Williams, "Demonologies," in Levack, 69–83, *The Oxford Handbook*.

<sup>72</sup> Pierre Viret, *De Beseten Weereldt: Waer in Bewesen Wort Dat De Duyvel, Te Weten Den Rooden Draeck, De Oude Slanghe Apoc. 20. Los Ghebroken En Ontbonden Is, Ende Tegenwoordich in De Weerelt Onder Alle Soorten Van Menschen Regeert* (Harderwyck, 1665).

Since the title-page especially recommends this book for the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, it would not be surprising if Bekker had a copy of this edition and had found it helpful in developing his own title, if nothing else. Yet, even in the late seventeenth century, asserting limitations to the devil's activity, as Van Dale did, was tantamount to being a heretical spiritualist or Libertine. The *Doopsgezinden* were consistent in their avoidance of demonizing language, and when they did mention Satan, it was in terms that greatly restricted his powers. For example, in his fascinating emblem book from the middle of the seventeenth century with numerous copper etchings—many taken directly from a work by Hiël and others copied from Rembrandt—Jan Philips Schabaelje provides the inner, personal significance of biblical history.<sup>73</sup> In his portrayal of creation, he mentions no devil present to tempt Adam and Eve, while the latter was responsible for tempting Adam, but only as she follows the “earthly reason,” which is represented by the serpent. The devil is not even a bit character in this performance, although Schabaelje does say that through this fall humans become the property of the devil, that is, enslaved to their earthly desires.<sup>74</sup> Neither Joris nor Hiël would have been uncomfortable with this demonology, and Joris too argued that Eve was a representation of earthly desires who tempted Adam, the spiritual human. Many other leaders like Galenus Abrahamsz sought to avoid mentioning the devil at all. They had, without mentioning Joris's name, developed his spiritualistic attitude, relegating the devil to the inner person. Faukel may indeed have been right to suggest that the entire Dutch Anabaptist tradition had been infected by Joris's demonology.

### BALTHASAR BEKKER AND THE ERADICATION OF THE DEVIL

It is tempting to compare Joris's internalized or purely spiritual devil with that presented by Balthasar Bekker, who lost his position for publishing his *Bewitched World* in which he denied the existence of demons except as spiritual influences. But similarity is no evidence of influence, and Bekker could simply have come to a Joris-like position merely through his Cartesian dualism. This is what he claimed when confronted

<sup>73</sup>Jan Philips Schabaelje, *Den grooten emblemata sacra, bestaande in meer dan drie hondert Bybelsche figuren, soo des Ouden als des Nieuwen Testaments* (Amsterdam, 1654).

<sup>74</sup>Schabaelje, *Den grooten emblemata sacra*, sig. A1<sup>r</sup>.

with accusations that he had been reading Joris, Hobbes, and Spinoza, as noted above. That said, when we look at the works he himself listed as primary influences, we see the aforementioned works by Scot, Wier, and Van Dale, whose *De Orakelen* he calls irrefutable, and he also cites Palingh.<sup>75</sup> If our interpretation of Wier, Scot, Palingh, and Van Dale as swimming in spiritualistic currents is correct, then we have a clear path from sixteenth-century spiritualistic demonology into the early Enlightenment.<sup>76</sup>

Bekker really could not have avoided knowledge of Joris's demonology.<sup>77</sup> His opponents certainly thought so. In 1691, a Pieter Jansz of Middelburg published a tract against Bekker's skeptical tome. The entirety of this tract, entitled *De Geest van David Joris, Sprekende zijn eygen taal, in dese Laatste Eeuwe. Waar men als in een Spiegel sien kan, dat veel der stellingen die den Heer Bekker in zijn Tweede Deel van de Betooverde Weerelt stelt, uyt dit Monster zijn voortgeteelt* (i.e., *The Spirit of David Joris, Speaking his own language, in this Last Century. In which one can see, as in a Mirror, that many of the positions held by Mr. Bekker in his Second Part of the Bewitched World, originated out of this Monster*), consists of passages about the devil drawn from Joris's *Wonder Book*, with the addition of marginal comments pointing to parallel passages in Bekker's work. There is no foreword, no description of Joris and his reputation, and no explanation. Jansz has obviously read the *Wonder Book* thoroughly. He begins immediately with Joris's infamous assertion that "the devil or Satan is nothing, entirely of no ability outside of the human, without power or might in himself." Humans, Joris continues in this pamphlet, can be "devilled" when captivated by the unchaste fleshly nature. This passage Jansz aligns with "Bekker in the last of his second part." Comparing this quotation to the relevant passage from the second edition of *The Wonder Book* reveals that Jansz has copied Joris word for

<sup>75</sup> Balthasar Bekker, *De Betooverde Wereld, Zijnde een Grondig Ondersoek Van 'tgemeen gevoelen aangaande de Geesten* (Leeuwarden, 1691), 468–9. Cf. Gijswilt-Hofstra, "Doperse geluiden," 83, n. 37. Almond suggests that Bekker got the idea of a non-corporeal devil from Scot, and Bekker admits to reading him. But this skeptical tradition had a stronger Dutch current in Joris and the spiritualists. Philip C. Almond, *The Devil: A New Biography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 218.

<sup>76</sup> Fix, *Prophecy and Reason*. See also Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 361–6.

<sup>77</sup> Knuttel, *Balthasar Bekker*, 247.

word, apart from some spelling or capitalization variations; he has not, it seems, put words in Joris's mouth.<sup>78</sup>

What is remarkable about this pamphlet is the lack of any editorial commentary, apart from the title page and marginalia. Was the editor not concerned that readers might find Joris's unusual interpretation intriguing or fascinating, that it might inspire them to reach for Bekker's more learned and coherent volume? In this example we have as late as 1691 a publisher who thought that Joris's name alone could still tarnish a publication. By publishing Joris's demonology in abridged form, it is quite possible that this pamphlet had the reverse effect to that desired by Jansz; it could just as easily have inspired interest in this unconventional demonology. Jansz clearly believed that Joris was responsible for Bekker's more recent assault on traditional theology. He may have indeed been correct.

Of course Jansz was not the only person to attempt to do this. One of the many books composed against Bekker in 1691 was the treatise by Everardus van der Hoogt, writing as *Haggebher Philaleethees*, attempting to prove that all of Bekker's ideas had been rejected before. In this *Brief van Haggebher Philaleethees, Geschreeven Aan Zynen Vriend N.N. Over Den Persoon en het Boek van D<sup>o</sup>. Balthasar Bekker* (i.e., *Letter from Haggebher Philaleethees written to His Friend N.N. Over the Person and the Book of Dr. Balthasar Bekker*), Everardus argues that the denial of the devil had been a characteristic of many ancient "foolish spirits," such as Aristotle. Yet, surprisingly his first example is David Joris, the enthusiast who understood the devil to be the corruption of the human will that originated only after the fall. The writer cites Joris's *Boek der Wonderen* (i.e., *The Wonder Book*), but then notes that his teaching is presented much more clearly in his *Apology to Lady Anna*, and was last defended by a supporter hiding under the pseudonym Andreas Hugelmumsonus and was thoroughly disputed by Ubbo Emmius.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Pieter Jansz, *De Geest van David Joris, Sprekende zijn eygen taal, in dese Laatste Eeuwe. Waar men als in een Spiegel sien kan, dat veel der stellingen die den Heer Bekker in sijn Tweede Deel van de Betroerde Weerelt stelt, uyt dit Monster sijn voortgeteelt* (Middelburg, 1691), 3, compared with Joris, *Twonder-boeck* (1551), 20<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> *Brief van Haggebher Philaleethees, Geschreeven Aan Zynen Vriend N.N. Over Den Persoon en het Boek van D<sup>o</sup>. Balthasar Bekker* (Amsterdam, 1691), 3. For the *Apology to Countess Anna of Oldenburg*, see Waite, *The Anabaptist Writings*, 269–86, esp. 273.

In 1717 a Middelburg preacher by the name of Carolus Tuinman produced a much larger treatise of over 300 pages, *Het helsche Gruwelgeheim der heillooze Vrygeesten* (i.e., *The hellish Abominable secret of the wicked Free Spirits*), written as part of a series of works against the free spirits inspired by Spinoza.<sup>80</sup> Included in this rebuttal is *Een Andwoord en Aanmerkingen over dezelve, met betoog dat het alles vernieuwde David-Joristery is* (i.e., *An Answer and Remarks over the same with the argument that all of it is renewed David Joristery*). On the first page Tuinman calls his Spinozan opponents “Libertines” on the basis of their insane ravings; it is as if David Joris had risen phoenix-like from the ashes.<sup>81</sup> Joris’s mischievous distinction between the literal and spiritual meaning of the words of the bible lies behind the current heresies, Tuinman asserts.<sup>82</sup> His Spinozan opponents “merely serve under the black banner of David Joris,” where Bekker “could find the plan for his own demonology [*duivelleere*], since David Joris has his devil as powerless and bound firm in hell as does Bekker.”<sup>83</sup> Like Jansz, Tuinman cites frequently from Joris’s second edition of *The Wonder Book* to discredit the works of his opponents, attacking in particular their spiritualistic hermeneutic, their emphasis on individual inspiration and authority, and of course their position on the devil.<sup>84</sup> He references other Joris works as well, including *Verklaringhe der Scheppenissen* (i.e., *Explanation of Creation*) and a couple of Joris’s dialogues,<sup>85</sup> indicating that the prophet’s works were read by Reformed preachers well into the eighteenth century. Unlike Jansz,

<sup>80</sup> Carolus Tuinman, *Het helsche Gruwelgeheim der heillooze Vrygeesten, Open gelegt door den vermomden Pius Fidelis ... met betoog dat het alles vernieuwde David-Joristery is* (Middelburg, 1717).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., sig. \*1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., sig. \*4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, 8, 14, 40, etc. He also uses the names of other spiritualists such as Niclaes and Coornhert to discredit them. Tuinman aligns Niclaes’s Family of Love with Joris, describing it as “bewitched.” *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>85</sup> For example, *ibid.*, 60, where he quotes from the *Verklaringhe der Scheppenissen*, and 33, where he cites *T’samen-Spreckinge tusschen Godes Geest/Liefde ende stemme/mit die Verloren Mensche* of 1553 ([Netherlands], 1610), and *Thien Christlijcke Gespraeken: Tusschen een Godtgheleert/Bybels-geleert ende Sophistgeleert: Waer in verhandelt ende bericht wert het volcomen verstant der Waerheyt Christi* ([Netherlands], 1610). These are late works of Joris that seem to have been much more popular, in terms of republication, than his earlier works.

Tuinman includes an overview of Joris's life and actions, thus bringing into the foreground the less salubrious aspects of Joris's reputation that almost all earlier polemicists had described. According to Tuinman, Joris "conformed to the Münsterite ringleaders," becoming, with Jan van Leiden, one of the two new prophets for the Anabaptists.<sup>86</sup> Some suggest, he continues, that Joris had received money from Münster to recruit troops to relieve the siege, and when the city fell, Joris took over leadership through his visionary inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "Thus he set himself up as a second Muhammad," as both had misled their followers through their respective books. Joris proclaimed himself, Tuinman asserts, to be wiser than the scriptures and greater than Jesus Christ.<sup>87</sup> After he fled the persecution of 1539, Joris moved to Basel where he and his emissaries easily captivated the minds of others, bewitching them so that they donated their goods to Joris, while elsewhere Tuinman calls Joris a soothsayer (*waarzegger*) motivated by greed. Of course, he also describes Joris's shameless sexual ethics and practices, which included bribing young women to stand naked before him and teaching that polygamy and even incest were permissible.<sup>88</sup> When the Basel authorities were compelled three years after his death to disinter his remains, Tuinman describes how they dug up the "stinking carrion of David Joris" and threw it on a garbage wagon, burning it with his books and pictures. Thus was his believers' hope that he would rise again three years after his death gloriously fulfilled.<sup>89</sup> Tuinman reminds readers of the unsavory reputation of the Dutch prophet because his ideas were being accepted in some circles without this important context. Joris is still alive "in our free spirits" and these are the new "David Joris people," Tuinman complains, followers of the philosophy of Descartes and Spinoza who critique the Reformed clergy and deprecate scripture and theology.

Despite the fact that he denied being influenced by Joris or Spinoza, Bekker lost his preaching position in Amsterdam. Were his disavowals honest, or was this a Shakespearean matter of "The lady doth protest too much, methinks"? Joris's perspective on the devil was widely known by Bekker's time. In his 1689 critique of the English witch trial, Bekker

<sup>86</sup>Tuinman, *Het helsche Gruwelgeheim*, 223.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 224–5.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 236–9. He cites Ubbo Emmius, *David-Jorissechien Geest* on this.

<sup>89</sup>Tuinman, *Het helsche Gruwelgeheim*, 239–42.

does not explicitly deny the physical reality of the devil, but point by point ridicules the evidence against the accused witch, including that of the water test and the devil's mark. Why would the devil need to put a mark on his followers, he asks, for can he not identify them without one?<sup>90</sup> Bekker, here, is following a long tradition of skepticism toward these matters in the Dutch Republic; already in 1594 professors of Leiden University had advised the court of Holland to declare the water test invalid, thanks to the influence of Wier's *De praestigiis daemonum* and to the fact that the jurists who wrote the university's advice—the president of the High Council of Holland and Zeeland and the rector of Leiden University—were members of the Family of Love.<sup>91</sup> Bekker ridicules the belief that witches are somehow waterproof, for if you throw a witch into the sea, she'll drown like everyone else.<sup>92</sup> God does not make people waterproof and neither does (or can) the devil who is unable to do anything that God has not ordained as part of the natural order. Bekker relegates witchcraft to matters outside the human body, hence there can be no devil's mark nor bewitchment of a person. Nowhere in this pamphlet does he deny the devil's independent existence, as Joris had done. Bekker instead positions himself as fighting both irrational superstition and atheism. Thus far, there is no evidence of Jorist-type spiritualism or demonology that would inspire comparisons with the old Dutch prophet.

Until, that is, Bekker discusses the role of religion. In this English case, both an Anglican priest and a nonconformist preacher cooperated in the trial. This incensed Bekker, who fumed that it is foolishness that

the Protestant church is divided by such a thing as Nonconformism, and is united in such inexcusable foolishness. [Such] that people have split from each other over external church customs that are neither forbidden nor commanded in God's Word, and [then] are brought together over superstitious witchcraft evidence. What is more, people accuse each other of heresy in disputes about uncertain and unnecessary doctrines, and yet tolerate

<sup>90</sup> Bekker, *Engelsch verhaal*, 19–20.

<sup>91</sup> Hans de Waardt, “Netherlands, Northern,” in *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*, vol. 3, ed. Richard M. Golden, 810–3 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio, 2006), 812.

<sup>92</sup> Bekker, *Engelsch verhaal*, 23.

matters far more idolatrous, placing the devil higher than God, and by certain results cast down all at once the foundation of the Christian religion.<sup>93</sup>

Bekker's accommodationist approach to disputes over doctrine and practice is strongly reminiscent of his contemporary Galenus Abrahamsz's, and we have traced its lineage here in the Anabaptist tradition from Joris through to Abrahamsz and Van Dale. It is likely this point that most raised the ire of some of Bekker's critics and revived the specter of Joris, as much as his efforts to ridicule fear of the devil and magic. In his *The World Bewitched*, Bekker criticizes the popular focus on counter-magic for preventing people "from practising the Christian love of one's neighbor."<sup>94</sup> This was Tuinman's major critique of Bekker twenty years later; a spiritualist's hermeneutic undercut the rationale for the visible church with its confessions, disciplinary codes, and learned preachers. Bekker did not have to read a page of Joris's publications to be confronted with his ideas; he merely had to read the many polemical works against Joris or chat with some of his Doopsgezind colleagues or read some of their writings, such as those by Palingh and Van Dale. Arguing that precise doctrine or correct ecclesiastical practice were not worth fighting over was likely to raise much more ire than making fun of witchcraft beliefs, especially in the Dutch Republic where there had been no witch trials for decades, despite the fact that belief in magic remained strong.<sup>95</sup> Bekker himself noted how he had preached against witchcraft fears the Sunday before putting quill to paper.<sup>96</sup>

Historian Andrew Fix emphasizes the importance of Van Dale for Bekker, but he does not explore the long history of a spiritualistic approach to demonology among the *Doopsgezinden*.<sup>97</sup> Van Dale's pro-Abrahamsz drama was published by the Amsterdam printer Jan Rieuwertsz in 1664, just six years before he helped produce Baruch

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 23–4.

<sup>94</sup>G. J. Stronks, "The Significance of Balthasar Bekker's *The Enchanted World*," in *Witchcraft in the Netherlands from the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Willem Frijhoff, 149–56 (Rotterdam: Rotterdam University Press, 1991), 151.

<sup>95</sup>On the ongoing belief in magic, see Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt, ed., *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

<sup>96</sup>Bekker, *Engelsch verhaal*, 2.

<sup>97</sup>Fix, *Fallen Angels*.

Spinoza's controversial *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (i.e., *Theological-Political Treatise*). In this work, Spinoza sought to "strengthen individual freedom and widen liberty of thought in Dutch society" by "weakening ecclesiastical authority and lowering the status of theology."<sup>98</sup> This had been Joris's goal, to shift the obsessive focus on correct dogma and ceremonies onto love of God and neighbor, and this is also what the liberal-minded *Doopsgezinden* such as Abrahamsz fought very hard to achieve. Spinoza's brilliance was going further than Abrahamsz could, at least in public, by arguing that Christians thoroughly misunderstood the scriptures over which they fought. Prophets are merely individuals possessed of a powerful imagination and the scriptures needed to be read through a critical-historical approach as human records without inherent divine authority.<sup>99</sup> Many of Spinoza's friends were members of Abrahamsz's Mennonite fellowship, most particularly Rieuwertsz, his translator Jan Hendrik Glazemaker, but also Pieter Balling, Jarig Jelles, Jacob Ostens, and Simon Joosten de Vries.<sup>100</sup> As indicated in Van Dale's satire, Abrahamsz's hermeneutic combined a spiritualist's belief in the inner Word enlightening the reader and a concomitant depreciation of the authority of the letter, with a rationalist's (Socinian) treatment of the scripture text as a historical document. Abrahamsz's critics were, despite van Dale's defense, correct: Abrahamsz's hermeneutic treated scripture as a human document and demons as unimportant. That said, it seems he was not willing to give up angels, for he

<sup>98</sup> Jonathan Israel, ed., *Spinoza: Theological-Political Treatise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), viii. See also Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*; Leszek Kolakowski, "Dutch Seventeenth-Century Anticonfessional Ideas and Rational Religion: the Mennonite, Collegiant and Spinozan Connections," trans. James Satterwhite, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 64 (1990): 259–97 and 385–416.

<sup>99</sup> Israel, *Spinoza*, ix.

<sup>100</sup> Graeme Hunter, *Radical Protestantism in Spinoza's Thought* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 1–6; Michael Driedger, "Response to Graeme Hunter: Spinoza and the Boundary Zones of Religious Interaction," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 25 (2007): 21–8; Wim Klever, *Mannen rond Spinoza, 1650–1700: Presentatie van een emanciperende generatie* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997); Steven Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 166–70; Ruben Buys, "Without Thy Self, O Man, Thou Hast No Means to Look for, By Which Thou Maist Know God": Pieter Balling, the Radical Enlightenment, and the Legacy of Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert," *Church History and Religious Culture* 93 (2013): 363–83.

engaged in several disputations with one of his congregants and fellow Collegiant Herman Bouman, whose published versions of these debates indicate that Galenus was angry with Bouman's insistence that they apply the same rationale to angels as Bekker had to demons; very few *Doopsgezinden* seemed willing to follow Joris's lead in relegating angels as well as demons to the inner mind.<sup>101</sup> Yet Bekker's critics who linked him to Joris and Spinoza, as well as to Socinianism, had a point; in liberal Doopsgezind circles the spiritualism of Joris and his ilk had partnered with the rationalism of Socinianism, since the Holy Spirit within and individual reason had been fused.<sup>102</sup> So even if Bekker had not read any of Joris's own writings, variations of Joris's demonology were adapted and promulgated through works he did read: Wier, Scot, and especially Van Dale, as well as through the many publications condemning Joris. Thanks to their unintentional dissemination of such unorthodoxy, combined with the lack of vigorous censorship by the Dutch state, the basic idea propounded by Joris that the devil existed only in an individual's mind had become commonplace, sometimes associated with Joris, but sometimes not.

Joris's personal history of a profound experience with what he believed was the Holy Spirit within, followed by earth-shattering persecution and disillusionment, compelled him to rethink the verity of his experiences and the nature of the intersection of the supernatural with the natural worlds. He came to believe that there were no supernatural agents in the world apart from the inner Spirit and vices and virtues that were in fact his own mind and ethics. A similar process seems to have taken place in the examples of other individuals forced to confront the subject of ecstatic experiences and the real world, such as Robbertsz or the "City of Peace Folk." By the time of Spinoza and Bekker, the Dutch were quite used to thinking in dualistic terms, thanks in large measure to the religious nonconformists such as Joris.

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<sup>101</sup> Fix, *Fallen Angels*, 112–6. See especially Herman Bouman, *Disputatio van Verscheyde Saaken, Raakende de Wonderwerken, En of een Schepsel die doen kan: item van de Engelen, Duyvelen*, etc. (Amsterdam, 1695).

<sup>102</sup> Waite, "The Drama of the Two Word Debate."

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## CHAPTER 3

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# Hell and Fairy: The Differentiation of Fairies and Demons Within British Ritual Magic of the Early Modern Period

*Daniel M. Harms*

In 1647, Cornwall was abuzz with news of Ann Jefferies, a maid of St. Teath, and her meetings with the fairies. Ann reported that she regularly encountered the beings in her room and that they brought her fairy food, so she could eschew earthly nourishment; they also gave her the ability to heal her neighbors of their ailments. This was a matter of deep concern to the local officials and ministers who came to speak with her. According to Moses Pitt, a boy in the house in which Ann worked, the officials warned her that the fairies “were evil Spirits that resorted to her, and that it was the Delusion of the Devil.” After the officials departed, the maid heard the spirits call and, despite protestations from the Pitt family, she went to meet them. She returned with a bible with a page dog-eared at 1 John 4:1: “Dearly Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but

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try the Spirits, whether they are of God." The family was surprised by this, as they knew Ann to be illiterate.<sup>1</sup>

Such occurrences were not unheard of in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain, as its spirit world was teeming with all manner of creatures that were not human but which nevertheless seemed to possess will and intelligence. Most of these spirits were previously identified constituents of a divine Christian hierarchy in which celestial beings granted advice and aid to the faithful, and fallen angels sought to lead them away from salvation. Thus, an encounter with such a being was a significant event requiring judgment, faith, and wisdom. Was the being a celestial messenger giving crucial guidance, a diabolical tempter, or something else entirely? An incorrect decision could place life and potentially even salvation in the balance.

Ann Jefferies' case demonstrates how such matters were further complicated by a category that, from a popular perspective, lay outside of the heavenly and the infernal: fairies. Such beings appear often in the literary works of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British authors such as Shakespeare and Spencer.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, definitive statements from early modern writers regarding the conception and categorization of fairies are limited in number and scope. In his 1597 *Daemonologie*, King James VI of Scotland devoted fewer than four pages to these spirits, deliberately cutting off further discussion of what he saw as demons, lest he "woulde seeme to teach such unlawfull artes."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps he was trying to avoid the misreading that befell Reginald Scot's 1584 *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Seeking to discredit aspects of preternatural belief by providing a litany of examples of what he took to be superstition, Scot's work was often read against its skeptical intention, with his examples treated as instructions by cunning folk, and the publisher of the 1665 edition expanded the magical material. That said, Scot's discussion of fairy nature is largely superficial, comprised mainly of a list with entries such as "kit with the

<sup>1</sup> Moses Pitt, *An Account of One Ann Jefferies* (London, 1696), 19–20; R. Pearse Chope, "Anne Jefferies and the Fairies," *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries* 13.7 (1924): 312–4.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Katharine Mary Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1959); Katharine Mary Briggs, *The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Diane Purkiss, *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Allen Lane, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> James VI, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1597), 76.

cansticke” and “man in the oke” that continue to baffle folklorists.<sup>4</sup> Robert Burton’s 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy* likewise provides little detail, treating fairies under the headings of the “Water divels” and “Terrestriall Divells.” His discussion emphasizes their presence in classical literature, and how some of them “grinde Corne for a messe of milke, cut wood, or doe any manner of drudgery worke.”<sup>5</sup> Even Reverend Robert Kirk’s 1691 *The Secret Commonwealth*, the longest and most famous treatment of the topic, is perfunctory, devoting more space to an analysis of second sight than fairies.<sup>6</sup> Thus, investigating what early modern people “knew” of fairies is itself like trailing one, seeking out ethereal wisps in literature, poetry, ballads, biographies, trial records, memoirs, correspondence, and other sources in the hope of capturing some sense of how these ephemeral beings were construed.<sup>7</sup> One little-explored category of sources are early modern texts of ritual magic, which contain material that not only illuminate fairies in new and exciting ways, but also reveal a perspective on the discernment of spirits that differs considerably from other contemporary documents.

Many early modern practitioners of ritual magic sometimes went to great lengths to seek out fairies, conducting long and complex rituals to conjure these and other spiritual entities to obtain a variety of ends.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584), 139.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), 64–5.

<sup>6</sup>Robert Kirk, *An Essay of the Nature and Actions of the Subterranean (and for the Most Part,) Invisible People ... Secret Commonwealth ...* (Edinburgh, 1815).

<sup>7</sup>In this capacity, the most important studies are Purkiss, *Troublesome Things*. See also Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2001); Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Regina Buccola, *Fairies, Fractious Women, and the Old Faith Fairy Lore in Early Modern British Drama and Culture* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2006); Peter Marshall, “Protestants and Fairies in Early-Modern England,” in *Living with Religious Diversity in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott Dixon, Dagmar Freist, and Mark Greengrass (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); Ronald Hutton, “The Making of the Early Modern British Fairy Tradition,” *The Historical Journal* 57.4 (2014): 1135–56; Darren Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 2016); Darren Oldridge, “Fairies and the Devil in Early Modern England,” *The Seventeenth Century* 31.1 (2016): 1–15.

<sup>8</sup>I have expanded upon Claire Fanger’s definition of ritual magic to include rituals for conjuring other spiritual entities, such as fairies. See her, “Medieval Ritual Magic: What It Is and Why We Need to Know More About It,” in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions*

The seventeenth-century astrologer William Lilly tried to invoke the Fairy Queen, for instance, commenting that:

...it's not for every one, or every Person that these Angelical Creatures will appear unto, though they may say over the Call, over and over, or indeed is it given to very many Persons to endure their glorious Aspects; even very many have failed just at that present when they are ready to manifest themselves; even Persons otherwise of undaunted Spirits and firm Resolution, are herewith astonished, and tremble; as it happened not many Years since with us, a very sober discreet Person, of virtuous Life and Conversation, was beyond Measure desirous to see something in this Nature; he went with a Friend into my *Hurst* Wood: the Queen of *Fairies* was invocated, a gentle murmuring Wind came first; after that, amongst the Hedges, a smart whirlwind; by and by a strong Blast of Wind blew upon the Face of the Friend, - and the Queen appearing in a most illustrious glory. No more, I beseech you, (quoth the Friend) my Heart fails; I am not able to endure longer, nor was he; his black curling Hair rose up, and I believe a Bullrush would have beat him to the Ground: he was soundly laughed at, & c.<sup>9</sup>

Lilly was hardly unique in his description of the topic. The English translation of Cornelius Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* describes them as classical beings who "inhabit Woods and Parks... fountains and meadows," and who may be called "with sweet fumes, with pleasant sounds, and by such instruments as are made of the guts of certain animals and peculiar wood."<sup>10</sup> At the first meeting of occultists Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley, Kelley promised the doctor to "further [his] knowledge in magic... with fairies..."<sup>11</sup> Hints of magical practices involving fairies turn up in records of witchcraft trials; in examining these, it is important to distinguish between those who called up fairies based upon

*of Medieval Ritual Magic*, vii–xviii (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), vii.

<sup>9</sup>W. Lilly, *William Lilly's History of His Life and Times from the Year 1602 to 1681* (London: Currll, 1721), 102–3.

<sup>10</sup>Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (London, 1651. [i.e., 1650]), III.32, 450. The translator, identified only as "J. F.," rendered the original Latin text's "fauni" as "fairies" here. See Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres*, ed. V. Perrone Compagni (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 500.

<sup>11</sup>John Dee, *The Diaries of John Dee*, ed. Edward Fenton (Charlbury: Day Books, 1998), 25.

written works, such as John Walsh (or Welsh) of Netherby and possibly Susan Swapper (or Swaffer) of Rye, and those whose fairy associates were first encountered through unexpected meetings with these beings, such as Joan Tyrrye of Taunton and Isobel Gowdie of Auldearn.<sup>12</sup> The MP Goodwin Wharton kept lengthy diaries detailing his myriad failed attempts to contact fairies, pursued under the guidance of Mary Parrish.<sup>13</sup> The cases of Judith Philips and John and Alice West, con artists who extracted large sums from individuals for whom they purported to call up fairies to deliver riches, speaks to the wide acceptance that such invocations were possible.<sup>14</sup> It seems clear, then, that a substantial number of people believed that fairies could be conjured through rituals for various purposes.

What has been less examined is the aforementioned surreptitious operative literature of ritual magic, with its incantations and procedures to call upon or command fairies.<sup>15</sup> Such material has not been entirely

<sup>12</sup>On Walsh, see *The Examination of John Walsh, Before Maister Thomas Williams* (London, 1566); “The Examination of John Walsh (1566),” in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, ed. Marion Gibson, 25–32 (London: Routledge, 2000). On Swapper/Swaffer see Annabel Gregory, *Rye Spirits: Faith, Faction and Fairies in a Seventeenth-Century English Town* (London: Hedge, 2013). On Tyrrye, see Richard Holworthy, *Discoveries in the Diocesan Registry, Wells, Somerset: A Paper Read Before the Society of Genealogists, 10th March, 1926* (Wells: Diocesan Registry, 1926), 4–5. On Gowdie, see Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie: Magic, Witchcraft and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010).

<sup>13</sup>J. Kent Clark, *Goodwin Wharton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Frances Timbers, *The Magical Adventures of Mary Parish: The Occult World of Seventeenth-Century London* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2016).

<sup>14</sup>These cases are described in *The Brideling, Sadling and Ryding, of a Rich Churle in Hampshire* (London, 1595); *The Seueral Notorious and Levrd Cousnages of Iohn West, and Alice West* (London, 1613).

<sup>15</sup>Readers familiar with Anglo-Saxon magical and medical literature might be surprised that a corpus in which individuals actively set out to make contact with fairies exists in England, given the well-documented charms to heal the damage from “elfshot” and to keep such creatures at a distance. Karen Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 133–67; *Anglo-Norman Medicine*, ed. Tony Hunt, 2 vols. (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 2: 224–5. Such operations were not entirely absent from the period under discussion; for example, short procedures occur in a number of manuscripts for those who wish to throw off the effects of fairies. See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional B.1.; Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland MS GD 188/25/1/3; also Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007),

neglected. Katherine Briggs was one of the first prominent scholars to note the importance of fairy rituals beyond their existence as curiosities and to publish excerpts of fairy-related texts.<sup>16</sup> Since Briggs, Frank Klaassen has briefly discussed the corpus of fairy-related ritual magic texts, while transcripts of fairy operations have been published by Katrina Bens, as well as Klaassen and Frederika Bain.<sup>17</sup> Such materials have also been referred to briefly in broader historical analyses of popular religion, literature, economics, and medicine, beginning with the work of Keith Thomas, and followed up with abbreviated accounts and synopses in the works of Annabel Gregory, Richard Green, and Darren Oldridge.<sup>18</sup> Still, the tendency has been to highlight individual manuscripts, raising concerns regarding how representative such material is of the worldview, specialized vocabulary, norms, and practices of a larger underground cultural tradition. For example, when Elias Ashmole wrote down fairy spells in MS. Ashmole 1406, was he displaying “considerable knowledge of the kingdom of fairies” as Oldridge has suggested, or was the antiquarian simply copying a piece from another work?<sup>19</sup>

Many institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States hold copies of fairy-related ritual magic texts from sixteenth- and

122, and at least one Elizabethan author cited the virtues of bay and peony to ward off or cure attacks by these creatures. William Langham, *The Garden of Health* (London, 1597), 47 and 483. Nonetheless, much of the literature discussed in this chapter acknowledges the potential dangers of such contact, but nonetheless empowers, enables, and encourages the reader to seek out interaction with these beings. The reasons for this shift are unknown.

<sup>16</sup> Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck*, 112–6, 248–55.

<sup>17</sup> Frank F. Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance*, (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 175–76; Frank Klaassen and Katrina Bens, “Achieving Invisibility and Having Sex with Spirits: Six Operations from an English Magic Collection c.1600,” *Opuscula* 3.1 (2013): 1–14; Frederika Bain, “The Binding of the Fairies: Four Spells,” *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 1.2 (2012): 323–54.

<sup>18</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 725; Gregory, *Rye Spirits*, 56–7; Richard Firth Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 4–5, 106–9; Oldridge, “Fairies and the Devil,” 11–2; Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England*, 121.

<sup>19</sup> Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England*. I tend toward the latter position, although I have yet to find some of Ashmole’s rituals from MS. 1406 in other sources.

seventeenth-century Britain.<sup>20</sup> Magicians of the era also had access to fairy rituals in a small corpus of published material, which included Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (both the original 1584 edition and the expanded edition of 1665) and the *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* (1655), attributed to Agrrippa. There are undoubtedly more texts to be discovered, and manuscripts within our corpus already represent various levels of availability, preservation, legibility, and encipherment.

A key question, though, is how concerns regarding discernment, especially those which entail distinguishing between categories of spirits, reflect those in the literature of ritual magic that has been previously examined. Indeed, in many manuscripts examined by scholars in the past, such preoccupations are key elements of the procedures outlined, with magicians expending considerable effort to identify the true nature of the spirits they summoned. It was all too easy to confuse infernal beings for angels.<sup>21</sup> The fourteenth-century Benedictine monk John of Morigny wrote successive iterations of his *Liber florum celestis doctrine* in order to create a holy “correction” of the condemned esoteric ritual known as the *Ars Notoria*, based upon revelations supposedly handled to him by the blessed virgin Mary.<sup>22</sup> John Dee and Edward Kelley's attempts to contact spirits in the sixteenth century often included detailed efforts to ascertain the nature of the spirits who were contacted.<sup>23</sup> Are these concerns reflected elsewhere in the corpus of ritual magic?

<sup>20</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Ashmole 1406, Douce 116, c Mus. 173, c Mus. 263, Rawlinson D252; London, British Library, MSS Sloane 1727, 3824, 3826, 3850, 3851, 3853; Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 3544; Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS A.4.98; Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.26(1) and (2), X.d.234; GD188/25/1/3; and London, Wellcome Institute, MS 110. Numbers given are page numbers or folios, depending upon the convention used in a particular manuscript.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Kieckhefer, “Angel Magic and the Cult of Angels in the Later Middle Ages,” in *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Heresy, Magic, and Witchcraft*, ed. Louise Nyholm Kallestrup and Raisa Maria Toivo, 71–110 (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> See John of Morigny, *Liber Florum Celestis Doctrine: The Flowers of Heavenly Teaching*, ed. Nicholas Watson and Claire Fanger (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> John Dee and Meric Casaubon, *A True & Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Yeers Between Dr. John Dee ... and Some Spirits* (London, 1659), e.g. 1, 24, 146, 228.

This chapter is an exploration of the known fairy-related operations in the corpus of early modern British magic. By this means, it may be possible to reveal what those who read, copied, and practised the operations in these manuscripts thought about fairies, including these creatures' cosmological significance, genders, habitats, and relations with humans and other spirits. In addition, these documents might provide evidence as to whether efforts to discern the nature of spirits were widespread among magicians practising their art.

### THE BOUNDARIES OF FAIRY IN RITUAL MAGIC

When examining ritual magic texts, how can operations involving fairies be distinguished from those concerning other spiritual creatures, such as angels, demons, and ghosts? Many works of early modern ritual magic pointedly avoid defining the entities they describe, save only to call them “spirits,” while others refer to the beings summoned by specific names and titles. The broadly inclusive term “spirit” seems to have been widely used as a category to encompass many different types of beings and ambiguous situations, particularly where the classification or identity of a being was in doubt.<sup>24</sup> Further, ritual magic operations that appear to be similar in terms of language, motifs, ritual equipment, and other modalities, may not always employ consistent labeling for the spirits contacted. This lack of consistent nomenclature makes it difficult at times to identify what sort of creature a magician sought to conjure. This raises the question as to whether these labels actually reference a particular type of being, or, as is the case with the medieval Icelandic categories of *tröll* and *alfr*, are broader markers of preternatural beings to be used in a more diffuse sense that may overlap with other cultural categories.<sup>25</sup>

In attempting to distinguish ritual fairy magic from other types of operations—or to determine if this is possible—investigators should consider the following criteria. First, there appear to be a series of conventions with respect to names and designations. In ritual summoning, for

<sup>24</sup> Julian Goodare, “Boundaries of the Fairy Realm in Scotland,” in *Airy Nothings: Imagining the Otherworld of Faerie from the Middle Ages to the Age of Reason: Essays in Honour of Alasdair A. MacDonald*, ed. K. E. Olsen, Jan R. Veenstra, and A. A. MacDonald, 139–69 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 153 and 158.

<sup>25</sup> Árman Jakobsson, *The Troll Inside You: Paranormal Activity in the Medieval North* (Punctum, 2017), 25–35.

example, fairies as a species tended to be referred to as “elves,” “elphas,” “fairies,” “pigmies,” or some variation of those terms.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, when early modern practitioners sought to summon particular, named fairy spirits, they tended to draw from a limited pool of appellations. Two names recur frequently in the scholarly literature. The first is Oberion or Oberon, for whom the earliest evidence is the French *chanson de geste*, *Huon of Bordeaux*, dating back to the thirteenth century but first published in English in the sixteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The other is Sibilia and its variants, such as Sibilla, Sibylla, and Sybillia. This name is clearly derived from the Sibyls of classical tradition, though it appears to have been reinterpreted in the Middle Ages as a fairy designation, and might have appeared in magical works as early as the fourteenth century.<sup>28</sup> Also, other operations exist similar to those in the categories above in terms of language, ritual action, instruments, and/or other elements, particularly those in which the entities summoned are labeled as “spirits” or some other neutral designation. After an examination of the corpus, few cases remain in which one author assigns a rite to fairies while another attributes it to a different class of spiritual entity, such as angels, demons, planetary spirits, or other types of beings. Further, as we shall see, these items tend to possess elements not often present in rituals dealing with other

<sup>26</sup>This usage is counter to the collocation analysis performed by Ostling and Forest, which found “elves” and “fairies” to be largely found in literature and demonology. Michael Ostling and Richard Forest, “‘Goblins, Owles and Sprites’: Discerning Early-Modern English Preternatural Beings through Collocational Analysis,” *Religion* 44.4 (2014): 554–5.

The manuscripts examined do not use euphemisms for fairies such as the “fair folk” or “good neighbours,” nor do they subdivide them into the many categories of fairies recognized in modern popular books. The “seely wights,” who are postulated as a cult of fairy-affiliated shamanic figures, do not appear either. On seely wights specifically, see Julian Goodare, “The Cult of the Seely Wights in Scotland,” *Folklore* 123.2 (2012): 198–219.

<sup>27</sup>Joyce Boro, “The Textual History of *Huon of Burdeux*: A Reassessment of the Facts,” *Notes & Queries* 48.3 (September 2001): 233–7.

<sup>28</sup>William Lewis Kinter and Joseph R. Keller, *The Sibyl: Prophetess of Antiquity and Medieval Fay* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1967); Josiane Haffen, *Contribution à l'étude de la Sibylle médiévale: Étude et édition du MS. B.N., F. Fr. 25 407, Fol. 160v–172v, Le livre de Sibille* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984). A rite to a spirit named “cibille” appears in the table of contents to a late fourteenth-century collection of magical ritual, now lost, in the collection of John Erghome, left for the library of the Austin Friars at York. *The Friars’ Libraries*, ed. K. W. Humphreys (London: British Library in association with the British Academy, 1990), 86.

types of beings. Nevertheless, the temptation to see an absolute division between fairy magic and other types of spirit work should be avoided, as considerable overlap exists between the categories, but some distinctions are certainly worth noting.<sup>29</sup>

Do “fairy rituals” appear in the same manuscripts as those containing procedures for calling other types of beings? Klaassen has done important work on texts of natural, image, and ritual magic in the medieval and early modern periods, showing, among other things, when these operations appear together in bound manuscripts, indicating the compilers’ interests.<sup>30</sup> Of the fairy magic texts examined for this chapter, only one—X.d.234, consisting of a single sheet of vellum—does not include “fairy magic” rituals alongside those that summon up other types of spirits. All other works that contain fairy material also include rituals for spirits (1) that are unlabeled, (2) that are explicitly called demons, angels, ghosts, or other monikers, or (3) that explicitly refer to familiar theological figures such as Uriel or Satan. In many cases, the manuscripts are largely composed of these different types of materials. Thus, it would seem that fairies were typically perceived as beings that were part of the early modern preternatural world, one of a number of potential allies to which a practitioner could turn to effect his or her designs.

To avoid taking an essentialist view of the “fairy magic” category, it should be noted that there are also some rituals involving fairies that were used in dealings with other sorts of spirits, people, or even illnesses. For example, in Scot’s ritual, a ghost is called upon to summon a fairy and the two spirits appear sequentially. Nevertheless, it is far more common for a rite to affect multiple entities, such as Sloane MS 3851’s operation for protection from thieves, witches, spirits, and elves.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Rawlinson D252 provides a ritual that can be used to summon names associated with both demons and fairies, including “Bleth, Andromalcum, Egippiam, Oberionem, vel Sibillam” all under the title of “spirits.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> On category slippage between fairies and other categories of spirits in other contexts, see Julian Goodare, “Boundaries of the Fairy Realm in Scotland.”

<sup>30</sup> Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, 175–6.

<sup>31</sup> Sloane MS 3851, 133<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 144<sup>r</sup>.

Thus, we should avoid assuming that rituals involving fairies are “ventriloquizing the kind of magical discourse” found in other operations.<sup>33</sup> These procedures are one part of a broader ritual magic tradition that resided in the same sociocultural milieu, circulated among the same individuals, dealt with many of the same needs and desires, and that occasionally included rituals applicable to multiple categories of spirits. Nonetheless, differences often exist between “fairy magic” rites and those that appear alongside them, and these differences are worth examining.

### FAIRIES AND GENDER

In the vast majority of ritual magic operations, spirits are either portrayed as genderless, in line with the usage of thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, or with masculine pronouns and ranks.<sup>34</sup> Christian theologians and artists alike had long interpreted the biblical evidence of angels, including the gender of the Greek word *αγγελος* as assigning a male gender to angels—including the fallen ones.<sup>35</sup> It followed that any spirit appearing as female must be both demonic and illusory, an idea that is reflected in the traditions of early modern ritual magic. For example, V.b.26(1) provides a collection of lists of spirits, naming 138 distinct entities. With the exception of eight—those explicitly referred to as fairies—none of the remaining 130 is identified as female. Moreover, those appearing as female are deceptions: for example, the creature called Rewsyn, who “appeareth like a beautifull woman” is in fact “a duke”; similarly, the spirit Gemyem, who “appeareth like a fayere woman,” is rather “a stronge duke.”<sup>36</sup>

With respect to early modern fairy magic, however, almost every spirit with a specified gender is female. Indeed, femininity is a norm for such operations, a notion reflecting the prevalence of female fairies in legends and poetry, both in the learned and popular traditions. This might have

<sup>33</sup>Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars*, 109.

<sup>34</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia Dei*, q. 6, a. 8.7.

<sup>35</sup>Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 161–2; Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 26; David Albert Jones, *Angels: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 34.

<sup>36</sup>V.b.26(1), p. 77.

been due to a centuries-long shift during which Anglo-Saxon elves with masculine and androgynous characteristics were gradually perceived as female, a process that extended into the late medieval era.<sup>37</sup> Whatever the cause of this shift, spirit gender seems to indicate rituals dealing with fairies.

The most prominent of these female spirits is the aforementioned Sibilia, whose name appears in operations designed to enable petitioners either to view a spirit in the flame of a candle or to see the name of a thief inscribed upon a wax image. Her name also occurs in connection with spirit manifestations and/or sexual magic.<sup>38</sup> Another common type of operation calls upon three spirits, one of whom is sometimes identified as “the queen of the fairies.” Although she remains an unnamed monarch in a small number of manuscripts, she is typically given an appellation.<sup>39</sup> Shakespeare’s fairy queens—Titania and Mab—do not appear, but others with similar sounding names frequently do occur. The designation Sibilia (together with its variants) is prominent in these listings, at times accompanied by the equally female Milia and Achilia.<sup>40</sup> The names Micob, Mycob, Micol, or Michel also occur.<sup>41</sup> Generally these names are accompanied by two other figures: one is often called Chicam, Titan, Titam, or Tytar, while the other is referred to as Bursax, Burphax, or Burfex.<sup>42</sup> Despite the fact that some of these names seem masculine, these spirits are generally regarded as feminine, frequently being referred to as “sibyls” or “virgins.”

Another group of female spirits with a long pedigree is the seven sisters, whose names are Lilia, Restilia, Foca, Fola, Afryca, Julia, and Venulia, or variations thereon. These figures, or those with similar names, appear as “fevers” in charms as early as the eleventh century.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Hall, *Elves*, 157–66.

<sup>38</sup> e Mus. 173, 64<sup>v</sup>–5<sup>v</sup>; Rawlinson D252, 13<sup>r</sup>–4<sup>v</sup>; Sloane 1727, pp. 24–8; Sloane 3851, 104<sup>r</sup>–6<sup>v</sup>; V.b.26(1), pp. 138–40.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Scot, *Discoverie*, 406; GD188/25/1/3, p. 62.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Sloane 3850, 144<sup>r</sup>; GD188/25/1/3, pp. 169–70; Scot, *Discoverie*, 408–10.

<sup>41</sup> A.4.98, p. 78; V.b.26(1), p. 81; Sloane 1727, p. 28; Sloane 3850, 146<sub>r</sub>.

<sup>42</sup> Sloane 3850, 146<sup>r</sup>; e Mus. 263, p. 1; MS. V.b.26(1), p. 38; Sloane 3853, 36<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> Ernest Wickersheimer, *Les manuscrits latins de médecine du haut Moyen Age dans les bibliothèques de France* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1966), 32–3. See also BL Sloane 140, 44<sup>v</sup>–46<sup>r</sup>. Such charms were influential from Scandinavia to Italy as well. F. Ohrt, *Danmarks Trylleformler*, vol. 2 (Kbh.: Gyldendal, 1917), 2:31; Adolf Franz,

Within ritual magic texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, however, they are usually called upon to help the magician acquire treasure.<sup>44</sup>

Some of the lesser known female fairy figures include Oxford, Ashmole MS. 1406's "Margarett Barrance" and the queen "Delforia," who is included in some lists of the seven sisters but who may be an "empress" of the fairies in her own right.<sup>45</sup> Finally, the Guthrie manuscript describes a ritual in which four attendants of the fairy queen are called upon. They are named: Duris, Arkvus, Rames, and Dubarkus.<sup>46</sup>

Conversely, there are far fewer rituals for fairies identified explicitly as male. In one of the few surviving examples, found in GD188/25/1/3, there is a procedure designed to assist a magician who wants to call upon a fairy helper. To do so, he must sprinkle holy water at the doors of a church at midnight on Christmas Day. This will enable him to catch a male dwarf. However, the magus quickly inverts or disrupts the proceedings by immediately sending the dwarf to fetch a female "elphine," the true object of the summoning. Indeed, she will become the spell-caster's real servant in the future—not the male dwarf.<sup>47</sup> The other references to male fair folk are brief allusions to an (unnamed) king of the fairies or pygmies; typically these appear in operations that either summon fairies or attempt to heal injuries caused by them.<sup>48</sup>

The most prominent male spirit is Oberion, whose name is almost identical to Oberon, the king of the fairies in a number of popular sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts, including Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Not only is Oberion a male spirit, he also seems to bear a resemblance to the demonically inclined spirits invoked in other operations. So, for example, in V.b.26(1), Oberion appears at the end of a list of the "offices of spirits" that includes Lucifer and Satan, while Mycob and the seven sisters are placed on the next page in a

*Die Kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1960), 481–4.

<sup>44</sup>See, for example, e Mus. 173, 15<sup>v</sup>–9<sup>r</sup>; Sloane 1727, pp. 23–4; A.4.98, pp. 78–87; X.d.234.

<sup>45</sup>Oxford, Ashmole MS 1406, p. 14; Sloane 3851, 130<sup>r</sup>–131<sup>v</sup>; V.b.26, pp. 138–40.

<sup>46</sup>GD188/25/1/3, pp. 159–63.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 197–200.

<sup>48</sup>A.4.98, 87; V.b.26(2), 234; GD188/25/1/3, 4, 62.

separate list.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, conjurations of Oberion are similar to formulae designed to evoke other sorts of spirits, many of which employ elements of ritual magic that are more often associated with angelic or demonic operations than those associated with fairies. These can include lengthy incantations filled with holy names, lists of the heavenly and earthly servants of god, incidents from the life of Jesus, the use of a crystal to capture or hold spirits, explicit demands that a spirit appear in pleasing form, and so on.<sup>50</sup> In most of the rituals that survive, there is actually very little sense that Oberion is connected with fairy magic. Indeed, some manuscripts contain procedures in which Oberion's name appears once or twice, but is later replaced with the designation "N.", indicating that the same rite might be used with other spirits.<sup>51</sup> There are also texts in which Oberion clearly crosses the boundaries between spirit types.<sup>52</sup>

### THE DOMESTICITY OF THE FAIRIES

According to a manuscript in the National Records Office of Scotland's Guthrie family papers, to summon the queen of the fairies, one must gather four willow rods before the sun rises and place them in the corners of a clean bedchamber. One must then write the names of the queen's four companions on four pieces of paper, placing these upon the

<sup>49</sup>V.b.26(1), pp. 80, 73, 81.

<sup>50</sup>See, for example, e Mus. 173, 72<sup>r</sup>; Sloane 3826, 98<sup>r</sup>–99<sup>r</sup>; GD188/25/1/3, pp. 152–9; Folger V.b.26(1), pp. 185–200.

<sup>51</sup>V.b.26(1), p. 197.

<sup>52</sup>V.b.26, p. 80, for instance, defines him as the king of fairies; Sloane 3824, 98<sup>r</sup> lists him as one of the "Supreme head[s]" of fairies with Micob. Nonetheless, most manuscripts surveyed simply provide his name or designate him as a spirit. See, for instance, e Mus. 173, 72<sup>r</sup>; Rawlinson D252, 144<sup>v</sup>–145<sup>v</sup>; GD188/25/1/3, pp. 142–52; Wellcome 110, 97<sup>r</sup>. BL Sloane 3826, 98<sup>r</sup> refers to him as an "Angelum et Sp," or "angel and spirit," and other sources refer to his four subsidiary spirits as "angels." See V.b.26(1), p. 195, GD188/25/1/3, 157. In addition, the references to the "king of the fairies" in the other manuscripts appear with no name given. Cf. A.4.98, p. 87; GD188/25/1/3, p. 6 and 62; Scot, *Discoverie*, 406. Given the small number of manuscripts and their contradictory nature, the question of how many magicians considered Oberion to be a fairy remains open.

four posts of the bed. Finally, one must burn gum and mastic, and strew sweet-smelling flowers about the room.<sup>53</sup>

Operations that invoke fairies are more likely than those directed at other types of super- and preternatural beings to be situated explicitly within the magician's or another's house, and to involve household furniture, domestic tools, or other trappings of the home. The few times that descriptive statements about the nature of fairies appear in the manuscripts, their domesticity is an especially prominent motif. Sloane 3824, for example, notes that those to whom the fairies are attracted often include women "who are wholly inclined to housewifry, as maid-servants."<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the Guthrie manuscript attempts to dissuade readers from the belief that fairies "loveth to be in howses" and "to such persons give gifts of reward which in reverence of them brush swepe & garnish their Rounds."<sup>55</sup>

A number of fairy-related operations are devoid of domestic content, and instead tend to resemble rituals associated with other sorts of spirits. However, when domestic elements are present, they tend to appear in procedures dealing with fairies. Consider, for example, the operation that I have elsewhere called the "table ritual," or what Claude Lecouteux has termed "the meal of the fairies."<sup>56</sup> The best-known depiction of the operation appears in Turner's publication of pseudo-Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*.

Lastly, when you would invoke these kinde of Spirits, you ought to prepare a Table in the place of invocation, covered with clean linen; whereupon you shall set new bread, and running water or milk in new earthen vessels, and new knives. And you shall make a fire, whereupon a perfume shall be made. But let the Invocant go unto the head of the Table, and round about it let there be seats placed for the Spirits, as you please; and

<sup>53</sup>GD 188/25/1/3, pp. 159–61.

<sup>54</sup>Sloane 3824, 97v.

<sup>55</sup>GD188/25/1/3, p. 63.

<sup>56</sup>Claude Lecouteux, "Romanisch-Germanische Kulturberührungen am Beispiel das Mahls der Feen," *Mediaevistik* 1 (1988): 87–99; Claude Lecouteux, "Le Repas des Fées," *Bizarre* 1 (1995): 12–8; Dan Harms, "Spirits at the Table: Faerie Queens in the Grimoires," in *The Faerie Queens: In Magic, Myth and Legend*, ed. Sorita D'Este (London: Avalonia, 2013). It should be noted that Lecouteux defines his term to cover rites performed annually or at births, instead of the purposes described here; the later date of the magical manuscripts might indicate a shift in the purpose of such rites over time.

the Spirits being called, you shall invite them to drink and eat. But if perchance you shall fear any evil Spirit, then draw a Circle about it, and let that part of the Table at which the Invocant sits, be within the Circle, and the rest of the Table without the Circle.<sup>57</sup>

It should be noted that this is not a print-derived tradition; not only do historic and literary references to similar operations appear well before Agrippa or his imitator,<sup>58</sup> they appear in a dozen manuscripts.<sup>59</sup> Although its individual components may vary, the table ritual is always focused upon the tools, instruments, and resources of the household. For example, one such ritual in e Mus. 173 requests that the magician lays out “a newe towell or one cleane washt, & upon yt 3 fyne loves of newe manchett, 3 newe knyves with whyte hafstes, & a newe cuppe full of newe ale.”<sup>60</sup> Some rites even call for a bed to be made up and placed near the table, for purposes to be discussed below.

It should be noted that the manuscripts under discussion—handwritten works with long sections in Latin, describing ritual procedures often requiring considerable time and financial expenditure—would have been most useful to educated men of leisure. The table ritual involved domestic labor, i.e., preparing food, setting the table, making the bed, and other tasks that were usually relegated to the women or servants of the household. Requiring the magician, typically an educated man of status, to perform this kind of work represents an inversion of the social order, a transgression that might have signaled the power and efficacy of the operation. It might also have evoked parallels with a fairy realm in which such gender-based divisions of labor were often ignored.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, trans. Robert Turner (London, 1655), 69.

<sup>58</sup> Lecouteux, “Romanisch-Germanische Kulturberührungen.”

<sup>59</sup> They can be found in e Mus. 173, 72<sup>v</sup>; e Mus. 263, 25<sup>v</sup>–6<sup>v</sup>; Sloane 3824, 97<sup>v</sup>–100<sup>v</sup>; Sloane 3850, 145<sup>v</sup>–6<sup>v</sup>; Sloane 3851, 90<sup>r</sup>–<sup>v</sup> and 129<sup>r</sup>; Sloane 3853, 36<sup>r</sup>–8<sup>r</sup>; Sloane 3885, 50<sup>r</sup>–1<sup>r</sup>; A.4.98, pp. 78–87; V.b.26(1), pp. 38–9; X.d.234; GD188/25/1/3, pp. 163–5; Wellcome 110, 79<sup>v</sup>–80<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> e Mus. 173, 72<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> Buccola, *Fairies, Fractious Women, and the Old Faith Fairy Lore*, 41–2.

## MULTIPLE TYPES OF INTERCOURSE: SEX WITH FAIRIES

These rituals might also transgress another barrier: that which existed to proscribe sexual relations between humans and spirits. Despite such prohibitions, stories about human-fairy relations have often been associated strongly with sex and reproduction. Indeed, authors often used the word “incubus” to designate what a modern audience would call fairy or woodland spirits seeking copulation—this was largely before the term’s demonic connotations became more prominent in the late Middle Ages.<sup>62</sup> At least since the twelfth century, when Walter Map provided multiple examples of preternatural-human interactions in his *De nugis curialium*, the “fairy bride” motif has been a recurring narrative element in Western European folklore, most notably in the myth of Melusine. In these folktales, a human male figure comes upon a group of preternatural women in a remote place. He captures one of them, who subsequently agrees to go with him on the condition that a particular taboo is not breached. Their relationship is usually formalized through marriage, and their union continues for some time, often producing children. The marriage endures, however, only until the man breaks the agreed-upon taboo. At this point, the woman—and often the children—flee and disappear, rarely to return.<sup>63</sup>

Similar, if somewhat more abbreviated, preternatural sexual encounters play out repeatedly in the magical procedures involving fairies. This is a deviation from the standard model of ritual magic, which emphasized the protective measures with which the magician was required to gird himself. Demonic spirits were not seen as incapable of sex; in fact, Thomas Aquinas devoted considerable space to the methods of incubi and succubi, while the witchcraft trials of early modern Britain often included accounts of witches’ sordid relations with the devil.<sup>64</sup> Though both popular and learned authors warned of the dangers of sexual activity with spirits, most of ritual magic disregards the possibility. Instead,

<sup>62</sup>This idea appears to originate in Augustine of Hippo’s *De civitate Dei*, 15:23. See Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars*, 78–9.

<sup>63</sup>Walter Map, *De nugis curialium: Courtiers’ Trifles*, trans. and ed. M. R. James (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 148–59, 348–51; Juliette Wood, “The Fairy Bride Legend in Wales,” *Folklore* 103.1 (1992): 56–72.

<sup>64</sup>Julia M. Garrett, “Witchcraft and Sexual Knowledge in Early Modern England,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 13.1 (2013): 32–72 on 32.

ritual magic tended to encourage the magician to compel human partners to love or lust. Conspicuous exceptions to this tendency sometimes occur in fairy literature, particularly where a magician seeks to engage in congress with these beings.

One of the most common operations leading to fairy-human congress is the aforementioned table ritual. In many of the surviving accounts, the magician prepares a bed near the site of the ritual. After having obtained his immediate magical goal—often the acquisition of a ring of invisibility from the fairies—he may then initiate relations with one of the spirits. Given the fact that ritual magic almost invariably requires a period of sexual continence before the casting of spells, the magician is instructed to obtain the ring of invisibility from the fairies before he engages in any sort of carnal behavior with them.<sup>65</sup>

In his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Scot provides a rite to contact the fairy Sibylia. However, the conjuration occurs in a roundabout way, as the magician must first call up the spirit of a dead man. Once this initial conjuration has been conducted and the ghost has been promised alms to ease its suffering, the spirit is dispatched to retrieve Sibylia.<sup>66</sup> The magician attempts to call the fairy into a chalk circle, situated four feet from the one in which the magician stands. Curiously, the circle does not include the holy names so often present in other diagrams of the type. Sibylia is summoned with the names of planetary angels, the king and queen of fairies, and various holy figures and events, while the magician wears a parchment seal on his breast. The fairy can be conjured for a variety of reasons, typically, the acquisition of treasure or the giving of advice. However, she can also be called for the purpose of “common copulation.” How exactly this is to be accomplished when the two circles are four feet across is not explained, so it can be assumed that the barriers are crossed at some point.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup>V.b.26(1), pp. 38–9.

<sup>66</sup>Given the frequent connection of fairies with the dead in folklore and Scottish trial reports, it should be noted that operations contacting fairies with the dead may overlap little save for occasional instances of a deceased person being used as an intermediary. Aside from this operation described in Scot, the account of Mary Parrish and Goodwin Wharton, in which a dead man serves as a messenger to the Lowlanders, or fairies, is also of interest. See Clark, *Goodwin Wharton*, 27–37.

<sup>67</sup>Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 406.

There are also operations that are similar to the table ritual in their details, but which lack explicit sexual content. For example, the operation from the Guthrie family collection, in which the names of the fairy queen's servitors are attached to the bedposts described above, suggests the possibility of a sexual dimension, even though the ritual itself never mentions it. Similarly, Scot's "waie to go invisible by these three sisters of fairies" resembles the ritual in V.b.26 also noted above, although both the food and sexual elements are absent.<sup>68</sup> There are also other rites, not necessarily connected with fairies, which are similar to these. One such example, supposedly conducted in Cambridge in 1557, brings three ladies to the bedside of the magician to answer his questions in a manner similar to the bedroom operations of the Guthrie text.<sup>69</sup> The question may be asked whether the sexual aspects of these operations were added or removed later, or whether they simply coexisted with non-sexual variations of the same operations.

### DISCERNING SPIRITS: THE FAIRY EYE-OINTMENT

How might a magician perceive a spirit at all? Texts of ritual magic usually pursue procedures that combine the spiritual and the operative. In line with pre-Reformation theology, early modern magicians and sorcerers placed an emphasis not so much on piety, judgment, or other individual virtues and characteristics, as on the performance of particular acts, including purifications, bathing, almsgiving, the consecration of items, preparatory prayers, or even the ritual preparation of a child or a pregnant woman for divination. Some rituals for contacting fairies employ a more mundane procedure: the production of an ointment that allows the person who uses it to perceive preternatural beings. Such preparations are not abundant in the sources, but they turn up often enough to warrant comment.

The first known recorded instance of the Fairy Midwife tale, in which the ointment appears, occurs in Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperialia*,

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 408–10.

<sup>69</sup>Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ballard 66, 1–9. A similar continental example might be found in the operation "To send for three Ladies or three Gentlemen to your room after dining" in some Enlightenment period French grimoires. See Joseph H. Peterson, *Grimorium Verum* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2007), 44–5.

written in the early thirteenth century.<sup>70</sup> It has since become a staple folk tale in many different traditions from Scandinavia to Ireland.<sup>71</sup> In its most basic form, a woman is taken away from her home in order to care for a preternatural being's child. Throughout the period of her absence, she places a medicine in her eye that allows her to see such beings. Upon her return to the human realm, she accosts one such being whom she spies stealing from a merchant in the marketplace, and the fairy-thief blinds her for her betrayal. The tale was relatively well known in early modern Britain; it was even adopted as part of the narrative of Joan Tyrrye of Taunton, who discussed it during her trial as an occurrence that had happened to her after being given healing powers by the fairies.<sup>72</sup>

Some texts even stipulate that the creation and application of this eye ointment is a necessary condition for viewing the fairies in the first place. The methods can vary considerably. One procedure from V.b.26, for example, is quite bloody: in it, the magician is called to sacrifice seven different creatures, which might include an owlet, a lapwing, a hen, a cat, a mole, a bat, and a raven on seven consecutive days. The practitioner saves the fat from each of the animals, placing it in a vessel which he keeps in a “fairy throne.” The mixture eventually congeals into the ointment.<sup>73</sup> A comparatively inoffensive recipe for the ointment appears in the collection of Elias Ashmole; this calls for the magician to make a combination of rosewater, marigold water, hollyhock, thyme, and hazel.<sup>74</sup> A third procedure simply requires “a fayre & cleane bucket or payle” of clear water to be left by the fireside at night, with the “whyte ryme like rawe milk or grease” being skimmed off in the morning.<sup>75</sup> Each one of these substances, however, is to be placed in the eyes for the viewing of spirits.

<sup>70</sup> Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, trans. and ed. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 718–21.

<sup>71</sup> Críostóir Mac Cáirtháigh, “Midwife to the Fairies (ML 5070): The Irish Variants in Their Scottish and Scandinavian Perspective,” *Béaloideas* 59 (1991): 133–43.

<sup>72</sup> Holworthy, *Discoveries in the Diocesan Registry, Wells, Somerset*, 4–5.

<sup>73</sup> V.b.26(1), pp. 138–40.

<sup>74</sup> Ashmole 1406, p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> e Mus. 173, 72<sup>v</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

How did ritual magicians in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England differentiate fairies from other spirits? Even after the discussion above, most of the distinctions implied in the operations are indicative of difference rather than describing definitive categories of spirits. Fairy-related spells and conjurations tend to emphasize certain themes and motifs—such as the explicit femininity of spirits, the ritualized use of domestic settings or items, special ointments for the eyes, and sexual relations with spirits—than other types of operations found in the rest of the corpus of early modern magic. At least some of these elements appear to have been appropriated from pre-existing popular traditions and narratives regarding these beings, including those that portrayed them as “gatekeepers to an explicitly sexualized and industry-driven world.”<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, these operations appear alongside those designed to summon demons, angels, witches, ghosts, and other types of preternatural beings. Further, operations that refer to “fairies” or “elves” in one manuscript may show similarities with those concerning more generically labeled “spirits” in other print and manuscript traditions. This is especially the case in operations involving Oberion, whose categorization is varied and whose conjurations are more akin to those designed to summon demonic entities.

Given the acknowledgement in these texts of many different types of spirits, did magicians attempt to distinguish between fairies, demons, angels, and other spiritual entities, as John Dee and John of Morigny did? In the early modern magical miscellanies, the copyists make less effort to discern the true nature of the spirits summoned. Their chief goal seems to have been causing a spirit to manifest in a particular manner with escalating and repeated incantations, sometimes over the course of multiple hours or days. What is missing in most of these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century operations, however, is a process by which the magician determines whether the perceived spirit is the one desired.

When a magician seeks to discern the character of the spirits in these operations, he is focused more on surface characteristics of the spirits or the mechanical details of the operation than the wisdom or spirituality of the operators. For example, V.b.26 includes a ritual for calling up three spirits, one of whom may grant the ring of invisibility. To get the ring,

<sup>76</sup>Wall, *Staging Domesticity*, 103.

the practitioner must approach the smallest and most beautiful of the spirits who, despite her willingness to part with the magical item, will not speak to him or her.<sup>77</sup> In another “experiment for a Fayry,” the magician must ignore the first two manifested spirits, and instead deal with the third one.<sup>78</sup> It is notable, given the folkloric importance of the number three, that it is the third spirit—whether in order of appearance, or the one of three that does not approach the magician—who is the desirable one. The table ritual of Agrippa, in which the magician places a circle about his or her seat at the table, is a prime example of an operative method substituting for discernment. In either case, however, the spirit’s nature is not based upon a careful examination or questioning of the spirit, or any judgment by the magician, but instead by the time of its manifestation, its physical appearance, and the magician’s adherence to proper procedures.

Why did early modern practitioners of magic deemphasize the discernment of spirits, particularly with respect to fairies? First, there are examples of rites created to call up figures explicitly regarded as evil. For example, a magician calling upon Satan, through operations that survive in various manuscripts, would have no need to ensure that the spirit conjured was of a beneficent nature.<sup>79</sup> Second, the rites are operative in nature, with the magician seeking to achieve particular goals in their pursuit, ranging from treasure hunting to invisibility to simply making a spirit appear. In these circumstances, the magician might have perceived the achievement of a goal as more important than the force that effected it. Indeed, these approaches might not be exclusive.

The length of these operations might also be a factor that bears consideration. The conjuration of spirits is often associated with lengthy invocations of holy names, references to holy people, places, events, and objects, as well as with commands related to the spirits’ appearance and demeanor.<sup>80</sup> Such operations certainly do appear and have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, to the point that one scholar recently called upon future studies to concentrate mostly on “lengthy and

<sup>77</sup>“una pulcherrima, et minor aliis non tibi loquetur.” V.b.26(1), p. 39.

<sup>78</sup>Sloane 3846, p. 111.

<sup>79</sup>e.g. V.b.26(1), pp. 172–4.

<sup>80</sup>Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer’s Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 133–40.

complex ritual prescriptions—in contrast to short and simplified recipes.”<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, shorter conjurations with fewer ritual trappings are common, and many—though certainly not all—of the operations connected to fairies fall into this category.

This is notable for two reasons. First, it suggests that the magicians perceived fairies to be easier to summon, perhaps due to their nature as creatures associated with this world, rather than with heaven or hell. Second, the same magicians were not particularly concerned that a conjuration of a fairy would inadvertently produce an infernal spirit. In contrast to many divines and lay people of the period, the practitioners of ritual magic seem to have accepted that the spirits that appeared before them were precisely what they expected them to be, and that the magician need only have observed the purifications and made the proper conjurations in order to obtain success. This is certainly at striking variance with spirit encounters in many other areas of early modern British philosophy, and it bears further examination.

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<sup>81</sup> Bernd-Christian Otto, “Historicising ‘Western Learned Magic’: Preliminary Remarks,” *Aries* 16 (2016): 161–240 on 219.



## CHAPTER 4

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# Preternatural Peasants and the Discourse of Demons: Xenoglossy, Superstition, and Melancholy in Early Modern Spain

*Andrew Keitt*

In the fall of 1640, the Toledo tribunal of the Spanish Inquisition was in the process of summing up its case against Antonio de Bolívar, a spiritual director accused of conspiring with one of his penitents to feign divine raptures and revelations—and demonic possessions.<sup>1</sup> Pretending to be possessed might seem a strange way of establishing a reputation for sanctity, but such afflictions were often interpreted as trials and tribulations visited upon “those whom the Lord wished to purify.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, the inquisitors took a keen interest in these claims of diabolism because they involved a particularly perplexing sign of demonic possession: the spontaneous ability to speak Latin without having studied the language.

<sup>1</sup> Proceso de Antonio de Bolívar, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Inquisición, leg. 102, exp. 4.

<sup>2</sup> “[P]ersona a quien Nuestro Señor quería purificar.” *Ibid.*, 116<sup>r</sup>.

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In this case, the penitent, repeatedly referred to as a “rustic person,” was reported to have spoken, read, and written Latin without any prior knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

The inquisitors’ preoccupation with such feats is not surprising, given that the rustic who breaks into Latin was a familiar trope in the intellectual world of early modern Spain. The stock character was an uneducated peasant, typically described as a *rústico labrador*, or “rustic laborer,” and he had become a fixture in the learned discourse of the period as the prospect of the unlettered spontaneously speaking an unknown tongue raised a host of contentious issues in early modern European theology, natural philosophy, and medicine. Xenoglossy generated controversy because it fell within the realm of the preternatural, a category early modern Europeans reserved for phenomena that seemed to deviate from the established course of nature, without rising to the status of the supernatural.<sup>4</sup> In some cases such strange singularities were explained away as the effects of hidden natural causes, in others they were attributed to spirits or demons, but in all cases they demanded detailed natural philosophical analysis of the forces at work in order to ensure the proper classification of phenomena necessary for maintaining the early modern taxonomy of natural, preternatural, and supernatural causation.

The *rústico labrador* attracted especially intense interest in Spain because he stood at the intersection of two interrelated discourses: the critique of superstition and the analysis of melancholy. During the sixteenth century, Spaniards were both prolific and innovative in their treatment of these two topics, and the *rústico labrador* and his extraordinary linguistic feats became a popular object of analysis. Spanish presses produced not only a disproportionately large number of books on the reprobation of superstition and on the analysis of melancholy, but also the first vernacular treatises on both subjects, these being Martín de Castañega’s *Tratado de supersticiones y hechicerías* [*Treatise on Superstitions and*

<sup>3</sup>“Esta persona rustica.” *Ibid.*, 104<sup>v</sup>. “Que hablaba latin, leya, escribia, sin saber.” *Ibid.*, 105<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>The clearest and most thorough articulation of the concept came at the turn of the seventeenth century in the work of Martin Del Rio. See Martin Antoine Del Rio, *Investigations into Magic*, ed. and trans. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 57. For modern analyses of the preternatural, see Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); Ian Maclean, “The Natural and the Preternatural in Renaissance Medicine and Philosophy,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 31.2 (2000): 331–42.

*Witchcraft*] (1529), and Andrés Velásquez's *Libro de la Melancholía* [*Book of Melancholy*] (1585).<sup>5</sup>

The two discourses overlapped because they were both deeply invested in the classificatory schema outlined above. The critique of superstition, for example, involved sorting through a wide range of popular techniques—from divination to love magic, to crop blessings and spells to bring rain—and extraordinary phenomena, such as the “evil eye,” faith healing, and xenoglossy, in order to determine what causes, if any, they had in the natural order. Barring such natural causation, and given that they lacked the supernatural power possessed by the sacraments of the Church, such practices were deemed preternatural and most likely demonic by a process of elimination. The analysis of melancholy cut across the tripartite taxonomy of natural, preternatural, and supernatural in a similar fashion. It was accorded supernatural attributes in the Neoplatonic theories of Marsilio Ficino, investigated as an instrument of demonic possession in anti-superstition treatises and manuals for exorcists, and analyzed in purely naturalistic terms in the researches of natural

<sup>5</sup> Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, ed. Fabián Alejandro Campagne (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1997); Andrés Velásquez, *Libro de la Melancholía, en el qual se trata de la naturaleza desta enfermedad, assi llamada Melancholía, y de sus causas y simptomas. Y si el rustico puede hablar Latin ò philosophar, estando phrenetico ò maniaco, sin primero lo auer aprendido* (Viareggio and Lucca: M. Baroni, 2002). The indispensable work on superstition in Spain is Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo Catholicus. Homo Superstitiosus. El discurso anti-supersticioso en la España de los siglos XV a XVIII* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2002). Spain's contributions to the European discourse on melancholy have long been overlooked in classic works, such as Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (New York: Basic Books, 1964). Thankfully, there have been a number of excellent recent studies including David E. Linden, “The Natural and the Supernatural in Melancholic Genius. A Debate in Sixteenth Century Spanish Medicine and Its Antecedents,” *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 34.3–4 (1999): 227–43; Elena Carrera, “Madness and Melancholy in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spain: New Evidence, New Approaches,” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 87.8 (December 2010): 1–15; Elena Carrera, “Understanding Mental Disturbance in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Spain: Medical Approaches,” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 87.8 (December 2010): 105–36; Christine Orobio, “Melancolía e inspiración en la España del siglo de oro,” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 87.8 (December 2010): 17–31; Roger Bartra, *Melancholy and Culture: Essays on the Diseases of the Soul in Golden Age Spain*, trans. Christopher Follet (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008); Felice Gambin, *Azabache: el debate sobre la melancolía en la España de los siglos de oro* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2008).

philosophers and medical practitioners for its ability to generate extraordinary capabilities, such as the ability to speak a previously unknown tongue.

The Latin orations of the *rústico labrador*, then, were prime fodder for the conceptual ferment surrounding the preternatural. The issue for Spanish theorists was whether the melancholy humor could produce such extraordinary abilities. If so, what were the precise physiological mechanisms for such remarkable feats? And if not, were they in reality the machinations of the devil? This issue came to a head, as we shall see, in the debate between Juan Huarte de San Juan and Andrés Velásquez. Huarte's *Examen de ingenios* [*The Examination of Men's Wits*] (1575) sought to provide a naturalistic explanation for xenoglossy, a position that was contested by Velásquez in his *Libro de la melancolía* which argued that the phenomenon was demonic in origin. But this Iberian exchange was part of a long-running debate on melancholic genius which highlights the complex interrelationships between demonic agency and humoral physiology, and the difficulties inherent in drawing the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural.<sup>6</sup>

The notion that melancholia could confer the ability to speak a previously unknown tongue, and other extraordinary capacities, such as the ability to poetize or prophesy, dates back to classical antiquity. The seminal work in the discourse on melancholic genius was a pseudo-Aristotelian text, the *Problema XXX.1*, in which the author makes a connection between black bile and heightened aptitude for politics, philosophy, and poetry.<sup>7</sup> The theory was that the black bile dominating the melancholic temperament was particularly susceptible to variations in temperature, and consequently melancholics were often buffeted between frenzy and torpor. However, at certain key points on this spectrum at which the individual temperament and environmental factors converged, it was held that melancholics could be capable of extraordinary feats.<sup>8</sup> The quintessential example of this syndrome was the prophetic gifts of the Sybils. We find examples of this type of naturalistic account in the works of later philosophers and physicians in the ancient

<sup>6</sup>For this background I am relying on Linden, "The Natural and the Supernatural," 227–33.

<sup>7</sup>The text is often attributed to Theophrastus.

<sup>8</sup>Heidi Northwood, "The Melancholic Mean: The Aristotelian," *Problema XXX.1*. Available online at <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Anci/AnciNort.htm>.

world, such as Aretaeus of Cappadocia and Rufus of Ephesus, and as a general rule supernatural explanations of extraordinary mental states were rare among classical authors, with the exception of prophecy, which was often described as a divine gift.<sup>9</sup> During the Middle Ages, however, we do begin to see occasional references to demons as the cause of heightened cognitive abilities. In Islamic Spain, physicians Abulcasis and Avicenna both outlined demonological accounts of melancholic genius in which demons, either operating directly or as proximate causes, were credited with producing such effects.

The pendulum swung back in the opposite direction in the fifteenth century with a particularly influential analysis offered by Antonio Guainerio, a professor at the University of Padua. Guainerio's explanation for melancholic genius represented a departure from the competing humoral and demonological accounts. Guainerio relied instead on the Platonic doctrine espoused in the *Timaeus*, whereby all intellectual souls are created with equal perfection, each possessed of all the knowledge it will ever have. The varying aptitudes displayed by actual, embodied souls were, according to Guainerio, determined by the vagaries and imperfections of the specific bodies they inhabited. Having forgotten their previous knowledge upon embodiment, intellectual souls were destined to undergo a process of remembering in which they sought to recover this lost understanding. This process, however, was hindered by the corporeal sense faculties. In a counter-intuitive move, Guainerio held that by impeding sense perception, the melancholic humor could actually facilitate the intellectual soul's escape from its corporeal fetters and allow it to regain aspects of its original knowledge. It was through this process that melancholics sometimes displayed intellectual capacities, such as prophecy and xenoglossy, which they had not gained through experience.<sup>10</sup>

The Renaissance witnessed a renewed interest in the problem of melancholic genius, most famously in Marsilio Ficino's Neoplatonic revalorization of poetic melancholy, but it was in Spain that the question of melancholic genius received its most thorough airing, with the phenomenon of the *rústico labrador* becoming a favored case study. Several factors converged during this period to create a unique milieu conducive to such investigations. The numerous anti-superstition tracts being published in

<sup>9</sup>Linden, "The Natural and the Supernatural," 228–30.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 231–2. On Guainerio, see also Bartra, *Melancholy and Culture*, 115–6.

Spain provided a logical forum for discussing melancholic genius, since many purportedly superstitious practices involved attempts to foretell the future, and speaking a previously unknown tongue was taken to be a potential sign of demonic possession. Likewise, a sixteenth-century medical renaissance in Spain spawned a flood of treatises in which the subject of melancholy was treated extensively, as Spanish physicians debated the possible naturalistic or demonic explanations of various preternatural phenomena.<sup>11</sup>

Spanish anti-superstition writers, by and large, came down on the demonic side of the debate. Pedro Ciruelo, for example, in his influential anti-superstition manual, *Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías* [*A Treatise Reproving All Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft*] (1530), took up the question of the rustic laborer and the ability to speak Latin or foretell the future, denouncing this possibility as indubitably demonic and an example of his “first rule” of good theology and philosophy that “all works of superstition come from evil spirits.”<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, Juan Horozco y Covarrubias in his *Tratado de verdadera y falsa profecía* [*Treatise on True and False Prophecy*] (1588) remarked upon the relationship of melancholy to xenoglossy, writing that “According to Aristotle, all studious men, and those he calls ‘heroes,’ are melancholics, and according to medical writers, melancholy often makes idiots into learned men, as with those many who have spoken Latin, composed verses, and foretold the future.”<sup>13</sup> Horozco then went on to dispute

<sup>11</sup>On this development, see Angus Gowland, “The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy,” *Past and Present* 191.1 (May, 2006): 77–120 on 83; Andrew Keitt, “The Devil in the Old World: Anti-Superstition Literature, Medical Humanism, and Preternatural Philosophy in Early Modern Spain,” in *Angels, Demons, and the New World*, ed. Fernando Cervantes and Andrew Redden, 15–39 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>12</sup>“Y ansi paresce la verdad de la primera regla o principio desta obrezilla declarada y prouada por la buena theologia y philosophia. Y porque entendemos abaxo prouar que todas las supersticiones vienen de los malos espiritus.” Pedro Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (Valencia: Ediciones Albatros Hispanófila, 1978), 36. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted. I have retained the orthography and punctuation of the original sources in my transcriptions wherever possible, making minor alterations when necessary in the interest of clarity.

<sup>13</sup>“De manera que segun el problema de Aristoteles, todos los estudosos, y los que llama Heroes son melancolicos. Y puede tanto por si esta melancolia, que segun autores medicos suele hacer letRADos los ydiotas; como se cuenta de muchos que han hablado Latin, y han hecho versos, y otros que han adivinado.” Juan Horozco y Covarrubias, *Tratado de la verdadera y falsa profecía* (Segovia: Juan de la Cuesta, 1588), 82<sup>r</sup>.

the possibility of a purely natural explanation for xenoglossy, bypassing contemporary physicians and harking back to the authority of medical authorities such as Avicenna, insisting that “those reports of melancholics speaking languages they have not studied is without doubt the work of the devil who is speaking through them. This is the understanding of the most illustrious masters of medicine, following Avicenna who affirms this clearly.”<sup>14</sup>

Horozco’s position echoed that of Antonio de Torquemada, who in his anti-superstition treatise, *Jardin de flores curiosas* [*Garden of Curious Flowers*] (1575), had decried the tendencies of contemporary physicians to side with pagan philosophers in positing a humoral explanation for the heightened abilities of the *rústico labrador*:

And when these [pagan] philosophers were asked what beset those who were possessed by the devil, they said that it was a passion that proceeded from the melancholic humor, and that melancholy could produce these effects; and these days most physicians sustain and defend this same proposition, that when the devil speaks diverse tongues and puts delicate and elevated words in the mouth of a rustic laborer, that all of this is the product of the melancholic humor; but this is a manifest error.<sup>15</sup>

As these complaints suggest, many sixteenth-century Spanish physicians did indeed take a more naturalistic approach to the question of melancholic genius. One account that had particular influence in Spain was propounded by Levinus Lemnius, a Catholic physician and monk from the Spanish Netherlands who took as his point of departure Guainerio’s emphasis on the Neoplatonic notion of *reminisci*, holding that the melancholic humor could stimulate heightened capabilities without demonic

<sup>14</sup>“[A]vemos de decir de los melancólicos a quien sucede hablar las lenguas que no aprendieron, que sin duda es obra del demonio que habla por ellos; y assi lo entienden los mas acertados maestros de la medicina, siguiendo a Avicena que lo afirma llanamente.” *Ibid.*, 82v.

<sup>15</sup>“Y cuando estos filósofos eran preguntados qué mal era el de los que estaban endemoniados, decían que era una pasión que prodecía del humor melancólico, y que la melancolía puede hacer aquellos efectos; y así, aún ahora los más de los médicos quieren defenderlo, y de manera que confiesan y sustentan, cuando el demonio habla diversas lenguas, y en ellas cosas delicadas y subidas por la boca de un rústico labrador, que todo procede del humor melancólico; pero este es un yerro muy manifiesto.” Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardín de Flores Curiosas* (San Sebastián: Biblio Manías, 2000), 133.

intervention. In his *De miraculis occultis naturae* [*On the Hidden Miracles of Nature*] (1559), Lemnius argued that perturbation of the humors could activate innate knowledge in such a way as to unlock hidden linguistic capabilities:

Therefore very often it may be by the bubbling of the humors, or by a vehement agitation of the spirits that certain inaudible voices and previously unknown languages are produced. Just as we see that sparks are produced by striking flint, it is innate in the human mind that it would be suitable and fitted for the purpose of perceiving the knowledge of things.<sup>16</sup>

In the same chapter, Lemnius goes on to use several metaphors illustrating the way in which a melancholic disorder could engender heightened capabilities even while damaging the sensory faculties. He likens the process to a herb being crushed in order to liberate its essential fragrance and to a dormant fire covered in ashes that must be violently raked and turned over in order to free the heat and light within. Thus, the oppressive weight of the melancholy humor is able, paradoxically, to free the mind to remember its former nature.<sup>17</sup>

Naturalistic analyses such as Lemnius's found a receptive audience among physicians on the Iberian peninsula, as Spanish medicine was undergoing a period of exceptional innovation driven by a cohort of sixteenth-century Spanish physicians and natural philosophers who pioneered a medical renaissance characterized by the rediscovery of classical medical knowledge and an increasingly empirical approach. The study of Greco-Roman medicine—transmitted and elaborated upon by Jewish and Muslim scholars in medieval Spain—was particularly vibrant at the University of Alcalá, where both Juan Huarte and Andrés Velásquez received their medical training, but many other universities throughout Spain were similarly dedicated to recovering the medical wisdom of the ancients; the University of Valencia, for example, boasted eight

<sup>16</sup>“Frequentissima sit humorum ebullitio, vehemens quoque sit spirituum agitatio, quae voces quasdam inauditas, linguamque, prius incognita extundit, non fecusque ex centritu ac collisione silicis, emicantes ignitasque scintillas elici videmus. Est autem hoc menti humanae insitum, ut apposita aptaque; sit ad percipiendam rerum cognitionem, psaque; imbuta est arribus ante illarum vsum.” Levinus Lemnius, *De miraculis occultis naturae libri IIII* (Frankfurt, 1559), 141.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

chairs solely for the study of Galen and Hippocrates.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this medical humanism with its focus on the past and deference to classical tradition, Spanish medicine proved remarkably forward looking and innovative, especially in the field of anatomy. In the late fifteenth century, Spanish doctors received royal authorization to dissect corpses, and the presence of Vesalius at the court of Charles V further inspired the detailed, empirical study of the human body.<sup>19</sup> Out of these concerns emerged an intellectual culture with a decidedly naturalistic bent that combined an eclectic appropriation of traditional medical knowledge with an inductive, experimental clinical practice.

Given this context, it is not surprising that naturalistic, humoral explanations of extraordinary psychological states should become a topic of great interest, and indeed we see a variety of Spanish writers advancing such claims during this period. Francisco López de Villalobos, for example, court physician to King Ferdinand the Catholic, Charles V, and Philip II, asserted in his *Summario de medicina* [*Summary of Medicine*] (1498) that mania resulting from an excess of melancholy could account for the ability to prophesy.<sup>20</sup> This form of melancholy, however, was not the natural state of the humor, according to Villalobos. It was instead a different kind of melancholy, made of “adust choler.”<sup>21</sup> This distinction was a crucial one because the term “melancholy” could refer to the normal bodily humor, black bile, or alternatively to the burnt, noxious bile known as adust choler, or *atra bilis*. For Villalobos and many other theorists, it was this adust choler, or “adust melancholy,” as it was sometimes called, that could give rise to the sorts of extraordinary capabilities demonstrated by the *rústico labrador*.

Another author who countenanced the possibility of a natural explanation for xenoglossy was Alonso de Santa Cruz, who in his dialogue

<sup>18</sup> Carlos G. Noreña, *Studies in Spanish Renaissance Thought* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), 213.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> See Orobitg, “Melancolía e Inspiración,” 19. On Villalobos see Bartra, *Melancholy and Culture*, 130, n. 51; Jon Arrizabalaga, “Francisco López de Villalobos (c.1473–1549), médico cortesano,” *Dynamis* 22 (2002): 29–58.

<sup>21</sup> Francisco López de Villalobos, *Sumario de la medicina en romance trovado, en algunas obras del doctor Francisco López de Villalobos* (Madrid, 1886), 321. Here the term “choler,” derived from the Greek, is rather confusingly used as a synonym generally for *bilis* or humor, rather than denoting the choleric humor itself.

*Dignotio et cura affectuum melancholicorum* [*Diagnosis and Cure for the Effects of Melancholy*] (c.1569) had his chief interlocutor cite approvingly the opinions of Galen and Aristotle regarding the ability of melancholics to speak an unknown tongue and foretell the future.<sup>22</sup>

The interest in melancholic genius in sixteenth-century Spain extended even to political thought, as a burgeoning genre of “medical politics” sought to extend the humoral analysis from the human body to the body politic. One such medico-political work was Bartolomeu Felippe’s *Tractado del consejo y de los consejeros de los principes* [*Treatise on the Counsel and Counselors of Princes*] (1584), wherein he held that melancholics could foretell the future through purely natural means. Felippe disputed the negative valoration of the melancholy humor put forth by fellow political theorist Fadrique Furió Ceriol, who after identifying the choleric and sanguine temperaments as those most suited for a prince, characterized melancholics as “vain, enemies of illustrious thoughts, malicious and superstitious.”<sup>23</sup> Felippe, after conceding that the melancholic temperament is less desirable than the choleric or sanguine, presented a defense of melancholy, pointing out that many authors have called it the “heroic temperament,” and insisting, citing Aristotle, that “many excellent men” have been melancholics. Felippe went on to argue that melancholics have a penchant for truth telling and that they often have the gift of prophecy and “many times they say what will come to pass.”<sup>24</sup>

By the second half of the sixteenth century, the naturalizing tendency we have been examining had given rise to a number of works by physicians and natural philosophers that contained not just isolated analyses of melancholic genius, but rather exhibited a thoroughgoing somatic determinism which sought to explain man’s psychic and emotional states

<sup>22</sup>Alonso de Santa Cruz, *Dignotio et cura affectuum melancholicorum* (Madrid, 1622). The work was written some time around 1569 and published posthumously by Santa Cruz’s son. The Latin text has recently been translated into Spanish. See Alphonsus de Sancta Cruce, *Sobre la melancolía: diagnóstico y curación de los afectos melancólicos* (c.1569), ed. Juan A. Paniagua, trans. Raúl Lavalle (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2005).

<sup>23</sup>“Vanos y enemigos de los ilustres pensamientos, son maliciosos y supersticiosos....” Bartolomeu Felippe, *Tractado del consejo y de los consejeros de los principes* (Coimbra, 1584), fols. 42<sup>r-v</sup> recte 41<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>24</sup>“Los authores comunmente la llaman complexion heroica.... [L]a melancolia obliga a los melancholicos hablar verdad y muchas vezes adeuinan y dizen lo que ha de suceder; muchos excellentes varones fueron como dice Aristoteles melancholicos.” Ibid., 41<sup>v</sup>–42<sup>r</sup>.

as the result of purely natural causation. Notable among such works were Oliva Sabuco de Nantes's *Nueva filosofía de la naturaleza del hombre* [New Philosophy of Human Nature] (1587), and Gómez Pereira's *Antoniana Margarita* (1554),<sup>25</sup> and most importantly for our purposes, Juan Huarte de San Juan's *Examen de ingenios*, which included an influential excursus on the phenomenon of the *rústico labrador*.

In the *Examen*, Huarte sought to account for the differences in aptitudes between humans for learning various arts and sciences in purely naturalistic terms. These aptitudes, or “*ingenios*,” were determined by one's physiological makeup according to Huarte, and in the neo-Galenic paradigm in which he operated, that meant the precise balance of humors in a given body, these humors being blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. This unique balance, usually referred to as “temperament,” or “complexion,” gave rise to specific character traits: a surfeit of blood produced the sanguine character, whose disposition tended toward cheerfulness; an overabundance of phlegm gave rise to the calm, placid tendencies of the phlegmatic; an excess of yellow bile made the choleric energetic and quick to anger; and too much black bile fostered anxiety and depression in the melancholic. Within this paradigm, each of the humors in the human body corresponded to one of the four elements in nature: blood to air, phlegm to water, yellow bile to fire, and black bile to earth. And these in turn corresponded to the natural qualities, dry, wet, hot, and cold, so that the sanguine temperament was considered hot and moist, the phlegmatic cold and moist, the choleric hot and dry, and the melancholic cold and dry. To develop the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm further still, each humor was associated with a heavenly body and corresponding sign of the zodiac: blood with the planet Jupiter and the sign Libra, phlegm with the moon and the sign Virgo, yellow bile with the planet Mars and the sign Leo, and black bile with the planet Saturn and the sign Scorpio.<sup>26</sup> For the physician, health consisted in maintaining a balance among these humors in the microcosm of the individual human body according to its given temperament, and consequently a great deal of medieval and early modern medicine involved attempts to restore the proper balance of humors through the

<sup>25</sup> Pereira's title was a tribute to his parents, Antonio and Margarita.

<sup>26</sup> Hence the title of Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl's book, *Saturn and Melancholy*. See above, note 5.

use of medications with qualities that countered the ones present in excess in the patient.<sup>27</sup>

Huarte used this notion of temperament to launch an investigation into the genesis of psychological traits and cognitive abilities. He sought to provide an account of how specific humoral temperaments could give rise to particular aptitudes and in so doing inaugurated the discipline of differential psychology. The *Examen* achieved a good deal of success in the years immediately following its publication; it was brought out in various Spanish editions and quickly translated into French and Italian. Ultimately the book would be translated into English, German, Latin, and Dutch and read throughout Europe. Hand in hand with this success came controversy, however, given Huarte's skepticism towards what he perceived as the miracle mongering of the common folk and his extreme naturalism, which was seen by some as casting doubt on the immortality of the soul. The Inquisition reviewed the *Examen* and a series of changes were mandated. These changes were implemented and an expurgated version published in 1594, shortly after Huarte's death.<sup>28</sup>

In chapter four of the *Examen*, Huarte took up what would prove to be one of the most controversial topics in a controversial book: whether the melancholic temperament could give rise to extraordinary intellectual abilities.<sup>29</sup> Huarte defended the notion that such extraordinary abilities could indeed be the result of a surfeit of the melancholic humor and thus the product of purely natural causation. Huarte asserted that when the brain's temperature changed suddenly as a result of some melancholic

<sup>27</sup>A good introduction to the theory of temperament can be found in Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), 101–6. A useful discussion can also be found in Angus Gowland, *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 43–9. See also Campagne's edition of Castañega's *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 102–5, note 6.

<sup>28</sup>For a general treatment of Huarte, See Malcolm Read, *Juan Huarte de San Juan* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981). On Huarte's naturalism and the immortality of the soul, see Ismael del Olmo, "La posesión diabólica en el Examen de ingenios para las ciencias (1575) de Juan Huarte de San Juan: Una paradoja," *Tiempos Modernos* 8.33 (December 31, 2016): 70–101. Del Olmo argues convincingly that Huarte, far from undermining Catholic doctrine, presented an innovative approach to reconciling Galenic naturalism and the immortality of the soul, albeit an approach that ultimately failed to convince his critics.

<sup>29</sup>Chapter VII of the 1594 edition. In what follows I will refer to the chapter numbers of the first edition.

disorder, it could lead to a dramatic transformation whereby even a fool might philosophize, versify, foretell the future, or speak Latin without having studied the language.<sup>30</sup> By way of example, Huarte recited a series of anecdotes, purportedly drawn from his personal experience, ranging from one in which a previously inarticulate man began to compose poetry in a fit of melancholy to another in which, famously, a rustic laborer acquired the ability to speak Latin with an eloquence rivaling that of Cicero addressing the Roman Senate.<sup>31</sup>

Huarte's analysis of melancholic genius bears a resemblance to those of Guainerio and Lemnius, although he does not mention either of them in his text. Like Guainerio and Lemnius, Huarte credited melancholy with the effect of liberating the rational soul to regain its original knowledge and capabilities.<sup>32</sup> According to Huarte, the abilities of melancholics to speak Latin without having studied it, or to foretell the future, were the result of adust melancholy, which was capable of creating a frenzied, hyper-excited state, very different from the typical symptoms of melancholic disorders. The capacity of the rustic laborer to speak fluent Latin was, in Huarte's interpretation, a combination of this state of melancholic frenzy and Latin's status as a supremely "rational" language which had a special consonance with the rational soul such that if the rational soul were to attain the proper temperament it would naturally hold forth in Latin.<sup>33</sup>

This analysis depended on a particular theory of language in which words have a natural relationship to the things they represent.<sup>34</sup> Here he invoked the scriptural example of Adam giving names to the creatures of the earth,<sup>35</sup> and then went on to insist that if God presented the same things to a different man possessed of the same perfection

<sup>30</sup>Juan Huarte, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Guillermo Serés (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989), 311.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 305–6. For Huarte's naturalistic account did not rule out the possibility of demonically inspired xenoglossy. See 315.

<sup>32</sup>Huarte differed, however, from Guainerio about how, exactly, this original knowledge was recaptured. See Linden, "The Natural and the Supernatural," 236.

<sup>33</sup>Huarte, *Examen de ingenios*, 314. That Latin was a supremely "rational language" was a favorite theme of Renaissance humanists. See *ibid.*, n. 56.

<sup>34</sup>Huarte cites Plato's doctrine that words are "instruments for teaching and discerning the essence of things" (*instrumentum docendi discernendique rerum substantia*). See Huarte, *Examen de ingenios*, 186.

<sup>35</sup>Genesis 2.20.

and supernatural grace, that man would necessarily give them the same names as Adam did because both would have discerned the “nature of each thing.”<sup>36</sup> Because words bore the signs of their original inception, a rational soul sufficiently liberated from its carnal fetters could read these signs and discern their meaning. Thus, according to Huarte, if a man in a state of melancholic frenzy were to attain momentarily the same temperament as the inventor of the Latin language, he might simulate the same speech.

Huarte was not entirely consistent in his linguistic theorizing; elsewhere in the *Examen* he seemed to advocate an Aristotelian, conventionalist account of the development of language in which words functioned as arbitrary signifiers.<sup>37</sup> But when it came to the issue of xenoglossy, Huarte adopted the Platonic notion that words reflect the essences of things. In chapter eight of the *Examen*, for example, Huarte elaborated further on these issues, comparing the linguistic originalism of Plato with the conventionalism of Aristotle, ultimately asserting that “the opinion of Plato is closer to the truth.”<sup>38</sup>

Huarte’s treatment of the extraordinary feats of the *rústico labrador* elicited numerous critiques, including Andrés Velásquez’s *Libro de la melancolía*, which was, as mentioned above, the first vernacular treatise on melancholy published in Europe.<sup>39</sup> Velásquez’s book, subtitled “whether a rustic in a state of frenzy or mania can speak Latin and philosophize without having previously studied,” vociferously denied the possibility of a natural explanation for xenoglossy. Velásquez was physician to the Andalucian town of Arcos de la Frontera and to the Duke of Arcos himself, and was educated in the same intellectual milieu as Huarte, having studied at Alcalá de Henares during the same years.<sup>40</sup> Velásquez considered his book not only a defense of Galenic orthodoxy

<sup>36</sup>Huarte, *Examen de ingenios*, 315.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 399.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 419.

<sup>39</sup>For additional information on Velásquez and his work, see Antonio Contreras Mas, “*Libro de la Melancolía* by Andrés Velásquez (1585). Part 1. The Intellectual Origins of the Book,” ed. M. Dominic Beer, trans. Amparo Lafuente Balle, *History of Psychiatry* 14.1 (2003): 25–40; Contreras Mas, “*Libro de la Melancolía* by Andrés Velásquez (1585). Part 2. Its Context and Importance,” ed. M. Dominic Beer, trans. Amparo Lafuente Balle, *History of Psychiatry* 14.2 (2003): 179–93.

<sup>40</sup>Bartra, *Melancholy and Culture*, 68.

in the face of Huarte's deviations, but also, specifically, as an intervention in the debate over how to distinguish between demonic and natural causation in regard to extraordinary phenomena, a debate that was ever more pressing given the needs of exorcists to make such distinctions in their battle against what was perceived by some to be a rising tide of diabolism in post-Tridentine Spain.<sup>41</sup>

Velásquez took issue with Huarte's assertion that adust melancholy could be the source of extraordinary intellectual abilities. Whereas Huarte suggested—in similar fashion to Neoplatonists like Ficino—that the rational soul was capable of functioning independently of the body, of ascending like other disembodied spirits to ascertain certain “secrets of heaven,”<sup>42</sup> Velásquez hewed to the hylomorphism of traditional scholasticism, insisting to the contrary that the rational soul is incapable of functioning in the absence of its physical “instruments,” and that as a result if these instruments were damaged by an excess of melancholy, the activity of the rational soul would likewise be curtailed. In Velásquez’s view, no substance that damages the sense faculties could give rise to an increased capability:

And so heightened abilities necessarily come from a good and perfect temperament; from a corrupt and damaged one we can expect only corrupt and damaged works. For this reason I consider it impossible within sound philosophy (although doctor Sant Juan uses up a great deal of paper in his *Examen de ingenio* (sic) providing examples to prove his case) for a melancholic to speak Latin without prior knowledge, or philosophize without having studied.<sup>43</sup>

In the absence of any credible natural cause, Velásquez determined that preternatural phenomena such as xenoglossy or prophecy must be attributed to the machinations of demons, as the final sentence of his book emphatically declares: “My ultimate conclusion, in keeping with the

<sup>41</sup> Andrés Velásquez, *Libro de la melancolía*, 58.

<sup>42</sup> Huarte, *Examen de ingenios*, 319.

<sup>43</sup> “Y pues las buenas habilidades vienen de necesidad del perfecto y buen temperamento, del corrompido y dañado no se esperan sino obras corrompidas y dañadas. Y assí tengo por imposible en buena philosophía (aunque gaste más papel en su Examen de ingenio el doctor Sant Juan en traer ejemplos para probar su opinión) que pueda ningún melancólico hablar latín sin lo saber, ni philosophar sin lo haber aprendido.” Velásquez, *Libro de la Melancolía*, 127–8.

opinions of the most erudite and worthy men, is that the aforementioned marvelous effects are not caused by the humors, or the influence of the stars, but rather by the work of demons.”<sup>44</sup>

Another significant critique of the naturalistic account of xenoglossy was that of Pedro García Carrero, who dedicated a section of his *Disputationes medicae super libros Galeni de locis affectis* [Medical Disputations on Galen’s “On the Parts Affected by Disease”] (1605) to the relationship between demons and melancholy, and took aim specifically at the theories of Huarte and Lemnius.<sup>45</sup> Carrero took issue with the idea of innate knowledge that could be rediscovered by the rational soul. Instead, Carrero insisted that the mind is initially a *tabula rasa* upon which no knowledge other than that which is received through the senses can be inscribed.<sup>46</sup> Thus, in Carrero’s estimation, it would be impossible for the *rústico labrador* to regain prior knowledge of an unknown tongue through some form of Platonic *reminisci*, and absent this possibility, xenoglossy must be the product of a superior power, “either God, or good or bad angels.”<sup>47</sup> Carrero then advanced his critique a step further, disputing Huarte’s assertions concerning the nature of language by denying that words possess any intrinsic relationship to the things they signify and instead arguing that the meanings of words are conventions instituted by men.<sup>48</sup>

The positions taken by Velásquez and García Carrero were part of what appears to have been something of a backlash against naturalistic accounts of melancholic genius and a renewed insistence on the powers of the devil.<sup>49</sup> Medical treatises by Francisco Vallés, Alonso Freylas, and Tomás Murillo y Velarde, for example, all took similarly critical stances toward claims of melancholic genius, and this emerging medical

<sup>44</sup> “Y assí digo últimamente y concluyo de parecer de los más doctos varones que estos maravillosos efectos dichos *non vi humoris, non siderum influxu sed Demonis agitatione contigunt.*” *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>45</sup> Pedro García Carrero, *Disputationes medicae super libros Galeni de locis affectis* (Alcalá de Henares: Sánchez Crespo, 1605), disputatio XIII: De melancholia morbo.

<sup>46</sup> Carrero, 256. “intellectum hominis in principio esse tanquam tabulam rasam in qua nihil est depictum.”

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* “voces significant ad placitum, & ex hominum institutione.”

<sup>49</sup> Orobigit, “Melancolía e inspiración,” 25.

consensus spilled over into works by non-physicians.<sup>50</sup> Raphael de la Torre, for example, in his demonological tract, *De religione et eius actibus* [Of Religion and Its Acts] (1611), included a detailed refutation of Lemnius's assertions concerning the ability of untutored melancholics to speak foreign tongues:

This disproves the delirious words of Levinus Lemnius, who in book 2 chapter 2 of *Occultis naturae* teaches that melancholics and frenetics, from the boiling of the humors and the vehement agitation of the spirits, are able to speak various languages, however little they knew of them previously. Impossible and incredible dogma!<sup>51</sup>

This process of re-demonization was bolstered by the inclusion of xenoglossy as a key indicator of demonic possession in numerous manuals for exorcists, further reinforced by the Inquisition's increasing reliance on xenoglossy as evidence of diabolism, and epitomized in the *Rituale Romanum*, issued in 1614 by Pope Paul V, in which speaking a previously unknown language was officially codified as one of the chief signs of demonic possession.<sup>52</sup>

The debate over xenoglossy and the *rústico labrador* in early modern Spain is of intrinsic interest as an episode in the history of medicine and as an addition to the literature on melancholy in European history—but what broader conclusions might be drawn? First and foremost, we should resist the temptation to posit any neat teleologies that characterize the naturalism of thinkers like Huarte as a harbinger of modernity and the demonological explanations of thinkers like Velásquez and

<sup>50</sup>Francisco Vallés de Covarrubias, *De sacra philosophia* (n.p., 1587); Alonso de Freylas, *El arte de descontagiari las ropas de seda, telas de oro; con un discurso al fin si los melancólicos pueden saber lo que está por venir* (Jaén, 1606); Tomás Murillo y Velarde, *Aprobación de ingenios y curación de hipochondricos, con obseruaciones y remedios muy particulares* (Zaragoza, 1672).

<sup>51</sup>“Ex dictis confutatur delirium Leuini Lemnij, qui lib. 2 capi. 2 de occultis naturae docet, melancholicos, & phreneticos, ex frequentissima humorum ebullitione, & vehementi spirituum agitatione, posse variis linguis loqui, quamvis antea nullam earum nouerint. Impossible, & incredible dogma.” Raphael de la Torre, *De religione, et eius actibus*, 2 vols. (Salamanca, 1611), 1: 835.

<sup>52</sup>Orobitg, “Melancolía e Inspiración,” 26. On the 1614 criteria for exorcists, see Jeffrey S. Grob, “A Major Revision of the Discipline on Exorcism: A Comparative Study of the Liturgical Laws in the 1614 and 1998 Rites of Exorcism.” (PhD diss.: University of Ottawa, 2007).

García Carerro as vestiges of medieval obscurantism. Huarte, for all his emphasis on natural causation, did not deny the possibility of demonically inspired xenoglossy.<sup>53</sup> And Velásquez and García Carerro, in turn, were no less committed to natural therapies in treating melancholic illnesses, regardless of whether they were caused or exploited by demons. In the case of García Carrero, because he held that the devil operated via proximate causes found in nature, it was no contradiction to suppose that medical means could be effective against diseases brought about by demonic manipulation, even if in the overarching causal schema material causes could never take precedence over spiritual ones.<sup>54</sup> In the case of Velásquez, he recognized demonic intervention only in the facilitation of the extraordinary intellectual feats of melancholics, not in the generation of the disease, which meant that the physician could rely on natural therapies while deferring to priests and exorcists when it came to the spiritual dimension.<sup>55</sup> Thus, we are not faced with a zero-sum game in which melancholy serves as a naturalistic explanation that necessarily supplants a spiritual, demonological one.<sup>56</sup>

Another reminder of the problems inherent in sorting early modern thinkers into “progressive” and “retrograde” camps is the debate over the origins of language referenced above. Huarte has often been identified as a forerunner of modern-day linguists who posit an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified.<sup>57</sup> But as we have seen, Huarte was far from consistent in his theorizing about language, and when it came to xenoglossy he was still firmly wedded to the idea that words bore an intrinsic relationship to things. It was, in fact, Huarte’s opponents who hewed more rigorously to the conventionalist theory of language. As it happens, this fits with observations made by Stuart Clark concerning competing theories of language during the period.<sup>58</sup> Clark

<sup>53</sup> Huarte, *Examen*, 315.

<sup>54</sup> Linden, “The Natural and the Supernatural,” 242.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 242–3. See also Bartra, *Melancholy and Culture*, 119.

<sup>56</sup> For a detailed examination of this division of labor between early modern physicians and churchmen, see Jonathan Seitz, *Witchcraft and Inquisition in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Javier Virués Ortega, “Juan Huarte de San Juan in Cartesian and Modern Psycholinguistics: An Encounter with Noam Chomsky,” *Psicothema* 17.3 (2005): 336–40.

<sup>58</sup> Stuart Clark, “The Rational Witchfinder: Conscience, Demonological Naturalism and Popular Superstitions,” in *Science, Culture and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe*, ed.

has noted that representational theories of language went hand in hand with the philosophical realism demanded by the new science, and it was, counterintuitively, demonologists who spearheaded the campaign to conceptualize language as purely conventional rather than as a system of natural and necessary links between words and things. The spells and incantations that permeated early modern popular culture depended upon the magical power of words to influence persons and objects, but early modern demonology was predicated on the assumption that these practices were demonic, and thus “superstitious,” precisely because there was no causal efficacy between words and things. As a result, anti-superstition writers often ended up on the same side of the linguistic divide as Enlightenment heroes such as John Locke, although for very different reasons. With this in mind, it makes sense that García Carrero championed a demonological interpretation and at the same time insisted on the conventionality of language, while his adversary, Huarte, argued for a naturalistic explanation for xenoglossy, but was still willing to entertain the soon-to-be-outdated theory of linguistic originalism.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, on a broader level, it may be tempting to view the controversy over whether to categorize the preternatural locutions of the *rústico labrador* as melancholic genius or as superstitious diabolism through the lens of “disenchantment” used by Max Weber to examine what he saw as the desacralization of the natural world and human society by Western science and bureaucratic rationalization.<sup>60</sup> In this framework, melancholy becomes a naturalizing vehicle for supplanting the agency of spirits. Indeed, Euan Cameron, in his book *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250–1750*, presents melancholy as an alternative to supernatural explanations in precisely this way, writing in a section on Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* that

Stephen Pumfrey, Paolo L. Rossi, and Maurice Slawinski, 222–48 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 240–5.

<sup>59</sup> García Carrero, *Disputationes Medicae*, 256; Huarte, *Examen de ingenios*, 419.

<sup>60</sup> For a trenchant critique of disenchantment as a tool for historical analysis, see Alexandra Walsham, “The Reformation and ‘the Disenchantment of the World’ Reassessed,” *The Historical Journal* 51.2 (2008): 497–528. See also Egil Asprem, *The Problem of Disenchantment: Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric Discourse, 1900–1939* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), chaps. 1 and 2.

The subject of melancholy would become enormously important in the controversies of the seventeenth century: it was increasingly argued that ‘melancholy,’ meaning a common and rather diverse and widely diffused mental disorder, might explain many of the visions and other supposedly ‘supernatural’ experiences reported by the common people.<sup>61</sup>

As Cameron’s title suggests, he makes use of the framework of disenchantment, focusing on seventeenth-century England where, in his account, rifts within the discourse on superstition combined with investigations into the etiology of melancholy, scientific naturalism, and new alternatives to scholastic-Aristotelian metaphysics to cast doubt on the workings of the traditional spirit world. In Cameron’s telling, the distinctive literary-philosophical milieu of Restoration England was ultimately instrumental in eroding the reigning “demonological consensus,” thus paving the way for wholesale skepticism concerning the existence of spirits.<sup>62</sup>

There is no denying the influence of this late-seventeenth-century English intellectual milieu on European ideas about religion and natural philosophy, but one of the dangers of measuring historical change on a timeline of disenchantment is that it tends to elide the epistemological diversity of pre-modern societies. As Richard Jenkins has pointed out, it is “questionable whether the ‘enCHANTED world’ was ever as unified or homogeneous in its cosmology and beliefs as Weber’s argument seems to presume.”<sup>63</sup> Jenkins goes on to assert that the pre-modern European world was, in fact, always “epistemologically fragmented,” rife with “skepticism, heresy, and pluralism.”<sup>64</sup> Within the framework of disenchantment, Spain is typically relegated to the role of pre-modern, enchanted Other, and it thus seems telling that even in a treatment as wide ranging as Cameron’s, Spain is largely absent—and when it does appear it is presented as a bastion of traditional scholastic thought, incapable of the sort of cultural innovation we see in England. This omission

<sup>61</sup>Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 249.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 11–17.

<sup>63</sup>Richard Jenkins, “Disenchantment, Enchantment and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at The Millennium,” *Max Weber Studies* 1.1 (2000): 11–32 on 15.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

is especially glaring, given the fact that the Iberian peninsula contributed a great deal to discourses on superstition and melancholy.<sup>65</sup>

Cameron argues that a unique set of factors converged in late-seventeenth-century England to destabilize the metaphysical foundations of “enchanted Europe.” But could these foundations also have been weakened elsewhere and otherwise? Cameron does concede the potential of Neoplatonism as an alternative to scholastic-Aristotelian metaphysics, but dismisses this possibility because in his estimation Neoplatonists were “cultural elitists who had nothing to gain by intervening in the theological analysis of folkloric practices.”<sup>66</sup> As we have seen, however, in Spain there existed a strong current of Neoplatonism, which interacted with neo-Galenism, Hippocratism, and traditional scholastic-Aristotelianism to produce a vigorous debate over the nature of melancholic genius, a debate that did indeed intervene in the theological analysis of popular religious practices as a topic in anti-superstition treatises, manuals for exorcists, medical texts, and Inquisition trials. This debate generated a good deal of innovative natural philosophical speculation and medical theorizing based on case studies of actual peasants, penitents, and patients.<sup>67</sup>

But even if we accept the possibility of a greater latitude for intellectual experimentation in sixteenth-century Spain, what are we to make of the reaction against naturalistic accounts of melancholic genius? I would suggest that even in the wake of this backlash, we should not assume a return to a wholesale embrace of traditional demonology or a consensus about the interactions of spirits and humans. To be sure, in post-Tridentine Spain the devil loomed large in the collective imagination, but there was ample room for skepticism, dissent, and even ridicule. Rather than seeing the backlash as part of a definitive ideological crackdown on

<sup>65</sup> Apart from a discussion of Martín del Rio, and sporadic references to superstition treatises by Pedro Ciruelo and Martín de Castañega, Spain does not figure prominently in Cameron’s treatment. Moreover, he fails to cite the only other work on superstition of comparable depth, one that deals, coincidentally, with Spain: Fabián Alejandro Campagne’s *Homo Catholicus, Homo Superstiosus*. This is doubly unfortunate since Campagne’s book makes an eloquent case for integrating Spanish anti-superstition discourse into the mainstream of European intellectual history.

<sup>66</sup> Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 242.

<sup>67</sup> Roger Bartra hypothesizes that these incidents may well have taken place in reality as cases of hypertrophic memory displayed by those who would today be diagnosed as autistic. Bartra, *Melancholy and Culture*, 120–1.

the part of a militant Counter-Reformation, it should be viewed as part of a dialectical process in which the champions of demonological interpretations often overplayed their hand, setting the stage for a new round of skeptical challenges.<sup>68</sup>

In perhaps the most prominent example of this dialectic, we have the Spanish Inquisition's skepticism with regard to the prosecution of witches, which was epitomized by Inquisitor Alonso de Salazar y Frías's dispatch to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in response to the outbreak of witch hunting in the Basque country during the early seventeenth century.<sup>69</sup> While Salazar did not deny the existence of demons or contest their agency in the natural order, he doubted that these demonic interventions happened frequently, and he derided the idea that they should form the basis for witchcraft prosecutions. For Salazar, most of the reported activities of demons and witches could be dismissed as rumor and hearsay. As he famously put it, "There were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked and written about."<sup>70</sup> Salazar may still have been living in an "enchanted" world, but it was one that was increasingly being brought under the strictures of bureaucratic rationalization and one in which the spirit world was increasingly adjudicated according to codified legal procedures.

A lesser-known episode provides another example of the diversity of opinion surrounding demonology in baroque Spain. In the seventeenth century, there was no shortage of warnings about the growing power and ubiquity of the devil, and out of this milieu arose a campaign to imbue the Habsburg kings of Spain with the power of exorcism. Although other European monarchies had traditions of royal thaumaturgy, Spain did not. Yet by mid-century, there were a number of writers

<sup>68</sup>This is, in fact, similar to what Cameron has observed in the English case. See *Enchanted Europe*, 243.

<sup>69</sup>See Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition, 1609–1614* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980).

<sup>70</sup>Report from the Inquisitor of the Logroño tribunal, Alonso de Salazar y Frías, to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition relating to the witches of Zugarramurdi who appeared in the Auto de Fe in Logroño in 1610, entitled "Letter about the outcome of the visit and the Edict of Grace" (24 March 1612). Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid, Book 797, fol. 16<sup>r</sup>. Quoted by María Tausiet, in "From Illusion to Disenchantment: Feijóo Versus the 'Falsely Possessed' in Eighteenth-century Spain," in *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Owen Davies and Willem De Blécourt, 45–60 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 45–60 on 45.

insisting that Spanish kings could, and should, do battle with the minions of Satan.<sup>71</sup> In response to these extravagant demonological claims, we do not see a consensus marching in lockstep, but rather a protracted debate that culminated in a three-day forum held in September of 1654 at the royal court in which the matter was discussed by university professors, natural philosophers, and physicians—with Philip IV himself in attendance.

Despite the obvious propaganda benefits of establishing a tradition of charismatic kingship, the campaign backfired. In part this was due to skepticism concerning the natural philosophical rationale for these extravagant demonological claims. Gaspar Caldera de Heredia, for example, took issue with the need for any God-given charisma when it came to exorcism, arguing instead, in a similar fashion to Velásquez and García Carrero, that demonic possession was achieved through proximate causes, and thus might be addressed through these same causes:

[I]f he [i.e., the devil] works via some instrument, it will be possible to expel and overcome him through purely physical, natural means. For example, if he avails himself of melancholy as an instrument with which to work ... this can be evacuated, or tempered, by the [medical] art. And by getting rid of the instrument the demon can be expelled as well, since he has relied on such a fragile instrument.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, the mere touch of the Spanish kings, absent the infusion of divine grace, would not be capable of altering the humors in such a way as to ameliorate a demonic possession.

Other contemporary observers were less concerned with natural philosophical abstractions and confronted the suggestion of royal exorcism with skeptical derision, as in the case of Jerónimo de Barrionuevo, who ridiculed one of the participants in the debate, informing his readers that

[a] doctor from Andalucía has argued in a public debate held in the monastery of *la Encarnación* that in the same manner as the kings of France have the gift of healing scrofula, the kings of Spain are able to cure

<sup>71</sup> Among these were José Pellicer, *El fénix y su historia natural* (Madrid, 1628), Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, *Curiosa y oculta filosofía* (Alcalá de Henares, 1630) and Francisco Blasco Lanuza, *Patrocinio de ángeles y combate de demonios* (Real Monasterio de San Juan de la Peña, 1652).

<sup>72</sup> Gaspar Caldera de Heredia, “Si los señores reyes de Castilla por derecho hereditario de su real sangre, tiene virtud de curar energumenos, y lançar espiritus” (Madrid: 1655).

demoniacs. This is not a joke. His views have been published and as soon as I get my hands on them I will make them available to you.<sup>73</sup>

The failure of this campaign to institutionalize royal charisma (to put it in Weberian terms) paradoxically set the stage for a more disenchanted model of authority in which subjects were bound to their sovereign by purely political imperatives rather than as participants in an elaborate cosmic hierarchy.<sup>74</sup>

Returning to the case of Antonio de Bolívar, where this essay began, we see evidence of a similar skepticism on the part of his inquisitors concerning claims of diabolism. They dismissed out of hand the reports of demonically inspired xenoglossy, insisting instead that the “rustic person” under Bolívar’s spiritual direction was a fraud, and that Bolívar had conspired to fake divine raptures and revelations in order to enrich himself by collecting alms, and that the purported possessions were merely attempts to “elude the judgment and impede the functioning of the Holy Office by claiming that all the things they have said and done were not their own words and actions, but rather those of the devil.”<sup>75</sup>

In the eighteenth century we find still more skepticism directed at the purported feats of the *rústico labrador* in the work of the Spanish *philosophe* Benito Jerónimo Feijóo y Montenegro. Feijóo entirely sidesteps the controversy over natural versus demonic causation and dismisses reports of xenoglossy as inevitably feigned. Feijóo relates a case of a peasant woman from Oviedo who claimed to be possessed and was reported to have spoken Latin without ever having studied it. In an effort to debunk her claims, Feijóo adopted an experimental approach, staging a mock

<sup>73</sup>Jerónimo de Barrionuevo, *Avisos del Madrid de los Austrias y otras noticias*, ed. José María Díez Borque (Madrid: Editorial Castalia/Comunidad de Madrid, 1996), 280. Cited in Alejandro Campagne, “Entre el milagro y el pacto diabólico: saludadores y reyes tauromártigos en la España moderna,” in *Ciencia, poder e ideología. El saber y el hacer en la evolución de la medicina Española (siglos XIV–XVIII)*, 247–90 (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Historia de España “Claudio Sánchez Albornoz,” Facultad de Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2001), 283.

<sup>74</sup>Ismael del Olmo, “Providencialismo y sacralidad real. Francisco de Blasco Lanuza y la construcción del monarca exorcista,” *Sociedades Precapitalistas* 2.1 (December 18, 2012), 1–21 on 17–8.

<sup>75</sup>“[E]ludir el juicio y ejercicio del santo oficio diciendo que todo lo que a dicho y hecho no ha sido palabras ni acciones suyas sino del demonio.” Proceso de Antonio de Bolívar, 98<sup>v</sup>.

exorcism in which he spoke lines from Virgil and Ovid instead of the standard exorcisms. The woman, as Feijoo had predicted, responded with the typical exaggerated gestures that would have been elicited by the ecclesiastical Latin of the exorcism rite. As further proof of her fraud, Feijoo noted that she could follow his commands in Spanish but was at a loss when confronted with any Latin phrases that went beyond the stock formulations.<sup>76</sup>

By the eighteenth century both the Protestant and Catholic camps seem to have arrived at a new consensus on the structure of the causal taxonomy outlined at the beginning of this chapter. This amounted to a renegotiation of what could and could not happen in the visible and invisible worlds, a renegotiation that Fabián Alejandro Campagne has referred to as a new “Christian sense-of-the-impossible.”<sup>77</sup> Campagne’s assertion is a response to Lucien Febvre’s claim that early modern Europeans possessed no “sense-of-the-impossible,” because for them “there was normal and constant communication between the natural and the supernatural.”<sup>78</sup> According to Febvre, “Their world was a fluid one where nothing was strictly defined, where entities lost their boundaries, and, in the twinkling of an eye, without causing much protest, change shape, appearance, size, even ‘kingdom,’ as we would say.”<sup>79</sup> As we have seen, however, this was never the case for Protestant or Catholic theologians; there were always strict parameters determining what spirits could and could not do. But as we move into the eighteenth century, we begin to enter a new regime in which supernatural and preternatural interventions, although theoretically possible, became the rarest of occurrences. For Cameron, this development was driven by metaphysical debates prosecuted by English Protestants. Campagne, on the other hand, offers an alternative trajectory in which Spanish thinkers, rather than merely reacting to the arguments of Protestants, played an equally significant role. In Spain it fell to thinkers such as Feijoo to articulate the new, fully formed Christian sense-of-the-impossible, as when he asserted,

<sup>76</sup>On this episode, see Tausiet, “From Illusion to Disenchantment,” 50–1.

<sup>77</sup>Fabián Alejandro Campagne, “Witchcraft and the Sense-of-the-Impossible in Early Modern Spain: Some Reflections Based on the Literature of Superstition (c.1500–1800),” *Harvard Theological Review* 96.1 (2003): 25–62.

<sup>78</sup>Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 442.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

echoing Salazar, that “there do not appear to be any possessed people except where there are gullible people who say there are.”<sup>80</sup>

The career of the *rústico labrador* is a good example of the many ways in which knowing demons and spirits related to other kinds of knowing in early modern Europe. It highlights the wide range of theological and natural philosophical debates concerning the nature and role of spirits within the Christian cosmos and how they interacted with both the physical world and the human psyche. The Spanish interventions in these debates complicate familiar narratives and can potentially help us avoid hasty idealizations of complex historical realities, which is a danger when invoking the framework of disenchantment. As Egil Asprem has recently warned, when we identify certain intellectual developments as causal agents of disenchantment, “there is a tendency to prioritise a specific set of cultural impulses—above all Protestant theology and Kantian philosophy—when determining normativity and deviance in Western intellectual history.”<sup>81</sup> With this in mind, the contributions of Spanish thinkers to polemics surrounding melancholic genius in early modern Europe take on a heightened significance, revealing an epistemological pluralism that only comes into focus when we broaden our purview beyond the norms of canonical Western intellectual history.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted by Tausiet, “From Illusion to Disenchantment,” 56.

<sup>81</sup> Asprem, *The Problem of Disenchantment*, 4.



## CHAPTER 5

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# Testing for Demonic Possession: Scribonius, Goclenius, and the Lemgo Witchcraft Trial of 1583

*Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter*

Between 50,000 and 60,000 people died in Europe as a consequence of the persecution of alleged witches between the late sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup> To date, though, historians of

<sup>1</sup> Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edition (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), 23. Estimates as to the number of executions have been revised downwards in recent years. H. C. Erik Midelfort, for instance, argued that around 70,000 people had been killed. See his “Alte Fragen und neue Methoden in der Geschichte des Hexenwahns,” in *Hexenverfolgung. Beiträge zur Forschung - unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des südwestdeutschen Raumes*, ed. Sönke Lorenz and Dieter R. Bauer, 13–30 (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1995), 15. For his part, Wolfgang Behringer placed the number around 100,000. See his “Erhob sich das ganze Land zu ihrer Ausrottung...” Hexenprozesse und Hexenverfolgungen in Europa,” in *Hexenwelten. Magie und Imagination*, ed. Richard van Dülmen, 131–69 (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1987), 165.

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philosophy have been loath to examine the extent to which early modern philosophy was complicit in creating a world view that justified these killings. Early modern demonology, it seems, has been treated as if it is the demesne only of intellectual historians. This is unfortunate, for it has meant that philosophers have largely ignored the role of the debates in natural philosophy and psychology which helped shape understandings of demonic possession, witchcraft, and the persecution of witches.

This chapter discusses a debate between two Protestant philosophers in the late sixteenth century, Wilhelm Adolph Scribonius and Rudolph Goclenius, over the efficacy of an investigative method used in witchcraft trials, the so-called “water test” (*Wasserprobe*). This procedure involved binding an alleged witch and throwing her into a pool of water. If the accused sinks, she is judged innocent. But if she floats, she is deemed guilty and the charge is considered proven against her. The debate between Scribonius and Goclenius can be directly linked to the fallout from a specific witchcraft trial which took place in the German municipality of Lemgo in 1583. The debate is important, though, because it indicates broader philosophical disagreements about how to detect the presence of spirits in the physical world. It shows that philosophers participated in debates about demons and spirits *as philosophers*, and that their specific accounts are construed in terms of wider arguments within pneumatology (the doctrine of spiritual substances), natural philosophy, and metaphysics. However, in the present case, both attempts to reconcile the belief in demonic possession in late-sixteenth-century natural philosophy are ultimately unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the analysis of the contributions of Scribonius and Goclenius to demonology based upon their respective philosophical backgrounds presented here can serve as a case study, stimulating a more comprehensive investigation of the question as to whether philosophy can really accommodate belief in demonic possession, and provide comprehensible criteria for its identification.

Historians of early modern philosophy have not shown much interest in demonology.<sup>2</sup> The main reasons for this seems to lie in an

<sup>2</sup>The overview in Stephan Meier-Oeser, “Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation Angels: A Comparison,” in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz, 187–200 (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008) ends with Melanchthon. Anja Hallacker’s “On Angelic Bodies: Some Philosophical Discussions in the Seventeenth Century” in the same volume, 201–14, focuses only on Jacob Böhme, Henry More, Anne Conway and the hermetic tradition. Véronique Decaix, “The Devil in the Flesh: On Witchcraft and Possession,” in

unwarranted emphasis on canonical authors which is often coupled with a form of “presentism” that gauges historical ideas in terms of their relevance to contemporary problems. The notion of a canon of early modern philosophy can have legitimate uses.<sup>3</sup> But by its very nature, a canon is exclusive—and since no so-deemed canonical thinker of the early modern period took a sustained, considered interest in demonological questions, by and large, the contributions of philosophy to this discourse have gone unnoticed. Moreover, given that phenomena such as demonic possession are not modern philosophical problems, the presentist inclination of historians of philosophy tends to treat such discussions as intellectual dead ends and so of little intrinsic relevance.<sup>4</sup> This is unfortunate, for the fact that philosophers helped to shape discourses and practices that contemporary philosophers would and should abhor is an important part of the historical record. It certainly should not be ignored in favor of a whiggish teleology of philosophical development.

Still, the perspective of an historian of philosophy in thinking about demonology differs considerably from that of the intellectual historian. In intellectual history, the emphasis tends to be on accounting for the historical phenomenon of the persecution of putative witches. That is to say, such historians are primarily concerned with explaining why belief in demonic possession and magical agency led to the trials against witches at a particular historical moment. In his seminal study of witch belief, for instance, Stuart Clark aims to unsettle certain reductionist causal

*Embodiment: A History*, ed. Justin E. H. Smith, 299–306 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) draws a distinction between witchcraft construed as a result of a conscious decision of a woman to give herself to the devil, and as a mode of demonic possession that may well be involuntary. The authors under consideration here presuppose a presence of the devil in the body of a witch without making any assumptions about the circumstances that have caused this presence.

<sup>3</sup>Lisa Shapiro, “Revisiting the Early Modern Philosophical Canon,” *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 2 (2016): 365–83 on 368–70, distinguishes two: a pedagogical function, e.g. in the creation of syllabi; and a legitimizing function by showing how early modern discussions can be connected to contemporary philosophical debates.

<sup>4</sup>A defense of “presentism” along these lines can be found in Yitzhak Y. Melamed, “Charitable Interpretations and the Political Domestication of Spinoza, or, Benedict in the Land of the Secular Imagination,” in *Philosophy and Its History: Aims and Methods in the Study of Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Mogens Lærke, Justin E. H. Smith, and Eric Schliesser, 258–77 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), *passim*.

explanations that see belief in witchcraft as *per se* irrational and treat it as a consequence of various extraneous social or economic factors.<sup>5</sup> Clark holds that the best antidote to such an anachronistic approach is a healthy dose of relativism, or, to be more precise, “anti-realism.”<sup>6</sup> As he goes on to argue, reductionists are committed to the irrationality of witch belief because they subscribe to realism, construing truth as independent of language and discoverable by suitably trained observers.<sup>7</sup> For a realist, though, demonology and witch belief raise a puzzling question: how can irrational beliefs—beliefs about things that are not real and were not happening—be action-guiding? For Clark, the answer seems to lie in a relativist position, a treatment of belief *as* belief.

But as we will see in the case study that follows, in early modern philosophy specific theories—such as those to do with the presence of demons in human bodies—were deduced from and were warranted by more general theories about the presence of spirits in the sublunary world. These, in turn, were themselves components of larger theories about how things relate to each other, construed in the broadest possible sense. At each level—from the specific to the most general—disagreement between thinkers is not only possible but part of the historical record. From this perspective, a purely relativistic outlook does not capture these disagreements, nor can it enter into an investigation of the substance of such controversies. If, in Clark’s view, the conflict between early modern demonologists and our contemporary convictions about the existence of demons and witchcraft cannot be adequately resolved, the same must then be true for differences of opinion within early modern theories of spiritual substances and their place in the world. Under Clark’s premises, these controversies defy description because both opponents are right in their own way.

So historians of philosophy should acknowledge that questions about demonology have no immediate relevance for contemporary philosophical problems, and that even at the time, these issues tended not to concern the figures now deemed canonical in the field. But they should also eschew the whiggery inherent to the field, and examine the *historical* relevance of discourses such as early modern demonology in order to

<sup>5</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

capture a fuller picture of the past of our discipline—one that does not leave out the uncomfortable fact that demonological tracts were shaped by developments and trends in philosophical thought. For this, it is not necessary to presuppose relativist background assumptions: historians of philosophy operate routinely with texts we believe by and large to be false, because their content can be illuminating for a contemporary audience without being directly truth-conducive.

The debate between Scribonius and Goclenius over the operation of the water test is a case in point. Both philosophers accepted that this popular test for witchcraft worked. But for them, the issue was why. Bringing to bear their analytical talents, each proffered a naturalistic explanation that interpreted the test as an example of the operation of particular philosophical principles: Scribonius in terms of a change in forms; Goclenius in terms of pneumatology. While both applied contemporary philosophical ideas in ways that might not interest many modern historians of philosophy, their arguments gave the test a sophisticated intellectual justification—and, by extension, it allowed them to know demons.

### SCRIBONIUS, THE CAUSES OF WITCHCRAFT AND THE WATER TEST

Wilhelm Adolph Scribonius was likely born in Marburg around 1550.<sup>8</sup> After studies in philosophy and medicine and some intermittent teaching at Marburg University, he transferred to the Korbach Gymnasium in 1581. Shortly afterwards, in September 1583, he traveled to the Lippe town of Lemgo.<sup>9</sup> What he saw there interested him a great deal:

<sup>8</sup>The following summarizes the findings of Diana Kremer, in her “Von erkundigung und Prob der Zauberinnen durchs kalte Wasser. Wilhelm Adolph Scribonius aus Marburg und Rudolf Goclenius aus Korbach zur Rechtmäßigkeit der ‘Wasserprobe’ im Rahmen der Hexenverfolgung,” *Geschichtsblätter für Waldeck* 84 (1996): 141–68 on 153–5 and 160–4.

<sup>9</sup>We can only speculate with regard to Scribonius’s connection to Lemgo. His Marburg colleague Bernhard Copius, who contributed a preface to the first edition of *Rerum Physicarum* in 1577, had been rector in Lemgo until 1566 and helped during this period to establish a publishing house under the direction of Franz Grothen. See Lothar Weiß, “Bernhard Copius (1525–1581),” in *Bernhard Copius und das Lemgoer Gymnasium*, ed. Friedrich W. Bratvogel, 43–71 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011), 49. Scribonius published numerous books with Grothen. On the biographical background of this generation of West German Ramists in general see Howard Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and Its German Ramifications, 1543–1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 28–30.

Two days after I arrived in Lemgo on September 25, three witches or sorceresses were killed by burning outside the town, following a judgment of the town council on account of the multiple and nefarious sins they committed. On the evening of the same day, three others who the first ones had denounced to the magistrate as companions and abettors were arrested and incarcerated by law enforcement. To find out the truth of the matter, the next day at about two o'clock in the afternoon they were thrown into the water before the gates of the town in order to see whether they would sink or come up again. Their hands and feet were closely tied up in such a manner that the right hand was bound tightly to the big toe of the left foot and, conversely, the left hand to the right foot, so that they could not move themselves or their body in the slightest way. Although each of them was thrown three times into the river by the hangman while thousands of people watched, they swam on top of the water like a trunk of wood, and none of them was sunk.<sup>10</sup>

Scribonius then set out to investigate the reasoning underlying this judicial procedure—but his efforts were inconclusive.

When I was present at this spectacle (*spectaculum*), I was very astonished by the novelty of what I had seen, insofar as this was almost unheard of in other parts of Germany. Wanting to know something about the reasons and causes of such tests, I could find out nothing certain, but I understood from what I was told that this custom was introduced based on the observation of people in several regions during the previous summer, [...] but still no sufficient explanation of this judgment could be given.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>“Cum die vigesima quinta Septembbris ... Lemgoviam venirem: biduo post, ... tres Sagae sive Veneficæ ob plurima et nefanda a se commissa peccata, Senatu consulto extra urbem ignis flamma occisæ fuerunt: ejusdemque diei vespere tres aliae protinus, quas illæ priores magistratui ceu socias, et suæ factionis confortes indicassent, a lictoribus comprehensæ, et carceribus mancipatae: sequente autem die circiter horam pomeridianam secundam ad explorandam rei veritatem ante portas urbis in aquas projectæ fuerunt, ut videretur, num submersum nec ne ituræ essent. Nempe pedibus manibusque ligatae, et vestibus prius exutis hac ratione vinctæ erant, ut dextri lateris manus sinistri pedis pollici, et vicissim sinistra manus dextro pedi arcte colligaretur, ut ne minimum quidem se aut corpus suum movere possent. A carnifice deinceps in flumen, millenis aliquot hominibus aspectibus, et singulæ quidem vice tertia conjectæ ei instar trunci alicujus lignæ innatabant, nec ulla earum submergebatur.” Wilhelm Adolph Scribonius, *De examine et purgatione sagarum per aquam frigida epistola* (Lemgo, 1583), fol. 2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>11</sup>“Huic ego spectaculo cum interesseem, rei visae novitatem summopere admiratus, utpote quae in aliis Germaniae partibus vix audita esset: de examinis ejusmodi causis et rationibus novisse aliquid cupiens, nihil certi rescire potui, sed dici tantum intellexi ex observatione quidem nonnullorum populorum hanc praeterita aestate consuetudinem

For reasons that are not entirely clear, the Lemgo magistrates then asked him to provide them with a written account detailing the findings of his investigation into the water test.<sup>12</sup> The resultant letter is interesting not least because Scribonius seems to accept that the test actually worked. For him, the problem was to explain why.

Scribonius begins his analysis by providing an overview of previous treatments of the test, drawing upon Jodocus Damhouder's 1554 *Praxis verum criminalium*, Johann Weyer's 1563 *De praestigiis daemonum*—particularly his critique of witch belief, Jacob Cuiaci's 1566 *Usus foedorum*, and Diego de Covarrubias y Leyva's 1573 treatise *De frigidis et maleficiatis*. All of these he deemed inadequate in part, at least, because the authors relied upon some conception of a supernatural force for their explanations.<sup>13</sup> Instead, as he makes clear, he is only interested in explaining the test rationally, and on the basis of sound natural philosophical premises.<sup>14</sup>

In order to appreciate Scribonius's arguments—and those of Goclenius—it is helpful to remember that these authors distinguished different aspects of objects and different levels of discourse about them. The human body, which is of central importance in the analysis of the water test, can be understood either as a mixture of the four elements or as a living and ensouled organism. In the elemental model, characteristics of objects are determined by the essential properties and relative proportion of the elements of which they are comprised. Thus, light natural bodies tend to move upwards while heavy natural bodies fall downwards. By extension, wood has a “light essence” (*essentia rara*) relative to stone, so a piece of wood swims on water while a stone sinks.<sup>15</sup> As mixtures of

introduction esse, ... nec tamen ullam hujus judicii sufficientem causam dari posse.” Ibid., fol. 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., fol. 3<sup>r</sup>. We have no clear idea why Scribonius was asked to submit this letter. He was no jurist and had apparently no previous forensic experience. It is possible that, since the water test had been introduced into the area only recently, the magistrates felt the need to examine this new practice in detail.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., fol. 3<sup>v</sup>–4<sup>v</sup>. For details regarding some of the works cited see the remarks by Zekl in Rudolph Goclenius, *Von Hexen und Weisen und sieben Künsten: drei akademische Festreden gehalten an der Universität zu Marburg zwischen 1583 und 1598*, ed. and trans. Hans Günter Zekl (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2012), 59f.

<sup>14</sup>Scribonius, *De examine*, fol. 3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., fol. 4<sup>v</sup>.

elements, human bodies behave like stones—not like wood. According to Scribonius, the body of a person practising witchcraft does not differ elementally from that of an innocent person. With the material composition of women and witches the same in both cases, this model offers no ready way to account for the results of the water test.<sup>16</sup>

The second treatment of the body, though, was more promising. As a living organism, a human body has a soul which functions as its form. The form of a body serves a number of functions, but chief among these is to guarantee the continuity of the organism, despite the fact that its material basis is always changing by virtue of the ingestion and secretion of matter. That said, the soul also animates the body so that it can perform certain vital functions: so that plants can grow, animals can move, humans can think. If this is the case, then the soul as the form of the human body is—in a very vague sense—present not just in the body as a whole, but in each of its parts as well.

For Scribonius, this is the key. For him, it is this form of a witch's body that undergoes a change and this happens when she pledges herself to the devil.

And thus I claim that witches [...] are no longer a type of human, as they were before, but that they almost take on a new form. Namely, witches can be defined as people participating in the essence of the devil that obsesses them. Witches can evidently be defined as humans that take part in the essence of the devil that obsesses them.<sup>17</sup>

This diabolical form, he continues, permeates the essence of the person.

This evil demon, spirit and king of the air, who is cause and origin of all crimes and sins, has occupied the hearts of these evil women as well as all other parts [of them], so that it is diffused through the whole essence and the individual parts of the essence substantially.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>“Dico itaque Veneficas ... nec amplius esse tales homines, quales ante fuerunt: adeoque novam prorsus formam assumere. Sagae scilicet definiri possunt homines essentiam Diaboli, a quo obsidentur, participantes.” Ibid., fol. 5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>18</sup>“Malus enim iste genius, spiritus et rex aeris, qui causa et origo est delictorum peccatorumque omnium, corda malarum istarum mulierum, et partes reliquas universas ita occupavit, ut totus per totam illarum essentiam, essentiaeque partes singulas substantialiter sit diffusus.” Ibid., fol. 5<sup>r</sup>.

But because the essence of the living human body is its soul or form, such a change in form engenders a concomitant change in the properties of the body it ensouls—a change that is fundamentally different to that resulting from a rebalancing of the elements in a body. For Scribonius, this is what explains why those who are guilty of witchcraft cannot be submerged in water. As he argues, the nature of evil spirits is no different to that of other spirits—and so is, by extension, like air. Thus, in making a pact with the devil, the essence of a would-be witch becomes modified, making her more volatile and lighter than innocent females.<sup>19</sup>

In his letter to the Lemgo town council, Scribonius does not explain how it is possible for a multiplicity of forms to be present in a single human body. But this is only part of his problem, for not only must several forms be present at once, they must interact and modify each other. To understand why Scribonius believed this to be possible, we must turn to his more detailed discussion of pneumatology in his *Rerum physicarum naturalium doctrina methodica*. Originally published in 1577 but revised the year he visited Lemgo with the addition of a discussion of forms, this textbook on physics is crucial for his demonology.<sup>20</sup> In this work, Scribonius characterizes physics in general as the knowledge of natural things (*rerum naturalium scientia*). For him, there are two kinds of natural things: pure forms and composites of form and matter (in his terminology, “materialized forms”).<sup>21</sup> The implications of this statement become clear in a 1584 edition of the textbook which contains critical notes by the English physician, Timothy Bright. Bright’s criticism makes clear that Scribonius did indeed believe in the existence of unembodied forms. The Englishman argues that there cannot be a part of nature that consists of forms without matter.<sup>22</sup> From his perspective, all finite spirits must contain matter, too (though this matter need not be a natural

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., fol. 5v.

<sup>20</sup>See Wilhelm Adolph Scribonius, *Rerum Physicarum Iuxta Leges Logicas Methodica Explicatio* (Frankfurt/Main, 1577). Cf. Wilhelm Adolph Scribonius, *Rerum Physicarum Iuxta Leges Logicas methodica explicatio ... Nunc denvo recognita, & in plurimis locis emendata* (Leipzig, 1581). On his writings in general, see the older literature cited in Kremer, *Erkundigung*, 155.

<sup>21</sup>“Natura autem omnis, vel formata tantum est, vel materiata.” Scribonius, *Rerum Physicarum* (1581), 21.

<sup>22</sup>Wilhelm Adolph Scribonius and Timothie Bright, *In Physicam Gulielmi Adolphi Scribonii ... Animadversiones Timothei Brighti ...* (Frankfurt, 1587), 5.

body). As he says in a note to Scribonius's text, even "in divine minds, some kind of matter inheres, but no body."<sup>23</sup>

But Scribonius's demonology in his *Epistola* rests against Bright's criticism on the assumption that forms can subsist in the spatio-temporal world without being part of a hylomorphic union of form and matter. From Bright's criticism, it is obvious that Scribonius wanted to accommodate the self-subsistent existence of unembodied spirits in the spatio-temporal world: as we have seen, Scribonius asserts the commonplace idea that physics is concerned only with what goes on in the world according to nature, and does not address supernatural phenomena. Bright in turn believes that such an existence is conceivable only if we take spirits to be in union with matter, too—even if this matter is not in the traditional sense corporeal.

If we apply the idea of self-subsistent forms, as Scribonius accepted—and Bright criticized—Scribonius's demonology and his cryptic remarks about the invasion of the devil as a second form become a little bit clearer. Scribonius had claimed that witches participate in the essence of the devil. This is only conceivable if the devil is an immaterial being. Were this not the case, any interaction between the devil as a spirit and a human consisting of both body and soul would have to be mediated by the matter of both hylomorphic composites—much in the same way that any interaction between two human souls must be mediated by their respective bodies by means of speaking, writing, or touching. The devil is said to be present in each body part of the witch. This is true for the original form of the body, namely the human soul. Scribonius seems to assume that the very same mechanism of ensouling the human body is at work in witches. And in superimposing himself over the original human form of the witch, the devil changes the physical properties of their bodies, so that witches become lighter than other women.

## GOCLENIUS, THE CAUSES OF WITCHCRAFT AND THE WATER TEST

Goclenius was born in Korbach on March 1, 1547. After studies in Erfurt, Marburg, and Wittenberg, he first held various positions in Korbach and Kassel before taking over a professorship in Marburg in 1581 where he taught until his death on June 8, 1628. Goclenius

<sup>23</sup>"... mentibus divinis materia quaedam inest sua, atque divina, nec corpus ullum." Scribonius and Bright, *Animadversiones*, 6.

seems to have had a fairly close relationship with Scribonius, for he wrote an epigram for the first edition of the latter's textbook on natural philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

Having read Scribonius's analysis of the events in Lemgo, Goclenius replied in a formal academic oration. Like Scribonius, he wanted to explain the operation of the water test in strictly natural philosophical terms, and set out to critique his colleague's arguments in precisely that way.<sup>25</sup> For Goclenius, it was quite possible that a strange or counterintuitive phenomenon like the water test could have a physical explanation. After all, intrinsically light bodies do not always rise—especially if they are weighed down by heavier things. Similarly, the natural tendency of heavy bodies to fall can be counteracted when they are attached to light bodies.<sup>26</sup> Equally, unexpected results can be observed when the natural properties of an element are changed. The operation of the Dead Sea is a case in point, for there the properties of water are such that things that would normally sink, float. It is the same, he continued, with eggs pickled in brine.<sup>27</sup> On the basis of these observations, Goclenius is prepared to assume that the mechanisms at work in the water test are part of the ordinary course of nature, even if it is possible that the cause of these changes in nature may be supernatural in origin. We will see that this ambivalence is a recurring theme in Goclenius's pneumatology, too. In the context of his refutation of Scribonius's theses, he finally limits himself to the claim that any interaction between spirit and witch must

<sup>24</sup> Scribonius, *Rerum Physicarum* (1577), 35. Goclenius was apparently drawn into the controversy by Johann Antrecht. See Rudolph Goclenius, "Solemnis Actus Renunciationis 29. Magistrorum, in illustri Cattorum Academia celebratus Anno Christianae Epoche 1583, die 19. Novembris: continens orationem de natura sagarum in purgatione et examinatione per Frigidam aquis innatantium," in *Panegyrici Academiae Marpurgensis: Hoc est: Selectae aliquot orationes, in publicis illius Academiae congressibus ab eiusdem professoribus habitae*, ed. Paul Egenolph (Marburg, 1590), 192. The jurist appears again as dedicatee of a 1601 dissertation with Goclenius as *praeses*. See Rudolph Goclenius and David Battenfelt, *Disquisitiones Philosophicae: Ex. Artium Liberalium Fontibus Collectae* (Marburg, 1601), n.p.

<sup>25</sup> Goclenius, *Solemnis Actus*, 191–2. Accordingly, the moral, juridical, and theological dimensions of the "water test" are beyond the scope of his analysis.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

be based on an external force of the spirit rather than a superimposition of forms, not giving a definite answer to the question of whether or not a demon can be corporeal.<sup>28</sup>

Based on these general reflections, Goclenius suggests that the body of a purported witch is kept afloat during the water test through what he calls an “evaporation” or “exhalation” (*aspiratio*) of the demon residing in her body. However, he is ambiguous about the nature of spirits and demons. He uses the term *spiritus*, for instance, to designate both a corporeal entity like a wind or a breath, and an incorporeal substance.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, in places he suggests that demons are corporeal beings, characterizing the devil alternatively as a rarefied and agile being and as an aerial and fiery spirit. In his critique of Scribonius, he never definitively asserts whether a demon can be corporeal. That said, in the context of the water test it is clear that he sees the force of upward motion from the demon’s natural lightness counteracting the natural tendency of the human body to sink down.<sup>30</sup> The situation, he argues, is analogous to that of an animal skin used for storing liquids. If the skin is inflated, it cannot sink down when thrown in water because the upwards motion of the air contained within it counteracts its own weight. It is the same in the body of a witch. But in this case, the inflation of the body is not caused by the addition of air, but by occult demonic influence, namely the demon’s *vis spirabilis*. This is what allows the witch to float in water without fear of drowning.<sup>31</sup>

Goclenius himself does not make this distinction, but drawing upon the terminology of the scholastics, we could say that the proximate or immediate cause which sees a witch float is physical—an inflation of her body similar to that of the animal skin. In this case, though, the primary or mediate cause of this effect is supernatural, namely demonic. Expressed in similar terms, Scribonius’s point is that the water test succeeds because of a proximate supernatural cause—that is, a supernatural change in the form of the human body of the witch. For him, it is this change that engenders a transformation of the body’s natural qualities.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Goclenius, *Solennis Actus*, 195. Zekl claims an exactly reverse relationship between Goclenius and Scribonius: Scribonius is thinking in terms of physical interaction, Goclenius argues from the point of view of spiritual immateriality. Cf. Goclenius, *Von Hexen*, 48.

<sup>29</sup>Rudolph Goclenius, *Lexicon philosophicum, quo tanquam clave philosophiae fores aperiuntur* (Frankfurt, 1613), s.v. “Spiritus.”

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 194–5.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 194.

For Goclenius, Scribonius's problem is that he is committed to the idea that the devil's form is present in the body of a witch in the same way that the schools say that the soul is present in the human body, that is, *anima tota est in toto et in qualibet parte tota* (i.e., in the whole body and as a whole in each of its parts).<sup>32</sup> This causes him to accept the idea that a witch is a human being *participating* in the devil's essence.<sup>33</sup> But this is dangerous territory, for the idea that one spiritual substance can, in this sense, invade the essence of another spiritual substance borders on heresy. As Goclenius points out, the idea of such a substantial union is part of the definition of the trinity.<sup>34</sup> It is conceivable that the devil can change contingent properties of a human—that is, some of its accidents, like size, hair color, and outward behavior. But the notion that the interaction between a demon and a witch could change her with respect to substance or form is difficult to accept because it would turn the witch into a completely different entity. After all, it is the soul or form that guarantees the continuity of the organism over time.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, Goclenius does concede the possibility that an evil spirit can enter a human body, for this happens in cases of demonic possession.<sup>36</sup> While he admits that the mental status of a witch may be due to demonic manipulation of the bodily humors,<sup>37</sup> if it is the result of the entry of a spirit into her body, then it is necessary to understand how this could happen. Any philosophical account of demonic possession faces two interrelated challenges. On a foundational level, it must show how spirits can be present in a human body. But more than this, it must also show how these spirits can be causally efficacious—that is, how they cause the body to move. In some respects, assuming that spirits have bodies seems to explain both issues. If the indwelling spirit shares the space inside the body with matter, then it is relatively easy to see how the body of the spirit can manipulate the physical processes of that body. Things become considerably more difficult if spirits are understood as not having a body, for this calls into question how an immaterial spirit can move the matter of the body. The only way out of this dilemma is to

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 196.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 197.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 199.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 197.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 198.

propose—like Scribonius had done—that demonic possession involves an interaction of different forms in the same body.

In his critique of Scribonius's argument, Goclenius never takes a side. He never explains whether he accepts that spirits have some kind of body or whether there is some other mechanism that allows for physical interaction between spirits and humans. However, some of his later writings provide important clues. They show that Goclenius's lack of clarity in his demonological treatise was not accidental: he neither could nor would not make up his mind on the question of whether spirits have bodies. Apparently he thought it sufficient merely to show that a spiritual substance could be present in space and in the same place as a natural body. However, if it is unclear how the devil can be present in a body, this leaves the mechanism whereby the devil interacts with a witch unexplained. But then Goclenius's demonological views lack a sound philosophical foundation in much the same way as Scribonius's.

In 1599, sixteen years after the Lemgo affair, Goclenius published a collection of several small philosophical treatises entitled *Disquisitiones philosophicae*. Two of these contain his thinking on pneumatology. It was clear to him that spirits could interact with the physical world at some level, if only because they could be present in space. But whether this meant that they had bodies was not clear to him.<sup>38</sup>

Goclenius begins by examining three arguments against the idea: (1) spirits and bodies are by definition disjunctive categories. That is to say, an angel could be either one or the other, but not both. (2) If angels were bodies, they would have to exist in a physical place. This would imply that they exist in a volume surrounded by the volumes of their neighboring bodies. (3) Because there can be no vacuum in the sublunar world, if angels had bodies, when they arrive there from the supralunar world in which they properly reside, they would either have to be co-present with the body that already filled that place, or destroy a quantity of matter from the sublunar world equivalent to their size. Given that the latter position would effectively have angels destroying God's creation, if angels had bodies, this would mean that they must exist in the same place at the same time (*simul et semel*) as another body.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Rudolph Goclenius, *Disquisitiones philosophicae* (Marburg, 1599), 9.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 8.

With regard to the first of these three arguments, Goclenius denies the disjunction. Since spirits are created beings, they must have a body, even if it is a “spiritual” body. Their nature may be based on air or fire or be ethereal and invisible. But there is not necessarily any conceptual tie between being a spirit and being fully immaterial.<sup>40</sup> In the second, he sees the basic assumption as false: angels exist in a physical place as soon as they have determinate limits. But if there is a portion of space in which an angel is present and an adjacent portion of space in which it is not, the angel exists in a definite physical place.<sup>41</sup> At first glance, however, this seems to bolster the third argument—that it is impossible for two bodies to be present in the same place at the same time. But, Goclenius contends, this is only the case for bodies of the same kind. The subtle nature of an angelic body would allow it to coexist with a human body in the same place.<sup>42</sup> This last argument strengthens Goclenius’s claim against Scribonius that a demon causing possession in a human is present in a determinate place in the human body. Against Scribonius’s position, he asserts that demonic essence is thus not simultaneously present in all parts of the human body.<sup>43</sup> However, we cannot conclude that this means that Goclenius was fully convinced that angels have a spiritual body that can coexist with a natural body in one and the same place.

From this, Goclenius turns to discuss the shortcomings of two previous attempts to explain the presence of an unembodied spirit in space. The first of these defends the claim that the “general” (or, in scholastic terminology, “indefinite”) ability to be in a place must be ascribed to spirits. But this assumption is allegedly separate from the more specific thesis that this “mode of presence” is physical, that is, that it involves a material body that fills a determinate place. From this perspective, it can be said that spirits are in a place, but that their exact mode of spatial presence remains undetermined.<sup>44</sup> Goclenius’s refutation claims that being in a place is a property that only material bodies can have. Those who believe that angels cannot have a body distinguish the fact that some kind of indeterminate relation to space is part of the definition of all finite creatures. But they do not therefore accept the more radical

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>43</sup>Goclenius, *Solennis Actus*, 203.

<sup>44</sup>Goclenius, *Disquisitiones*, 9.

thesis that such intelligences are, therefore, in a place (that is, present in a volume that is enclosed by other volumes).<sup>45</sup>

A second attempt to locate spirits in space suggests that spirits can bring about effects in a place without being physically present there.<sup>46</sup> The problem with this notion, though, is that it makes an essential property of spirits depend upon a non-essential property. Having an *ubi* is essential for spirits, because they are finite beings; in this Goclenius agrees with the defenders of the “definitive” account. But whether or not a spirit acts in a place is not an essential property of the spirit. The requirement only to be active in a place is, thus, too weak to fulfill the criterion of having an essential relation to being in a place.<sup>47</sup>

Finally, and this is Goclenius’s own position, spirits can be present in a place like all other bodies, namely by being present between the limits of adjacent bodies.<sup>48</sup> This follows from their finitude, for if they were not in some sense bounded, it would not make sense to regard them as finite creatures. Moreover, both the human mind and spirits do change their place. In order to change a place, they must be able to be in a place. The notion that something could be defined by being in a place without being in a definite place is spurious: there is no difference between being in a “where” (*ubi*) and being in a place.<sup>49</sup> But although this position comes suspiciously close to a defense of the existence of angelic bodies, Goclenius does not explicitly commit himself to this strong thesis.

To sum up, Goclenius believes that the assumption of a superimposition of forms is superfluous because the interaction between a demon and a witch can be explained without appeal to such a metaphysically adventurous conception. Any interaction between a spiritual substance and a human being is mediated by external forces and does not rely on interaction between or fusion of forms. He suggests that the demon is bodily present in the body of the witch and inflates her in such a way

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>This view is usually associated with Aquinas. See Tiziana Suárez-Nani, “Angels, Space and Place: The Location of Separate Substances according to John Duns Scotus,” in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry: Their Function and Significance*, ed. Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz, 89–11 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 91–3.

<sup>47</sup> Goclenius, *Disquisitiones*, 9.

<sup>48</sup>In a side note, Goclenius calls this “Scotus’s thesis” (*sententia Scoti*). On Scotus’s views regarding the location of angels see Suárez-Nani, “Angels, Space and Place,” 106.

<sup>49</sup> Goclenius, *Disquisitiones*, 10.

that she can stay afloat. Scribonius's construction of this "spiritual levity" is unfounded and uncalled for, because a more parsimonious explanation is available. The possibility of such a strictly physical explanation rests, however, on pneumatological assumptions. Spirits may or may not have a body, but they certainly have a determinate presence in a place, because both the idea that spirits are present only in a metaphysical sense and the notion that the presence of angels rests on their efficacy in a place are incoherent.

## CONCLUSION

After witnessing with his own eyes how a water test was executed, Scribonius seized upon the opportunity to practise his investigative skills as a natural philosopher to determine why the test worked. His colleague Goclenius, though, chose to critique Scribonius's explanation in a festive academic oration. Despite the reluctance of most modern philosophers to engage with their arguments, both authors self-identified as philosophers. Their texts, then, are part of our heritage as philosophers.

What Scribonius and Goclenius both demonstrate—albeit involuntarily—is how difficult it is on a theoretical level to accommodate the presence of the devil in the physical world: we have to assume either that two different forms can coexist in a human body or that two different kinds of matter can coexist in the same place. Both contentions are difficult to reconcile with foundational tenets of Aristotelian metaphysics and physics. Thus, it seems to be a bit premature to insist, as does Stuart Clark, that "the really crucial decision in witchcraft matters—whether to allow devils a presence in the physical world or exclude them from it—had to be initiated not on natural philosophical grounds but on religious and moral ones."<sup>50</sup> Apparently, we have no clear idea of the extent to which tensions within demonological theorizing contributed to the devaluation of the discipline. However, it should be clear that the knowledge of demons that can be adduced from demonological tracts cannot be understood in isolation. The views of Scribonius and Goclenius can only be elucidated by including more foundational texts that lay out the theoretical presuppositions of their demonological arguments. The historian of philosophy cannot abdicate her responsibility for unearthing the

<sup>50</sup>Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 249.

specific philosophical presuppositions and implications of early modern demonologists. Their work is an integral part of the tradition of our discipline and should finally be acknowledged as such.

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## CHAPTER 6

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# “The Damned Trinity”: Judas, the Devil, and the Hell-Beast in Russian Iconography

*Dmitriy Antonov*

In a number of medieval and early modern Russian frescos, icons, and miniatures, the figure of a small, naked man sits on the lap of the devil. In turn, the devil sits upon or astride a two-headed monster, usually identified as the “Hell-beast.” Many viewers, including not a few tour guides, docents, and historians, believe the naked human to be the Antichrist, the devil’s son, imprisoned with his father in the lake of fire as John of Patmos described in Revelations 19.20 and 20.10. This, however, seems to be a misidentification. The small human character appears to be instead the traitor, Judas Iscariot.

Together, the three accused figures form a distinct iconographic ensemble. I refer to the ensemble as “the damned trinity” (or “anti-trinity”), and in all its forms and permutations, it seems to be related to the

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Some of the ideas in this paper were inspired by D. I. Antonov, “From a Biblical Personage to a Demon: Judas in Old-Russian Iconography,” *The Journal of Icon Studies*, 1 (2015): 77–88.

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iconography of the divine trinity of the New Testament—as its inverse. Indeed, many elements of the visual representation of Hell in medieval art appear to have been formed using recursive strategies as inverted sacral models (i.e., the Tree of Sin mirroring the Tree of Jesse or the infernal kingdom mirroring the celestial court of God).<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the structural configuration of the damned trinity resembles medieval and early modern images of God the Father holding his infant son on his lap. However, this demonic motif appeared independently from its heavenly counterpart. Nevertheless, in its numerous iterations, the damned trinity brought a kind of unity to the varied and motley medieval depictions of hell and its torments: it emphasized the deeply hierarchical structure of the Christian conceptualization of the underworld and its denizens. In this chapter, I explore variants of this demonological image in Old Russian iconography, trace its evolution through the centuries, and discuss the impact it made on Russian culture in more recent times. Before doing so, however, I analyze the motif in the wider context of Christian iconography, particularly as a variant of the widely used *Parenthood* hyperthème in medieval art. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates how, in the Russian Orthodox tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, knowledge of the diabolical was responsive to contemporary constructions of holiness. Artisans fashioned images of the devil and his foul partners in a manner that inverted and aped the persons of the Trinity, the virgin Mary (typically together with the baby Jesus), as well as other holy characters. This accorded the devil a familiarity and resonance that was easily understood by unlettered believers, while at the same time shocking sensibilities at the evil one's monstrous presumption.

### GOD THE FATHER, MARY AND ABRAHAM: PARENTHOOD AS A VISUAL MODEL

French art historian Jérôme Baschet coined the term *hyperthème* to denote conceptual models or ideas that helped to structure visual narrations.<sup>2</sup> The term can be deployed in two ways. First, it can refer to

<sup>1</sup>See D. I. Antonov and M. R. Maizul, *Anatomija Ada: Putevoditel po Drevnerusskoj Vizualnoj Demonologii* (Moscow: Forum, Neolit, 2013, 2014), 214–8.

<sup>2</sup>For more detail, see Jérôme Baschet, “Inventivité et sérialité des images médiévales. Pour une approche iconographique élargie,” *Annales: Histoire, Sciences sociales* 51.1 (1996): 93–133.

an abstract scholarly construction such as “the heavenly relations” in which Jesus, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, Mary and/or other holy figures are depicted interacting with one another in some way, or “Jesus eating food” which can be found in a variety of iconographic contexts (i.e., the Wedding at Cana or the Last Supper). In this instance, however, hyperthemes often signify dissimilar images and visual motifs; thus it is difficult to argue that artists or viewers perceived them as variations of the same idea. Second, the term can be utilized in a more confined sense to denote visual models that convey a clear and specific idea. A good example is parenthood. The father/mother-and-child dyad can be represented in a number of ways, but the most widely diffused image in Christian art shows the Christ child (or sometimes John the Baptist) sitting on the parent’s lap or *in sinu*, that is, “in his/her bosom.” If the model shows mother and child, it tends to signal also the idea of the mother’s former pregnancy; if it represents father and infant, then the implication is that the father possesses, protects, or guards his offspring. While the visual model *in sinu* sometimes gave prominence to different characters and often signified different motifs, all such motifs can be considered variations of the same hypertheme. Thus, this latter usage of the term offers an effective tool for iconographic analysis.

In the Christian tradition, the *in sinu* model has been used extensively in connection with the iconography of the holy mother of God. In a number of icons and frescoes, Jesus is depicted on Mary’s lap as she sits regally enthroned. In two especially influential iconographic models that came to Russia from Byzantium (and which subsequently gave rise to multiple new iconographic types of the mother of God in the Slavic world), Mary holds the baby Jesus in her hands. The first is called *Odigitria* (from the Greek *Οδηγήτια*, “the one who shows the way”); it depicts Jesus blessing the people with his hand outstretched. The second is called *Eleusa* (from the Greek *έλεος*, “compassion”), in which the infant savior presses his cheek tenderly against his mother’s. These arrangements are visually similar to the “child on its parent’s lap” motif described above, though Mary’s lap is not depicted. The iconographic type referred to in Russian as *Znamenie* (“sign”) bears an even stronger similarity to the *in sinu* model: in it, the baby Jesus is depicted at Mary’s breast between her outstretched arms. The *Znamenie* icons emphasized the idea of the miraculous conception of God by the holy

Virgin.<sup>3</sup> In European art there also appeared the Ann Mettercia model (*Germ.* Anna Selbdritt, *Ital.* Anna Metterza) which is, Ann, Mary and baby Jesus depicted or carved together, usually on each other's lap.

Medieval Russian and European artists also used the *in sinu* model in their depictions of Abraham, together with his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. Typically, the three are shown holding little figures on their laps which are usually naked or clad in white robes. Often, they wrap the tiny characters in the folds of their garments. These are the souls of the righteous, protected "in the bosom of Abraham," a refuge known widely throughout Jewish tradition and mentioned in the gospel of Luke in the context of the story of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:22). While theologians have debated the precise nature of this refuge, in Christian art it was depicted as a specific location in Paradise. The image of the three Patriarchs holding righteous Jews on their laps became a commonplace in Byzantine and Russian depictions of the Last Judgment, and eventually appeared as a distinct motif in a number of representations.

A third example is the divine trinity of the New Testament. Unlike its counterpart in the Old Testament (in which three angels sit at the table of Abraham as in Genesis 18), the New Testament trinity presents God the Father as an old man (despite theological prohibitions against such depictions in the Russian and wider European traditions), Jesus (generally depicted around the time of his Passion—that is, in his early 30s), and the Holy Spirit (usually represented as a dove). There exists a famous variant of this composition in Russian iconography called *Otechestvo*, "Paternity," which depicts Jesus as a young boy sitting on his Father's lap.<sup>4</sup>

According to Baschet, all these motifs are variations of the "divine parenthood" hypertheme in European art. However, "divinity" was not always an attribute of the parent to which an artist alluded; indeed, this hypertheme could function in opposing visual contexts. Thus, a similar

<sup>3</sup>For Greek and Russian icons of that type see, for instance, the web-gallery "Christian Art: Icons, Murals, Mosaics" at <http://www.icon-art.info/gallery.php?lng=en>. The Russian version of the site contains more images. See: <http://www.icon-art.info/gallery.php?lng=ru>, accessed August 2, 2017.

<sup>4</sup>This iconographic model followed European patterns. For examples, see "Christian Art: Icons, Murals, Mosaics," [http://www.icon-art.info/topic.php?lng=ru&top\\_id=3](http://www.icon-art.info/topic.php?lng=ru&top_id=3), accessed August 2, 2017.

*in sinu* model was often used in connection with the figures of Lucifer or Hades. These infernal personifications were frequently depicted holding or trying to hold people’s souls, which, of course, returns us to our central theme: demonology.

### THE ANTI-TRINITY

From the eleventh century onward, visual representations of the Last Judgment proliferated in various media: in ivory carvings, miniatures, frescos, mosaics. The lower part of such images was invariably reserved for depictions of the Inferno. Three characters generally dominated this part of the composition: the first was the Hell-beast, depicted as a serpent or hybrid creature with two heads that swallowed or spewed out sinners; the second was the devil, generally presented as a large man wearing a loin-cloth, sitting astride the two-headed monster as if on a throne; the third figure was a small naked youth sitting *in sinu diaboli* together with his master Satan. Variants of this arrangement were also possible: in a fresco in the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Virgin at Snetogorsky monastery near Pskov (painted in 1313), for instance, the devil is depicted seated upon the back of a two-headed dragon. In its left hand, the creature holds the figure of the naked youth.

In the wider European iconographic tradition, the small figure could easily be interpreted as the Antichrist, in accordance with the epithet given to him by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2.3: the son of perdition. A well-known example of this usage can be seen in a twelfth-century miniature from Herrad of Landsberg’s *Hortus Deliciarum* (*Garden of Delights*). Though the nude figure on the devil’s lap does not exhibit any demonic attribute or trait, the inscription next to it reads: “Antichrist.” This, however, remains an uncertain identification. There is little evidentiary basis for asserting that this, or other, similar figures depicted in other European miniatures or frescos are intended to represent the apocalyptic enemy of the church. Indeed, in the case of Herrad’s work, we are dealing not with the medieval original, but with an early nineteenth-century copy, as the original manuscript perished in a fire in 1870. The inscription could easily have been modified or added when the facsimile was produced in 1818. Thus, it might well reflect the interpretation of Christian Maurice Engelhardt who made the

copy.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, there are markers and inscriptions on a vast number of medieval European images that identify similar figures on the devil's lap as Judas. This is not particularly surprising as the gospels do not use the epithet "son of perdition" exclusively for the Antichrist. The term is also used in John 17.12 in connection with the former apostle.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Judas was regarded as the greatest reprobate in human history, a figure who personified the sins of betrayal, avarice and despair.<sup>6</sup> In statuary and frescoes, he is often identified by the sack or bag he holds in his hands—the receptacle for the blood money he received for betraying Christ. In other instances, the name "Judas" is inscribed next to the former apostle, as in the eleventh-century Judgment Day fresco in the church of Sant'Angelo in Formis, Italy, near Capua.<sup>7</sup> Barring examples with such explicit identifications, however, experts sometimes have difficulty distinguishing between the Antichrist and Judas. So, for example, a well-known late eleventh-century mosaic in the Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta on Torcello Island in the Venetian lagoon shows Satan or Hades holding a white-clad figure whose posture copies his own (Fig. 6.1). Some art historians believe that the smaller figure is the Antichrist (mimicking the devil), based upon the precedent of Herrad of Landsberg's *Hortus Deliciarum*. But the majority of specialists maintain that the figure is Judas.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On the *Hortus Deliciarum* see, for example, *The Hortus Deliciarum of Herrad of Hohenbourg (Landsberg, 1176–96)* ed. Rosalie Green et al. (London: Warburg Institute, 1979).

<sup>6</sup>The hanged figure of Judas in medieval art became an effective representation of despair. For more detail, see J. R. Depold "How They Will Suffer Pain: Death and Damnation in the Holkham Bible" (MA thesis, California State University, 2009), 51–2 and 82–5; Alexander Murray *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, vol. 2: *The Curse on Self-Murder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 323–31; Janet Robson "Judas and the Franciscans: Perfidy Pictured in Lorenzetti's Passion Cycle at Assisi," *The Art Bulletin* 86.1 (2004): 31–57 on 32–3. See also: Portuguese F. Baum "The Medieval Legend of Judas Iscariot," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 31.3 (1916): 481–632; Annette Weber "The Hanged Judas of Freiburg Cathedral: Sources and Interpretations," in *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other. Visual Representation and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. Eva Frojmovic, 165–88 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

<sup>7</sup>Jérôme Baschet, *Les justices de l'au-delà. Les représentations de l'enfer en France et en Italie (XIIe–XVe siècle)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1993), 200.

<sup>8</sup>Bernard McGinn, "Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. Werner Verbeke, Daniel Verhelst, and Andries Welkenhuysen, 1–48 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1988), 10; Baschet, *Les justices*, 193, n. 160; Luther Link, *The Devil: A Mask without a Face* (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), 114.

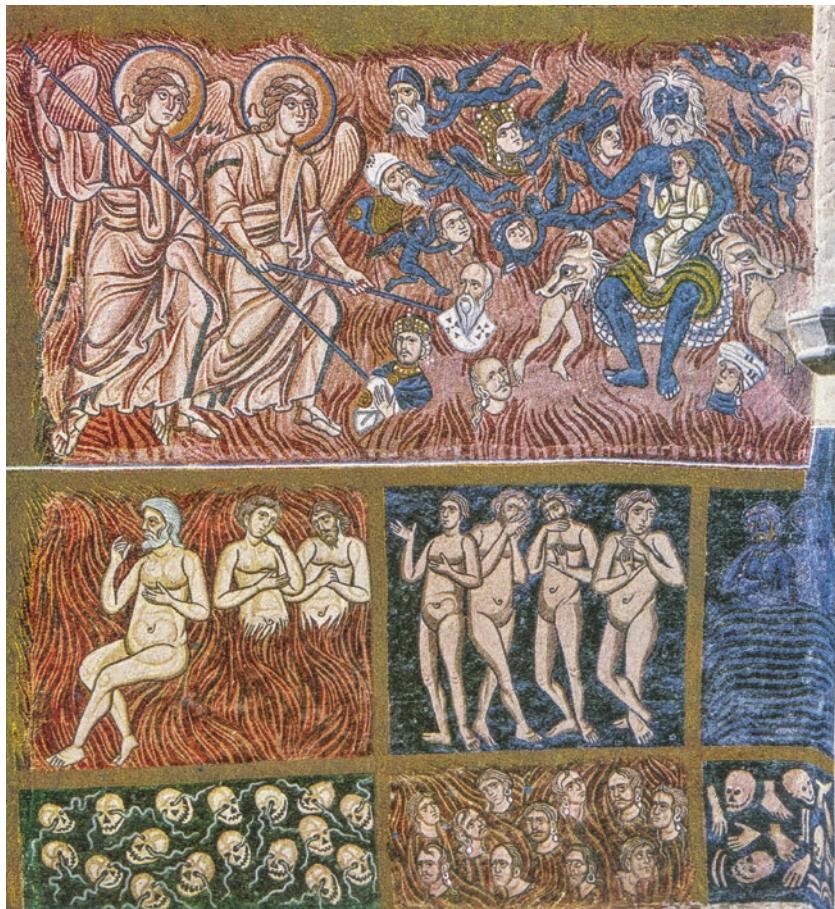


Fig. 6.1 The Last Judgment, detail from a XII century fresco, Torcello Island basilica, Venice, Italy. © Realy Easy Star/Alamy Stock Photo

While such uncertain readings are possible for European iconographic representations, in Old Russian iconography they are almost impossible: the figure on Satan's lap is invariably Judas Iscariot. Indeed, I know of no instance where a figure sitting in such a configuration might be identified as the Antichrist.<sup>9</sup> Following Byzantine precedents, Russian artists,

<sup>9</sup>For more detail see: D. I. Antonov and M. R. Maizuls, *Demony i Greshniki v Drevnerusskoj Ikonografii: Semiotika Obraza* (Moscow: Indrik, 2011), 184–91.

whether they were illuminators, icon- or fresco-painters, depicted Satan sitting on a Hell-beast or dragon that is devouring sinners. The former apostle looks directly at the viewer (he is almost never shown in profile) and he is holding the sack containing the thirty pieces of silver (on some icons the bag is reminiscent of a knotted scarf), an imprescriptible emblem of his betrayal and lust for money.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, Judas is not the only iconographic figure depicted holding a moneybag who is intended to convey the sinful acquisition of wealth. The sack of coins is a consistent marker of rapacity and other sins emanating from avarice. In Russian illuminated manuscripts of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, demons of cupidity are frequently portrayed with this device.<sup>11</sup> The moneybag can also be seen in the hands of those consigned to hell for their greed.<sup>12</sup> Still, in Christian art, the moneybag is the most common device used to denote Judas; it is his “coat of arms,” the marker most often deployed by artists to help identify him in visual representations.

The figure on the devil’s lap is often captioned “Judas” in Russian iconography. In some instances, however, he is described in even greater detail. For example, the text on one miniature reads: “Сатана съ Иудою предателемъ мучатся во веки (The Satan, together with Judas the betrayer, in pain for all time).”<sup>13</sup> Manuals for icon painters, known as *Litsevye Podlinniki*, prescribed that the devil be shown holding “Judas, fiery, on (Satan’s) lap” in representations of the Last Judgment—in many

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, the sixteenth-century icon of the Last Judgement from the State Hermitage collection (Inventory No ERI-230; Published in: *Sinai. Vizantija. Rus’*. *Pravoslavnoe Iskusstvo s 6 po nachlo 20 v. Katalog vystavki*, ed. O Badley, E. Brunner, and Yu. Pyatnitskiy (London: State Hermitage; Fund of St. Catherine, 2000), R-32.

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, the late eighteenth-century illuminated *Life of St. Basil the Younger* in the Library of the Russian Academy of Science (Stroganov MS 63, f. 96) or the *Sinodik* (a miscellany of texts devoted to otherworldly rewards and punishments) from the eighteenth century (St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, F. I. MS 733, f. 119).

<sup>12</sup>See, for example, the Old Believer illuminated miscellany from the eighteenth century in which avaricious souls are shown being tortured in Hell with sacks in their hands: St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, F. 359, MS 194, f. 103. The inscription reads: *Сребролюбцы отидут в червь неусыпающей* (The avaricious will go to undying worms). Characters with purses around their necks also regularly appear in medieval European representations of Hell.

<sup>13</sup>N. V. Pokrovskiy, *Strashnyj Sud v Pamiatnikah Vixantijskogo I Russkogo Iskusstva* (Odessa: Tipigrafija A. Shultse, 1887), 91.

cases, painters rendered the figure in a blazing red.<sup>14</sup> The idea that Judas is imprisoned in hell together with the devil was also grounded in various medieval and early modern Christian texts. For example, in the vision of Gregory from the widely disseminated eleventh-century *Life of St. Basil the Younger*, Arian heretics are described as being tortured after the last judgment “in the same place as the devil … and all his demons and the traitor Judas.”<sup>15</sup>

A third character completes the ensemble: this is Hell personified in the form of a two-headed beast or dragon. The Hell-beast is a figure of considerable symbolic complexity. While it serves as the devil’s throne, it can also be interpreted as a representation of the unremitting gluttony of the Inferno, gobbling up sinners with at least one of its hideous mouths. The serpent’s yawning maw was one of the most frequent representations of Hell in medieval art; united with the Hell-beast it formed a very menacing—though frequently diminutive—image (Fig. 6.2).

At the end of the fifteenth century, Russian illustrators and artisans replaced the fiery river that had traditionally been placed at the center of compositions of the Last Judgment with the undulating figure of the snake. The serpent’s long body was covered with a number of rings, each of which was filled or surrounded with small figures of demons. The circlets represented *mytarstva*, the post-mortem trial of the soul—a form of testing that was supposed to take place in the air, as the souls of the dead proceed from this world to the foot of God’s throne. Along the way, the souls had to pass a series of aerial stations patrolled by demons. Each station governed a particular sin, and the demons waited there to accuse and test the migrating souls; if a passing soul had failed to confess a sin while alive, the demons tried to snatch it and claim it for hell. At the same time, the serpent’s presence was intended to remind the viewer of humanity’s fall from grace in the Garden of Eden. Thus, from the late fifteenth century the Hell-beast acquired a new symbolic resonance, as it was now frequently depicted releasing the huge serpent from one of its mouths.<sup>16</sup>

The iconographic motif of the damned trinity in Russian Last Judgment compositions (and in some European images) revealed

<sup>14</sup> F. I. Buslaev, “Literatura Russkih Ikonopisnukh Podlinnikov,” in *Sochinenija F. I. Buslaeva*, vol. 2 (Saint-Petersburg: ORJAS, 1910), 136. This is based on two eighteenth-century copies.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Moscow, Russian State Library, MS F. 98, no. 375, f. 194v.

<sup>16</sup> See examples in Antonov and Maizuls *Anatomija Ada*, 109–13.



**Fig. 6.2** The Last Judgment, detail from a late XVIII century Russian icon, Cherepovets Museum, Russia. © Ivan Vdovin/Alamy Stock Photo

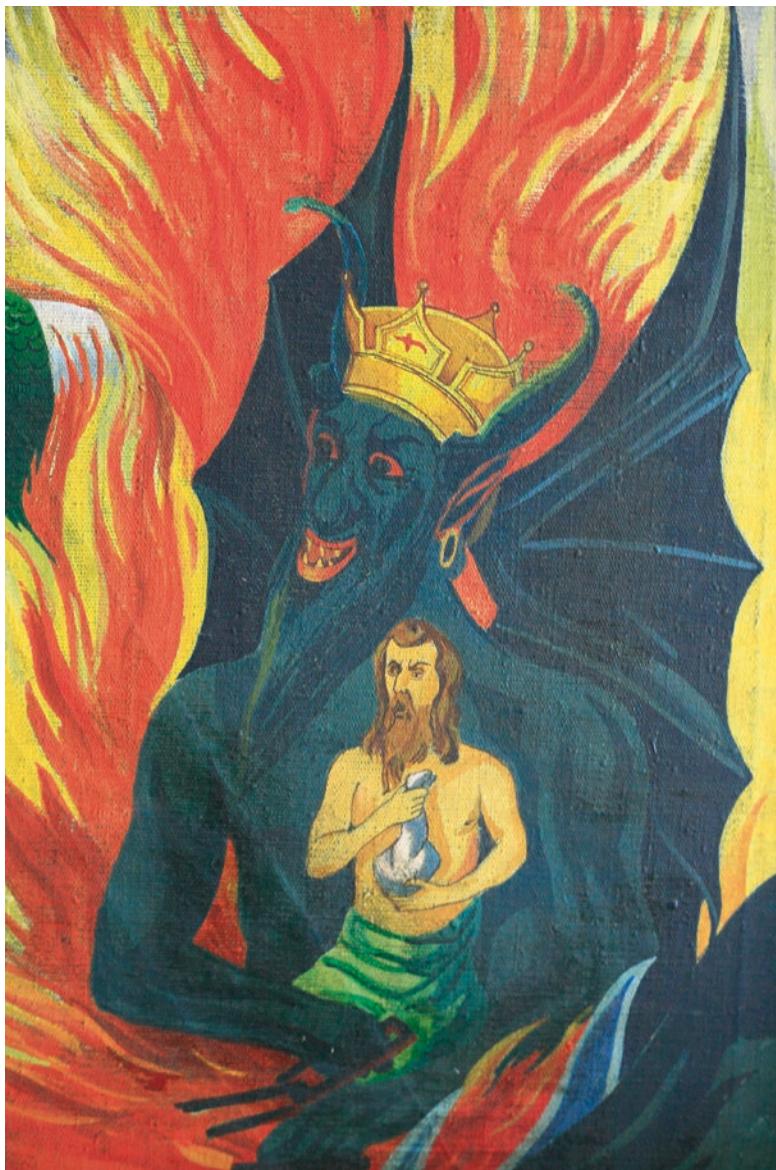
the intrinsically ambivalent status of Satan: he is a regal character with shackled legs or feet, while the Hell-beast below him serves as both his prison and his diabolical throne. The naked figure in the devil’s hands also clearly resembles prey. Taken together, the image helped to unite the important theological idea that fallen angels are tortured in Hell alongside sinners with another popular notion: that demons are the tormentors of the souls of the damned. Eventually this cluster of ideas turned this visual model into an effective tool of accusation.

### JUDAS, FALSE TSAR DIMITRIY AND LEO TOLSTOY: THE EVOLUTION OF THE DEMONIC MOTIF

Since the sixteenth century, the damned trinity has witnessed a kind of compositional drift and appeared in a number of new visual contexts. Again and again, it has been deployed by artists as the central and most recognizable image of the underworld. This is not surprising as, together, the ensemble represented the dominant characters of the Inferno: the Hell-beast was its primary monstrosity, Lucifer was its arch-fiend, and Judas was its foremost sinner. Each time the composition appeared in new contexts, it revealed new ideas and shades of meaning. However, even when the visual environment was altered and the Hell-beast changed its shape and function, the core elements—Satan and the seated Judas—remained stable and demonstrated a key idea, namely, that sinners are the children of the devil.

The Hell-beast’s ability to change forms seems to appear first in iconic depictions of Christ’s Descent into Hell. One of the foremost examples can be seen in a Vladimir-Suzdal icon from the final quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Unlike in scenes of the Last Judgment, Hell looks here like a red-skinned giant—the massive figure holds on his lap a winged Satan, who in turn grips Judas; the latter is depicted as a naked, childlike figure who clutches his moneybag. Hell’s countenance and protective posture transform him from the devil’s throne into an impressive father-figure. The infernal giant has two faces: one above and another below. The upper face is a bestial visage; it looks straight up and opens its yawning mouth, releasing the souls of the righteous. Hell’s former prisoners issue from the maw and proceed one-by-one toward the Redeemer, who

<sup>17</sup>Vladimir-Suzdal Museum. Inventory No. B-6300/2755, published in Antonov and Maizuls, *Demony*, colored illustration XII; see also Antonov and Maizuls *Anatomija Ada*, 162.



**Fig. 6.3** Devil with Judas Iscariot, detail from a XIX century Russian icon, Izborsk, Pskov region, Russia. © Jon Arnold Images Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

happily receives them. The lower face is that of a man: depicted *en face*, it stares out towards the viewers of the icon. The configuration gives the impression that the giant’s head has burst open, as if it were split with a blade; the edges of the resulting “wound” form the grinning teeth of the upper animal-like head. The figure of Judas, the son of perdition, is labeled with his name. Together, the three figures form a ladder of infernal descent: the great two-faced monster as the ultimate jail and “father” for all evil creatures; the devil as the master of sinners, still subordinate to Hell (its “son” and prisoner); and on the lower step the small naked figure that represents the main sinner of humankind and all the doomed souls of the underworld.

Variants of the “red giant” damned-trinity model occur in a number of icons of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries as well as in some works of later provenance.<sup>18</sup> Some notable examples are kept in the collection of the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, Massachusetts. These have been described by Henry Hundt and Raoul Smith, who argue that the unusual image of the two-faced red giant was influenced by the headless figures of *blemmyae* (or *Acephali*), stock characters in classical and medieval iconography and travel writing.<sup>19</sup>

In all its various manifestations, the “anti-Trinity” image became especially popular in seventeenth-century Muscovy, in a time of widespread political and social conflict, particularly in connection with the eschatological expectations of the frightening year of 1666, associated as it was with the apocalyptic number of the beast.<sup>20</sup> Throughout this period, demonological and eschatological themes that had started to intensify during the late fifteenth century finally permeated Russian art and literature. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, as Peter the

<sup>18</sup> Compare this to an icon from Yaroslavl from the end of the sixteenth century (Yaroslavl State Historical, Architectural and Art Museum. Inventory No. I-1754, KP-21119) available at “Christian Art: Icons, Murals, Mosaics,” [http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=ru&mst\\_id=4303](http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=ru&mst_id=4303), accessed August 2, 2017, or the miniature from the illuminated early seventeenth-century bible in State Historical Museum, Department of manuscripts, Vakhrameev Collection, MS No. 1. fol. 914.

<sup>19</sup> Henry A. Hundt and Raoul Smith “A Teratological Source of Hellhead,” *Journal of Icon Studies* (2013) [http://www.museumofrussianicons.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/March\\_2013\\_HundtSmithHellheadFinal.pdf](http://www.museumofrussianicons.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/March_2013_HundtSmithHellheadFinal.pdf), accessed July 28, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> On eschatological expectations in Russia in the seventeenth century see, for instance: Oparina T. A. *Ivan Nasedka I polemicheskoe bogoslovie Kievskoy mitropolii* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1998).

Great (d. 1725) transformed the Tsardom of Muscovy into the Russian Empire—bringing it increasingly into the wider European orbit—the use of these themes began to wane in mass culture. However, from the late seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, eschatological expectations were pronounced among the so-called Old Believers, that is, Orthodox Christians who split from the mainstream Russian Church in the 1660s (in response to the reforms of Patriarch Nikon) and formed diverse communities throughout the country. Though the various Old Believer denominations developed theological differences among themselves, they were largely united in the conviction that the world had fallen into irretrievable evil and that the “final” Antichrist was imminent after the machinations of his predecessors—Patriarch Nikon (d. 1681) who had “destroyed” the Orthodox religion and tsar Alexey Mikhailovitch (d. 1676) who had allowed him to do so.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, in a number of the Old Believers’ illuminated manuscripts there are eye-catching and terrifying glimpses of hell. In many of these codices, the damned trinity becomes the core image that structures the cycle of infernal torments. Quite often, the manuscript folia are large and covered with brightly painted images of hellfire, demons, and other diabolical motifs; some leaves are so large that they must be elaborately unfolded across the table like a map, disclosing images of infernal lamentation and suffering. For instance, in one nineteenth-century codex, there is a folio page that must be unfolded several times, first to the right then downwards and upwards. When the concertina-like page is fully opened, Satan dominates the expanded space: he sits in the flames of Hell on the back of the now-familiar two-headed monster. Judas completes the arrangement, sitting upon the Satanic lap as if upon a throne and behind him there is a bristling crowd of demons (quite often in these depictions, Judas’s money bag is exaggerated to the point where it looks like an enormous sack).<sup>22</sup> In a number of miniatures, some of them as

<sup>21</sup> On the Schism of the seventeenth century see, for example: Robert Crummey, *The Old Believers and The World of Antichrist: The Vyg Community and The Russian State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970).

<sup>22</sup> St. Petersburg, Institute of Russian Literature, Drevlekhranilishe (Department of manuscripts). Opis’ 24, MS. 13, f. 218. See also St. Petersburg, Institute of Russian Literature, Northern Dvina Collection MS 152, f. 82. This Old Believers’ manuscript from the 1820s includes a large foldout folio page with a sizeable miniature depicting Hell. In it, the devil, surrounded by his demons, is placed on a large “rose” of fire with sinners’ heads looking out from within its “petals” flames. Judas sits with his bag of silver coins on Satan’s lap. Similar examples can be found in Antonov and Maizuls *Anatomija Ada*, 225.

large as the folio page, the Hell-beast was abandoned, and only Judas was depicted *in sinu diaboli* (Fig. 6.3).<sup>23</sup>

Another variant of the damned trinity motif that became popular with Old Believers appeared in a composition called “The Fruits of the Passion of Christ” that was first created around 1682 in Moscow, following earlier European patterns. In this image, the hanged Christ is surrounded by figures associated with his triumph: these include death defeated and the devil in chains. Satan sits in Hell’s open jaws, holding Judas, sometimes with—and sometimes without—his traditional money-bag.<sup>24</sup> Once again, Hell acquires a new signification, transforming itself from an infernal throne or diabolical father figure into Satan’s fanged jail. The devil’s kingship is strongly diminished as the iconography stresses his status as a defeated enemy. Still, the inclusion of Judas indicates Lucifer’s continuing status as the master of sinners.

With its increasing tendency towards shifting signification(s), the damned trinity ensemble ultimately acquired a fundamental symbolic flexibility. So, while some core ideas (such as the parenthood hyper-theme, the infernal setting, and the devil’s guardianship of a minor figure seated on his lap) remained stable, new personages emerged to replace Judas, while the Hell-beast often disappeared altogether. These modifications helped nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists to draw parallels between the negative characters they sought to vilify and their imagined biblical precedents. This allowed them to diabolize modern secular figures using a symbolic/semantic vocabulary that was familiar to their audiences.

One new scene that appeared in a series of Old Believer manuscripts and miniatures of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries depicted Satan seated and surrounded by a number of demonic figures. One of them, often shown with a lion-like mane, is placed on the devil’s lap in a manner reminiscent of Judas. The orbital figures are demons or cardinal sins as in a nineteenth-century Old Believers’ miscellany; the identity of the leonine figure is sometimes unclear, but in other cases it represents

<sup>23</sup>See examples in Antonov and Maizuls, *Demony*, 275; Antonov and Maizuls, *Anatomija Ada*, 205–7. Sometimes the Devil was depicted astride the Hell-beast without Judas. For an eighteenth-century miniature, see Antonov and Maizuls, *Demony*, 27.

<sup>24</sup>O. B. Kuznetsova *Protsvetshij Krest. Ikonografija Plody Stradanij Hristovyh iz Tserkvej, Muzeev i Chastnyh Sobranij Rossii, Germanii, Italii, Finlandii, Shvejtsarii* (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), nos. 1–38. See also Antonov and Maizuls, *Anatomija Ada*, 163.

the devil's "preferred" sin—chosen by the illuminator or the author of the text.<sup>25</sup> For instance, in the same manuscript, the creature bears the label "fornication."

At some point, probably during the nineteenth century, the motif became a tool of accusation and visual polemics. Thus, for example, in 1883 an intriguing fresco appeared in Znamenskaya church in the Russian village of Tazovo, in the Kursk region.<sup>26</sup> In it, Lucifer is depicted as beardless; this was typical for modern European depictions, but not for Old Russian iconography. On his lap sits a naked, bearded figure, one with conspicuously recognizable features.<sup>27</sup> It is none other than the great author Leo Tolstoy, who emerged as a critic of Russian Orthodoxy in the 1880s and gradually established his own religious philosophy—a course of action which ultimately led to his excommunication in 1901. It appears that the priest and the parishioners in Tazovo consciously decided to place Tolstoy where Judas was traditionally situated, thereby transforming the famous writer into the devil's spawn.

In both of the examples (the Old Believers' miniatures and the fresco from Tazovo), the damned trinity motif maintains its stability even though the central figure in the ensemble has shifted. These changes, of course, stimulate new readings and produce what I propose to call a "hypermotif," that is, a flexible model with a stable semantic core (in this case, the stable elements include: the ladder of evil figures, a character functioning as the son of the devil, and another character operating as a new "Judas"). This core distinguishes the hypermotif from the hypertheme, which is typically much larger and less specific in meaning. Thus, for example, the hypertheme "parenthood" and its most conspicuous variant *in sinu* simply present the idea that "A is a child of B," despite whatever holy, neutral, or evil characters might be depicted. By contrast, the hypermotif can develop, shift, or replace figures within a group while retaining the composition's original meaning. Thus, the hypermotif can function as an effective visual tool that manages to hint and infer, creating strong links between the depicted and the original character(s). It thereby establishes a bridge between figure A (the one remembered) and

<sup>25</sup> See Antonov and Maizuls, *Anatomija Ada*, 217–3.

<sup>26</sup> The work has been removed from the wall and is now kept in the Museum of History of Religion in Saint Petersburg.

<sup>27</sup> Available at <https://shkolazhizni.ru/culture/articles/54774/>, accessed August 2, 2017.

B (the one observed). Of course, such conceptual links can have different meanings and provoke different reactions, from straightforward comparison (as with Tolstoy) to mockery (as with the *drôlerie*, animals and monsters which sometimes replace biblical characters, priests, prelates, and so on. in European manuscript marginalia).<sup>28</sup> In Russian iconography, playful inversions and comparisons were limited as symbolic tools of this sort were normally reserved for more serious purposes.

In its many incarnations, the anti-Trinity hypermotif eventually came to influence Russian literature and folklore. In early modern Russia, for example, there were tales which claimed that Judas resided on the devil’s lap in the fires of Hell. In “The Tale of How Boris Godunov Stole the Moscow Throne Through Iniquity,” written soon after Vasily Shuiskiy came to power in 1606, the motif was linked to False Dmitry, a pretender to the tsar’s throne who succeeded in seizing Moscow and its crown in 1605, only to be killed the next year. The self-styled tsar was demonized and characterized as “a new Judas” by many authors both at the time of his insurrection and after he was assassinated. In “The Tale of Boris Godunov,” False Dmitry’s enormous pride was indicated to the reader by the fact that he wanted to be “above Satan himself” in the depths of Hell, and intended “to take the place of Judas in the bosom of the devil.”<sup>29</sup> Another example is the Old Believer’s “Tale of a Seer called Timophey,” written in c.1680. In it, the visionary claims that he has seen hell’s fiery river with his own eyes and that, in the midst of the flames, Judas was being tortured alongside the devil.<sup>30</sup> While the latter author could borrow his description from popular texts such as the aforementioned “Vision of Gregory,” the former was almost certainly referring to the damned trinity motif, and expected his readers to recall the brightly painted scene, so familiar from icons, miniatures, and frescos.

The motif of Judas sitting on the devil’s lap appears frequently in vernacular tales from Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia (where it appears to have been first recorded in the nineteenth century). Some oral stories

<sup>28</sup>On European *drôlerie* see, for instance, J. Wirth, *Les marges à drôleries des manuscrits gothiques, 1250–1350* (Genève: Droz, 2008).

<sup>29</sup>*Pamjatniki Drevnej Russkoj Pismennosti, Otnosjashiesja k Smutnomu Vremeni* (Saint Petersburg: Russian Imperial Academy of Science, 1909), 166.

<sup>30</sup>A. V. Pigin, *Videnija Potustoronnego Mira v Russkoj Rukopisnoj Knizhnosti* (Saint Petersburg: Dmitriy Bulanin, 2006), 252. On the tale itself, see 208–17.

claim that, even as a child, Judas was dandled on Satan's lap.<sup>31</sup> Others state that Lucifer's lap was a space reserved for self-murderers or for those who had not been forgiven by God.<sup>32</sup> One legend even attempts to explain why Judas was not able to leave Hell after the resurrection of Christ. It claims that as Jesus harrowed Hell, he asked the arch-traitor three times whether he was comfortable sitting on Satan's lap. As he did so, the devil prodded the former apostle's sides, urging him to answer in the affirmative; after Judas' third "yes," the redeemer left his betrayer where he had found him. According to the tale, Judas has remained *in sinu diaboli* ever since.<sup>33</sup> It appears that virtually all vernacular legends of this kind stem from or build upon the damned trinity hypermotif, which has influenced both the visual and textual traditions of the East Slavic world from at least the sixteenth century.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that until the twentieth century, the damned trinity visual ensemble played a prominent role in East Slavic, and especially Russian, culture. It gradually moved beyond its traditional situation in Orthodox iconography to appear in historical and visionary tales as well as in oral legends. In the process, it slowly became a hypermotif, a flexible model that helped to produce new ideas that were conceptually linked to the initial one. That is, it became a new way to know the Old Enemy.

From the late fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, eschatological anxiety throughout Muscovite Rus together with the growing influence of Western European artistic modalities (with their tradition of evocative infernal imagery) provoked the growth and elaboration of a homegrown Russian visual demonology. Figures of infernal creatures became increasingly common both in public and private images, in ecclesiastical space and manuscript illumination. Thus, the anti-Trinity became a critical component of the

<sup>31</sup>This belief is found with the Lemkos in Western Ukraine, Poland and Slovakia. O. V. Belova, *Narodnaya Bibliya: Vostochnoslavianskie Etiologicheskie Legendy* (Moscow: Indrik, 2004), 337, also 308, 346 and 402. See also *Slavyanskie drevnosti: Etnolingvisticheskij Slovar*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otoshnenija, 1995–2012), 430.

<sup>32</sup>O. V. Belova, *Narodnaya Bibliya*, 402.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 308; *Slavyanskie drevnosti*, vol. 2, 430.

iconographic vocabulary of the time.<sup>34</sup> As the image united a number of important ideas—the infernal hierarchy, the son(s) of the devil, punishment for sins—it became useful in a polemical context, particularly for those engaged in theological and political debate.

While the influence of the damned trinity hypermotif has faded in Russian culture since the early twentieth century, the closely related image of the money-grubbing Judas has remained popular in mass culture. Indeed, while the Hell-beast and the devil largely receded from view in communist society, the sinner who betrayed his teacher for financial gain remains a potent symbol of avarice. His image has been used in caricatures throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and his identity is often unmistakable, as artists frequently retain the ancient idea of captioning their images with his name. Shortly after famed Russian author Boris Pasternak won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1958, for example, he was savagely accused and mocked by communist authorities. At a hastily organized demonstration, “they gathered a few volunteers … about thirty people; they had no experience of public protests, since there had been none—even loyally supportive ones—for a long time. They hurriedly prepared placards emblazoned with the slogan, “Judas, get out of the USSR”; the accompanying visual image emphasized Pasternak’s supposed Jewish features, and showed him greedily dipping his hand, Judas-like, into a sack filled with dollar bills.<sup>35</sup> More recently, the Russian Communist Party website featured a caricature in which Boris Yeltsin was equated to Cain, while Mikhail Gorbachev was likened to Judas, again with the tell-tale sack of money.<sup>36</sup> The lampoon is not unique—those who view the fall of the USSR as a national disaster and the result of a “betrayal” of the country’s leaders have made frequent recourse to the image of the former apostle.

<sup>34</sup>For more on Russian visual demonology see Antonov and Maizuls, *Demony*. On the eschatological expectations of the period, see Michael S. Flier, “Till the End of Time: The Apocalypse in Russian Historical Experience Before 1500,” in *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice under the Tsars*, ed. Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Green (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

<sup>35</sup>D. L. Bykov, *Boris Pasternak* (Moscow: Molodaja Gvardija, 2007), 776.

<sup>36</sup>Available at the Russian Communist Party website, <https://kprf.ru/history/soviet/130364.html>, accessed August 2, 2017.

Such examples indicate just how effective and flexible visual models can be even when they seek recourse in quite specific motifs. The explanatory potential of visual hyperthemes and hypermotifs is considerable; this enables them to transcend epochs and survive great shifts in cultural environment. This clearly happened in early modernity as artists and craftsmen availed themselves of the damned trinity hypermotif, an artifact of Orthodox iconography of the first millennium, and reconfigured it to suit new cultural and political circumstances.

PART III

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## Knowing in Practice



## CHAPTER 7

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# Curious Companions: Spirit Conjuring and Alchemy in the Sixteenth Century

*Frank Klaassen*

In 1533 Sir William Neville confessed to employing two magicians and bewailed that this had led to his deception and downfall. It all began when he hired the cunning man, Nash of Cirencester, to seek the retrieval of some silver spoons, but when Nash began to make predictions about an imminent and dramatic rise in Neville's fortunes he became more deeply embroiled in magic. For a second son in the unsuccessful arm of the Neville family, this was welcome news. In turn, Nash put him in touch with another magician, Richard Jones, of Oxford, who confirmed Nash's prediction, putatively through visions attained by spirit conjuring. Not only would Neville take up his father's patrimony, he would also become Earl of Warwick. This bright future could be attained so long as the young nobleman was prepared to seize the opportunities that presented themselves in an immanent period of instability that would in part result from the death of the king. Neville evidently tried to make the necessary preparations. He sought financial support from some of his less wealthy friends in exchange for the promise of significant offices when he

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took up the title of Earl. One of these, Thomas Wood, and his chaplain, Edward Leigh, brought it all to an ignoble end by reporting his activities to the crown, resulting in the arrest of Neville and Jones.<sup>1</sup>

William Neville's confession and the associated papers reveal a curious aspect of magic practice in the sixteenth century. During a visit to Oxford, Neville reported, he visited Jones's rooms.

[T]here at oxford in the said johns chambre [I] did se certaine styllatoires alembykes & odre Instrumentes of glasse and also a septer & odre thinges which he said did appertaine to the coniuracion of the iiii kynges and also an image of white metall and in a boxe a serpents skynne as he sayd, And dyverse bokes & thinges wherof one was a boke which he said was my lorde cardynalles having pictures in it like angelles. he told vs y<sup>t</sup> he colde make ringes of gold to optayne favoure of great men & sayd y<sup>t</sup> my lorde cardynall hadde such and promysed my said broder & me eythre of vs one of them & also he shewed <me> a ronde thing lyke a balle of cristall.<sup>2</sup>

Together with evidence from the rest of William's letter, this passage makes clear that Jones was a fairly conventional necromantic practitioner. The sceptre he mentions was a tool regularly used in conjuring rites. The conjuration of the four kings was a very common late medieval invocation.<sup>3</sup> The book with angels in it was probably also a ritual magic book and quite possibly another work of conjuring, since necromantic

<sup>1</sup> For most of the papers relating to this case see "Henry VIII: December 1532, 16–31," in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 5, 1531–1532*, ed. James Gairdner (London: HMSO, 1880), 681–700, nos. 1679–81. For the letter of accusation of Thomas Wood, see "Henry VIII: March 1533, 21–5," in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 6, 1533*, 115–21, no. 258. See also George Lyman Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1956), 62.

<sup>2</sup> London, National Archives, SP 1/72/175<sup>r</sup>. The manuscript is mutilated at the edges. Angle brackets indicate lacunae and contain conjectural readings.

<sup>3</sup> For discussions and conjurations relating to the four kings see Oxford, Bodleian, Rawlinson D. 252, ff. 103<sup>r</sup>–107<sup>r</sup>; London, British Library, Sloane 3853, ff. 138–41; Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89, Sup. 38, ff. 35<sup>r</sup>–51<sup>r</sup>; Oxford, Bodleian, Rawlinson D. 252, ff. 103<sup>r</sup>–107<sup>r</sup>. Demons for theft under four kings. *Speculum astronomiae* XI, 23 and 79. "Speculum Astronomiae," in *The Speculum astronomiae and its Enigma: Astrology, Theology, and Science in Albertus Magnus and his contemporaries*, ed. Paola Zambelli (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1992), 240–1 and 44–5. Thomas Wood's letter corroborates his use of this text. Wood claims that Jones used it to achieve the vision of Warwick Castle and the Beauchamp Arms. London, National Archives SP 1/72/172<sup>r</sup>.

manuals also commonly involved angel conjuring.<sup>4</sup> It might also have been a book like *Royal 17. A. XLII*, a copy of the *Liber iuratus Honorii* (*Sworn Book of Honorius*), which contains numerous and dramatic illustrations of angels as well as angel-conjuring rituals, or a copy of the *Ars notoria*, which often incorporates illustrations of angels into its figures.<sup>5</sup> The construction of magic rings may be found in numerous medieval magic texts, including the kind of Solomonic literature he evidently practised.<sup>6</sup> Finally, crystal was the most common skrying device for conjurers. Gazing into such a stone or “balle of cristall,” either the magician or his skryer could discern and interact with the conjured spirits.<sup>7</sup>

Jones also evidently belonged to the social and intellectual demographic typical of late medieval necromancers. He lived in Oxford, suggesting he was a scholar of some kind, or at least that he represented

<sup>4</sup>Frank Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 115–55.

<sup>5</sup>On the *Liber iuratus Honorii* see Gösta Hedegård, ed. *Liber Iuratus Honorii—a Critical Edition of the Latin Version of the Sworn Book of Honorius* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2002); Richard Kieckhefer, “The Devil’s Contemplatives: The *Liber Iuratus*, the *Liber Visionum*, and Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism,” in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. Claire Fanger, 250–65 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Katelyn Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii* and the Christian Reception of Angel Magic,” in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Ideas and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. Claire Fanger, 113–50 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Jan R. Veenstra, “The *Liber Iuratus* in Berengario Ganell’s *Summa Sacre Magice*,” in *ibid.*, 151–91. The angel illustrations appear in London, British Library, *Royal 17. A. XLII*, 67<sup>v</sup>–79<sup>r</sup>. Angels commonly appear in the *notae* or magical diagrams of the *Ars notoria*. See Michael Camille, “Visual Art in Two Manuscripts of the *Ars Notoria*,” in *Conjuring Spirits*, 110–39.

<sup>6</sup>The Rings of Solomon circulate independently in manuscript as well as within compendia. Manuscript versions include: Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, II–iii–214, ff. 26<sup>v</sup>–29<sup>v</sup>; Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89, Sup. 38, ff. 211–24 and London, British Library, Sloane 3847, ff. 66<sup>v</sup>–81<sup>r</sup>. For the version in the Ganell compendium, see Veenstra, “The *Liber Iuratus*,” 152–3.

<sup>7</sup>Claire Fanger, “Virgin Territory: Purity and Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Catoptromantic Texts,” *Aries* 5.2 (2005): 200–25. For specifically English cases, see Frank Klaassen, “Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science: The Skrying Experiments of Humphrey Gilbert,” in *Invoking Angels*, 341–66; James Raine, “Divination in the Fifteenth Century by the Aid of a Magical Crystal,” *Archaeological Journal* 13 (1856): 372–4. For Central Europe see Benedek Lang, *Unlocked Books: Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 162–88.

himself in that guise. Lower level clerics, including scholars with moderate levels of education, were the group most commonly associated with necromantic magic at this time. He claimed familiarity with the very recently published *De occulta philosophia* of Henry Cornelius Agrippa, although he said it was “of very little effect,” so he was also up-to-date on the latest books on magic and, if we take his claim seriously, could also read Latin. In short, aside from not being a priest, he was a pretty typical late medieval conjurer. But in one respect he was not.

The stillatories, alembics, and other instruments of glass in his rooms are the first indication that he was not only a necromancer but also an alchemist. The equipment Neville described was expensive and specialized and Jones would have been unlikely to buy it on a whim. The records do not betray what kinds of alchemical texts Jones might have had at his disposal, but he certainly represented himself as a practitioner. In a letter he wrote to Thomas Cromwell from jail for his involvement in the Neville affair Jones not only tried to exculpate himself from the charges of magic practice but also offered his services to the crown as an alchemist. In fact, he volunteered to be locked up in the Tower of London until such time as he produced results: for twelve months if they wanted silver, eighteen for gold.<sup>8</sup> This may have been a ploy to gain a temporary reprieve from the consequences of having predicted the death of the king, but it also suggests he had some confidence in his abilities.

Historians of alchemy have noted the curious partnership of conjuring and alchemy in the seventeenth century. Laurence Principe has described a hybridization of alchemy at that time and he gives particular attention to the development of what he calls “spiritual alchemy.” He is principally interested in the roots of Robert Boyle’s theory that the philosopher’s stone can be used for communication with spirits. Although Principe cannot identify a clear alchemical source for this idea he speculates that it may have its roots in the work of John Dee and Edward Kelly.<sup>9</sup> Arguing that this sort of alchemy was more common and less peripheral to seventeenth-century traditions than Principe has suggested, Matthew Rogers describes Elias Ashmole’s theories about the “Angelicall Stone,” which Ashmole claimed “affords the Apparition of Angells, and gives a

<sup>8</sup>London, National Archives, SP 1/73/1.

<sup>9</sup>Lawrence Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and His Alchemical Quest* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 198–201.

power of conversing with them, by Dreames and Revelations.”<sup>10</sup> Rogers expands somewhat on Principe’s suggestion, arguing that the roots of Ashmole’s idea probably lie in the operations of late sixteenth-century figures like Edward Kelly and the son of John Dee, Arthur. He posits that this was transmitted from Kelly and Dee through William Blackhouse to Ashmole.<sup>11</sup> Certainly, as Rogers and Principe suggest, the development of an articulated integration of the two arts in alchemical theory probably lies in this period. This notion also doubtlessly grew out of the sorts of communities Rogers describes where both spirit conjuring and alchemy were practised. However, as the story of Richard Jones makes clear, the association between spirit conjuring and alchemy has a much longer history.

This chapter is centrally concerned with this longer history, particularly how alchemy and conjuring came to be practised by the same people. Its speculative nature makes it an essay in the true sense of the word. I will argue that this cohabitation was largely a feature of the sixteenth century but that there is no simple explanation for how it came about. Instead a variety of interrelated forces seem to lie behind it. The expansiveness of sixteenth-century natural philosophy, in particular the literature of renaissance magic, cooperated well with developed habits of associative thinking in alchemy and provided a model for the syncretic projects of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, the cohabitation of these two arts began prior to the influence of figures like Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Agrippa. The people who brought them together were practically rather than theoretically oriented and were not devotees of the renaissance mages. The fifteenth-century vernacularization and popularization of learned magic and alchemy transmitted these arts to a wider middlebrow and non-clerical audience who did not observe the same divisions as their forebears.<sup>12</sup> This process also

<sup>10</sup>In fact, Ashmole not only discusses the Angelicall Stone but also the magicall or Prospective Stone which can be used for more terrestrial matters. Elias Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, A4<sup>v</sup>–B1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>11</sup>Matthew D. Rogers, “The Angelical Stone of Elias Ashmole,” *Aries* 5.1 (2005): 61–90.

<sup>12</sup>I use the term middlebrow to refer to magicians who evidently make part or all of their living by the art and who were not in the first place intellectuals. Although they may have had some level of learning, they were in significant measure self-taught and did not have the intellectual status or motivation for publication or writing.

made both arts available to professional conjurers, who took them up simply as two possible ways to make a living. But this does not mean that the marriage was purely a by-product of these processes. Another feature of both arts that may have facilitated the marriage is their emphasis on experience as a key element in their practices. The increasing importance of experience in scientific culture at all levels helps explain why this combination spread to a significantly wider group of people during the course of the century.

### ALCHEMY AND CONJURING MAGIC IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Neither CLM 849 nor Rawlinson D. 252, the two major surviving fifteenth-century necromantic manuals, contain any hint of alchemy.<sup>13</sup> The conventional medieval texts of conjuring magic, including the *Liber iuratus Honorii*, *Clavicula Salomonis*, *Thesaurus spirituum*, and the *Holy Almandal*, also contain no mention of alchemical practice. Finally, no English court records have surfaced that reveal a practitioner specializing in both arts prior to 1527. It remains possible that there are Continental examples that have yet to come to light. The only medieval manuscript that combines necromantic magic and alchemy is Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, HS 5491. This fifteenth-century chemical, alchemical, and medical manuscript contains an unusually short Latin text of Solomonic magic (less than one folio long). If brief, it is written in the main hand of the manuscript and so was copied by someone who was also interested in alchemy. Significantly, much of the material in this codex was written in German.<sup>14</sup> The only other somewhat similar case is a fifteenth-century Spanish vernacular alchemical volume that contains a short passage from the *Liber Razielis* involving suffumigations, but not conjurations as such.<sup>15</sup> The compendium from which this was extracted includes numerous different sorts of magic. Only some of it involves explicit conjuring. If these are indications of alchemists interested in conjuring—and they may be—it is also notable that these

<sup>13</sup>For an edition of CLM 849, see Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997). There is no modern edition of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D. 252. For a discussion of this manuscript see Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, 134–55.

<sup>14</sup>For the fragment of Solomonic magic see ff. 1<sup>r</sup>–1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>15</sup>Frankfurt am Main, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Ms. Lat. Oct. 231, ff. 96<sup>r</sup>–97<sup>v</sup>.

two examples are also in vernacular manuscripts and so may reflect the vernacularization process I discuss below. To my knowledge, no other such volumes survive in western or central Europe.<sup>16</sup>

If we broaden the parameters to include the wider literature of ritual magic, we find a few medieval examples where alchemical texts travel with the *Ars notoria*, a work seeking the infusion of intellectual and spiritual gifts by angels. Sloane 3008, a fifteenth-century collection of alchemical works, includes a prayer extracted from the *Ars notoria*.<sup>17</sup> As is the case with most of the prayers from this text, unless you knew the source, one might well assume it to be an orthodox prayer for wisdom. Even assuming the scribe knew the source, it certainly would not provide anywhere near enough material to practise the art, which typically occupies an entire codex itself and could take two years to complete. Nonetheless, it remains possible that this is evidence for an alchemist who also employed this form of ritual magic. The miscellany of Richard Dove, a fifteenth-century Cistercian monk, includes a very short redaction of the *Ars notoria* together with a wide range of works including various forms of divination, astrology, and alchemy.<sup>18</sup> However, the collection does not give the impression that Dove was a serious practitioner of any kind of magic, except perhaps simple forms of divination; rather it suggests he was simply a collector of a wide variety of curious materials. He was certainly not a serious alchemist. Only München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 276 contains both a full-length *Ars notoria* together with alchemical, chemical, and medical texts.<sup>19</sup> Although its constituent texts are fourteenth-century, it is not clear that it was assembled before it entered the library of Hartmann Schedel (d. 1514) in the late fifteenth century. So although the evidence is inconclusive, fragmentary, and relatively rare, it merits further consideration.

<sup>16</sup>A manuscript owned by Ulricus Crux describes natural magic but not conjuring. See Lang, *Unlocked Books*, 206.

<sup>17</sup>London, British Library, Sloane 3008, ff. 66<sup>r</sup>–68<sup>v</sup>. For the alchemical material see ff. 1<sup>r</sup>–65<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>18</sup>London, British Library, Sloane 513, ff. 192<sup>r</sup>–195<sup>r</sup>. For the alchemical sections see for example ff. 154<sup>r</sup>–154<sup>v</sup>, 155<sup>r</sup>–168<sup>r</sup>. D. A. Bell, “A Cistercian at Oxford: Richard Dove of Buckfast and London,” *Studia Monastica* 31 (1989): 67–87.

<sup>19</sup>München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 276, ff. 26<sup>r</sup>–68<sup>v</sup> (*Ars notoria* and related material) and 112<sup>r</sup>–139<sup>v</sup> (alchemical material).

There are several ways to understand the coincidence of two different kinds of text in a medieval book. First, it could indicate that the scribe or collector collected them together though an intimate involvement in both sorts of texts whether practical or otherwise. Second, it might indicate an assumption that there was some taxonomical commonality between the texts and that they were put together as one might classify books in a library. Lastly, it all might be purely coincidental. For firm evidence that scribes saw these arts as related or that they practised both, one would like stronger evidence than this. Given that the *Ars notoria* promised complete knowledge of the seven liberal arts, it would be perfectly reasonable that a curious inquirer into the natural world might seek it out. That being said, none of the manuscripts I have cited include full versions of the *Ars notoria* except CLM 276 and this suggests, at least, that there were few dedicated *practitioners* of both arts.

More importantly, since my focus in this chapter concerns the association of alchemy with explicit spirit conjuring, it has to be emphasized that the *Ars notoria* is not centrally about achieving explosive appearances of spirits or discursive interactions with them. It offers infusion of knowledge and spiritual gifts and, at certain stages, dreams. In the case of John of Morigny it did provoke dramatic interactive visions of good and bad spirits, but in the first instance it is not a conjuring text. The infusions it seeks can take place without these kinds of waking experiential interactions. Necromantic magic by contrast tends to be heavily focused on direct, discursive interactions with spirits that frequently include visual, aural, and other sensory elements, at least for the skryer. So if these manuscripts suggest that a few scribes may have seen some kind of loose association between alchemy and ritual magic or actually practised both, they certainly do not attest to an association between conjuring magic and alchemy prior to the sixteenth century. The few alchemical manuals that do suggest such an association are tantalizing but not convincing given the brevity of the magic passages they contain.

This survey of the manuscripts confirms Principe's insistence that prior to the late fifteenth century "spiritual, supernatural, or mystical elements in alchemy remained largely absent."<sup>20</sup> By contrast, in the sixteenth century we see a dramatic increase in evidence provided by manuscripts and court transcripts and the known practices of numerous

<sup>20</sup> Principe, *Aspiring Adept*, 189.

magicians. The change is particularly dramatic in England where we find no association of alchemy with conjuring prior to 1527 and only loose associations between the *Ars notoria* and alchemy.

### ALCHEMY AND CONJURING AFTER 1527

A late sixteenth-century alchemical compendium contains *Dialogue between Hillard the Necromancer and a Certain Spirit* (*Dialogus inter Hillardum necromanticum et quendam spiritum*), a stilted and mechanical conversation in which the necromancer poses technical questions about alchemical operations to a spirit who responds with specific and similarly technical information.<sup>21</sup> It provides no practical information on necromancy or how Hillard went about arranging the interview, but this is clear enough. The text uniformly refers to his interlocutor as a “spirit” which might mean an angel or, in England, a fairy. Nonetheless the term *necromanticus* makes clear that this spirit had been conjured and was, in all likelihood, a demon. This is surprising not only because of the horror it would have provoked among medieval (and probably many early modern alchemists) but because the term *necromanticus* had a negative valence even in magic texts. The preferred term for those wishing to imply that their magic was purely natural or acceptable in some other way was *nigromanticus*.<sup>22</sup> The author’s use of this word in the title illustrates not only how common it had become for the arts of alchemy and spirit conjuring to be intertwined but also a curious shift in attitude that made it possible to accept, or perhaps even celebrate, the negative associations that accrued to the art. That Simon Forman copied this text makes clear that this was not just an odd and isolated literary conceit but that the text was read and copied by an audience who, as we shall see, actually practised both arts. Although this is perhaps the most compelling evidence of a dramatic shift in attitude, a flood of evidence from the courts and manuscripts tells a similar story.

The first place we see the same people practising alchemy and conjuring is in the courts among a rag-tag group of middlebrow practitioners. In 1527 a Frenchman, Maurice Bensart, was arrested on suspicion of

<sup>21</sup> Ashmole 1472, ff. 19<sup>v</sup>–20<sup>r</sup> (Foreman’s copy). Sloane 1077, ff. 3<sup>r</sup>–3<sup>v</sup> (seventeenth-century).

<sup>22</sup> Jean-Patrice Boudet, *Entre Science Et Nigromance: Astrologie, Divination Et Magie Dans L’occident Médiéval, Xiie–Xve Siècle* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006), 92–4.

necromancy. A search of his possessions revealed a variety of suspicious items that tends to confirm his involvement in such arts. He also confessed to having made *aurum potabile* in France.<sup>23</sup> Richard Jones, whose case I have already described at some length, was evidently practising the same combination of arts before his arrest in 1533. A decade later the remarkable conman Gregory Wisdom was first introduced to a different member of the Neville family, Harry Lord Neville, as a great magician capable of helping him out with his gambling debts. Wisdom was described as “both wise and wealthy, not in a thread-bare coat as these imperfect multipliers commonly are.” The speaker took it for granted that magicians were often also alchemists.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as a member of the painters’ guild and later a doctor, Wisdom was in the business of chemistry if not alchemy as such.<sup>25</sup> Around the same time, Robert Allen was arrested for having prophesied the death of the king, and during his incarceration in the Tower, claimed to know how to make the “Great Elixir.” Evidence uncovered during his arrest reveals he was a cunning man working in a variety of magical trades including astrology and conjuring.<sup>26</sup> John Prestall, perhaps the most notorious traitorous magician of the sixteenth century, who remarkably walked away from several seemingly terminal encounters with the law, also fashioned himself as an alchemist.<sup>27</sup> Finally, the Oxford scholar John Buckley, who was arrested in 1570 on charges of debasing currency, was a practising alchemist and conjurer who had used the demon Oriens for treasure hunting.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England*, 86. “Henry VIII: December 1527, 26–31,” in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 4, 1524–1530*, ed. J. S. Brewer (London: HMSO, 1875), 1653–72, no. 3743.

<sup>24</sup> London, National Archives, SP 1/226/119<sup>v</sup>. Alec Ryrie, *A Sorcerer’s Tale: Faith and Fraud in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 92.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Allen (putatively called the “God of Norfolk”) claimed while incarcerated in the Tower that he knew how to make the “Great Elixir.” Harley 424, f. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Devine, “John Prestall: A Complex Relationship with the Elizabethan Regime” (MA thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2010). See also Francis Young, *Magic as a Political Crime in Medieval and Early Modern England: A History of Sorcery and Treason* (London: I.B. Tauris Books, 2017), 91–145. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England*, 261.

<sup>28</sup> Ryrie, *Magician’s Tale*, 141–2. W. H. Hart, “Observations on Some Documents Relating to Magic in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth,” *Archaeologia*, 40 (1866): 389–97.

Conjuring manuscripts of the later sixteenth and seventeenth century also reflect this combination of interests. The scribe of Wellcome 110, a late sixteenth-century necromantic manual containing amongst other material the classic medieval grimoire, the *Thesaurus spirituum*, copied a passage on making the philosopher's stone.<sup>29</sup> The mid seventeenth-century scribe of Sloane 3648 copied an alchemical operation for *tincture universalis*, including an illustration of the apparatus, in the midst of the classic conjuring work, the *Clavicula Salomonis*. Making clear that this was not merely a matter of chance, the manuscript also includes the *Archidoxis Magia*, a pseudo-Paracelsian work, which amongst other things, seeks to integrate magic and alchemy.<sup>30</sup> Alchemy is also identified in sixteenth-century conjuring manuals as a valuable skill that may be attained or performed through conjuring. In the British Library, Additional 36674, a list of demons and their powers, attributes the ability to transmute metals to the demon Zaga.<sup>31</sup> A conjuring text in Sloane 3318 attributes the ability to offer instruction in making the true elixir to the fairy spirit Oberion.<sup>32</sup> A version of the *Ars notoria* in Harley 181 includes alchemy in a list of things the work will reveal, whereas medieval versions of this text do not explicitly make this claim.<sup>33</sup> The *Arbatel de magia veterum*, first printed in 1575 and translated into English by Robert Turner in 1665, is centrally concerned with spirit conjuring and describes numerous spirits who specialize in transforming metals and revealing alchemical secrets.<sup>34</sup>

The same combination of interests may be found among manuscript collectors. One of the largest collections of pre-modern conjuring texts may be found in the library of Elias Ashmole, the foremost English writer on alchemy and collector of alchemical manuscripts of the seventeenth century. He also evidently experimented with alchemy and many

<sup>29</sup>London, Wellcome Library, Wellcome 110, f. 21<sup>r</sup>–21<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>30</sup>London, British Library, Sloane 3648. The *tincture universalis* recipe may be found on ff. 14<sup>v</sup>–15<sup>r</sup>. The *Archidoxis Magia* (ff. 54<sup>v</sup>–75<sup>r</sup>) discusses the transmutation of metals in the fourth chapter (ff. 63<sup>v</sup>–66<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>31</sup>London, British Library, Additional 36674, f. 65<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>32</sup>Sloane 3318, f. 79<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>33</sup>British Library, Harley 181, f. 2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>[Anon.], *Arbatel De Magia Veterum Summum Sapientiae Studium. In Omnibus Consule Dominum, & Nihil Cegetis, Dicas, Facias, Quod Tibi Deus Non Consulueris* (Basel, 1575), 5, 26, 28–9, 39–41, and 57.

forms of magic including conjuring in addition to theorizing about the fusion of alchemy and spirit conjuring in the “Angelical Stone.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly, although a little later, we find both alchemical and conjuring works in the collection of Thomas Britton who was also an alchemist.<sup>36</sup>

Significant figures in the history of magic were also heavily involved in both arts. Humphrey and Adrian Gilbert conjured demons and other spirits in 1567, particularly the demon Azazel and the ghosts of Adam, Job, Solomon, Roger Bacon, and Cornelius Agrippa. The explicit questions they put to the spirits focused broadly on knowledge of occult topics, but the visions, including clouds of various colours coalescing and turning into gold, suggest alchemy was one of their interests.<sup>37</sup> In any event, they were both heavily involved in alchemy in subsequent years. Adrian Gilbert worked as an alchemist in the household of Mary Sidney Herbert. Humphrey Gilbert proposed an academy for education and research to Elizabeth that would have been centrally concerned with unlocking the secrets of alchemy. He also invested heavily in two failed alchemical schemes.<sup>38</sup> John Dee and Edward Kelly were both practitioners of angel conjuring and also practising alchemists, although Kelly was far more focused on the art.<sup>39</sup> Beginning in 1588, Simon Forman engaged in a variety of ritual magic practices. He began with necromantic operations and by his own admission wrote a book on the subject.

<sup>35</sup> Evidence for his practice of conjuring magic is attested only by the significant number of conjuring texts in his collection, some in his own hand. See for example Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1406, ff. 50v–55v.

<sup>36</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. “Britton, Thomas (1644–1714).” Among his many alchemical manuscripts he also owned Sloane 3884, a collection of conjuring materials.

<sup>37</sup> For example, the vision from March 14, 1567 contains this passage. “ffirst I, and my skryer, sawe a rownde fyer in the west, w<sup>ch</sup> sodaynly vanished and came agayne. There apered ananother with hym w<sup>ch</sup> I beheld very well, and from them there went a greate blacke cloud vnder them, w<sup>ch</sup> went from the west, by the north to the East pointe. And ouer that cloud there came an extreme number of fyer, & in the place where the first fyers were, there was a greate quantity y<sup>t</sup> was marvelous red, all y<sup>e</sup> which turned into gold; & some parte of the fyer went towardes the south, soe y<sup>t</sup> god of a greate miracle shewed it to me & my skryer....” London, British Library, Additional 36674, f. 60r.

<sup>38</sup> G. J. R. Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror of England: John Dee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 81–93. See also Klaassen, “Ritual Invocation and Early Modern Science.”

<sup>39</sup> On Kelly’s and Dee’s practices, see Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 178 and 228–9; Parry, 71–93 and 194–204.

At the same time he became interested in conjuring angels, which may have provoked his long-term interest in the *Ars notoria* culminating in his copying of the text in 1600. He also practised alchemy starting in 1594.<sup>40</sup> It may be the intellectual environment in which this kind of experimentation was taking place that provoked Thomas Charnock to write against the use of necromancy in alchemy. He tells a long story about Roger Bacon's foolhardy and fruitless use of conjuring to advance his knowledge of alchemy.<sup>41</sup>

In summary, the practice of alchemy and conjuring magic rarely appear in the same manuscripts prior to 1500. Examples of alchemy coinciding with the *Ars notoria* are more common at that time, but do not reveal any convincing evidence that their scribes were practitioners of both arts. Almost all of these early manuscripts that may be evidence of this combination are fifteenth-century, most from the latter half. The examples containing both conjuring magic and alchemy were both late in the century and also written in the vernacular. By contrast, evidence for the strange alliance of alchemy and conjuring is significantly more common in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources. This includes not only substantially greater manuscript evidence, but also numerous court cases and other examples of known practitioners of both arts. Perhaps even more strangely, if the dialogue I mentioned is any evidence, the process was not simply one in which necromantic practitioners turned their hand to alchemy. Instead, it appears that some alchemists embraced conjuring to a higher degree than before, regarding it as an acceptable way of gaining information about the art. Perhaps by the late sixteenth century and certainly by the time of Ashmole, alchemists began to actually synthesize the arts and theorize a relationship between the philosopher's stone and the skrying devices of spirit conjuring.

The prior separation of alchemy from spirit conjuring is consistent enough that it behoves us to ask why the change took place, but the

<sup>40</sup>Simon Forman, *The Autobiography and Personal Diary of Dr. S. F. ... From A.D. 1552 to A.D. 1602. From the Unpublished Manuscripts in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Edited by J. O. Halliwell*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London, 1849) 20–3. Simon Forman copied several manuscripts of the *Ars notoria*: Cambridge, Trinity College O.9.7; Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Yahuda 34; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Jones 1.

<sup>41</sup>Thomas Charnock recounts a long and rambling story of Bacon attempting to gain the philosopher's stone and the ability to practise alchemy through ritual magic. London, British Library, Lansdowne 703, ff. 16<sup>r</sup>–18<sup>r</sup>.

question also requires some nuance. There are plenty of reasons why a professional necromancer like Richard Jones might branch out into alchemy. It may have been simply another way for someone with a middling level of education and no other job prospects to make money. But why would practitioners of alchemy, which prior to 1650 still stood a chance of being regarded as a more or less legitimate art, associate themselves with demon conjuring, the most disreputable of learned magic practices? Not only is this shift in culture among intellectuals and the privileged a matter of some interest, but the fact that it appears to have begun with middlebrow practitioners suggests a curious history. Do the roots of the hybridization in alchemy and of broad syncretism in magic in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century lie not purely with high intellectuals like Johns or Arthur Dee, but in the chambers of back-alley conjurers? We are used to assuming a top-down influence, but this story suggests to a significant degree the reverse.

I do not pretend to be able to answer these questions with any finality in this short chapter, but three elements are no doubt at work in this strange development: the vernacularization and popularization of medieval learning; the intellectual expansiveness of sixteenth-century natural philosophy; and (perhaps most controversially) the experiential aspects that the practices of alchemy and spirit conjuring share. In all of this the back-alley conjurers do appear to play a significant role.

### VERNACULARIZATION, POPULARIZATION, AND PRACTICALITY

Although vernacular manuscripts of magic survive from earlier centuries, particularly from Iberia, learned magic generally does not appear regularly in European vernaculars until the fifteenth century, and only in the sixteenth does this become common. The introductions to the far more numerous Latin texts invoke a mythology of secrecy that implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) excluded all but the learned clerical minority. This was not merely wishful thinking or grandiose posturing. That the texts were available almost exclusively in Latin and depended upon knowledge of the liturgy and astrology functionally excluded anyone else. Only the Latinate could read the texts, expand the prayer or psalm incipits from memory, or make sense of the astrological requirements. Early transmissions to the vernacular generally involved other genres of magic such as charms and or books of secrets, like the *Secretum secretorum*, which did

not require clerical involvement or specialized knowledge.<sup>42</sup> Vernacular charms required at most the recitation of the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo in Latin, something that was manageable for a churchgoing layperson. Books of secrets may have included exotic ingredients but generally took the form of simple recipes or lists of occult properties.

The first examples of vernacular ritual magic in Britain appear in fifteenth-century manuscripts and tend to be quite simple, possibly abbreviated versions of Latin antecedents. A short ritual to see a spirit in a candle appears in the collection of the non-Latinate Robert Reynes, for example.<sup>43</sup> This new vernacular literature can also be found in collections of people who were fully Latinate. The Rawlinson Handbook, a dedicated British conjuring manual, contains a few passages in the vernacular. Although the scribe's Latin was not flawless, he did not need to have material in English in order to understand it. The appearance of these passages in largely Latin volumes suggests that vernacular texts were not initially produced for an audience that worked solely in the vernacular. Nonetheless, these early vernacular texts formed the basis for a growing literature in English for non-Latinate users. The first surviving fully English conjuring manual dates from the second quarter of the sixteenth century. It employed the newly translated Great Bible and its composition may have been motivated in part by the Protestant vernacularization of the bible and liturgy.<sup>44</sup> In the second half of the century, fully vernacular conjuring manuscripts became quite common.<sup>45</sup> Translation was, however, only part of the picture.

The appearance of conjuring magic in the vernacular was also interwoven with the popularization of learned magic. Popularization involves

<sup>42</sup> M. A. Manzolaoui, *Secretum Secretorum: Nine English Versions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). On vernacular charms see Lea Olsan, "The Language of Charms in a Middle English Recipe Collection," *ANQ* 18 (2005): 29–35; also Olsan, "The Corpus of Charms in the Middle English Leechcraft Remedy Books," in *Charms, Charmers and Charming: International Research on Verbal Magic*, ed. Jonathan Roper, 214–37 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes of Acre; An Edition of Tanner MS 407*, ed. Cameron Louis (London: Garland, 1980), 169.

<sup>44</sup> London, British Library, Sloane 3849, ff. 7<sup>r</sup>–29<sup>v</sup>. This manuscript was written sometime between 1534 and 1550.

<sup>45</sup> For an example of a non-Latinate scribe attempting to work with Latin texts and a fully English conjuring manual, see Frank Klaassen, *Making Magic in Elizabethan England* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, forthcoming).

the development of widespread appetite for the materials, transmission to a larger and different group of people, and also, potentially, the transformation of the literature for and by that group. The popularization of learned magic began with versions of less problematic forms of magic, such as books of secrets, which commonly appear in fifteenth-century manuscripts. Evidence for the popular diffusion of this kind of literature may be found in fifteenth-century family notebooks that include short texts of magic and divination.<sup>46</sup> Popular interest was fed and also fuelled in the sixteenth century by printed works such as the *The Secrets of Albertus Magnus* (1599).<sup>47</sup> Among lay readers, such books no doubt further stimulated an appetite for literature containing arcane secrets and perhaps also a sense of entitlement to the knowledge they contained. In this process, some of the magic became more simplified, but it was certainly transmitted to a group of readers quite different from the original, largely clerical, authors and scribes.

It makes sense that this new group would not necessarily observe the same boundaries between genres as their learned forebears. They were less likely to have access to libraries or networks where one might find numerous texts to feed their interest in a focused subject. They did not operate inside intellectual communities such as universities or monasteries where niche interests could develop, specialized information could be shared, and disciplinary boundaries might be reinforced in social as well as intellectual ways. As a result, at least in the early years of vernacularization and popularization, it would have been harder for a non-Latinate reader to specialize in a particular area and much more likely that a non-Latinate practitioner would assemble a bricolage of materials that just happened to be available. This could explain why practitioners in the early part of the sixteenth century blended previously distinct genres like alchemy and conjuring. What they chose to practise might simply have been a function of the materials that happened to fall into their laps. A lower level of theological sophistication may also have meant that practitioners of alchemy were less wary about ritual magic, including

<sup>46</sup>Laura Theresa Mitchell, “Cultural Uses of Magic in Fifteenth-Century England” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2011), 96–132.

<sup>47</sup>Albertus Magnus, *The Secrets of Albertus Magnus. Of the Vertues of Hearbes, Stones, and Certaine Beasts. Whereunto Is Newly Added, a Short Discourse of the Seauen Planets Gouerning the Natiuities of Children. Also a Booke of the Same Author, of the Maruellous Things of the Worlde, and of Certaine Effects Caused by Certaine Beasts* (London, 1599).

conjuring. One way or another, the blending or reconfiguration of genres would be one predictable result of the transmission of learned materials to a broader audience. Thus it may not be coincidental that the earliest manuscripts combining conjuring and alchemy were written in the vernacular.

The earliest known practitioners who combined necromantic and alchemical practice were non-clerical middlebrow professional magicians of the early sixteenth century like Richard Jones. Prior to this time itinerant conjurers who appeared in the courts tended to be priests, reflecting Richard Kieckhefer's claim that medieval necromancy was transmitted in a clerical underworld.<sup>48</sup> Early modern practitioners like Richard Jones, however, evince the shift of the conjuring literature into the hands of the laity. No doubt people like him were partly responsible for the production of vernacular versions of medieval conjuring texts. In addition to mixing and matching a variety of materials that happened to fall to hand and having no intellectual or social motivations to eschew this kind of mingling, this group may also have combined conjuring and alchemy for practical reasons. The fact that they used this material as a way to make money no doubt made them less fussy about which arts they employed. Everything we know about Richard Jones suggests this kind of opportunism. So in a variety of ways the popularization and vernacularization of learned traditions can account for a broad blending of sources. However, some of the evidence cannot be accounted for in this way. As the century wore on, highly educated figures like John Dee, who had all the books he wanted, and others, like Humphrey Gilbert, who had no need to hire themselves out as magic practitioners, also combined alchemy and spirit conjuring. Other processes were clearly at work as well.

### EXPANSIVENESS IN NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

Principe traces the roots of spiritual alchemy to the full integration of Christian religious symbols and myths into alchemy by the fifteenth century. This made it particularly susceptible to integration with other esoteric systems that worked with these sorts of association. The syncretic projects of renaissance writers like Ficino, Pico, Agrippa, and Dee

<sup>48</sup>Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), xi.

not only actively incorporated elements of alchemy but also laid the groundwork for further integration. The syncretic potentials afforded by Paracelsus' world-system also played an important role since they were "populated with a vast number of supernatural beings and elemental spirits and where natural and sympathetic magic played a central role in an organic cosmos."<sup>49</sup> It seems quite reasonable to argue that these elements were the intellectual building blocks necessary for the integration of alchemy and skrying in Ashmole's Angelical Stone, but the influence of figures like Agrippa will not explain the cohabitation of alchemy and conjuring magic prior to the latter part of the sixteenth century.

Henry Cornelius Agrippa epitomizes the daring intellectual expansiveness of sixteenth-century natural philosophy. His *De occulta philosophia* proposes a grand cosmological schema built upon a model derived from Kabbalah through Johannes Reuchlin into which Agrippa wound a spectacular array of ancient sources. His works propose a return to a purified form of high magic that he believed was practised by ancient Jewish priest-magicians and which he regarded as the highest form of religious practice. Although it is not clear precisely how Agrippa intended magic to be performed, he certainly proposed that magic should be an integration of natural, celestial, and ritual elements and that none should be practised without the others. There is no evidence that Agrippa was an alchemist himself, but his schema sought to incorporate all aspects of esoteric and natural philosophy. In a letter of 1527, he describes the esoteric literature that had possessed his life to that stage.

O how many writings are read concerning the invincible power of the magic art, concerning the prodigious images of the astrologers, the marvellous transformation of the alchemists, and that blessed stone which Midas-like immediately turns every base metal it touches to gold or silver. All these writings are found vain, fictitious and false as often as they are practiced to the letter. Yet they are propounded and written by great and most grave philosophers and holy men. Who will dare call their teachings

<sup>49</sup> Principe, *Aspiring Adept*, 189. The connections between Dee's skrying and Paracelsus have been further explored by Gyorgy E. Szonyi, "Paracelsus, Skrying, and the *Lingua Adamica*," in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 207–29.

false? What is more, it would be impious to believe that they have written falsehoods in those works. Hence the meaning must be other than what the letters yield up.<sup>50</sup>

So if alchemy was not an explicit element in the *De occulta philosophia* he unquestionably intended his magic to comprehend and subsume natural philosophy writ large, including alchemical traditions.

Naturally, Agricola was neither the first nor the last to propose a grand schema of this sort. As Principe has observed, late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century writers like Pico, Johannes Trithemius, and Agricola “linked some alchemical notions with the cabala, Hermetic and Neoplatonic mysticism, and natural magic.”<sup>51</sup> But at least in England (and excluding the work of John Dee) one has to look very hard indeed to discern any direct influence of other thinkers such as Pico, Ficino, and Reuchlin in sixteenth-century manuscripts of ritual magic. Where they do have an impact it tends to be indirectly through the works of Agricola. Agricola is referred to and his works quoted in manuscripts of magic far more often than any other renaissance writer and it is telling that Richard Jones read the *De occulta philosophia* the year it was published. The pseudo-Agricola’s *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* was probably more influential in magic texts and by association expanded the influence of Agricola’s legitimate works.

This being said, it seems very unlikely that Richard Jones and others like him took up alchemy under the influence of Agricola’s expansive cosmology and it is difficult to identify any clear influence in the broader literature. Not only did Jones dismiss Agricola’s *De occulta philosophia* as “of very little effect” but his interest in alchemy and magic evidently predate the publication of that book in 1533 since he already had alchemical equipment and expertise at that time. In 1567, Humphrey Gilbert conjured the ghost of Agricola together with Adam, Job, Solomon, and

<sup>50</sup>HMES V, 132. O quanta leguntur scripta de inexpugnabili magicae artis potentia, de prodigiosis astrologorum imaginibus, de monstrifica alchimistarum metamorphosi, deque lapide illo benedicto, quo, Midae instar, contacta aera mox omnia in aurum argentumve permutentur: quae omnia comperiuntur vana, ficta et falsa, quoties ad literam practicantur. Atque tamen traduntur ista scribunturque a magnis grauissimisque philosophis et sanctis viris, quorum traditiones quis audebit dicere falsis? Quinimo credere impium esset, illos data opera scripsisse mendacia. Alius est ergo sensus, quam literis traditur. *Epistola V*, 14; *Opera Omnia* v. II. 873–4. The letter is dated 1527.

<sup>51</sup>Principe, *Aspiring Adept*, 189.

Roger Bacon, as one of the five greatest magicians of all time. Nonetheless, there is nothing about the short conjuring manual they composed (based in part on their visions) which suggests any particular influence from Agrippa. At most, one might conjecture that the broad and encompassing sorts of information they sought in the recorded visions as evidence of his influence. Curiously, despite his ambivalent feelings about magic, the sixteenth-century alchemist Thomas Charnock not only employed Agrippa's three-tiered cosmological scheme in his work but also claimed that Agrippa was an alchemist who had succeeded in creating the philosopher's stone.<sup>52</sup> The influence of Agrippa on Charnock and the latter's sympathetic treatment of the former certainly suggest an intellectual climate in which a fusion of magic and alchemy could take place. Charnock also illustrates the way that Agrippa was mythologized as a great mage. But there is little evidence that he had any major intellectual impact prior to the last decades of the century, at which time John Dee was already publishing similarly syncretic materials that tend to obscure the lines of influence.

John Dee certainly knew Agrippa's works and might be said to have followed in his footsteps, but his work is better understood as a continuation of the renaissance esoteric tradition in general. He was also clearly influenced by the medieval ritual magic tradition.<sup>53</sup> The *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564) blends natural philosophy, kabbalah, astronomy, mystical mathematics, alchemy, and magic, but there is no evidence it was influential among sixteenth-century magicians.<sup>54</sup> This work could arguably have encouraged more sophisticated practitioners to take up other esoteric arts, but the profoundly obscure nature of the work made it even less accessible

<sup>52</sup> London, British Library, Lansdowne 703, ff. 38v–99r.

<sup>53</sup> Stephen Clucas, “*Regimen Animarum Et Corporum*: The Body and Spacial Practice in Medieval and Renaissance Magic,” in *The Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Darryll Grandley and Nina Taunton, 113–29 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Clucas, “Non Est Legendum Sed Inspicendum Solum”: Inspectival Knowledge and the Visual Logic of John Dee's *Liber Mysteriorum*,” in *Emblems and Alchemy*, ed. Alison Adams and Stanton J. Linden, 109–32 (Glasgow: Glasgow Emblem Studies, 1998), 109–32; and his “John Dee's Angelic Conversations and the *Ars Notoria*,” in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas, 231–73 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

<sup>54</sup> Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy*, 77–115. For a specific discussion of alchemy see Frederico Cavallaro, “The Alchemical Significance of John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*,” in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas, 159–76 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

to common readers than Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*. Neither of them would have been of much use in themselves as magic manuals for a practically oriented magician. Perhaps more to the point, even John Dee does not seem to have developed an interest in skrying until the 1570s.<sup>55</sup>

The only other writer of this group to have a clear presence in the world of sixteenth-century magic is Paracelsus. His idiosyncratic synthesis of medical and esoteric traditions was as broad ranging as Agrippa's and included both magic and alchemy. It is thus unsurprising that he is mentioned by name in the sixteenth-century printed edition of the spirit conjuring manual the *Arbatel de magia*, a text which as we have seen includes numerous references of transmutation as a power of particular demons.<sup>56</sup> The presence of the pseudo-Paracelsian *Archidoxis Magia* in an early seventeenth-century conjuring manual and the fact that it gathers alchemy under the rubric of magic attests to the influence of the Paracelsian materials and how, more broadly, the new writers of the renaissance influenced the development of an intellectually expansive culture which, in turn, might have encouraged the integration of esoteric arts such as magic and alchemy.<sup>57</sup> But again, there is no clear influence of this literature upon magic practitioners of sixteenth-century England, and certainly not prior to the latter decades of the century.

The habitual blending of alchemy and conjuring magic in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century ritual magic texts might have been encouraged by writers like Agrippa and Paracelsus, and eventually by Dee. But there is little direct evidence for it and none before 1567. Certainly they cannot in themselves account for the cohabitation of conjuring magic and alchemy that clearly took place among a practically minded group of magicians earlier in the century, for whom the fine points of high theory would not have been particularly compelling. And it was to members of this group that John Dee turned when he took up skrying in the 1570s. If the tradition of spiritual alchemy developed in the hands of intellectuals like John Dee or Elias Ashmole, professional magicians had already been practising both arts for a generation or two and had prepared the ground.

<sup>55</sup> Szonyi, "Paracelsus, Skrying, and the *Lingua Adamica*," 214.

<sup>56</sup> *Arbatel De Magia Veterum Summum Sapientiae Studium*, 46.

<sup>57</sup> London, British Library, Sloane 3648. The *tincture universalis* recipe may be found on ff. 14<sup>v</sup>–15<sup>r</sup>. The *Archidoxis Magia* (ff. 54<sup>v</sup>–75<sup>r</sup>) discusses the transmutation of metals in the fourth chapter (fols. 63<sup>v</sup>–66<sup>v</sup>).

## EXPERIENCE

In terms of their goals and tools, alchemy and conjuring share very little. In fact, in most respects they are very different indeed. Alchemy establishes its authority on the traditions of natural philosophy, conjuring on Christian traditions of exorcism and the liturgy. Alchemy manipulates material ingredients, conjuring sentient creatures. Alchemy works through chemical processes, conjuring through the manipulation of the numinous powers of Christian rites and the chrism of baptism. Alchemy tends to use highly coded language; conjuring literature tends to be quite blunt and literal. These oppositions could be multiplied considerably. During the middle ages when sciences were conceived more as bodies of knowledge than cumulative research exercises (as they later came to be conceived), such divisions would have loomed large.<sup>58</sup> However, the two arts do share one characteristic that many of the other occult sciences do not, a dimension that would have appealed to the practically oriented magicians like Richard Jones, and one that the changes in sixteenth-century science would have made considerably more significant. Both are heavily experiential in focus.

To say this about alchemy is hardly controversial since so much of the art is founded upon actual chemical operations. Even if its processes might not transform mundane ingredients into silver, gold, or the philosopher's stone, alchemy certainly produces concrete results that one can touch, see, and smell. Recent work in the field has emphasized the ways in which alchemy could produce convincing results through real metallurgical processes. In fact, as Newman has discussed, alchemy was commonly included among the mechanical arts for precisely these sorts of reasons.<sup>59</sup> Although the written tradition includes purely philosophical or poetic forms, these were not the sort of alchemy practised by the sixteenth-century conjurers I have described. They all physically practised the art and their goals were pretty clearly material.

In the case of conjuring, however, one might have good reasons to question whether the processes actually produced any results at all.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Robert Dear, *Mersenne and the Learning of the Schools* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 1; Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 68–72.

<sup>59</sup> William R. Newman, “Technology and Alchemical Debate in the Late Middle Ages,” *Isis* 80 (1989): 423–45.

Certainly, the fact that many conjurers employed skryers meant that they did not see the spirits themselves and that the visions may have been pure invention. But this does little to obviate the fundamentally experiential nature of conjuring. First, conjuring texts had strong experiential aspirations and this element was no doubt part of what drew people to it. Conjuring operations seek visual and aural communication with spirits and the appearances of demons, angels, or other spirits are commonly described at length in the manuscripts as are the conditions or events surrounding those appearances.<sup>60</sup> Second, this experience was still fundamentally important no matter who had it. It revealed whatever information was sought from the spirits. It was also commonly a crucial part of learning more about magic practice and the spiritual world. The extensive notes taken by Humphrey Gilbert's circle and John Dee in their operations attest to the importance of these experiential details for sixteenth-century conjurers. These have the character of modern lab notes and include a wide variety of often bizarre visual details, the significance of which were not evident. John Dee's notes and annotations reveal that he hung on every word that Kelly spoke and gave great attention to these details afterwards under the assumption that they might eventually yield important meanings.<sup>61</sup>

Readers of Boyle's descriptions of his air pump experiments (most of whom never saw the experiment performed and could not repeat them without his expensive equipment) were no less concerned with his experiences than John Dee was with Kelly's. The description of experience by a scientist was no less crucial to science than the skryer's descriptions to the magician and it would be anachronistic to suggest otherwise. Moreover, the powerful sense of immediacy that can be provoked by a skryer or a modern medium can also help us understand how these experiences could be taken so seriously. As Deborah Harkness has suggested, the dialogic relationship between the skryer's imagination (assuming the visions are invented rather than experienced) and the master's questions produces a potentially very compelling creative process with results

<sup>60</sup>For the classic example of a text describing the appearance of demons in detail, see Jean-Patrice Boudet, "Les Who's Who Démonologiques De La Renaissance Et Leurs Ancêtres Médiévaux," *Médiévaux* 44 (2003): 117–39.

<sup>61</sup>Klaassen, "Ritual Invocation," 344–6.

that cannot be reduced to either of the participants.<sup>62</sup> John Dee was not a fool and we have reason to take seriously his conviction that he was communicating with angels despite the fact that he had no direct visual or aural experience of them. The conversation in itself was experience enough. But what about the many conjuring operations that do not employ a skryer and which, therefore, required a *real* vision?

Operations that sought direct experience of spirits by the conjurer without a skryer not only promised dire and explosive visions but also provided subjectively convincing experiences for at least a portion of those who regularly practised the art. Modern studies such as the work of Tanya Luhrmann have demonstrated that powerful subjectively convincing experiences can be produced through the sorts of preparatory exercises common in ritual magic. In a majority of people, regular exercises in visualization and meditation can provoke a strong sense of spiritual presence. In a significant portion of the population they also can provoke visual and aural dissociative experiences, that is, hallucinations.<sup>63</sup> When such exercises are combined with fasting and abstinence, ritual observances, and the use of mildly psychoactive suffumigations such as frankincense, they would be all the more likely to provoke subjectively convincing results. All of this confirms the accounts of ritual magic practitioners who claimed to have had direct visionary experiences of spirits provoked by ritual magic practice.<sup>64</sup>

One final aspect of ritual magic practice in general, and conjuring magic in particular, is the requirement of long experience in the art. Although the texts often open with mythologies about their ancient origins that are designed to make the reader feel they have discovered

<sup>62</sup> Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 11.

<sup>63</sup> T. M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 115–17, 33–38, and 80–202; Luhrmann, “The Art of Hearing God: Absorption, Dissociation, and Contemporary American Spirituality,” *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 5.2 (2005): 133–57; and Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> Frank Klaassen, “The Subjective Experience of Medieval Ritual Magic,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 7.1 (2012): 19–51. On the representation of the magician as a divinely guided editor see Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, 115–55; Julien Véronèse, “La Notion D’ ‘Auteur-Magicien’ À La Fin Du Moyen Âge: Le Cas De L’ermite Pelagius De Majorque,” *Médiévales* 51 (2006): 119–37.

something singular and rare, they do not pretend one can immediately perform the feats of magic they contain. Instead, the texts tend to represent the magician as a kind of divinely guided editor and experimenter who sorts through fragmentary and difficult texts and, through long experience in the art, discovers how to perform the magic successfully.<sup>65</sup> This dynamic relationship between text and experience is also very similar to alchemical practice, although the experience derives from visions or engaged exchanges with a medium rather than with physical experimentation.

In comparison to divination, charms, astral magic, and astrology, conjuring was far more experiential in aspiration, method, and practice. This offered considerable conceptual and methodological common ground with alchemy despite the differences in the ways they achieved this experience and justified or explained their methods. This makes those who practised both arts far more understandable. Someone who was particularly interested in experience may have been encouraged to take up both arts or to shift from one to the other. This would certainly have been encouraged by the expansive nature of renaissance occultists who gathered all human science and religion under the rubric of magic. Just as significantly, at a time when experience was increasingly emphasized in science, when science became more like an ongoing research project in which experience was fundamental, and when the old authorities were increasingly challenged by experience, this shared dimension would have become more significant than it was in prior centuries and the differences less so.

## CONCLUSION

That a surprising number of sixteenth-century conjurers also practised alchemy and that alchemical practitioners seem to have had more sympathy for conjuring magic is powerfully attested in manuscripts, the courts, and in the lives of known practitioners. This stands in stark contrast to the middle ages, where we find very little evidence that such a partnership developed in any significant way prior to the last quarter of the fifteenth century and in England prior to the 1520s. The reasons for the change are undoubtedly more complicated than this brief discussion can

<sup>65</sup> Klaassen, “Ritual Invocation.”

encompass, but several forces were clearly at work. Renaissance occultism produced grand synthetic schemes that encompassed previously discrete traditions under the umbrella of magic, giving a conceptual framework in which alchemy and conjuring could be understood as related. This tradition may have inspired a more expansive view of the occult arts among practitioners, but its influence only becomes clear later in the century, after lay middlebrow practitioners had already been practising both arts for decades. Their involvement in these arts was made possible and perhaps encouraged by a process of popularization and vernacularization and it is understandable that they treated the received material differently than their learned and clerical forebears. Their interest in both arts seems to have been driven at least in part by raw opportunism and the promise of material reward. One further element also seems to have been in play that unites the Angelical Stone with Richard Jones' "ronde thing lyke a balle of cristall" and also alchemy with conjuring magic. Those seeking direct experience of arcane mysteries would have found in both arts not merely the promise, but quite possibly, the realization of their desires. This common ground may well have encouraged many of these sixteenth- or seventeenth-century figures I have described to practise both arts as well as to seek the intellectual grounds upon which to fuse them.



## CHAPTER 8

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# Edward Terry and the Demons of India

*Richard Raiswell*

If *Satan* bee now *come downe*, then *legite vestigia*, read his footsteps.<sup>1</sup>

Edward Terry claimed to have no interest in publishing his *Voyage to East-India* in 1655. His was a “scribbling writing age,” he said, “where there is no end of making many books,” many of which were written towards evil or mischievous ends.<sup>2</sup> However, the manuscript copy of a short tract he penned in 1622 relating his travels and experiences in north-west India between 1616 and 1619 during which time he had served as chaplain to Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to the Court of the Great Mughal, had recently come into the possession of two London printers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Homes, *Plain Dealing or the Cause and Cure of the Present Evils of the Times* (London, 1652), 34. In quoting from early modern texts, I have silently changed “u”s to “v”s and “i”s to “j”s to conform to modern usage.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India* (London, 1655), sig. A3v. All references to Terry are to this text unless otherwise specified.

<sup>3</sup> Terry had given the manuscript to Charles, then the Prince of Wales, who seems to have handed it on to Samuel Purchas who included it in his *Hakluytus Posthumus* under the title, “A Relation of a Voyage to the Eastern India.” Terry never alludes to this version

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Eager to capitalize on the public's taste for foreign exotica, they pressed Terry to be allowed to publish the work. So long after the fact, Terry appreciated that his account had become rather dated, and that so much would have changed, “*twixt the particulars then observed, and their publication*” that bringing it forth at such a late hour would be “as an untimely birth, *or as a thing* born out of due time.”<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the intervening years had given him the opportunity to reflect upon his observations and their significance, so he acquiesced on condition that he be permitted to amend his original text so that it would still contain much “*matter for instruction and use, as well as for relation and novelty.*”<sup>5</sup> The specific things he had seen would no longer be as he had observed them but, he felt, he could still provide an account of India that would be relevant and useful to a contemporary audience. The result was a 547-page tome that, in offering a decidedly more philosophical assessment of the region, went far beyond the discursive boundaries of a conventional travelogue or ethnography.

For a Protestant cleric describing the social and religious practices of India's Hindu population, Terry's account is surprisingly restrained. It contains none of the lurid details about idolatrous rites performed to images of multi-armed demons that punctuate the writings of other early modern Europeans who travelled in the region. He notes, for instance, that Hindus divide themselves into many sects. These “consist of people there of several trades … and conditions of life, which several sorts of people … marry into their own tribes, and so unite and keep together amongst themselves, that they had not much correspondency with any other people.” Consequently, each tribe develops a unique style of worship, a process which exacerbates the differences between them.<sup>6</sup>

Hindus worship at little churches which, he says, are called *pagoda*. These generally stand near or under trees and are full of images made “in monstrous shapes.” But rather than denigrating these by locating

of his travels in any of his subsequent works, so it is likely that Purchas's editing was heavy handed and did not meet with the cleric's approval. On the publishing history of the text, see Richard Raiswell, “Edward Terry and the Calvinist Geography of India,” *Études anglaises: Revue du monde anglophone* 70.2 (2017): 167–86.

<sup>4</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, sig. A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., sig. A4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>6</sup>Presumably he is trying here to articulate some poorly understood sense of the caste system. Ibid., 345.

them within the context of European discourses of barbarism, he notes merely that “for what end they have them, I know not.”<sup>7</sup> He goes on to make much out of the ritual washing practised by Hindus before their devotions, noting that this is commanded of them by their “Law-giver *Bremaw*” who required that all prayers be offered with a purity of heart. But again, he passes little comment on the matter, simply pointing out that the practice is not unlike that of the Pharisees who, according to Mark 7.2, would not eat with unwashed hands.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps his strongest remarks come in his description of the Brahmins, whom he identifies as Hindu priests. These Brahmins, he says, should not be confused with the *Brachmanes*, wise philosophers and rigorous ascetics familiar to readers from “ancient stories.”<sup>9</sup> By contrast, the modern Brahmins of India were “a very silly, sottish, and an ignorant sort of people, who are so inconstant in their *principles*, as that they scarce know, what the particulars are which they hold, and maintain as truths.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite this comparatively restrained assessment of Hindu religious practices, Terry hints at a much darker reality underlying superficial appearances.

But though the *Hindoos*, or *Heathens* there have no learning, yet they want not opinions, for their divided hearts are there distracted into *four-score*, and *four* several *Sects*, each differing from others, very much in opinion about their irreligion, which might fill a man, even full of wonder, that

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 346–7.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 347–8. “Bremaw” is probably intended to denote “Brāhmaṇa.” It is likely that some of Terry’s account here is informed by Henry Lord’s *A Display of Two Forraigne Sects in the East Indies* (London, 1630).

<sup>9</sup>The Brahmins were known in the west through the Alexander legend and became almost stock figures in medieval discourses about the east. They were often regarded favourably, with some suggesting that through their obedience to the laws of nature, they might individually merit salvation. In the twelfth century, Peter Abelard went so far as to argue that together with Kings David, Solomon and Nebuchadnezzar, the Brahmins were like the wheels of a coach carrying the faith in the Trinity throughout the world. Abelard, *Theologia Christiana* (Migne PL 178:1164B). By Terry’s day, descriptions of the Brahmins could be found in Joannes Boemus’s 1537 *Omnium gentium mores*, Englished in 1555 as the *Fardle of Facion* (see sig. L8<sup>r</sup>–M2<sup>r</sup>) and in the various sixteenth-century printings of *The Voyages and Travailles of Sir John Maundevile, Knight*. See, for instance, the 1582 version, sig. S4<sup>r</sup>–v.

<sup>10</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 346.

doth not consider, how that *Satan*, who is the author of division, is the seducer of them all.<sup>11</sup>

That is to say, although the eye may discern significant external variations in the rites performed by Hindus, these subsist only at the level of accident. In no real sense can they be construed as signs pointing to any substantive, qualitative difference between the sects to which they are proper. Thus, for the purposes of his account, Terry sees no reason to catalogue these differences any further: any discernible differences in Hindu religious practice are window dressing, disguising what are ultimately just slightly different expressions of the devil's rage.

At one level, it is hardly surprising to find a cleric trying to make sense of what must have seemed an onslaught of strange experiences and exotic visual data by filtering them through the lens of demonism. As various modern scholars have argued, demonism is a resilient ontological category that facilitates the assimilation of the otherwise unintelligible, rendering it comprehensible by locating it within the context of a familiar and trusted discursive frame—albeit in a sense which renders that which is observed sinister and threatening.<sup>12</sup> Demonism is thus a readily accessible intellectual resource that provides a sufficient explanation for cultural difference. But Terry is not intellectually lazy. His sense of the demonism of India is actually far darker than this.

Certainly, Terry sees the footprints of the devil scuffed across the Indian landscape, evidence that his machinations underlay both the institutions and the actions of the region's people. But the involvement of the evil one here is very different in nature and extent to that with which he was familiar in the Christian west. There, as the clergyman would certainly have understood, the devil's incursions are spatially and temporally heterogeneous, a function of the progression of sacred history. With the disobedience of Adam and Eve, Satan gained a foothold in the world, and then, in the words of John Calvin, all things became drowned in darkness, and the “Lorde of this world [i.e., the devil] made a sport and a play in maner of all men, and lay idle and toke his pleasure,” laughing

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 344–5.

<sup>12</sup>See Michael Ryan, “Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981): 519–38. Cf. Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 216.

and playing while he was in peaceful and undisputed possession of his kingdom.<sup>13</sup> With Christ's passion, though, as 1 John 3.8 explains, the devil's activities were significantly curtailed. The devil may still dearly wish to ruin all humanity, but in the Christian west at least, his devices are restricted to temporally and geographically circumscribed attacks. This state of affairs will continue until the world approaches the end times, at which point the devil will grow restless once again, bringing disorder, famine, disease, and war, taking possession of some people directly, while corrupting others through superstition, idolatry, atheism, witchcraft, and magic. And as Revelation 12.12 predicts, this period will culminate with Satan being let loose once more. During this time, his rage will be furious and desperate, for he knows that his time is short before he is cast down into the lake of fire and sulfur. Within this frame, then, the power of the devil at any one historical moment is a function of the progression of time and the structure of providence.<sup>14</sup>

But while the strength of the devil's power varies temporally across the breadth of sacred history, it is also spatially heterogeneous within the Christian west, for Satan does not—cannot—attack on all fronts simultaneously. In practice, before the end times, his interventions there are confined to specific, targeted attacks, perversions, subversions, and possessions. These may seem extensive and terrifying from the vantage point of humanity trapped within the confines of time, but at least there is a geography to them. For Terry, though, this does not seem to be the case in India, for he sees the demonism manifest there as ahistorical and geographically homogeneous. It is inherent, written into the constitution of creation by God himself. Viewing the world through a set of Calvin's faith-tinted spectacles, Terry constructs India as the demesne of the devil. In his telling, it is part of the world in which God has turned loose his ape, allowing him to subvert the nature and character of both place

<sup>13</sup> Calvin, *The Institution of the Christian Religion*, trans. Thomas Norton (London, 1578), sig. \*\*iii<sup>v</sup>. As will become clear below, Terry's conception of the world is deeply Calvinist. He clearly thought much of the reformer, describing him at one point as "good and reverend," quoting from a letter he wrote to Cranmer in 1552. See Terry, *Voyage*, 470. I have used this version of *Institutes* only because it is the first English version of the full text. Although Terry certainly was an able Latinist, it is more likely that he would turn to this edition than any of the continental French or Latin ones, if only because it would be more readily available.

<sup>14</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 326–30 and 409–11.

and occupants, to serve as a something akin to an anti-miracle for the English to confound atheism and to spur moral reformation. For Terry, India is the geographical analogue to the demoniac of post-incarnation England. It is a warning to the godly, a cause for pious introspection, and a living example of the justice, benevolence and omnipotence of the creator. Knowing demons explains India for the English in the only sense that really matters.

### DEMON POSSESSION IN ENGLAND

Early modern English people generally associated demon possession with the physical manifestation of a number of strange symptoms in a single body. The core of these were biblical and included strange and violent fits, foaming at the mouth, the demonstration of preternatural knowledge, and attempting suicide.<sup>15</sup> By the sixteenth century, though, the form and content of possession as it was generally enacted had become considerably more convoluted with the addition of a host of new symptoms. According to the controversial Puritan minister John Darrell, William Sommers had supposedly displayed fourteen different symptoms during his attempt to feign possession in 1597. The majority of these were extra-biblical and included a mysterious lump that moved perceptibly under the skin, the presence of four or five strange shapeshifting creatures under the bedclothes that would disappear when the covers were removed, insensibility, speaking for long periods of time without moving the lips, unusual rigidity in the limbs, foaming at the mouth profusely “like to the horse, or beare,” and blaspheming horribly, saying that there was no God and then contradicting himself, saying that he himself was God.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Mark 1.24 and 9.17–29, Luke 4.33–34 and 8.27–33, and Matt. 8.29. I have dealt with these symptoms in considerably more detail in Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle, “Demon Possession in Anglo-Saxon and Early Modern England: Continuity and Evolution in Social Context,” *Journal of British Studies* 47 (October 2008): 738–61.

<sup>16</sup> John Darrell, *An Apologie, or Defence of the Possession of William Sommers* ([Amsterdam?], [1599?]), ff. 3<sup>r</sup>–4<sup>r</sup>. The Sommers possession proved exceptionally controversial in its day. Hostile sources claimed that Sommers had likely been taught how to simulate possession by Darrell, who then publicly dispossessed the youth, bolstering his spiritual credentials and those of his brand of the faith against the state church. The authenticity of the possession—and others tended by Darrell—was the subject of a lively pamphlet war.

As bizarre as this list might seem, what it suggests is that what constituted possession was the product of a set of unspoken negotiations between a demoniac and those who came to see him or her. Someone like Sommers who seems to have consciously set out to fake possession would have been acutely aware of the fact that his imposture had to conform to the expectations of those who came to see what they had already been told would be a preternatural spectacle. In this sense, possessions generally had a profoundly social element to their performance and diagnosis, for putative demoniacs would remake their fits and trances in response to the tests onlookers performed upon them. Far from being limited to just a few biblically defined behaviours, the content and authenticity of an apparent possession were a function of the beliefs and values of the culture inhabited by those with the social capital to diagnose it.<sup>17</sup> Without the gift of *discretio spirituum* which had been granted only to the apostles, doctors and cunning men, neighbors and divines, all diagnosed possession was on the basis of their own conception of how demonic power might manifest itself in the bodies of the afflicted.<sup>18</sup>

While, in practice, possession was a useful if malleable explanatory category, what actually happened in a possession was the subject of much charged debate in the century before Terry wrote. As Brian Levack has argued, Catholic theologians and authors were categorical that while possession entailed a demon entering into a body and tormenting the demoniac from within, they insisted that the invading spirit could not afflict the soul.<sup>19</sup> After all, conceding this point, as they well knew, would destroy the doctrine of freewill. This was certainly not the case for England's Calvinists. Writing in 1600, for instance, Darrell described Judas as having been spiritually not corporeally possessed. Reflecting upon John 13.2–27, he argued that the devil put the idea of betraying Christ into the apostle's heart and then, holding out the possibility of financial reward, entered into him. This sort of possession is distinct

<sup>17</sup>I have examined how this dynamic operated in the context of a single possession in Richard Raiswell, "Faking It: A Case of Counterfeit Possession in the Reign of James I," *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 23.3 (1999): 29–48.

<sup>18</sup>On the Protestant conceptions of *discretio spirituum* see John Darrell, *A Detection of that Sinnful, Shamful, Lying, and Ridiculous Discours, of Samuel Harshnet* (London, 1600), 34–5.

<sup>19</sup>Brian Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 58–63 and 206–11.

from bodily possession and occurs in the soul. It is, according to Darrell, the most common and the worst form of possession, and could not easily be cured.<sup>20</sup> Darrell was certainly not alone in his conception of possession. According to his brother, to whom the pamphlet account of his possession is attributed, the demon that took hold of Alexander Nyndge for a day in 1573 entered into him and then threatened to take hold of both his soul and his body.<sup>21</sup> Closer to Terry's day, the Congregationalist divine Nathaniel Homes distinguished between obsession, suggestion and possession, arguing that the latter occurred when a devil is permitted by God to enter into a man, "and is there powerfully predominant over his soule and body."<sup>22</sup>

This profoundly different conception of possession is a consequence of the Calvinist preoccupation with temptation. Certainly, temptation had always been one of the devil's chief lures, one well attested by biblical precedent in the figures of Eve and Judas. But it was also how the devil set out to compromise Christ's salvific mission before it even began. As Matthew 4.1–4 describes, Christ went into the wilderness at the very start of his ministry precisely so that he might be tempted and so overcome the devil. And the devil did not disappoint. Hungry and weak from forty days of fasting, he enjoined Christ to use his powers to perform various different miracles to prove that he was the son of God. To each of these temptations, Christ responded by citing scripture, eventually causing the devil to give up.<sup>23</sup> Considering this, in the sixteenth century Calvin argued that the whole episode was intended as an example to humanity of how people should resist the kind of demonic temptation to which they are subject daily. People, he asserted, are inherently susceptible to temptation. Indeed, the example of Adam shows that it is part of the way they were constituted, for the first man succumbed to the devil while he was still innocent and embodying the brightness of the divine image.

It is not just that succumbing to temptation necessarily entails sin—as bad as that might be. For Calvin, giving into temptation means not

<sup>20</sup>John Darrell, *A True Narration of the Strange and Grevous Vexation by the Devil of 7 Persons in Lancashire and William Somers of Nottingham* (London, 1600), 80.

<sup>21</sup>Edward Nyndge, *A Booke Declaringe the fearfull Vexation of one Alexander Nyndge* (London, 1573), sig. A3v.

<sup>22</sup>Homes, *Plain Dealing*, 78.

<sup>23</sup>Other versions of this episode can be found at Mark 1.12–13 and Luke 4.1–13.

trusting in God, seeking, instead, to use the things of the world to our own advantage in unauthorized ways. Christ's time in the wilderness makes this crystal clear, for the devil commanded Christ to turn stones into bread to satisfy his hunger in an unnatural and wicked fashion. Had Christ not resisted, Satan would have succeeded in destroying Christ's faith—and, with it, the possibility of humanity's redemption. Though the contest between Christ and the devil was one-sided and the outcome never in doubt, for humanity the situation is chronic, for Calvin insists, "however many bodily desires there are in man, Satan seizes as many opportunities for tempting him."<sup>24</sup>

In this respect, the possibility of demonic temptation was never far from the minds of Calvinists trawling their consciences for signs of sin. Nathan Johnstone has gone so far as to argue that Protestants in general were fixated by the issue of temptation, declaring that, for them, it came to be the single most worrying element of the devil's power.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, amongst Calvinists, succumbing to temptation implied providing the devil with a foothold inside the body from which he might be able to take possession of the soul. For Darrell, this is precisely how possession often began. Satan, he argued, would approach his intended victims with promises of silver, gold and the like, "and after this manner he dealeth with us all in the temptation[n]s wherwith he continually assalteth us: somtimes yea usually settinge before our eyes the pleasure of the sinne he intiseth us unto." Once seduced, the way is open for the devil to take hold of his victim not just physically but spiritually.<sup>26</sup>

Sin, then, is an entry point for the devil. But the corollary could also be true: sin could imply a form of possession. This latter notion was developed by Calvin's friend and colleague, Pierre Viret in his 1561 *Le monde demoniac*, a work Englished in 1583 as *The Worlde Possessed with Devils*. In this text, Viret distinguished between various types of possession. To be sure, the demoniacs of the New Testament can properly be said to be possessed by devils, for they show indisputable signs of physical or mental anguish. But so too can the wicked of the present day, for

<sup>24</sup>"Quotquot in homine sunt corporales affectus, totidem illius tentandi occasiones arripit Satan." See Calvin, *Commentarius in Harmoniam Evangelicam*, in *Opera*, vol. 45, ed. William Baum, Edward Cunitz, and Edward Reus (Brunswick, 1891), 129–31.

<sup>25</sup>Nathan Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil: The Experience of Temptation in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 43.2 (2004): 173–205, esp. 176–8.

<sup>26</sup>Darrell, *True Narration*, 80.

through their sins they give themselves soul and body over to the devil and do his works.<sup>27</sup> To Viret, alluding to St. Paul's prophecy in 1 Tim. 4.1–2, the omnipresence of this sort of possession—with people giving themselves over to the spirit of error and the doctrines of the devil—was proof that the world was entering into its final days.<sup>28</sup> In the middle of the seventeenth century, this sentiment was echoed by Homes. Critiquing the immorality of the interregnum, he lamented that in his own day, “crowds of wicked wretches, blasphemers, inhumane imps, impious by horrid principles, ascend their increment and gradation of ungodliness, till they appear to us no otherwise then as *possessed*.”<sup>29</sup>

Thus, as Stuart Clark has made clear, possession was in practice a term with a range of meanings.<sup>30</sup> Certainly, it was popularly linked to the raging demoniacs famous and infamous from the pamphlet and learned literature that sold across London. But there was also an extended sense in which those who succumbed to the temptation of sin allowed the devil into their conscience, granting him a foothold from which he might take hold of the whole person. The corollary was also true: the presence of sin was a sign that an individual was in the clutches of the evil one. It is this latter more polemical sense of possession that underlies Terry's understanding of India and its inhabitants. As is obvious to him from his experience in the region, India is a land in which the devil has been granted licence by God—a land in which the vanity and arrogance of the people has caused them to misconstrue reality, causing them to fall into Satan's clutches.

### TERRY AND THE DEMONISM OF INDIA

By the time Terry wrote his 1655 account, Protestants of all stripes had been pondering the issue of demonic subversion for more than a century in an attempt to explain Catholicism and its ability to seduce its adherents through false belief.<sup>31</sup> But while they were prepared to concede that there was an element of truth at the core of the Roman faith, the same could not be said of the rites and rituals practised by Indians.

<sup>27</sup> Pierre Viret, *The Worlde possessed with Devils* (London, 1583), sig. D8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., sig. A7<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Homes, *Plain Dealing*, 79.

<sup>30</sup> Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 420.

<sup>31</sup> Johnstone, “The Protestant Devil,” 180–1.

Indians, Terry asserted, were “meer *natural* men,”<sup>32</sup> an allusion to 1 Corinthians 2.14, “But the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishnes unto him: nether can he knowe *them*, because they are spiritually discerned” in the Geneva translation.<sup>33</sup> Commenting on this passage, Calvin argued that it referred to a person endowed only with the natural faculties with which he was born, in contradistinction to the spiritual man, the mind of whom is illuminated by the spirit of God.<sup>34</sup> To the Puritan theologian William Perkins writing in the early years of the seventeenth century, a natural man “is he who living a naturall life is endued with a reasonable soule, and is governed by nature, reason, and sense onely; without grace or the spirit of God.”<sup>35</sup>

For Terry, this realization is part of the key to understanding what is really happening in India. Superficially, at least, there does seem to be much good in Indian society. We may behold there, he wrote, many worthy examples of “excellent *Moralities*,” the majority of which are a result of their observance of various precepts handed down to them by “Bremaw,” whom he describes as one of their “most highly esteemed Prophets and Law-givers.”<sup>36</sup> Likely supplementing his observations with borrowings from Henry Lord’s 1630 *Discoverie of the Sect of the Banians*, Terry notes that Hindus are enjoined to preserve the life of all creatures, to take food only in moderation, to observe the appropriate times for fasting, to help the poor as much as they are able, to avoid lying, stealing or defrauding, and not to oppress the poor.<sup>37</sup> Many of these injunctions

<sup>32</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 255.

<sup>33</sup>While I cannot be completely certain, judging from the passages where he quotes scripture, it seems likely that Terry used a Geneva bible, for he seems to have drawn occasionally upon its marginal gloss.

<sup>34</sup>Calvin is actually glossing the phrase “Animalis homo” which is rendered as “natural man” in the Geneva translation. See Calvin, “Commentarius in Epistolam Priorem ad Corinthios,” in *Opera*, vol. 49, ed. William Baum, Edward Cunitz and Edward Reus, 293–574 (Brunswick, 1892), 343–4.

<sup>35</sup>William Perkins, *A Godlie and Learned Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Jude* (London, 1606), 126.

<sup>36</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 328.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 328–9. Cf. Henry Lord, *Discoverie of the Sect of the Banians in A Display of two forraigne sects in the East Indies* (London, 1630), 41–3. Although Terry has reordered Bremaw’s precepts, his wording is very close to that of Lord. That said, he turns Lord’s time for “washings” in the third precept to “hours for watching.” If Terry is borrowing from Lord, he omits the latter’s second commandment, which is that individuals should make their covenant with God according to each of the five senses.

are very good, “having the impression of God upon them.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Terry seems especially impressed by the fact that however poor Indians may be, they are always prepared to help their parents, sometimes going so far as to offer them half of their income when they stand in need. In this, Terry says, they seem to be following the precept to “honour thy father and mother” laid down by Paul in Ephesians 6.2, reiterating the fifth commandment.<sup>39</sup>

But for Terry, it is quite clear that the similarity between Bremaw’s laws and those of the decalogue cannot be the result of divine illumination. Rather, he asserts, what moral virtues that “so much adorn *Heathens*” are “*Remnants & Remaines*” of the truths that were impressed upon the minds of all human beings before the fall. Though these impressions are now only dimly perceived, as it were, through the fog of centuries of accrued tradition, they are, he says, like “[l]ittle sparkes raked up … under many ashes, which can never die nor be utterly extinguished so long as the Soule liveth.”<sup>40</sup> To Calvin, it is the survival of these smouldering embers of truth within people’s souls that explains why people can intrinsically discern justice from injustice, and honesty from dishonesty, regardless of whether they are Christian or not.<sup>41</sup>

The problem is, while all people—whether Christian, Gentile, or Muslim—have some spark of truth in them, they do not have full knowledge of the law. Nor can they deduce the law from the book of nature, for in its postlapsarian state, human understanding is “choked with great thickenesse of ignorauance.”<sup>42</sup> As Calvin argues, this dull-wittedness means that the mind is unable to search out the truth but, instead, strays into error—like someone groping his way forwards in darkness and stumbling. “So,” in Calvin’s words, “in seekinge trueth, it doth bewray howe unfitte it is to seeke and finde trueth.” Unguided, the mind strays into error, mistaking its own fond conceits and opinions for truth and reality.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 329.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 249–51.

<sup>40</sup>Terry maintains this on the basis of Romans 2.14–15 which he renders as “*that they having not the Law, doe by nature the things conteyned in the law, which shews the works of the law written in their hearts.*” Ibid., 258.

<sup>41</sup>Calvin, “Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos,” in *Opera*, vol. 49, ed. William Baum, Edward Cunitz, and Edward Reus, 1–292 (Brunswick, 1892), 38.

<sup>42</sup>Calvin, *Institution*, II.2.12.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

This is precisely the position in which all “natural men” find themselves, for in giving free rein to their mind illuminated by nature but without grace or the knowledge of heavenly things, they are led by the spirit of pride away from truth into opinion and error.<sup>44</sup> They are, Terry says, “will-worshippers,” doing whatever they want without any master or guidance.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, he finds the inherent irreligion underlying Indian morality quite clear from their attitude towards living things. Not only do they not eat anything that was living,<sup>46</sup> the “tenderness” of Indians causes them to do whatever “they can to preserve the lives of all inferior Creatures.” They give large sums of money to protect the lives of cows—even sometimes going so far as to pay the boys of the English trading factory in Surat “to forbear that … cruelty” of killing the flies swarming in such abundance there.<sup>47</sup> Moreover,

… they will not deprive the most uselesse, and most offensive Creatures of life, not *Snakes*, and other venomous things that may kill them, saying, that it is their nature to do hurts, and they cannot help it, but as for themselves they further say, that God hath given them reason to shun those Creatures, but not liberty to destroy them.<sup>48</sup>

But rather than interpret their attitude towards animals as a spark of truth, a remnant of the decalogue’s commandment against killing impressed upon their souls, Terry concludes that it actually shows the extent to which they are “dwelling in the dark.”<sup>49</sup> To be sure, treating animals with compassion is to allow them “to make havock and spoil of them.”<sup>50</sup> But that is just a symptom of a much deeper problem. In an argument which echoes that made by Lord, Terry points out that Genesis 1.26 made it clear that God gave humanity power over the

<sup>44</sup>See, for instance, Samuel Otes, *An Explanation of the General Epistle of Saint Jude* (London, 1633), sig. A5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>45</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 433, recte 542.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 94 and 321.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 326–7.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 327.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 329.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

beasts and that people were to use them for service and sustenance.<sup>51</sup> Thus, in treating animals in a fashion contrary to how God intended them to be used, Indians are denying the sovereignty of God. What is more, their actions show how deficient the untutored mind of the natural man is, for in their pride they have clearly failed to recognize the divinely orchestrated hierarchy of creation manifest in terrestrial reality, and the power and benevolence of God that underlies it.

As bad as this might be, like other natural men the situation in which Indians find themselves is actually more chronic. As Calvin argues, God permitted these little sparks of prelapsarian wit—this “little tast of his Godhead”—to survive in man so that people cannot excuse their ungodliness by feigning ignorance.<sup>52</sup> Writing of natural men in general in 1600, the clergyman Robert Cawdry described their virtues as “bewtiffull sinnes.”<sup>53</sup> According to Perkins four years later, the “morrall works performed by naturall men are sinnes, indeede,” for they are not performed for the sake of faith or obedience, or for the glory of God.<sup>54</sup> In this sense, the seemingly good, moral precepts that Indians observe so diligently actually convict them, for they render their conduct inexcusable. That their conscience causes them to realize, for instance, that adultery, theft and murder are evils and that honesty is commendable should prove to them that there is a god above and behind these precepts.<sup>55</sup> Terry readily admits that all Indians understand that there is a single God, but unguided by the light of faith and without revelation, they are unable to contemplate him in a way that does not detract from his nobility. The Brahmins, for example, limit God by circumscribing him to place. They have some dim comprehension of the fact that as creator he must have awesome power, but this realization leads them astray, causing them to envision God with a thousand eyes, hands and feet. In contemplating his omnipotence and transcendence, they end up similarly confused. God rules over the universe, they argue. But because of this, he can have no interest in petty matters such as the day to day progression

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Lord, *Discoverie of the Sect of the Banians*, 46 which makes the same argument but grounds it upon Gen. 9.3.

<sup>52</sup>Calvin, *Institution*, II.2.18.

<sup>53</sup>Robert Cawdry, *A Treasurie or Store-house of Similieis* (London, 1600), 105.

<sup>54</sup>William Perkins, *A commentarie or exposition, upon the five first chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians* (London, 1604), 224.

<sup>55</sup>Calvin, *Commentarius ad Romanos*, on 38. Cf. *Institution*, II.2.22.

of the affairs of individuals. Meddling at such a base and trivial level would be beneath him and debase his dignity. Terry finds this last argument absurd, for, he says, it is like arguing that the sun is defiled because it shines on dung heaps.<sup>56</sup>

To Terry, these errors show the dangers of the unguided empiricism of India's natural men. Echoing Calvin, the proper object of knowledge, he argues, is always “a right understanding, and knowledge of the true God,”<sup>57</sup> for knowledge is what allows man to live twice.<sup>58</sup> Knowledge that is not ordered towards the ultimate final cause is—quite literally—aimless, and amounts to no more than a set of random conclusions, devoid of any real significance. Natural men simply cannot understand what is really happening from what they see, the clergyman William Attersoll asserted, for they “seeth with one eye, to witt the carnall eye of naturall reason, that can pierce no farther then the light of nature reacheth.”<sup>59</sup> Indeed, determined the Puritan James Cranford, the judgment of natural men is susceptible to manipulation by the devil and his instruments, causing them to miss the true significance of reality.<sup>60</sup> The situation in India, Terry declares, is parallel to that in which the quintessential natural men—the great heathen philosophers of antiquity—found themselves. Drawing upon the arguments of the fourth-century Christian rhetorician Lactantius, their learning, he says, “was without an head, because they knew not God, and therefore seeing they were blind, and hearing they were deaf, and understanding they understood nothing as they ought to have done.”<sup>61</sup> Indians are their analogues, for they “see as far with the eye of Nature as it can possibly reach, and nature it self

<sup>56</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 348–50. The metaphor bears a striking resemblance to one deployed by Calvin: “whence … commeth the stinke in a dead carriion, which hath bin both rotted & disclosed by heate of the sunne? All men do see that it is raised by the beames of the sunne. Yet no man doth therefore say, that the sunbeames do stinke.” See Calvin, *Institution*, I.17.5. I am grateful to Michelle Brock for pointing this out to me.

<sup>57</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 343.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 342.

<sup>59</sup>William Attersoll, *A Commentarie Upon the Epistle of Saint Paul to Philemon* (London, 1612), 296 and Attersoll, “Physicke Against Famine,” in *Three Treatises Viz. 1. The Conversion of Nineueh. 2. Gods Trumpet Sounding the Alarum. 3. Physicke Against Famine* (London, 1632), 143.

<sup>60</sup>James Cranford, *An Abstract of Some Late Characters* (London, 1643), 2.

<sup>61</sup>The quotation is from Lactantius's *De vero cultu* (PL 6.0664B). Terry, *Voyage*, 536–7.

teacheth them ... that there is a God, but who this God is, and how this God is to be worshipped, must elsewhere be learn'd.”<sup>62</sup>

The fact that Indians—like all natural men—cannot see through appearances to reality explains, in part, why they have lapsed into idolatry. Equipped only with impaired human cognition, searching for light in the darkness, they are so dazzled by the splendor and wonder of creation that they are seduced into worshipping some of its physical manifestations rather than construing these properly as living signs pointing to a higher signification.<sup>63</sup> For Calvin, this confirms the fact that idolatry is actually a sign of the desperation of its practitioners. With a sense of the deity indelibly engraved upon their hearts, without faith or revelation to guide them, they struggle to find a way to articulate this desire to honor God. Consequently, they erroneously and dangerously misdirect their attentions, misconstruing effects as causes.<sup>64</sup> In this respect, idolatry is a sin inextricably linked to vision and its interpretation. According to the early seventeenth-century Calvinist clergyman George Hakewill, this is why Ezekiel 20.8 finds God describing the idols of the Israelites as “abominacions of their eyes.” Following Calvin’s commentary on the passage, Hakewill argues that this phrase was used not just because idolatry began with vision, but because it is also sustained by it, for in attracting the attention of the eye, idols prevent the mind from contemplating that for which it was created.<sup>65</sup> Terry agrees, noting that “Sin commonly enters in at the eye, and so creeps down to the heart,” leaving the soul exposed to “very much hazard.”<sup>66</sup>

In trusting their vision, in relying upon the inherently dubious evidence of appearance as the first principle from which to deduce reality, Indians have been seduced into using created things in a way that does not admit the fact that these come from God. As such, they stand in breach of what Calvin takes to be both the first and second

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 537.

<sup>63</sup>Henry Ashwood, “To My Ancient Friend,” in *ibid.*, sig. A8<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>64</sup>Calvin, *Institution*, I.3.1 and I.5.15. Cf. *Commentarius ad Romanos*, 38.

<sup>65</sup>George Hakewill, *Vanities of the Eye* (Oxford, 1608), 13–17. See also Calvin, “Praelectiones in Ezechieliis Prophetae,” in *Opera*, vol. 40, ed. William Baum, Edward Cunitz, and Edward Reus, 13–516 (Brunswick, 1889), 478–9. Cf. Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9–38.

<sup>66</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 301.

commandment.<sup>67</sup> For Calvin, everything flows from these commandments which enjoin humanity to recognize God and worship him correctly. In this respect, idolatry is the most heinous of offences. The apocryphal *Wisdom of Salomon* describes it as “the beginning and the cause and the end of all evil.”<sup>68</sup> Idolatry diminishes, even obscures the godhead by redirecting the worship and reverence due to it towards an inanimate object. In so doing, it corrupts and adulterates true religion, and is an affront to God, provoking him to jealousy, as Calvin says, “as if an unchast woman by bringing in an adulterer openly before her husbands eyes should the more vexe his minde.”<sup>69</sup> It is not just that idols insult the creator. According to the Elizabethan “Homely against parell of Idolatry,” they are lies, for they claim to be something that they are not and cannot be. Certainly, it is impossible for a human craftsman to capture the pure, infinite spirit of God in a gross and finite image—a spirit he has never seen and whose mind cannot comprehend. But even those who try to claim to have fashioned an image merely in honor of God have, in fact, done precisely the opposite. They have “dishonored him most highly, diminished his maiestie, blemished hys glory, and falsified hys trueth.”<sup>70</sup> In this sense, they are double lies. Under the inextricable logic of contrariety, to the homily’s author, this connects idols directly to the devil, the father of lies, concluding that “the lyinge ymages of God, to hys great dishonor, and horrable daunger of hys people, came from the Devyll.”<sup>71</sup> Idolatry is a form of rebellion against God and an integral component of the devil’s religion.

That the natural men of India have succumbed to the devil’s religion is not surprising, for natural men in general are susceptible to the influence of the devil, as much sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century literature points out. According to Calvin, the will of a natural man “is subject to the rule of the Devill[;]... beinge bewitched with the deceits of Satan, it of necessity yeldeth it selfe obedient to every leading of him.”<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Calvin takes Exodus 20.4–6 against making and worshipping graven images as a commandment distinct from 20.3, “Thou shalt have none other gods before me.”

<sup>68</sup> *Wisdom*, 14.26.

<sup>69</sup> Calvin, *Institution*, II.8.16–17.

<sup>70</sup> “Homely against parell of Idolatry,” in *The seconde Tome of Homelyes* (London, 1563), sig. Mmiv<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> “Homely,” sig. Mmiv<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>72</sup> Calvin, *Institution*, II.4.1.

To the Puritan-minded minister Joseph Caryl writing in 1656, natural men are incapable of maintaining the truth. They are, he says, “like vessels without a bottome, or full of holes, into which these truths being put, run out every drop.”<sup>73</sup> Thus, what apparent wisdom they display is nothing but the “*craft or wit to doe wickedly.*” This they get from their father, for “*They are the seed of the Serpent.*” Their guile dwells inwardly in them, derived from their blood. They are “witty above others in devising evill, so they are cursed above others in bearing evill.”<sup>74</sup> That said, natural men are not necessarily aware that they are in Satan’s clutches. As Perkins argued, they may well have seen some of the horrible representations of the devil made by painters and sculptors, but they are unable to recognize them for what they are, for Satan has so won them over with the pleasures of the world that he “keepes them sure in his possession.”<sup>75</sup>

In this respect, India is the devil’s land—a land of superstition, idolatry, and what Terry calls “misdevotion.”<sup>76</sup> Confusing their own imaginings with truth and reality, Indians are possessed at least in the sense that Viret deployed the term. And as a traveller to the region, as a clergyman who had spent an extended period there, Terry felt he had the social capital to diagnose the condition of the region and to explain it to English readers.

### PRICKING THE REPROBATE

As the story of Job makes clear, the devil has no independent power. What he does, he can only do with the explicit consent of God. Calvin goes so far as to describe Satan as an agent of God.<sup>77</sup> Commenting upon 1 Sam. 16.15 where Saul is assailed by evil spirits, the gloss to the Geneva text states that “wicked spirits are at Gods commandement to execute his wil against [th]e wicked.” The clergyman George Gifford

<sup>73</sup>Joseph Caryl, *An Exposition with Practical Observations Continued Upon the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Chapters of the Book of Job* (London, 1656), 79.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 275–6.

<sup>75</sup>William Perkins, *The Combat betweene Christ and the Divell displayed* (London, 1606), sig. A2v.

<sup>76</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 541 and 87.

<sup>77</sup>Calvin, *Institution*, I.14.17.

was slightly more colourful in his assessment of the devil's relationship with the lord. The devil, he wrote, "hath no right nor power over Gods creatures, no not so much as to kill one flye, or to take one eare of corne out of anie mans barne, unlesse power be given him."<sup>78</sup> Closer to Terry's day, Homes stressed that what power the devil has in the world comes from "particular special *permission*, if not a *Commission*" from God to try the righteous, to seduce the wicked and obstinate, and to deceive nations.<sup>79</sup>

In this respect, it is clear that the devil's intervention in India must be something desired by God; it is something, Terry suggests, for which God has granted permission and approval, even if he is not prepared to offer direct assistance. The devil's grip upon India, then, is analogous to his hold over a demoniac;<sup>80</sup> both are sites to which the devil has been granted access and given a free hand. The issue is: why?

From the gospel accounts, it is evident that Christ used cases of possession as opportunities to demonstrate his power publicly by casting out demons. Not only did these exorcisms make clear to his followers that he was a conduit for preternatural power and could manipulate it to specific ends, they were intended to convince people of his divinity. After dispossessing the Gadarene demoniac, for instance, Mark 5.19–20 reports that Christ told the newly healed man, "Go thy way home to thy friends, and shewe the[m] what great things the Lord hathe done unto thee, and *how* he hathe had compassion on thee./So he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, what great thi[n]gs Jesus had done unto him: and all men did marvel." From the beginning, then, demon possession had a rhetorical dimension to it in that it was intended to persuade those who saw it enacted or remedied—or who heard about it from trustworthy witnesses—of the veracity of Christ's claims.<sup>81</sup> After the crucifixion, Acts suggests that the power to exorcize demons passed to the apostles, but to the Protestant English reflecting on the history of the early church

<sup>78</sup>George Gifford, *Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (London, 1593), sig. D1v.

<sup>79</sup>Homes, *Plain Dealing*, 2–5.

<sup>80</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 289.

<sup>81</sup>All of Christ's miracles were intended to be persuasive. But as Graham Twelftree has argued, exorcisms seem to have been the most important of these wonder-workings. See his *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 46.

1500 years later, this is where it ended. With both the divinity of Christ established, and the fundamental truth of the gospels unassailable, such displays of power over malicious spirits were no longer necessary. Faith was what mattered—and faith did not require sensory evidence.

While the likes of John Deacon and John Walker tried in 1601 to discredit Darrell by arguing that the end of the age of miracles necessarily implied that extraordinary instances of possession had also ceased, this was not an easy position to maintain outside a learned, theoretical treatise, for cases continued to be diagnosed and reported.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, where demoniacs were found, they necessarily demanded serious attention—and not just from physicians. Drawing upon Romans 1.20, which asserts that creation should be read as a statement by God about himself, enjoining Christians to contemplate his majesty through the variety of things he has made, Darrell argues that what is true of these ordinary works of God must be all the more true for the extraordinary, specific, and limited interventions the Lord occasionally makes to disrupt the normal course of nature. Possessions are relatively rare events, he insists, and so they demand special attention from the faithful, “for an extraordinarie worke calleth for an extraordinarie use.”<sup>83</sup> Not only should “we our selves conceyve well off the worke, and profit by it,” but we have a duty to the lord to disseminate news of such great works of God not just in conversation but also in print so that it reaches “throughout the whole land.” Commenting on his decision to publish yet another account of the Sommers possession, Darrell explains that “iff I should have abstayned from the publishinge thereof, I see not but that therayn I should have fayled in the performance off a necessarie dewtie, and so sinned against God.”<sup>84</sup> As with the Gadarene, the faithful are obliged to spread news of the wonders God has sanctioned.

In the context of the Puritan anxiety over temptation, demoniacs were generally understood as sinners having succumbed to some form of temptation. Calvin signals as much in *Institutes*, noting that “God

<sup>82</sup> John Deacon and John Walker, *Dialogicall Discourses of Spirits and Divels* (London, 1601), 166–8. As Marion Gibson has argued, the relationship between Deacon and Walker, and Darrell was complicated, for all three were identified as amongst the godly. See her *Possession, Puritanism and Print: Darrell, Harsnett, Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Exorcism Controversy* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), 145–50.

<sup>83</sup> Darrell, *True Narration*, 104 and 67.

<sup>84</sup> Darrell, *An Apologie, or Defence*, sig. A2<sup>v</sup>–A3<sup>r</sup>.

suffereth not the devil to reigne over the soul[s] of the faithfull, but onely delivereth him the wicked and unbelievi[ng] to governe.”<sup>85</sup> The point is reiterated by Darrell, who asserts that possession “is a punishment or correction of the Lord layd upon man by the ministerye of Satan for his sinne.”<sup>86</sup> For him, Judas’s possession is a case in point, for in succumbing to temptation he allowed the devil to take possession of him. Outside the canon of scripture, Edward Nyndge drew a straight line between his brother’s sin and his possession, arguing that the demoniac’s relief would come only with his earnest repentance.<sup>87</sup> This connection also seems to have held in some of the more sensationalistic pamphlet literature. To cite just one example, the anonymous author of the 1584 *A true and most Dreadfull discourse of a woman possessed with the Devill* noted that Margaret Cooper was bewitched by an evil spirit and later assailed by it physically in the form of a headless bear. The spirit rolled her around “like an Hoope” and then “downe an high paire of staires in[to] the Hall,” for 15 minutes; she later acknowledged “that it was for her sinnes she was so tormented of the evill Spirite.”<sup>88</sup> Gifford went so far as to argue that because ultimately it is God’s will that the devil takes possession of a demoniac, “I see no warrant at all by Gods word, much lesse to commaund and adjure him to depart.”<sup>89</sup>

From the perspective of the godly, at least, demoniacs were not unwitting victims of the devil’s malice; rather, they were sinners who had succumbed to some form of temptation and suffered the consequences. Construed in this way, not only was their affliction just—a means of punishing and correcting particular sinners—but, as Darrell argues, this means that possessions ought to be treated as mirrors of God’s justice. That is to say, as expressions of his disapproval and as wholly justified retaliation against specific types of sinner, they function as statements made by God about his justice that are intended to be read and comprehended by humanity. According to Darrell, this works in a number of ways. On one level, those who witness a demoniac’s fits or read

<sup>85</sup> Calvin, *Institution*, 1.14.18. The text is very tightly bound at this point; hence I have supplied the likely readings of line endings.

<sup>86</sup> Darrell, *An Apologie, or Defence*, f. 12<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> Nyndge, *Vexation of one Alexander Nyndge*, A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> *A true and most Dreadfull discourse of a woman possessed with the Devill* (London, 1584), sig. A4<sup>r</sup>–A7<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> Gifford, *Dialogue Concerning Witches*, sig. I2<sup>r</sup>.

about them in a popular account come to appreciate the manifold snares the devil has strewn across the world to entice and trap human beings, understanding at length how sin operates as the devil's doorway to the soul.<sup>90</sup> But more than this, the raging of the devil inside the body of a demoniac allows those who see the poor unfortunate to appreciate his power over the living and affords an opportunity to contemplate how he might treat souls in the afterlife. Viret made this point explicitly. For him, instances of possession were a vital part of the rhetoric of creation:

[B]ecause men can not well perceive how the Devil hurteth their soules by meanes of sinne, God hath set forth this Image before their eyes in the persones of the possessed whiche are knowne to be suche, to the ende that by the[m] thei might learne to know, by the tyranny which the Devill executeth on their bodies, what tyranny be useth on their soules when thei are given over to hym.<sup>91</sup>

Demoniacs are important as living examples, then, depicting the effect of sin on the soul; as such, they are specific warnings that faithful Christians would do well to heed—anti-miracles, even. Indeed, Viret continues, “the exa[m]ples of the possessed … maie serve to waken us, that we be not sodainly overcome with so cruel an enemy.”<sup>92</sup> He even goes so far as to offer a number of tropological readings of the behaviour of certain demoniacs in their fits, suggesting how each particular contortion should be interpreted as a precisely honed warning to the faithful.<sup>93</sup> Although he denied it when interrogated, a set of anonymous documents headed “A note of the sighte in Nottingham by one possessed, the v<sup>th</sup> of November, 1597, according to our remembraunces” shows that Sommers’s fits were perceived as critiques of the many and varied sins of the town’s citizens.<sup>94</sup> Darrell’s critic Samuel Harsnett claimed that the minister himself supplied a running commentary of the boy’s fits, interpreting each of Satan’s apparent gestures in the body of the

<sup>90</sup> Darrell, *True Narration*, 80–2.

<sup>91</sup> Viret, *Worlde possessed with Devils*, sig. E1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., sig. E2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, sig. G1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton, Preserved at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire* (London, 1911), 165–8. Gibson argues that the author of the note was likely one John Atkinson. Gibson, *Possession, Puritanism and Print*, 87.

putative demoniac as a specific warning.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, to Viret it is the exemplar value of possession that explains why God has permitted there to be so many devils. Although Satan would be powerful enough to assail the whole world on his own, on the basis of Mark 5.9 that has the Gadarene demoniac possessed by a legion of unclean spirits, Viret argues that God has permitted there to be many demons so that human beings might witness and learn the full effects of sin, and get a sense of the variety of troubles and torments the devil will inflict upon the damned from a rich corpus of examples.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, he concedes, as appalling as these tortures may be, “all that is written[n] of these possessed men is nothing, in comparison of the tormentes of the damned [and] reprobate.”<sup>97</sup>

Yet if possessions can be understood as showing the power of the devil in microcosm, so too can they be read as a statement by God about his power. As strong and powerful as the devil shows himself to be within the bodies of the possessed, possessions also show how much more powerful is the Lord for whom the devil is merely his executioner. How much more appropriate, then, that human beings approach God—in good Calvinist fashion—trembling in fear.<sup>98</sup>

While possessions teach the faithful in this way, they are also of singular use in confounding atheists—those who, as Darrell argues, not only follow the Psalmic fool by saying that there is no god but go further, affirming their “unspeakable folly” in blasphemy.<sup>99</sup> Confronted with the spectacle of a possession, with the putative demoniac manifesting the conventional litany of strange and unnatural symptoms, or with depositions of many worthy men and women attesting to the fact that they had seen the demoniac in his fits, these “lusty galla[n]ts who will have no heaven, nor hell, no god, nor devil” find themselves with nowhere to turn. As it was for the Jews and gentiles who encountered Christ, such sensible and palpable evidence must force him to conclude that there is a devil, and, by extension that there is a God who has the power to deliver

<sup>95</sup> Harsnett’s loathing for Darrell and his notion of the possibility of dispossession by prayer and fasting means that his account has to be taken with more than a pinch of salt in such matters. But given the earlier, unpublished note, it seems clear that Sommers’s fits were being glossed. [Samuel Harsnett], *A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrel* (London, 1599), 115–17.

<sup>96</sup> Viret, *Worlde possessed with Devils*, sig. E2<sup>v</sup>–E3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., sig. E7<sup>r</sup>; cf. Darrell, *True Narration*, 82.

<sup>98</sup> Darrell, *True Narration*, 68; cf., for instance, Calvin, *Institution*, I.2.1.

<sup>99</sup> Darrell, *True Narration*, 87.

the vexed from their torments.<sup>100</sup> As Calvin argued, “the ministry of Sathan is used to pricke forward the reprobate.”<sup>101</sup>

Possession, then, is an integral part of the disposition of providence. It is a temporally and spatially circumscribed intervention by the devil with the consent of the creator intended to be read and glossed by the faithful. As such, the appropriate response to the spectacle of a demoniac, beyond petitioning God through prayer and fasting for his deliverance, is vigilance and introspection. The devil is everywhere, keen to lure sinners through temptation, setting before them all the worldly pleasures they might gain should they succumb to his offer,<sup>102</sup> ever ready to take hold of people should they fall even slightly from God.<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, the faithful must look to themselves, probe their conscience for chinks in their spiritual armour, for, as Homes notes breezily about the devil’s assaults on others “Happy (saith the Proverb) are they, whom other mens harmes make to beware—*Paries cum proximus ardet, Tunc tua res agitur*—When thy neighbours house is on fire, it is time to looke to thine.”<sup>104</sup> The Jews had the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as examples of the just judgment of God, Viret asserted. But in these current days, we have manifold examples of men possessed by devils to prick our consciences and to spur moral reformation.<sup>105</sup>

For Terry, the devil’s hold over India functions in precisely the same way as general cases of possession, for it too is an extraordinary work of God. Though his intervention in this part of the east is spatial and not temporal, God allows the devil a free hand in the region, Terry believes, for the sake of his new chosen people. Like the body of the demoniac, India is a statement by God about his power and justice, and a warning to the faithful. As such, it is incumbent upon the good Christian to read and gloss it by the light of scripture.

Terry’s understanding of geography is deeply informed by Calvin.<sup>106</sup> Although the theologian actually had very little specific to say about the

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>101</sup>See Calvin, *Institution*, II.4.5.

<sup>102</sup>Darrell, *True Narration*, 80–1.

<sup>103</sup>*A true and most Dreadfull discourse*, sig. A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>104</sup>Homes, *Plain Dealing*, 35.

<sup>105</sup>Viret, *Worlde possessed with Devils*, sig. C2<sup>v</sup>–C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>106</sup>I have developed this argument more fully in my “Edward Terry and the Calvinist Geography of India.”

subject directly, his conception of the nature and purpose of creation and its relationship to providence were enormously important to Terry's thinking about the structure and organization of space within the world. For Calvin, creation is a visible expression of God; it is a means of communication by which he makes himself known.<sup>107</sup> Creation is akin, he argues glossing Psalm 104, to a garment donned by the invisible God that makes him visible.<sup>108</sup> To be sure, his immutable essence may be incomprehensible to humanity, but God has disclosed something of his power, wisdom, benevolence, and justice in "the whole workmanship of the world," engraving plain and readily discernible marks of his glory in its fabric.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, Calvin continued, "we must confesse, that in every particular woorke of God, but principally in the universall generalitie of them, the powers of God are sette forth as it were in painted tables, by which mankind is provoked and allured to the knowledge of him."<sup>110</sup> Creation, he says, is "so beautifull a stage" on which human beings have been placed "to take a godly delight of the manifest and ordinary works of God."<sup>111</sup> It is, in the words of Susan Schreiner, the "visual language" of God.<sup>112</sup>

Although we are meant to contemplate God through the wonders of creation, parsing the individual things of the universe as precise and particular statements by him about himself, by themselves these are inadequate, for "we have no eyes to se the same throughly, unles they be enlightened by the revelation of God through faith."<sup>113</sup> In other words, scripture is necessary to mediate the evidence of the senses, to order it and to translate it into information that accurately reflects the nature and disposition of reality. Without it, we are nothing more than natural men,

<sup>107</sup> Calvin, *Institution*, I.5.8.

<sup>108</sup> John Calvin, "Commentarii in librum Psalmorum Pars Posterior: Ps. XCL ad CL," in *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 60, ed. William Baum, Edward Cunitz, and Edward Reuss, 2–442 (Brunswick, 1887), 85.

<sup>109</sup> Calvin, *Institution*, 1.5.1.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.5.9.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.14.20; cf. 1.6.2.

<sup>112</sup> Susan Schreiner, *Theater of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 65.

<sup>113</sup> Calvin, *Institution*, 1.5.13–4.

groping around in the dark, unable to discern properly the vague shadows that we see. Creation, then, has an important rhetorical dimension to it—although it is a statement accessible only to those God has chosen—making the creator also, as Serene Jones has termed it, “the Grand Orator.”<sup>114</sup>

Yet it is not just creation that ought to be treated as a text, for God uses providence to sustain the world in precisely the state he wishes. Unlike most of his medieval predecessors, Calvin afforded no role to proximate causation. For him, the fact that God was truly omnipotent meant that he did not operate through regulating forces such as nature:

he is ... called almighty, not because he can do and yet sitteth still and doth nothing, or by generall instinct only continueth the order of nature that he hath appointed: but because he governing both heaven and earth, by his Providence so ordreth all thinges that nothing chaunceth but by his advised purpose.<sup>115</sup>

The implication of this point is profound, for it means that every aspect of the creation is under the direct authority of providence. For example, in his commentary on Psalm 104, Calvin points out that natural philosophers have shown that water inclines to a place above earth in the hierarchy of elements because it is lighter. But if God allowed the elements to behave according to their nature, this would mean that there would be no place for humanity to live, for the earth would be flooded. Even the philosophers have to concede, therefore, that the fact that there is dry land at all must necessarily be a result of providence actively counteracting the order of nature, and restraining the waters. This is a miracle of God—something that would seem incredible to us were it not for the fact that experience shows us daily that it is true.<sup>116</sup> Providence, then, seeks to maintain the world in precisely the way God wishes it, regardless of the natural propensities of the elements.

What is more, it is not just the fundamental structure of the world that is a function of this sustaining providence. The state of creation—on both a macrocosmic and a microcosmic level—at any temporal instant

<sup>114</sup>Serene Jones, *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 28.

<sup>115</sup>Calvin, *Institution*, I.16.3.

<sup>116</sup>Calvin, “Commentarii in librum Psalmorum,” 86.

within the entire span of sacred history must also be a direct consequence of divine will. To provide just one example, Calvin notes that at one point in Psalm 104, God is described as walking upon the wings of the wind. This is a metaphor, he argues, and should be understood as referring to the fact that God drives the winds and clouds around according at his pleasure, for in sending them quickly here and there through the atmosphere he shows the presence of his power.<sup>117</sup> This is important, for it should make clear to those reading the signs of creation through the lens of scripture that the winds do not arise by chance—nor does lightning crack through the sky accidentally. Rather, both show that God rules and governs each and every atmospheric disturbance. Thus, if a noxious wind arises, we should understand that this is a result of God’s will and tremble under his scourges. Equally, if he moderates the excessive heat of the day with an agreeable breeze or purges corrupted air with a fresh north wind, we ought to be moved to contemplate his goodness and benevolence.<sup>118</sup>

It is not just that God holds the elements in balance according to his will, preventing creation from descending into something approaching the original chaos. His intervention is constant and continuous throughout all time. This means that the state of the world—or any part of it—at any point in time is wholly the result of the action of divine will. Thus, neither nature nor accident, tradition nor history can properly be said to have any role in accounting for the state of a region or a society; there is no place for fortune or chance in the government of the world.<sup>119</sup> If God is omnipotent, his power cannot be limited or qualified by the action of any independent force or principle.

Terry’s understanding of India is deeply informed by this treatment of God’s omnipotence. In a sermon he delivered in 1646 to merchants of the East India Company newly returned home, he framed their safe passage as a sign of divine benevolence as they sailed through waters directly under God’s power. From time to time, he notes on the basis of Proverbs 30.4, God releases the winds so that they raise up the waves, often boiling up the waters to enormous heights causing mariners in their small wooden vessels to despair. Their wit and judgement

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 85–6.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 138.

failing them, their skill in navigation standing them in no stead, “they looke every minute to be buried in those rowling graves, under those huge heapes, those mountaines of water.”<sup>120</sup> Yet just as all seems lost, “He who before let forth the windes, calls them in againe; he who before raised up the waves, commands them to be still, for *both windes and waves obey him*.”<sup>121</sup> Indeed, he adds, God constantly intervenes in creation in order to ensure that the waters do not flood the land—and to keep the movement of the sun around the earth bounded by the tropics.<sup>122</sup> The very fact that human beings survive at all is a result of God’s intervention. Man, he says, is like “an ill calkt Ship, and were it not for his power and providence, he would dayly receive that in through the little poares of his body, which would destroy him.”<sup>123</sup>

Terry does not dwell on the issue of sustaining providence to quite the same extent in his account of his own travels in India. Nevertheless, it underlies his thinking at critical junctures. He notes, for instance, that God intercedes directly in the tropics to temper the hot, sulphurous air by sending a “small gale of *winde* daily” there for the benefit of the English in the region, lest they end up stewed in their own sweat.<sup>124</sup> More significantly, it is providence, rather than nature acting independently, that restrains the animals of the world, forcing them under the yoke of humanity. Without God’s continuous and direct intervention, Terry cautions, “they would be able with their *Horns, Hoofs, Fangs, Teeth, Beaks, Claws, and stings* (which are their natural Artillerie) exceedingly to annoy, if not destroy man from the face of the Earth.”<sup>125</sup> “God,” he asserts unambiguously, “is not a carelesse, an improvident God, or a God to halves and in part ... but he is a God in lesser as well as in greater matters: Who beholds at one view all places, and all persons, and all things ... *our times are in Gods hands*.”<sup>126</sup>

While it is incumbent upon the faithful to read the humility of animals or the presence of cooling winds as signs of the benevolence of the almighty, so too are we meant to consider the state of Indian society as

<sup>120</sup>Terry, *Merchants and Mariners*, 10.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 10–11.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>124</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 125.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 141–2.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 352.

utterances by God. That India is a land in which the devil has a free hand clearly cannot be understood to be a function of the devil's own agency. Thus, in precisely the same way that God grants the devil limited power from time to time to chastise English sinners, vexing or possessing them for a period, the devil's intervention in India must likewise be part of the creator's will. As such, it too must have rhetorical value, for it must be intended—in part at least—to instruct the faithful.

That God periodically uses people essentially as figures in his vast, cosmic rhetoric to make his justice and benevolence clear to those he favoured was not without biblical precedent. Viret's point that the destruction of not just the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah but their inhabitants was intended to be an example of God's judgement is perhaps the most obvious case. For Terry, though, the fact that God uses people to express himself can be found in Deuteronomy 32.21 where the creator, moved to jealousy by the idolatry of the Israelites, resolved to "provoke them to angrē with a foolish nacion"—that is, according to the Geneva gloss, a nation that has neither been favoured by God nor has received his law. Indeed, argues Terry, drawing upon Isaiah 1.3:

as God instructs man by the Oxe, and Ass, and Stork and Turtle and Crane and Swallow, and by the little Ant or Pismire Creatures which are onely sensible so much more they may be minded of, and learn the practice of some duties from men, people (though strange and remote) yet endued with reason.<sup>127</sup>

Like the demoniacs of England, then, the demonism inherent to India was intended to be read. It was to stand as an edifying example to the faithful who encountered the region or read about it in printed tracts. What is more, it was intended to be permanent, for Terry argues that God would never let Indians be converted to Christianity, implying that providence would sustain them in their ignorance forever; truth, after all, he says, is not for everyone.<sup>128</sup> Thus, in the final section of his *Voyage*—running to nearly a fifth of the whole—Terry sets out to understand the "speciall use" the English should make of his "interview of Nations,

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 452–3.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 460 and 471, recte 523.

Persons, Things,” offering what he describes as a number of “serious, and heedfull, but sad Considerations” about the region, its meaning and significance.<sup>129</sup>

Part of the importance of India to the English, Terry argues, stems from the fact that knowing how the devil functions—understanding his power and the kind of snares he uses to trap human beings—amplifies rhetorically the benevolence and mercy of his opposite. As he writes, “for the power and truth of Religion we shall the better know it, if we first briefly discover what it is not, and then what it is.”<sup>130</sup> As Clark has shown at some length, this mode of exposition was common practice in early modern rhetoric.<sup>131</sup> Terry would likely have first encountered it at school studying Quintilian’s first-century *Institutio oratoria*.<sup>132</sup> Closer to Terry’s day, the English humanist Thomas Wilson described how opposites should be used in his 1553 *Arte of Rhetorique*:

Contraries being set, the one against the other, appere more evident. Therefore if any one be disposed to set furthe chastitie, he may bryng in, of the contrarie parte, whordome, and show what a foul offence it is to live so uncleanly, and then the deformitie of whoredome shall muche sette for the chastitie.<sup>133</sup>

That is to say, discussing one term in an opposition serves to enhance the qualities of the other. In terms of theology, this notion is expressed most bluntly by King James who, in his 1597 *Daemonologie*, written while he was still in Scotland, argued that “For since the Devill is the verie contrarie opposite to God, there can be no better way to know God, then by the contrarie.”<sup>134</sup>

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 452–3. He had done much the same in his 1649 sermon where he is concerned to stress to his audience of merchants and mariners the “inference, or application” of their experiences on the high seas. See Terry, *Merchants*, 17. This point is developed more fully by Daniel Carey in his “Edward Terry’s A Voyage to East-India (1655): A Chaplain’s Narrative of the Mughal World,” *Études anglaises: Revue du monde anglophone* 70.2 (2017): 187–208.

<sup>130</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 539.

<sup>131</sup>Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 43–68 esp. 57.

<sup>132</sup>See Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 5.10.87–93; cf. 8.4.2. Terry has clearly read parts of Quintilian, for he cites him at 471, recte 523.

<sup>133</sup>Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, f. 99<sup>r</sup>, recte 69<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>134</sup>James VI. *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1597), 55.

To Terry, the presence of God's contrary does not just shine out from the idolatry of Indians. It is manifest in the very land itself. At the level of appearances, India seems the most blessed and beneficent part of the world. The region is so intrinsically fertile, he continues, that it provides everything necessary to feed, clothe and enrich the population, all without the need to export treasure to import costly foreign vanities. It produces excellent wheat, rice and barley—the wheat, he observes, is even whiter than that produced in Europe, and makes well-relished bread that may be said to be "*Panis Pene melior*, Bread better than bread."<sup>135</sup> It is favourably endowed with large supplies of indigo and cotton, all manner of medicinal drugs—and a surfeit of lignum aloes, which if burnt, "yields a perfume better than any one thing in the World that I ever smelled."<sup>136</sup> It has a plentiful supply of useful metals too, and an especially large repository of diamonds. India is so wealthy, Terry laments, that with the exception of a small quantity of woollen cloth that the English bring to the region, the only commodity the Indians will take from them is silver. "And this," Terry waxes, "is the way to make any *Nation* of the world rich, is to bring, and leave *Silver* in it, and to take away Commodities."<sup>137</sup>

Alongside the enormous wealth of the region—and the drain there of English coin evident to the cleric—India's intrinsic fertility compounds the region's apparent wonder. It is home to the great banyan trees which grow to such a girth that "hundreds of men may shade themselves under one of them at any time."<sup>138</sup> It is also the proper abode of the enormous and mighty elephant. Nurtured by the wholesome air, these creatures, Terry says, grow much larger than their African namesakes—sometimes up to fourteen or fifteen feet high.<sup>139</sup> The region's human population seem similarly blessed, for in terms of their physique, they tend towards the perfect. Indeed, Terry notes, they are generally tall, straight and never deformed.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, they are also seen to be intrinsically healthy, most of them living as long as the oldest English men and women.

<sup>135</sup> Terry, *Voyage*, 92.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 118–19.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 143. It was generally accepted on the basis of the testimony of antiquity that Indian elephants were larger than African. See, for instance, Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. and ed. H. Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1979), VIII.9.27.

<sup>140</sup> Terry, *Voyage*, 132.

But for Terry, the apparent blessings of the region are part of God's rhetoric—statements from which the faithful should make inferences. In the first place, he cautions his reader in his prefatory address, that God has chosen to bestow such riches upon manifest idolaters—people “whom he owns not”—should cause us to think about “how transcendently glorious is that place which he hath prepared for them that love him.”<sup>141</sup> But he also appreciates that what he sees are not real riches, warning against arguing that the material conditions of a society should be taken as diagnostic of its actual condition. Just as we cannot judge the hearts of men from their faces—or the patrons of “houses of entertainment” from the angels depicted on their signs—so we cannot argue from effects to causes and conclude that they are signs of God's favor.<sup>142</sup> Indeed, he argues, the richer, more apparently prosperous the people and the happier they seem to be, the more miserable they are in reality.<sup>143</sup> This inversion is not surprising, though, for dangerous things are often made to appear good. After all, 2 Corinthians 11.14 teaches that “*Satan can transform himself into an Angel of light*, and seeme holy to doe mischief.” Indeed, “of all mischieves,” he writes, “those that smile most, are most deadly, the uglyest and vilest of all projects will make use of *Religion* as a Foyle, to set them off; Poysoned *Pills* can finde *Gold* to *cover* them; because the *worse* that any thing is, the better *shew* it desires to make.”<sup>144</sup> The apparent riches God has bestowed upon these people—people who are clearly not his own—are not riches, then. They are signs of the devil's complete possession of the region and of his iron grip over its inhabitants, won through their inability to discern visual effects from reality—a point upon which the faithful should muse in their contemplation of real blessings.

To Terry, the power of the devil in this region is enormous. This can be seen most clearly perhaps in the “hellish sacrifice” of the *sati*.<sup>145</sup> It is highly unlikely that Terry actually witnessed a *sati* immolating herself. His account is written in the abstract and overlaps in detail closely

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., sig. A6<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 287–8.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 536.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 264.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 324.

to that penned by Ambassador Roe in his diary, published in 1625 as part of Samuel Purchas's compendium of travelogues, *Hakluytus Posthumus*. While descriptions of a sati were something of a *sine qua non* in early modern European accounts of the east, Terry's lacks much of the vividness of those of other accounts. Jan Huyghen van Linschoten's *Itinerario* published in 1596, for instance, was supplemented by a double-page illustration of the woman in the fire surrounded by musicians and enthusiastic spectators.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, Terry is under no illusions as to what is really taking place. "Alas poor wretches!" he begins:

[W]hat a hard Master do they serve, who puts them upon such unreasonable services in the flower of their youth and strength, thus to become their own executioners; to burn their own *bones* when they are full of *marrow*, and to waste their own *breasts*, when they are full of *milk*.<sup>147</sup>

These women, he writes, go out of the world madly, "through one fire into another, through *flames* that will not last long into *everlasting burnings*, and do it not out of necessity, but choice, led hereunto by their *tempter* and *murderer*."<sup>148</sup> Given the appalling suffering involved, he finds it "strange to consider that the Devil should have such an abundance of servants in the World, and God so few."<sup>149</sup> Indeed, the devil's power in these parts must be truly incredible if he can seduce people into willfully sacrificing themselves in such a hideous fashion. But then, as he notes in an allusion to sati in a 1646 sermon, "the Devill ... is most tyrannicall, where he is most obeyed," forcing them "to submit unto commands that have been most heavy, hatefull, yea most unnaturall."<sup>150</sup> By contrast, Terry asserts, "Almighty God requires no such thing at his peoples hands."<sup>151</sup> The more tyrannical the devil, the greater seems the benevolence of God by contrast.

While Terry understands India as a figure within God's vast cosmic rhetoric, construing the devil's hold on the region as a warning to the

<sup>146</sup>Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerario: voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten 1579-1592* (Amsterdam, 1596), after 60.

<sup>147</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 325.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 326.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 325.

<sup>150</sup>Terry, *Pseudeleutheria, or Lawlesse Liberty* (London, 1646), 18.

<sup>151</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 325.

faithful about the evil one's wiles—and, in the context of the logic of contrariety, an implicit statement about divine benevolence—he is particularly concerned about the devil's role in the body politic, and what that is intended to teach England's godly. Terry met the Great Mughal, Jahangir, a number of times while he and Roe were resident in Mandu with the *leskar*—the royal encampment—for seven months in 1617. He had witnessed part of the celebrations for *Nowroz*—the Persian festival marking the start of the new year—which saw the Mughal sitting in state, receiving offerings of gold, pearls, gems, jewels and many other glittering vanities from his nobles in a formal ritual of authority and submission.<sup>152</sup> He had been present for the ceremonies around the emperor's birthday, too. These had culminated in the Mughal's public weighing: dressed in gem-encrusted finery and sitting on one side of a gigantic scale, he was weighed successively against silver, gold, jewels, silk, spices and various luxury foods, with the duly measured quantities distributed to the poor.<sup>153</sup> But Terry was also well acquainted with the Mughal's great cruelty. Shortly before he arrived, he recounts that Jahangir had ordered a woman who had been discovered kissing one of his eunuchs to be buried in a hole up to her head and left there to die under the heat of the sun. He was clearly shocked by this brutality, calling it a “horrid execution, or rather murder.”<sup>154</sup>

But for all of the lavish display of the Mughal's court, for all of the obsequious flattery of his nobles and attendants, for all of the perverse cruelty of his justice, it was clear to Terry that the Great Mughal does not actually *rule* in any real sense of the term. Ultimately, God is the author of all governments and, following Calvin, Terry understands that it is the job of an earthly ruler to command obedience to God, and to hold his subjects' propensity for sin in check.<sup>155</sup> A good ruler's emblems should be the eye and the sword: the eye to watch over his subjects and the sword to command obedience. If the eye becomes dim or the sword remains sheathed, then society descends into disorder.<sup>156</sup> This, Terry thinks, is precisely what has happened in India. Instead of asserting

<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 394.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 394–6 and *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615–19*, ed. William Foster, rev. ed. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1990), 378–9.

<sup>154</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 406–7; cf. *Embassy*, 190–1.

<sup>155</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 296.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid., 489.

order, the Mughal's rule is arbitrary and irrational, condemning men to servitude or death as sacrifices according solely to his "will and passion," and not to justice.<sup>157</sup> The situation, he suggests, is akin to that described in Judges 17 to 21. This, he is convinced, was the worst period in the history of the Israelites, for during this time, everyone did what he wished for want of authority. The point is underscored by the Geneva gloss to Judges 17.6: there can be no order, no religion where there is no ruler. So once again, it is clear to Terry that external appearances lie. Instead of the stern, repressive government apparent to the naked eye, the inhabitants of India are, in fact, in the grip of anarchy—paradoxically, they are subject to what Terry dubs "disorderly order."<sup>158</sup>

The consequences of the Mughal's tyrannical anarchy are damning and infect the whole of society, for in order to make his domination palatable to his subjects and maintain his grip on power, he allows everyone to practise whatever religion he wishes.<sup>159</sup> To Terry, the idea of religious toleration is an abomination: God is one; his will is one—and so must be his church.<sup>160</sup> Multiplicity and diversity only underscore the complete absence of God from the land. Indeed, in the context of the rampant sectarianism of the Civil war, to many English people toleration was a clear marker of the devil's handiwork. The clergyman and heresiographer Thomas Edwards writing in 1646, for instance, described toleration as "the grand designe of the Devil, his Masterpeece and chiefe Engine."<sup>161</sup> It is comparable to original sin, for it contains within it all subsequent errors and evils, and in so doing, "overthrows all relations, both Politicall, Ecclesiastical, and Oeconomicall."<sup>162</sup> Terry largely agrees.<sup>163</sup> In these modern "times of liberty," he lamented, all

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 370, 408, and 435.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid., 465. In his 1646 sermon, he likens the situation to "that *confused Chaos* before the Creation, where heighth and depth, light and darknesse were mingled together." Terry, *Pseudoleutheria*, 5.

<sup>159</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 271 and 440.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid., 469.

<sup>161</sup>Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena: Or a Catalogue and Discovery of Many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and Pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this Time* (London, 1646), 153.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid., 154.

<sup>163</sup>As Corinne Lefèvre has argued, Terry left no definitive statement about his religious identity, or his sympathies in the civil war. See her "Entre despotisme et vertu: les représentations de l'Inde dans *A Voyage to East-India* d'Edward Terry" in *Rêver d'Orient, connaître l'Orient: visions de l'Orient dans l'art et la littérature britanniques*, ed. Isabelle

the old heresies recorded by Irenaeus and Epiphanius have been “raked up out of their corruption,” and with new glosses and commentaries, preached and printed to much popular acclaim, endangering “the very life and soul of Religion, and the utter overthrow of true Godliness here amongst us.”<sup>164</sup> And he has no doubt that it is the devil who has stirred up this contention in order to destroy Christian unity.<sup>165</sup>

Edwards, worried about the possibility that parliament might grant some instrument of toleration to the sectarians, invited his readers to contemplate what England might look like in 20 years, were this to be done. England, he lamented, was already “a *Chaos*, a *Babel*, another *Amsterdam*” but it would quickly become “a *Sodom*, an *Egypt*, *Babylon*, yea, worse then all these.”<sup>166</sup> Terry, too, was deeply concerned about the dangers of toleration to the state. While he was prepared to “retain and manifest as many Bowels of mercy and pity towards others as any can shew,” ultimately, he argues, it is the job of the magistrate to compel these heretics and schismatics should positive enticements not win them back to orthodoxy.<sup>167</sup> Drawing upon 1 Timothy 4.11, he says “some things should be commanded as well as taught.”<sup>168</sup> Should the ruler refuse to do so, or “give a *light check* for a *great offence*,” then they are as guilty of the vices they do not condemn as the sinners themselves.<sup>169</sup> And in such a case—where those who are meant to maintain order do not—even the very best in society left to themselves succumb to the fancies of their own will and become as base as the worst upon earth, as bad as the wretched in hell.<sup>170</sup>

Gadoïn and Marie-Élise Palmier-Chatelain (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2008), 131–46 on 135. That said, he managed to hold his position as rector at Holy Cross Church in Greenford from 1630 to 1660 seemingly without incident. His son succeeded him in the position but resigned shortly afterwards, unwilling to accept the new Book of Common Prayer. Peter Hounsell and Frances Hounsell, *Holy Cross Church, Greenford: A History and Guide* (Greenford, Middlesex: The Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Greenford Magna, 2016), 30–1.

<sup>164</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 470.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 467.

<sup>166</sup>Edwards, *Gangraena*, 152.

<sup>167</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, 483.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid., 484.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 490–1.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid., 454.

The devil's involvement in India, then, is intended to be read by the English so that they might see the dangers of toleration and the judgement of God upon those who would divide religion. The schismatics, willfully construing their base desires as prickings of the conscience, Terry says, are precisely the same as the natural men of the Mughal Empire divided into their 84 different sects.<sup>171</sup> While both have given themselves over to the devil, sowing discord in their societies, leading to the inversion of the body politic in India, Terry is not prepared to take his argument to its conclusion in this case. To be sure, Jahangir needed to indulge the various demonic sects of India in order to maintain power, and, in so doing, made himself beholden to his subjects, but Oliver Cromwell was doing much the same thing. Just as Terry was completing the revisions to his manuscript, Cromwell issued the Instrument of Government granting a degree of religious toleration in England. In this respect, the document was a pragmatic compromise, a tacit recognition of the Protector's need to straddle a middle ground in religious affairs to avoid further turmoil. Given the extended treatment Terry gives to the subject of sectarianism and toleration in the *Voyage*, it is quite possible that some of his contemporary readers would have made the connection. Yet Terry is not prepared to go quite so far.

Like the demoniacs of England, India is an anti-miracle. It has been disposed by providence as a place where the devil has been granted licence. And, just like the demoniac, it is intended to move the faithful to introspection and moral reform. Certainly, it is intended as a warning against sectarianism and a call to enforce ecclesiastical discipline for the good of the body politic. But despite the fact that they are damned, the sacrifices, extravagance and the level of devotion—or mis-devotion as Terry terms it—of Indians condemns many who call themselves Christians who shun any expense, any inconvenience for the true God. Early on in his text, he provides an example, describing the great idol which the Indians call Matta found in a silver-plated “*Chapel*” in Nagracot (likely the Jwalamukhi Devi temple in modern Kangra, Himachal Pradesh). The idol, he says, is richly adorned, and continually visited “by those poor blinded *Infidels*.” For Terry, this idol is the modern analogue of the Golden Calf of Exodus 32, for the superstitious Israelites like these Indians spared no expense in their devotions to

<sup>171</sup>Ibid., 538.

their “*Molten God*.” Nothing, he says, “is *too rich*, too pretious, or too dear for their *Idol*.”<sup>172</sup> In their feverish worshipping of their false god, though, pilgrims to Nagracot often cut off part of their tongue, offering it up as a sacrifice, in the vain belief that it will grow back.<sup>173</sup> How freely, he argues, do Indian heathens give to their false gods when many English men and women take all they can from the true God, “being very *Prodigals* for their *Lusts*, very *Nigards* for their *Souls*.”<sup>174</sup> The poor, seduced Muslims are zealous in their devotions to the great shame of Christians who are “as hot as fire in *earthly*, as cold as ice in *heavenly* things.”<sup>175</sup> It is a sad thing to note, he continues, how Muslims and others “should drive like *Jehu*, furiously, madly, and that in the waies of *error, injustice, oppression, prophaness*, as in all other kinds of wickedness; and *Christians* in the cause of God more heavily, slowly, like the *Egyptians* in the *Red-Sea* when their chariot wheeles were off.” They make more haste to destruction than Christians do to bliss.<sup>176</sup>

But Terry’s understanding of India as possessed had one final important implication, for as an extraordinary work of God, it was figured in God’s rhetoric perfectly accommodated to the tenor of the times. In the same way that pampered bellies and wanton palates come to feasts wanting nothing but the newest sauces, Terry complained, so many of his fellow countrymen come to sermons and good books nowadays seeking only wit and their opinions confirmed. They have no interest in that which is substantial or profitable to them, only what “is delightfull, and pleasant to feed the phancie.”<sup>177</sup> Instead of reading Moses, the prophets or the evangelists, they leave these texts in their windows, as “their best ornament & to sit in their uppermost rooms as their best Ghest in their houses.”<sup>178</sup> Craving novelty, they turn instead to romances, frivolous stories—even to an English translation of the Qur’ān—to “feed

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., 86–7.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid., 87. Terry’s account of the temple and its devotions is based upon his conversations with the traveller Thomas Coryate, with whom he shared a tent in Mandu. See 58–60.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 87; cf. sig. A6<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid., 269.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid.; cf. 554, recte 543.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 462.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 463.

their wanton humours,” corrupting their minds, preferring “to wade in Kennels or filthy Puddles” rather than to read the scriptures.<sup>179</sup>

But if creation in general and the state of any part of it at a particular temporal instant are manifestations of divine will and intended to be parsed, as Terry construed them to be, then the act of writing a trave-logue or a geography becomes akin to writing a sermon. Whether it be the topography of a region or the political, cultural or social structures of society, all are an intricate part of God’s revelation; their description and analysis, then, is analogous to the exposition of a passage of scripture. Thus, Terry hoped that his readers would “observe very large foot-steps of the Almighty in his works of Creation & Providence” in his *Voyage*.<sup>180</sup>

But in Terry, it seems, this connection between geographical exposition and sermon writing goes deeper than this. As Wilson argued drawing upon Quintilian, a well-honed oration should be adorned by various pleasant tales to hold the auditor’s attention. Failing that, “it were good to tell some straunge thyng, some terrible wonder that they all may quake at the onely hearyng of the same.”<sup>181</sup> In this sense, God’s creation—with all of its exotica and wonders scattered across its various regions—is awash with the kind of novelty and excitement that English readers desire. This is all the more true in the case of India, for it is sustained by providence under the control of the devil as an anti-miracle, like a possession, an extraordinary work requiring special attention from the faithful. Thus, Terry says, in recounting some of the wonders God has used to adorn his rhetoric, he hopes that those “who fly from a Sermon … may happily (if God so please) be taken before they are aware, and overcome by some Divine truths that lie scattered up and down in manie places of this Narrative.”<sup>182</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Viewing the world through the lens of Calvin’s conception of sustaining providence allows Terry to understand India as a land possessed by the devil, the geographical analogue of the demoniac. Individual

<sup>179</sup>Ibid., 463–4.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid., sig. A5v.

<sup>181</sup>Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, f. 58r.

<sup>182</sup>Terry, *Voyage*, sig. A4r.

Indians may not have been manifesting strange lumps that wandered around their bodies under their skin or writhing around in a demonically induced stupor, but it was clear to him that the devil had been granted licence in the region, turning it into a land of illusion where external form hides a sinister, hideous reality.

Construed in this way, India serves all of the principal functions of a demoniac possessed within the bounds of England. Its state is an extraordinary work of God intended as a statement by the creator about his omnipotence and benevolence, and as a warning to the faithful about the power of the devil, his traps, snares and seductive enticements. Moreover, in the same way that both Viret and Darrell thought they saw specific messages imparted in many of the ravings of the devil in the body of the possessed, so Terry found aspects of the devil's possession of India as part of a sobering commentary on the dangers of sectarianism and toleration in England for the body politic. And like Darrell, who saw it as his duty to disseminate news of the possessions he encountered, so it was incumbent upon Terry to publicize the warnings he had seen for the English in India.

While cases of possession in England were isolated affairs and of limited duration, that of India was intended to be permanent—a statement by God written into the fabric of creation and sustained by him to prick the conscience of the reprobate. But in both cases, the consciences of the reprobates to be pricked were not those afflicted by the devil or who endured his torments. Rather, the reprobates who should learn from these examples are those who encounter the afflicted: the neighbour offering alms to the demoniac, the beleaguered Indian traveller—or those who read accounts written about them.

For Terry, knowing that the demons in possession of Indian society are part of God's rhetoric—an anti-miracle sustained by providence on the other side of the world—allowed him to see through appearances to understand what he had actually seen. As Terry says, silently drawing upon Psalm 104, the lord's judgements are in the land.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., 490, recte 520.



## CHAPTER 9

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# Jesuit Missionaries and the Accommodationist Demons of New France

*Mairi Cowan*

Even before setting foot on the land that their king claimed as New France, French missionaries from the Society of Jesus were assuming a spiritual geography that extended to both sides of the Atlantic. Pierre Biard, an early Jesuit in Acadia, opened his *Relation* of 1616 with a description of the world divided between heavenly and infernal domains. Some nations were illuminated by the sun of justice, Jesus Christ, and there the earth was a paradise of delights. The rest, lying behind Lucifer and under the shadow of death, was a place of destruction, loneliness, desolation, and cries and lamentations. New France, according to Biard, was in this second, hellish, part of the world. Although it was a “twin land” to France, subject to the same influences, placed on the same parallel, and situated in the same climate, this vast region was a horrible desert because of the malice of Satan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “terre jumelle,” *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, vol. 1, ed. Lucien Campeau (Québec-Rome: Bellarmin-Institutum Historicum Societas Iesu, 1967–), 460–62; Éric Thierry,

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Jesuit missionaries who came to North America in the decades following Biard's voyage wrote quite a lot about demons in this part of the world, and their accounts from the 1630s and 1640s reflect several interesting features of European demonology within a colonial context. The first is that its scope was trans-Atlantic, arising from the Jesuits' belief that demonic forces present in North America were essentially the same as those in Europe. A second interesting feature emerges from the missionaries' interpretations of local reports about demonic activity. Jesuits thought the demons were adapting to different cultures in order to draw souls into an allegiance with them, making these demons accommodationist in approach much like the missionaries were in theirs. These two features, common among the group of Jesuits in New France, partly conceal a third aspect of Jesuit demonology, which is that considerable

“Le discours démonologique dans les récits de voyages au Canada et en Acadie au début du XVIIe siècle,” in *Voyager avec le Diable: Voyages réels, voyages imaginaires et discours démonologiques (XVe–XVIIe siècles)*, ed. Grégoire Holtz and Thibaut Maus de Rolley, 209–20 (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), 219. The most important primary sources for this study are the Jesuit *Relations*, a series of reports written by Jesuit missionaries and published in Paris between 1632 and 1673. For the volumes published up to 1661, I use the *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, edited by Lucien Campeau and published between 1967 and 2003 (hereafter MNF). For relations post-dating 1661, I use the *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites and published between 1896 and 1901. All translations into English from the MNF are my own. “Indian” is used when paraphrasing or directly translating the word “sauvage” from texts in French. It is a less jarringly offensive rendering than the more obvious cognate “savage,” and, since it is a historically inaccurate label, it conveys something of the misunderstandings common among European observers in seventeenth-century North America. When providing a more modern interpretation or perspective, the word “Indigenous” is preferred. “Native” is used when the original author was emphasizing a North American origin. Similarly, “Black Robes” is sometimes used as the name for Jesuits when adopting an Indigenous perspective of the seventeenth century. For the publication history of the *Relations*, see Micah True, *Masters and Students: Jesuit Mission Ethnography in Seventeenth-Century New France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015). For advice on how best to use the *Relations* as a historical source, see also Allan Greer, *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000), 1–3; Klaus-Dieter Ertler, “Les Relations des jésuites et la construction de l’observateur Européen face au monde indigène,” in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas: Intercultural Transfers, Intellectual Disputes, and Textualities*, ed. Marc André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 276–90 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 276–7; Carolyn Podruchny and Kathryn Magee Labelle, “Jean de Brébeuf and the Wendat Voices of Seventeenth-Century New France,” *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 34 (2011): 97–126 on 99–100.

diversity existed within the religious order. Individual members of the Society of Jesus shared presumptions about the universal reach of Christianity and the abilities of demons to accommodate themselves to local cultures, but they did not have a common and consistent way of discerning a demonic presence. From responding to Indigenous people's claims about seemingly demonic activities with accusations of fraud, to taking very seriously the possibility that real demons were frequently at work in Algonquian and Iroquoian communities, Jesuit missionaries were far from unified in their procedures for understanding demons. They were disunited in their procedures for countering charges of malefice too, and the missionaries' inability to overcome a reputation as controllers of harmful magic is the final aspect of Jesuit demonology in New France to be discussed in this chapter. Indigenous people accepted some of the missionaries' claims to spiritual authority, but also incorporated the priests into a pre-existing metaphysical system, and thereby transformed the Jesuits into something like the demons that the missionaries sought to defeat.

### TRANS-ATLANTIC DEMONOLOGY

Jesuit missionaries expected to find demons in New France, and in seeking them were led to conflate the sometimes malevolent spirits of Indigenous North America with the devil or demons of European Christianity. A significant problem with any such conflation, implied or explicit, is that although North American spiritual forces like the manitou or oki could help or hinder human plans, they were not absolutely good or evil in the way that European Christians would have thought of God and Satan. They could be at once both helpful and harmful forces, taking the form of spirits with the power to do things beyond what an ordinary human could do, or of humans with unusual powers or characteristics.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes the Jesuits did add subtlety to a simple good/bad binary, such as when Paul Le Jeune developed a sufficiently nuanced understanding to write that the Montagnais used the word “manitou” to denote all natures superior to the

<sup>2</sup>John L. Steckley, from the introduction to *De Religione: Telling the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Story in Huron to the Iroquois* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 37–45; Bruce Trigger, *The Huron: Farmers of the North* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 90–1.

human, good or bad,<sup>3</sup> and Paul Ragueneau described “oky” as “things that have a virtue like supernatural.”<sup>4</sup> More often, however, while the Jesuits may not have meant there to be a precise equivalence between the “manitou” of Algonquian-speakers, the “oki” of Iroquoian-speakers, and the “demon” of French-speakers,<sup>5</sup> they did at least propose a correspondence through their frequent usage of such phrases as “ondaki, that is to say demons,” and “a manitou, that we can call the devil.”<sup>6</sup> With these analogs, they were indicating to their readers back in Europe that the demons they knew had a presence in the societies of North America.

The Jesuits’ expectation of finding demons in New France was rooted within a presumption of a Christian universalism more broadly. Jérôme Lalemant said it had always seemed to him that Indian countries were a principal fortress of demons, but that all the nations of the world were given to Jesus Christ and all would serve him.<sup>7</sup> He was expressing at once both a negative opinion about the current diabolical state of New France, and also an optimism about its future as a godly place. His hope stemmed from a belief that the Indigenous people in New France, like people everywhere, were fully capable of being good Christians. The Jesuits were adherents to the theory of monogenesis, in which all humans were thought to be descended from Adam and Eve and shared a basic disposition that allowed them to understand universal truths.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> MNF III, 600. See also MNF IV, 595, and Tracy Neal Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 77.

<sup>4</sup> “des choses qui ont une vertu comme surnaturelle,” MNF VII, 417.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Goddard argues that the Jesuits did not conflate the manitou with the devil, except when associating the good manitou with God. “The Devil in New France: Jesuit Demonology, 1611–50,” *Canadian Historical Review* 78.1 (March, 1997): 40–62 on 52. Bruce Trigger says that Jesuits did identify the deities worshipped by the Huron with devils. *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1976), 503. Tracy Neal Leavelle thinks that it was common among the French to equate manitous with devils. Leavelle, *Catholic Calumet*, 76.

<sup>6</sup> “Ils ont dit qu’ils sont ‘ondaki.’ c’est-à-dire des démons,” MNF III, 99; “ils reconnoissent un manitou, que nous pouvons appeler le diable,” MNF II, 571–2. See also MNF II, 546, 583; MNF III, 328–9, 356; MNF V, 210–12; MNF VII, 400.

<sup>7</sup> MNF IV, 405–6, 423–4; MNF VII, 173.

<sup>8</sup> True, *Masters and Students*, 138; Justin E. H. Smith, *Nature, Human Nature, & Human Difference: Race in Early Modern Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 105.

With this common ancestry in mind, and following the directive of their order's founder Ignatius Loyola to "seek God our Lord in all things,"<sup>9</sup> Jesuits looked for traces of Christian belief among the peoples they were trying to convert. Thus, Paul Le Jeune thought that in the Montagnais story of Messou repairing the world lost in water there was a tradition of Noah's flood,<sup>10</sup> and Jean de Brébeuf maintained that because the Indians were people, they could not misrecognize God altogether.<sup>11</sup>

The Jesuits were convinced that Indigenous people in North America were perfectly able to side with God against Satan, provided that they received sufficient instruction. And this instruction was key. They considered all humans to be equal in terms of their potential for spiritual achievement and salvation, but thought that their societies were not all equally likely to lead them along the right path. In their minds, they arranged different kinds of society into a hierarchy, following a widespread European hierarchy of social organization, which placed those that were sedentary and Christian at its summit.<sup>12</sup> Important for understanding the Jesuits' approach to their mission, and the roles they gave to demons, is the fact that it was society that was categorical, not the individual people within it: the Indians, Jesuits believed, with their good bodies and minds, and with the same souls as the French, had the capacity to move up the rungs of civilization.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the Jesuits supposed that this is just what the French had done. Well aware that Christianity had been imported into Europe, Le Jeune asked rhetorically whether there had not been barbarism in Germany, in Spain, in England, and even in France, before the coming of the faith.<sup>14</sup> Le Jeune extended this

<sup>9</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, ed. George E. Ganss (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 165.

<sup>10</sup> MNF II, 434, 564.

<sup>11</sup> MNF III, 355. Peter A. Dorsey argues that the Jesuits in New France also saw "God's imprint on the languages and, by extension, the cultures of the people they encountered" in "Going to School with Savages: Authorship and Authority Among the Jesuits of New France," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55.3 (1998): 399–420 on 401.

<sup>12</sup> Girolamo Imbruglia, "A Peculiar Idea of Empire: Missions and Missionaries of the Society of Jesus in Early Modern History," in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas*, 21–49 on 29–30.

<sup>13</sup> MNF II, 596; Sara E. Melzer, "The Role of Culture and Art in France's Colonial Strategy of the Seventeenth Century," in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas*, 169–86 on 170–2.

<sup>14</sup> MNF II, 289, 306.

trajectory in his imagination to the point where he hoped the Indians would help New France exceed the Old to become regenerated and improved, a Jerusalem composed of citizens destined for heaven.<sup>15</sup>

Upward movement through the hierarchy of societies was not thought to be without impediment or opposition, and the Jesuits regularly stated that Satan was trying to interfere with their efforts to Christianize the Indians. They said that he hindered their travel by causing a tempest on the Atlantic, by gathering ice around their canoes, and by making snow fall in such abundance that it covered all the paths.<sup>16</sup> They also said that he meddled with the minds of the Indians so that they would block the missionaries' passage by river, worry that the abandonment of traditional ceremonies would be fatal, and suspect the missionaries of trying to kill them.<sup>17</sup> Such allegations of diabolical interference not only helped the Jesuits to explain the failure of their efforts to convert the Native population, but also, even more fundamentally, underscored the high stakes and importance of their mission. Le Jeune affirmed that the Jesuits were in New France to destroy the empire of Satan and raise the banner of Jesus Christ; the bloodier the battle, the nobler the victory and the more glorious the triumph.<sup>18</sup> Paul Ragueneau connected events on both sides of the ocean by saying that the devil, seeing Old France being torn apart by its own children, wished to destroy the New.<sup>19</sup> Statements like these gave New France a relevance that might otherwise escape the notice of French readers, who were important as political and material supporters of the mission overseas.<sup>20</sup> With its frozen winters, attacks by the Iroquois,

<sup>15</sup> MNF III, 51–2; Gilles Havard et Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique française* (Paris: Flammarion, 2014), 173–4. By 1665, François-Joseph Le Mercier argued that such progress was already well under way and that the country appeared almost no longer like Canada. Henceforth, he suggested they should erase the name “barbarian” from all the histories or relations and change “Canada” to “New France,” or even “Old France,” for it seemed to him that the latter had been transported to these countries, so much had things already advanced. Library and Archives Canada, Lettre du jésuite François Le Mercier à Colbert, MG7-IA6, microfilm reel number C-12868, pp. 211–12.

<sup>16</sup> MNF III, 121; MNF IV, 100, 219.

<sup>17</sup> MNF III, 330–1, 675; MNF IV, 287; MNF V, 449–50.

<sup>18</sup> MNF III, 525; MNF IV, 78; MNF V, 61.

<sup>19</sup> MNF VIII, 341.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3; Bergin, *Church, Society and Religious Change in France*, 285; True, *Masters and Students*, 9–10.

and vast tracts of uncleared land, New France did not have a good reputation among Europeans.<sup>21</sup> In characterizing this trying place as the site of a larger struggle against demons, Jesuits were able to buttress their position back in France, where they faced competition from other orders about how best to undertake conversion, as well as contentions that missions to Asia, Spanish and Portuguese America, and the Protestant parts of Europe should take higher priority than those to North America.<sup>22</sup> The *Relations*' accounts of battles against the greatest of foes showed that the missionaries' efforts among the Indigenous peoples who lived along the St. Lawrence and around the Great Lakes were important far beyond New France; the missionaries were participating in a worldwide, cosmic battle against the devil and his forces.<sup>23</sup>

### ACCOMMODATIONIST APPROACHES

Jesuits noted genuine differences between cultures, and were willing not only to adopt an intellectual posture of tolerance toward these differences, but even to adapt themselves in creative ways to local circumstances.<sup>24</sup> Their adaptive approach did have limits. It extended in

<sup>21</sup> Marie-Christine Pioffet, “La Nouvelle-France dans l’imaginaire jésuite: terra doloris ou Jérusalem céleste?” in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas*, 326–43 on 326 and 335; Alain Beaulieu, *Convertir les fils de Cain: Jésuites et amérindiens nomades en Nouvelle-France, 1632–1642* (Québec: Nuit Blanche, 1990), 15. For an insightful and forceful Indigenous account of why people should not convert, as presented by the Algonquin captain Agwachimagan while wintering with the Huron in 1643–1644, see *MNF VI*, 214–16, discussed in James P. Ronda, “‘We Are Well As We Are’: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34.1 (1977): 66–82 on 76.

<sup>22</sup> Luca Codignola, “Few, Uncooperative, and Ill Informed? The Roman Catholic Clergy in French and British North America, 1610–1658,” in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500–1700*, ed. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny, 173–85 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 179–81; Peter Goddard, “Canada in Early Modern Jesuit Thought: Backwater or Opportunity?” in *Decentring the Renaissance*, 186–99 on 186–7.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Worcester, “A Defensive Discourse: Jesuits on Disease in Seventeenth-Century New France,” *French Colonial History* 6 (2005): 1–15; Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 130–1; Dominique Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire: Les missions françaises au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 291, 297, 428, 439.

<sup>24</sup> Simon Ditchfield, “Of Missions and Models: The Jesuit Enterprise (1540–1773) Reassessed in Recent Literature,” *Catholic Historical Review* 93 (2007): 325–43.

fullness only to cultural matters that they deemed indifferent to religion; whenever the Jesuits interpreted something to be a religious matter, they insisted on an exclusive Christian interpretation.<sup>25</sup> Within these limits, Jesuits nonetheless made a conscious decision to remain flexible. Alessandro Valignano wrote in his 1579 instructions to missionaries in China and Japan, for instance, that they should “not attempt in any way to persuade these people to change their customs, their habits, and their behavior, as long as they are not evidently contrary to religion and morality.”<sup>26</sup> A seventeenth-century explanation for the strategy was provided by Roberto De Nobili, a Jesuit missionary in southern India, who said that “the Christian preacher has to live according to the local traditions, in order to be judged worthy of trust by those whom he is going to evangelize.”<sup>27</sup> Jérôme Lalemant expressed the same attitude in New France, writing that it was important to recognize the Indians’ world, enter into their minds, take on their language, their customs, their way of life, and, “if it is necessary, to become a barbarian with them in order to win them to Jesus Christ.”<sup>28</sup> These missionaries were working within what Girolamo Imbruglia has called “the ambiguity of the Jesuit strategy.” Jesuits were conscious of being part of a centralized religious order that had ideological and political unity, while they simultaneously cultivated an awareness of the variety of cultural and social situations to which they were being sent on mission. Adaptation was their chosen strategy to understand, and be accepted in, the societies to which they were sent.<sup>29</sup>

Jesuits’ reports of demonic forces while on missions to different parts of the world show that they perceived demons and the devil as employing a strategy of adaptation not entirely unlike their own. In China,

<sup>25</sup>James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 71–2; Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5. For a discussion of Jesuit accommodation as enculturation in China, see Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 39–63.

<sup>26</sup>Cited in R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 210.

<sup>27</sup>Cited in Imbruglia, “Peculiar Idea of Empire,” 23–33.

<sup>28</sup>“s’il est besoin, se faire barbare avec eux pour les gaigner à Jésus-Christ,” *MNFV*, 545.

<sup>29</sup>Imbruglia, “Peculiar Idea of Empire,” 23–4.

Jesuit missionaries explained demonic creatures in traditional Chinese folklore by saying that they were created by God, and they blamed the devil for using the Jesuits' Chinese political opponents as his instruments. In the Philippines, they interpreted a practice of communicating with the spiritual world while in a trance as the devil speaking through local idols. In Spanish and Portuguese America, Jesuits often identified the devil as the object of Indigenous worship.<sup>30</sup> As Jesuits traveled to distant lands, their demonology proved malleable, and demonic forces accommodationist.<sup>31</sup> One of the most striking manifestations of demonic accommodationism in New France was through dreams.<sup>32</sup> Some of what the devil commanded in dreams, such as feasts, would have sounded familiar to Europeans who had heard tales of demonic banquets at witches' sabbaths,<sup>33</sup> but other commands, like the playing of lacrosse,

<sup>30</sup>Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 131–3; René B. Javellana, “The Jesuits and the Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines,” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley et al., 418–38 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 422, 427; Iris Gareis, “Merging Magical Traditions: Sorcery and Witchcraft in Spanish and Portuguese America,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian Levack, 412–28 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 14–15; Ralph Bauer, “Baroque New Worlds: Ethnography and Demonology in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation” in *Religious Transformations in the Early Modern Americas*, ed. Stephanie Kirk and Sarah Rivett, 46–78 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 46; Qiong Zhang, “About God, Demons, and Miracles: The Jesuit Discourse on the Supernatural in Late Ming China,” *Early Science and Medicine* 4.1 (1999): 1–36 on 5–6, 10–15; Shenwen Li, *Stratégies missionnaires des Jésuites français en Nouvelle-France et en Chine au XVIIe siècle* (Québec: Les presses l’Université de Laval, 2001), 162.

<sup>31</sup>Catherine Albane has discussed “the conscious and unconscious ways that Indian cultures with their spiritual powers pried open spaces in the seemingly impermeable walls of European civilization,” in her “Exchanging Selves, Exchanging Souls: Contact, Combination, and American Religious History,” in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas Tweed, 200–26 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Quotation on p. 205.

<sup>32</sup>The fullest discussion of how Jesuits interpreted the dreams of Indigenous people is Leslie Tuttle, “French Jesuits and Indian Dreams in Seventeenth-Century New France,” in *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World*, ed. Anne Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 166–84.

<sup>33</sup>MNF III, 364–5.

were distinctly North American.<sup>34</sup> Most distinct was the very power of dreams, thought the Jesuits, for dreams were much more persuasive for Indigenous North Americans than for Europeans.<sup>35</sup> Barthélemy Vimont ascribed so much importance to dreams that he called them the Indians' most important beliefs. Dreams, he said, are their oracles, and they obey them like a sovereign deity. He went on to say that "a dream, in France, is but a dream, but here it is a point of theology or an article of faith."<sup>36</sup> Occasionally, the devil's attempts to work through dreams were unsuccessful, such as when the dreamer identified a dream's true origins or when the Jesuits explained that it was the devil who authored the dream as a discouragement from baptism.<sup>37</sup> Very occasionally, the Jesuits interpreted dreams as being divine rather than diabolical. A Huron woman, for instance, told Le Mercier about a dream in which she saw "a young man dressed in a robe white like snow and beautiful like a Frenchman" who was going to baptize the whole village. Having taken great pleasure in seeing him, the woman requested baptism. The Jesuit instructed her on the dream's meaning, explained the catechism, and then baptized her.<sup>38</sup> So Jesuits accepted the possibility that God could use dreams as a

<sup>34</sup> MNF IV, 223, 434. The Jesuits often expressed a sense of disgust at the eating at feasts, perhaps as part of the trend outlined by Peter Burke as an early modern reform of popular culture. See his *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Ashgate, 2009), 289–334.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Jean de Brébeuf in MNF III, 352; Le Jeune in MNF III, 594; François Dupéron in MNF IV, 222–3; Jérôme Lalemant in MNF IV, 421; Simon Le Moine in JR 47: 177; and MNF V, 515. Goddard, "Devil in New France," 58; Dominique Deslandres, "Dreams Clash: The War over Authorized Interpretation in Seventeenth-Century French Missions," in *Empires of God: Religious Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic*, ed. Linda Gregerson and Susan Juster, 143–53 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Delâge, *Bitter Feast*, 71, 74, 77; Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 76–7, 81–2; Greer, *Jesuit Relations*, 54.

<sup>36</sup> "Un songe, en France, n'est qu'un songe, mais c'est ici un point de théologie ou un article de foi," MNF V, 404, 450–1.

<sup>37</sup> MNF III, 753–4; MNF VII, 143. The parodying type of imitation by this demon is far from what Gilles Havard has found in his examination of mimicry among Indigenous people for the purpose of piercing through the opaqueness of the Europeans' otherness. See his "Le rire des jésuites: Une archéologie du mimétisme dans la rencontre franco-amérindienne (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle)," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 62.3 (2007): 539–73.

<sup>38</sup> "un jeune homme vêtu d'une robe blanche comme neige et beau comme un François," MNF IV, 155; Deslandres, "Dreams Clash," 152; Tuttle, "French Jesuits and Indian Dreams," 182–3.

means of advancing his plans, but they also worried that dreams could lead people astray.<sup>39</sup> They were concerned that dreams were routes of communication between the forces of hell and the Indigenous peoples of New France.

Demons could be even more accommodationist than the devil. They spoke Indigenous languages,<sup>40</sup> accepted gifts of tobacco,<sup>41</sup> and demanded offerings of Native armor.<sup>42</sup> They were behaving, therefore, not as demons in Europe were wont to do, but rather in ways calculated to win over people from Indigenous North American cultures. As recounted in Jesuit writings from New France, these demons were using the same kind of accommodationist approach to their mission as the Jesuits did themselves in their efforts to convert the souls of Indigenous North Americans.

### SEPARATE AND SHIFTING ASSESSMENTS

As a group, members of the Society of Jesus accepted that the devil and demons could be found in both Europe and North America, and that these demons could accommodate themselves to local cultures. They did not, however, have a common or consistent way of discerning a demonic presence, nor did they all agree on exactly what impact these malign forces had in New France. Some thought that demons acted directly in Indigenous communities, others believed that demonic influence worked indirectly and from a distance, and some went so far as to conclude that most episodes of seemingly demonic apparitions in New France were really the result of human ignorance or fraud.

Paul Le Jeune, superior of the Jesuits of Quebec from 1632 to 1639, was inconsistent in his assessment of the demonic presence in Indigenous societies, but his first inclination was generally to suspect human deceit. He wrote in his *Relation* of 1632 that some Indians near Quebec said they spoke to the devil, but that he believed this to be trickery.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Tuttle, “French Jesuits and Indian Dreams,” 168–9.

<sup>40</sup>MNF III, 363; MNF VII, 172.

<sup>41</sup>MNF III, 358; *Mandements, lettres pastorales et circulaires des évêques de Québec*, publiés par H. Têtu et C. O. Gagnon, volume premier (Québec: Imprimerie Générale, 1887), 21.

<sup>42</sup>MNF IV, 690; MNF V, 526–8.

<sup>43</sup>MNF II, 289–90.

The following year, Le Jeune repeated his belief that Indians were fabricating tales to their advantage, this time saying that a story about people being devoured by devils shaped like animals was just a rumor circulated to scare people away from a desirable hunting ground.<sup>44</sup> In Le Jeune's assessment, would-be sorcerers were not practising magic but rather were charlatans,<sup>45</sup> and his account of a Montagnais ceremony for consulting khichikouai (which Le Jeune elsewhere identifies as devils) takes on a sarcastic tone when he describes the ceremony's leaders as "these fine oracles," the ceremony itself as "this fine mystery," and the cabin where it took place as "this fine building." The khichikouai were not actually there at all, according to Le Jeune, just the "juggler who was imitating them."<sup>46</sup> Even when admitting the possibility of diabolical communication, Le Jeune insisted on inserting other interpretations too. He told about how a Montagnais man named Manitougache came to talk to the French about his dream in which some Frenchmen had been killed. Two days later, three Frenchmen were killed and four others wounded by the Iroquois. Le Jeune thought it was possible that the devil had granted the man this premonition—but he also thought that out of the man's many dreams one was simply true by luck.<sup>47</sup>

Le Jeune's ideas shifted over time, as he himself was aware. He explained that at first he had thought that the devil fooled the Montagnais, filling their minds with error and their wills with malice. Later, he believed that all the sorcerers' actions were frauds invented to make a profit. But then, having watched their ceremonies more closely, he came to doubt his second position, and reverted to the idea of demonic deception, thinking it possible that the Montagnais were in direct and sensible communication with the devil.<sup>48</sup> In other words, although Le Jeune never entirely gave up his suspicion of fraud, he became more convinced as time went on that there really was some kind of interaction between demons and the Indigenous peoples in New France.

<sup>44</sup> *MNFII*, 415.

<sup>45</sup> *MNFIII*, 601.

<sup>46</sup> "ces beaux oracles," "ce beau mystère," "ce bel édifice," "le jongleur qui les contre-faisoit." *MNFII*, 566–70.

<sup>47</sup> *MNFII*, 456. See also *MNFII*, 435; *MNFIII*, 602, 603.

<sup>48</sup> *MNFIII*, 603–5. Two years later, he maintained that even if most people resorted to trickery, at least some were really in contact with the devil. *MNFIV*, 326.

Jean de Brébeuf was more ready to admit the possibility of diabolic contact. For example, he argued that arendiouané, Wendat healers, were true sorcerers with access to the devil.<sup>49</sup> Sometimes he was reluctant to judge too quickly about the reality of demons, emphasizing instead a capacity for conversion to Christianity. In recounting a ceremony in which the Huron made an offering of tobacco to a spirit (called by Brébeuf a demon) who lived in a rock and could either help or hinder a voyage, Brébeuf did not offer comment on the reality of the spirit or the effectiveness of the prayer, but he did ask God to make himself known to the people, since they wished to address themselves to him.<sup>50</sup> The same assumption about an openness to Christian truths was evident in Brébeuf's attitude toward the Feast of the Dead, a mortuary festival that happened approximately every ten to fifteen years whenever the Wendat moved their village. When Brébeuf witnessed a Feast of the Dead at Ossossané in 1636, he emphasized the parallels between Huron and Christian practices, and reported that the Jesuits said prayers for the souls of fifteen or twenty Christians who had been buried with the "infidels" in the hope that in future this feast would either cease, or be held only for Christians.<sup>51</sup> For Brébeuf, the Huron might have been misguided in their actions, but they were correctly disposed in their intent.

Jérôme Lalemant, superior of the Huron mission following Brébeuf and later superior of the Jesuits in Canada, was more likely than Le Jeune to perceive the presence of demons, and more certain than Brébeuf that the Indigenous people were willfully engaged in demonic activities. Lalemant provided a particularly clear illustration of his thoughts about the extent of demonic influence in a story from the *Relation* of 1642. A Huron man who was pressing the Jesuits for baptism recalled a time when he was 15 or 16 years old and fasting in the woods. He heard a voice from heaven and saw an old man of rare beauty descend from the sky. This spirit foretold various things about the future of the

<sup>49</sup> MNF III, 104–5. See also MNF III, 110; Seeman, *The Huron-Wendat Feast of the Dead: Indian-European Encounters in Early North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 53–4.

<sup>50</sup> MNF III, 358.

<sup>51</sup> MNF III, 392–404; Kathryn Magee Labelle, "'Faire la chaudière': The Wendat Feast of Souls, 1636" in *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630–1815*, ed. Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale, 1–20 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013); Seeman, *Huron-Wendat Feast*, 78.

youth's family, and when it finished, it presented him with a piece of human flesh. The youth turned away his head in horror, so the old man told him to eat a piece of bear flesh that he offered instead. Once this was done, the figure, whom Lalemant now called a demon, went back up to the sky, and since then often returned and offered help. Lalemant reported that almost everything that the demon predicted came true, and emphasized that this was but one example among many that he could have provided: similar things are so common in this country, he wrote, that it was not to be wondered that these poor people are so strongly attached to the service of the devil.<sup>52</sup> Lalemant's account was clearly intended to demonstrate that demonic influence in New France was real, powerful, and pervasive. Indeed, he recounted many stories that he believed reflected true demonic appearances, and spoke extensively about "asc8andics,"<sup>53</sup> objects that could be carried in a pouch, which he called "familiar demons." These were used to help procure wampum belts and beaver robes, and bring good luck in the hunt, in gambling, and at war.<sup>54</sup> Like Le Jeune, Lalemant also recognized that his ideas about the operation of demons in New France were becoming more certain as time went on. Experience had made the Jesuits understand that the people were filled with diabolical beliefs, he said. These were not just false opinions passed down in the traditions of ancestors that had taken root in the minds of the people, but the result of demonic visitations in his own time.<sup>55</sup> With so much demonic interference on his mind, perhaps Lalemant was not overly concerned with distinguishing real demonic communications from those that only seemed demonic. He decided that most Huron dances, feasts, medicines, and customs were either manifestly diabolical or else filled with so many impertinences that it was impossible to know whether they were part of the process of formalizing pacts with the devil; that their healing remedies were either true

<sup>52</sup> *MNF* V, 526–8. My thanks to Erik R. Seeman for his advice on interpreting this episode.

<sup>53</sup> The "8" is a feature of French transcriptions of Indigenous names. It started out as an omicron surmounted by an epsilon, so that it looked somewhat like the number 8 but open at the top. Later it closed so that it often looks indistinguishable from an "8." It represents a sound like the English "w."

<sup>54</sup> *MNF* IV, 425, 435, 438–40; *MNF* V, 167; *MNF* VII, 155. For a newly converted Christian's struggle to give up the asc8andics, see *MNF* IV, 440.

<sup>55</sup> *MNF* V, 525–6. See also *MNF* VI, 397; *MNF* VII, 155.

spells or so filled with prohibited superstitions that they nearly amounted to a crime; and that magicians, although recognized as protectors of the country, were really instruments of demons and caused death by bewitchment.<sup>56</sup>

François-Joseph Le Mercier, superior-general of the Jesuits in New France and another missionary among the Huron, was especially careful to separate the natural from the supernatural. He did not approve of many traditional healing methods, calling one “a true sabbath.”<sup>57</sup> But when he and those in his care got sick, he was willing selectively to accept Indigenous knowledge. Tonneraouanout, described by Le Mercier as a famous sorcerer, offered the Jesuit a deal: in return for ten glass beads and an additional bead for each patient, he would cure the sick by teaching the missionary the appropriate roots to use for specific ailments, and he would help advance the cure by praying and sweating. Le Mercier only accepted part of the offer, saying that the prayer was a diabolical pact, but he willingly made use of the natural remedies.<sup>58</sup> He trusted the Jesuits’ own natural remedies too, at one point offering a sorcerer an ointment to help heal a broken leg; when the offer was refused, Le Mercier called the sorcerer a “demon incarnate.”<sup>59</sup>

Paul Ragueneau, superior of the Huron mission and later superior of the Jesuits in Canada, also exercised care to distinguish between the natural and the supernatural. He wrote about a Huron belief in three kinds of illnesses: those with natural causes, which are cured by natural remedies; those produced from the soul of the sick person desiring something, which are cured by providing what the soul desires; and those brought on by a sorcerer’s spells, which are cured by removing the harmful spell from the body. Ragueneau said that although the Huron believed most of their illnesses to be caused by desires or spells, he thought that they were natural.<sup>60</sup> On the question of whether there truly were sorcerers who caused death by spells, Ragueneau remained doubtful yet undecided, saying that after considering all that he had heard, he

<sup>56</sup> *MNF* IV, 409, 412–13, 653–4; *MNF* V, 538. For his account of a magician who could conjure thunderstorms with the devil, see *MNF* IV, 654–5. For his disapproval of the Huron sacrificing to the devil for a good harvest, see *MNF* IV, 652–3.

<sup>57</sup> “un vrai sabat,” *MNF* III, 742.

<sup>58</sup> *MNF* III, 714–15.

<sup>59</sup> *MNF* III, 753.

<sup>60</sup> *MNF* VII, 414.

did not yet see a sufficiently reasonable basis for believing that any of them meddled in “this trade of hell.”<sup>61</sup> On aaskouandy, the “familiar demons” also described by Lalemant, Ragueneau’s interpretations were again cautious. He thought that the Huron belief in the ability of aaskouandy to bring good fortune was sustained not because it was true, but because it was repeated by those who had been told it by people who had themselves heard the stories from others; nobody claimed to have witnessed the power of the aaskouandy themselves—except perhaps for a few unscrupulous sellers of aaskouandy who wanted to increase demand and the price of their wares. Ragueneau admitted that he himself did not know whether these aaskouandy really did bring good fortune, but he noted that those who thought they did seemed no more successful than those who doubted their power. Ragueneau preferred more worldly reasons for success. In the hunt, for instance, the most successful were those who were the most robust and the best runners. He even found an Indigenous source to support his position, citing a Huron proverb: “industry, strength, and vigilance are the most powerful aaskouandy that a person can have.”<sup>62</sup> With deliberations like this, Ragueneau remained unsure about many of the Indigenous claims to supernatural power, and he readily acknowledged limits to his understanding.

Arranging the Jesuits along a spectrum according to their assessment of demonic power in New France, therefore, we find at one end Paul Le Jeune, who mistrusted his Indigenous hosts’ reports of malevolent forces and reacted to them with sarcasm and disdain, but who became more convinced of a real demonic presence over time. In the middle are Jean de Brébeuf, who maintained a compassionate attitude toward those whose behavior he believed was shaped by the devil, François-Joseph Le Mercier, who was inclined to separate natural from supernatural influences, and Paul Ragueneau, who was careful to articulate why the Jesuits should exercise care and discretion when categorizing beliefs and practices. At the other end of the spectrum is Jérôme Lalemant, who perceived direct demonic influence in New France from the start, and became ever more assured of it as the years went on. This arrangement departs from the findings of others who have looked at Jesuit concern with demons in their North American missions. Peter Goddard finds that

<sup>61</sup> “ce mestier d’enfer,” *MNFVII*, 419–20.

<sup>62</sup> “l’industrie, la force et la vigilance sont le plus puissant aaskouandy qu’un homme puisse avoir,” *MNFVII*, 417–19.

Jesuit demonology in New France was generally characterized by doubt and caution. He points to important distinctions among individual Jesuits, noting that Le Jeune, Brébeuf, and Ragueneau tended to explain Indigenous religion largely without reference to the supernatural, stressing historical and cultural factors instead, and that Lalemant perceived the devil as responsible for resistance to Christianity. To explain the differences between the approaches of these missionaries, Goddard looks to the extent of their experience in the field: those who had been on mission longer were also likely to be more skeptical. Overall, according to Goddard, the Jesuits' depiction of the devil and his demons conformed to a "version of the diabolical that features the illusory, the fraudulent, and the error-ridden, and is marginal rather than central in religious life."<sup>63</sup> Luke Clossey counters that what Goddard takes as two opposite positions (an active diabolism where the devil was really present, and the cautious demonology featuring illusion, fraud, and error) are in fact both correct: doubt and caution were considered warranted and even necessary in the context of a suspected diabolic conspiracy. He further remarks that although most Jesuit letters make no reference to the devil, those that do "impress for their intensity."<sup>64</sup> Dominique Deslandres is convinced that the Jesuits took the diabolic seriously, finding that in missionary accounts, the devil was everywhere and was used to explain all obstacles to their efforts at conversion.<sup>65</sup>

In comparison with such interpretations, this analysis places a greater emphasis on distinctions between individual Jesuits, and observes that as the missionaries spent more time in New France several of them became *more* convinced of a real demonic presence among Indigenous people, not less.<sup>66</sup> Such a shift might be explained in connection to the missionaries' changing evaluation of the native population's predisposition to accept Christianity. At their arrival in New France, Jesuits profoundly misunderstood many features of Indigenous religions. They were misled because they did not find what they had come to expect in Europe: they saw no official creed, no designated places of worship, no institutional or hierarchical church, no specialized clergy. Focusing on the lack of religious

<sup>63</sup> Goddard, "Devil in New France," 40–62.

<sup>64</sup> Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, 130–1.

<sup>65</sup> Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*, 437–5.

<sup>66</sup> Goddard also finds a change over time, from a concern about demons to one about sinful nature, but puts it later—by 1650. Goddard, "Devil in New France," 43.

markers, the missionaries concluded that the people were religiously empty vessels, ready to be filled with Christian teachings. Only later, with experience, did they appreciate the extent to which the Indigenous peoples perceived a spiritual energy all around them; the spiritual world was pervasive, and it was real.<sup>67</sup> As they came to understand Indigenous religious beliefs and practices more fully over the course of the 1630s and 1640s, seeing not just the absence of Christianity but also the presence of other beliefs, some at least became more inclined to believe that the Indigenous cultures they encountered were infested with diabolism.

Not all the Jesuits in New France grew more concerned about the presence of demons over the course of their stay, however, and it is worth noting the correlation between the missionaries' interpretations of latent demonism and the extent to which they were prepared to trust their Indigenous hosts. Specifically, the less likely a missionary was to assume good intentions, the less likely he was to believe his hosts' accounts of malevolent spiritual forces. Paul Le Jeune, who was the most likely to interpret Indigenous claims about demonic forces as fraudulent, was also the most mistrustful, and often insensitive to the point of insulting when demonstrating his disbelief.<sup>68</sup> On several occasions, he challenged claims about demonic forces with performances meant to discredit a local population's beliefs. Once, for example, when the group with which he was traveling became trapped by high winds on an island, a Montagnais woman claimed that she had seen the manitou. Everyone fell into silence, filled with fear—everyone, that is, except for Le Jeune, who laughed, got to his feet, and left the cabin. Le Jeune wrote that his next actions were meant to reassure the people around him, although they seem more belligerent than reassuring. He called to the manitou in the Montagnais language, crying out loudly that he did not fear it, and taunted it by saying that it would not dare to come where he was.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Denys Delâge, *Bitter Feast: Amerindians and Europeans in Northeastern North America, 1600–64* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993), 71.

<sup>68</sup> On Le Jeune's general mistrust of his Indigenous hosts' claims more broadly, see Jacques Monet, "The Jesuits in New France," *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester, 186–98 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 193.

<sup>69</sup> *MNF* II, 673–4. For a similar incident, see also *MNF* II, 716–17. He was much less reluctant to accept accounts when they came from Europeans, even at secondhand. He called it strange that the devil appeared sensibly to Indigenous South Americans, according to reports by Europeans, but did not communicate in any visible or sensible way to the Indians where he was. *MNF* II, 583–5.

Not only did Le Jeune mistrust others, but he was also willing to mislead them to get what he wanted. When the “sorcerer” Carigouan refused to teach him about a particular type of demon, Le Jeune turned to flattery and deceit—and was surprisingly transparent about the strategy. To his French readers, he described Carigouan as a “très meschant homme” (i.e., a very bad man) and “prétendu magicien” (i.e., a would-be magician), and he explained that he had misled Carigouan into believing that he admired his teachings, and had tried to make Carigouan feel guilty for turning him away since Le Jeune had answered all his questions about Christianity.<sup>70</sup> It was certainly not uncommon for French missionaries to get into conflicts with Indigenous shamans, whom they regarded as their nearest equivalents and their likeliest enemies.<sup>71</sup> Even so, Le Jeune’s animus was unusually sharp. He declared that Carigouan was among the greatest torments that he had to endure in New France, and he did not forego opportunities to torment Carigouan in return, or, as the Jesuit put it, he did not let any occasion pass by to convince the sorcerer of his nonsense and puerility, exposing the impertinence of his superstitions.<sup>72</sup>

Le Jeune’s suspicion of being deceived by the locals at every turn, his unwillingness to entertain even the possibility that people were sincerely mistaken, had an unforgiving quality to it. His God likewise was an unforgiving God. When a man named Sakapouan tried to turn a dying neophyte away from Christianity, Le Jeune wrote that God took vengeance by making him fall into a frenzy, lose his senses, and die.<sup>73</sup> Not long after, God punished Le Jeune’s main spiritual adversary, Carigouan, who was, as Le Jeune put it, “grilled, roasted, and miserably burnt” when his cabin caught fire. According to Le Jeune, divine vengeance also killed Carigouan’s brother, Mestigoït, who was drowned in the waters by the rising tide of the St. Lawrence River.<sup>74</sup> Le Jeune was a convert himself, having been born to Calvinist parents, so perhaps his impatience with

<sup>70</sup> MNFII, 570–1.

<sup>71</sup> Delâge, *Bitter Feast*, 164–5; Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 79–80.

<sup>72</sup> MNF II, 659–60. For a colorful description of Le Jeune trying to sleep through one of Carigouan’s ceremonies, see MNF II, 687–8. Carigouan was not the only sorcerer with whom Le Jeune had a vexed relationship. See also MNF III, 595–7; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 98–9.

<sup>73</sup> MNF III, 58–9.

<sup>74</sup> “il a été tout grillé, rosty et misérablement brûlé,” MNF III, 60–1, 230–1, 233–4.

those who resisted conversion to what he saw as the only true religion owed something to his own personal religious history.<sup>75</sup>

Compared to Le Jeune, Jean de Brébeuf ascribed more positive value to Indigenous culture and got along well with his Indigenous hosts. His facility with languages surely helped, as did his impressive capacity for physical endurance.<sup>76</sup> His relatively generous attitude towards accommodation probably generated trust as well. As superior of the Huron mission, he encouraged Jesuits to live as much as possible according to Indigenous customs, and—in stark contrast to Le Jeune—required that missionaries take care not to offend or annoy their hosts. In his instructions to priests, Brébeuf urged missionaries to have a sincere affection for the Natives among whom they lived, and ordered that they must endure unpleasant things without saying anything or even appearing to notice them. They were to conduct themselves in such a way that they would not be troublesome to anyone.<sup>77</sup> Brébeuf was certainly less likely than Le Jeune to assume that the Natives were out to deceive him, and more open at least to considering Indigenous accounts of supernatural forces. Without questioning the exclusive validity of Christianity, he was compassionate (if paternalistic) towards the Huron. They were in error, he believed, having been misguided by evil forces, but not willfully complicit.<sup>78</sup> The devil filled the Huron with vain hope, he said, replacing the conformity they should have to the will of God with impieties and superstitions.<sup>79</sup> In Brébeuf's consideration, Indigenous accounts of malevolent spiritual forces were worthy of his attention and respect. These sometimes needed his correction, but they did not deserve his mockery. Brébeuf even conceded that he was not always certain about the origins

<sup>75</sup> Léon Pouliot, “Le Jeune, Paul,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1 (Toronto and Québec: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 1966 rev. 1979).

<sup>76</sup> Joseph Donnelly, *Jean de Brébeuf* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1975), 11, 57; Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 501; Monet, “The Jesuits in New France,” 188; René Latourelle, “Brébeuf, Jean de (Échon),” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1 (Toronto and Québec: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 1966 rev. 2015).

<sup>77</sup> Cited in Nancy Bonvillain, “Jesuit Perceptions of Iroquoian Culture: Ethnocentrism and Enlightenment,” in *Jesuit Encounters in the New World: Jesuit Chroniclers, Geographers, Educators and Missionaries in the Americas, 1549–1767*, ed. Joseph A. Gagliano and Charles E. Ronan, 81–97 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1997), 84.

<sup>78</sup> *MNF III*, 361–2.

<sup>79</sup> *MNF III*, 105–6; Podruchny and Labelle, “Jean de Brébeuf and the Wendat Voices,” 109.

of supernatural communications. He judged that Huron claims about the ability to command rain and wind, to predict the future, to find lost things, or to cure the sick were likely not imagination or fraud, and in his opinion, no one could say whether they had been endowed by God with such gifts.<sup>80</sup>

Jérôme Lalemant, a careful administrator devoted to advancing the Jesuits' mission in New France, was less charismatic than Brébeuf, and also less enthusiastic about learning from his hosts.<sup>81</sup> When he succeeded Brébeuf as Jesuit superior in 1638, he altered the mission's plans for Huronia and called for a settlement to be built in the French style, separated from Huron villages. This was the start of Sainte-Marie-among-the-Huron, completed in 1640. His policy was perhaps motivated by the dangers of intensified warfare between the Wendat and Haudenosaunee confederacies as much as by his reluctance to adapt to the living conditions of the Huron, but in any case it reflects his unsympathetic view of the Huron and their reluctance to leave behind their traditional beliefs.<sup>82</sup>

François-Joseph Le Mercier's eagerness to distinguish real from imaginary demons is mirrored in his general reluctance to accept anecdotes from secondhand sources uncritically. In an account he heard of a vision, demons revealed that they ate nothing but clear soup with strawberries. This detail about the soup helped Le Mercier characterize the story as unlikely, saying that it had the appearance of finding strawberries in January, meaning that it seemed at first very strange; in line with his interest in natural remedies, however, he conceded that the Indians did keep dried strawberries for medicinal reasons, eating them to avoid sickness.<sup>83</sup>

Paul Ragueneau, ever skeptical about the presence of the demonic in Indigenous beliefs and practices, adopted a measured and moderate stance on credulity. Writing in the *Relation* of 1647–48, he said that if he were counseling those starting their missionary work, he would advise them to be very cautious before condemning Indigenous customs that were at odds with European ones, warning that “it is easy to

<sup>80</sup> MNF III, 366.

<sup>81</sup> MNF IV, 416; Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 572–3; Donnelly, *Jean de Brébeuf*, 149–50.

<sup>82</sup> Bonvillain, “Jesuit Perceptions,” 84–5.

<sup>83</sup> MNF III, 754–5.

accuse something as being irreligion when it is but foolishness and to take as a diabolical operation that which is nothing more than human.” He decided that the Jesuits had been too severe in the past, and that henceforth they should be less rigorous about apparently innocent recreations.<sup>84</sup>

Ragueneau’s approach eventually won out, in a way. By the 1660s, many of the references to demons in the *Relations* were almost certainly metaphorical, such as the Jesuits’ frequent descriptions of drunkenness as demon-like or as leading to demon-like behavior.<sup>85</sup>

### BLACK-ROBED DEMONS

The Algonquian and Iroquoian people among whom the Jesuits lived took a pluralist view on human relations with the spiritual world, and Indigenous voices can be heard several times in the *Relations* explaining politely but firmly that they did not think all people should believe the same things or behave in the same way. When Le Jeune was tending to a sick child, for instance, he tried explaining that when he himself had recently had a fever, he was healed through rest. A Montagnais man answered that such an approach “is good for you others,” but his people heal differently.<sup>86</sup> When Brébeuf was preaching about God and paradise and other Christian mysteries, the Huron answered that what he said was good for the country of the French, but not for theirs; each country has its own way of doing things. Brébeuf tried to demonstrate the universal reach of Christian teaching by showing on a little globe that they were all on the same world, but his Huron listeners remained unpersuaded.<sup>87</sup> As a Huron captain said to Brébeuf on another occasion, “we have our ways of doing things and you have yours, as well as the other nations.”<sup>88</sup> Unlike the French Jesuits, who presumed that their religious system was operating universally whether people recognized the ultimate truth of Christianity or not, the Indigenous speakers

<sup>84</sup>“Il est aisé qu’on accuse d’irréligion ce qui n’est que sottise et qu’on prenne pour opération diabolique ce qui n’a rien au-dessus de l’humain,” *MNFVII*, 395–6.

<sup>85</sup>*JR* 47: 181–3; *JR* 51: 111, 123–5, 217; *JR* 62: 181.

<sup>86</sup>“Cela est bon pour vous autres,” *MNFII*, 465–6.

<sup>87</sup>*MNFIII*, 103.

<sup>88</sup>“nous avons nos façons de faire et vous les vostres, aussi bien que les autres nations,” *MNFIII*, 737.

who instructed the Jesuits on the notion that different religious truths were appropriate for different people preferred a spiritual diversity. In terms of what the Jesuits interpreted as demonology, this diversity meant that Indigenous people accepted the possibility that they were encountering familiar spiritual forces in the Black Robes' hands, and also that they were facing previously unknown supernatural powers from across the Atlantic.

When they heard about demons from the Jesuits, Indigenous audiences responded in a number of different ways. Sometimes people interpreted Jesuits and their pronouncements according to traditional Indigenous systems. Jesuits were seen as religious adepts, with notable powers such as the ability to transmit messages through writing and to predict lunar eclipses.<sup>89</sup> Several aspects of the missionaries' behavior seemed strange: they were celibate; they challenged traditional efforts to cure disease; they talked about death rather than focusing on recovery; and they remained impervious to illness or were able to recover very quickly.<sup>90</sup> Such strange ways made them seem akin to shamans or, more dangerously, to sorcerers, and therefore deserving of cautious respect and circumspection. With their clearly indicated (and self-proclaimed) spiritual power, their anti-social behavior, and their arrivals coincident with the outbreak of devastating disease, it is not surprising that some of the Jesuits' religious practices would come to be seen as magical and pernicious, that the Jesuits themselves would come to be seen as—in French translation—demons.

When Le Jeune was told by a dying man in 1637 that he did not want to go to heaven because he had no acquaintances there, several Algonquians in attendance said that they had presumed the Jesuits to be “true demons incarnate.”<sup>91</sup> The writer of this *Relation* did not provide the original Algonquian words, but others sometimes did record Indigenous speech more directly and with Jesuit commentary about

<sup>89</sup>Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 566, 848; Beaulieu, *Convertir les fils de Caïn*, 89–92.

<sup>90</sup>MNF III, 735. Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 246–8; Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 499–500, 534–5; Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America 1632–1650* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 106–8.

<sup>91</sup>“vrays démons incarnez,” MNF III, 769.

likely meaning. In an interesting reversal of the Jesuits' propensity to reduce the Iroquoian *oki* to the Christian demon, for example, the captain of a Huron town said that the Jesuits "speak ceaselessly of their *Oki*, which is to say of this great spirit that they adore."<sup>92</sup> Given the complexity of the concepts "manitou" and "oki," it is, of course, likely that when people were calling the Jesuits "demons," they were actually declaring something more morally ambiguous than the French translation allows. Le Jeune was getting at this complexity when he reported that a group of Huron held an assembly at which one of the captains said to the French, "you are *Okhi*" which, according to the Jesuit, meant "you are demons or extraordinary creatures" beyond common men.<sup>93</sup> A clear implication in the label was that the Jesuits were potentially malevolent. Jean de Brébeuf expressed this idea when he reported that the Jesuits' house was being called "a house of demons, or of harmful people, who had come to their country in order to make them die."<sup>94</sup>

This accusation that the Black Robes desired to cause death was repeated by many, and various theories were formulated to explain why and how the missionaries were spreading illnesses. Some were based in Indigenous rules of comportment, such as the idea that the Jesuits desired to exact vengeance on the whole country because the Indians had not behaved properly in matters of compensation after the death of French explorer Étienne Brûlé.<sup>95</sup> Some theories about the transmission of disease, such as bewitchment, also fit with traditional explanations for the cause of illness.<sup>96</sup> Other conjectured methods were new and related to missionary activity, such as baptism,<sup>97</sup> or the poisoning of a robe,<sup>98</sup> or sugar, called "snow of France,"<sup>99</sup> or spells uttered by a priest reading

<sup>92</sup> "Ils parlent sans cesse de leur *Oki*, c'est-à-dire de ce grand Esprit qu'ils adorent," *MNF* IV, 146.

<sup>93</sup> "vous estes des *Okhi*," c'est-à-dire vous estes des démons ou des créatures extraordinaires et hors commun des hommes," *MNF* III, 317–18.

<sup>94</sup> "la maison des François estoit une maison de démons, ou de gens méfaisans, qui estoient venus en leur pays afin de les faire mourir," *MNF* III, 677.

<sup>95</sup> *MNF* III, 317–38, 781; *MNF* IV, 656–7; Delâge, *Bitter Feast*, 175–7; Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 473–6.

<sup>96</sup> *MNF* III, 653; Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 535.

<sup>97</sup> *MNF* III, 115, 200.

<sup>98</sup> *MNF* III, 625–6, 729.

<sup>99</sup> *MNF* III, 781.

prayers.<sup>100</sup> One particularly gruesome idea, possibly a macabre echo of Eucharistic theology, was that disease spread because the French were keeping the dead body of a child in their tabernacle.<sup>101</sup> Other rumors were equally fantastic and perhaps a mixture of old and new ideas. According to Lalemant, some Huron believed that the French caused disease by nourishing a serpent in a removed part of their house, others that the French used a toad marked by smallpox, and still others that the French held disease in the form of a subtle demon in the barrel of an arquebus and could easily send it wherever they wished.<sup>102</sup> The Huron were also concerned that images of saints emitted pestilence to infect those who looked at them.<sup>103</sup> Here, the Jesuits were reaping an unintended consequence of what they had very deliberately sown, for they had taken special care to have such images crafted to reflect Indigenous tastes for full frightening effect. The Jesuit missionary Charles Garnier, in ordering images that were “proper for our Indians,” gave clear directions. He specified that flat and shining hair pleased the Indians more than frizzy hair, and that Jesus should have no beard. One painting, which was to depict a soul being grilled, chained, bitten by a dragon, and torn by harpoon-wielding demons, was clearly meant to instill terror in the unconverted, an example of what Jean Delumeau has called an “evangelism of fear” in the context of missionaries in the interior of France.<sup>104</sup> This pedagogical technique had a dramatic manifestation too. In 1640, when Governor Montmagny sponsored a play to celebrate the

<sup>100</sup> Gordon Sayre, *Les sauvages américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 204; Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls*, 108–9; James Axtell, “The Power of Print in the Eastern Woodlands,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44.2 (1987): 300–9. For similar charges brought by the Neutrals, see MNFV, 198–9.

<sup>101</sup> MNFIV, 22–3, 31–4; MNFIV, 140.

<sup>102</sup> MNFIV, 658.

<sup>103</sup> MNF III, 781; Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls*, 112.

<sup>104</sup> MNF VI, 264–7; Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 115–16; François-Marc Gagnon, *La Conversion par l’Image: Un aspect de la mission des jésuites auprès des Indiens du Canada au XVIIe siècle* (Montreal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1975), 42–6, see also 66–7. For other examples, see Marie de l’Incarnation, *Correspondance*, ed. Dom Guy Oury (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1971), 840, 857; Jean Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur: La culpabilisation en Occident (XIIIe – XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), 369–550; Deslandres, *Croire et faire croire*, 439.

birth of the dauphin in France, he asked the Jesuits to include something to strike the eyes and the ears of the Indians. The missionaries, therefore, added a scene in which the soul of an unbeliever was chased by demons who spoke Algonquian, and who hurled the struggling and shrieking soul into a that vomited forth flames.<sup>105</sup> In the face of such vivid representations, it is no wonder that people were concerned about launching demonic attacks against their communities.

Some responses to the terrible epidemics were intended to block the Jesuits' spiritual power directly. One Huron village resolved no longer to use large copper pots from France, believing that these were the way by which the Jesuits passed along illness.<sup>106</sup> In another, a Jesuit was about to baptize a sick man at the point of death. He had been instructed and he consented, so that all that was needed was some water. A little girl of seven or eight took the bucket where water was kept, spilled it on the ground, and trod on it with her feet. She was determined that the man would not be baptized, saying that he would be dead if they baptized him, and that she would prevent them from finding water. This "little fury of hell," as the *Relation* called her, was so eloquent that the sick man decided that he no longer wanted to be baptized. "Do you want to damn yourself?" the Jesuit asked. His response is fascinating in how it does not deny the missionary's claim that the decision would send him to hell. Instead, he took the Christian concept of infernal pain and transformed it into an opportunity to prove his honor as a warrior. "Yes!" the man replied. "I am completely resolved to suffer the fires and flames of hell. I have been willing from a young age to be cruelly burnt. I will show my courage in it." In drawing on the Huron custom of maintaining stoic courage when captured and tortured by enemies, insisting defiantly that his experiences had prepared him well for the hell that the Black Robes said would be his destination, this man's refusal to be baptized turned the Jesuits' evangelism of fear into fodder for his resistance.<sup>107</sup>

To those who did convert to Christianity, the missionaries' insistence that neophytes adhere exclusively to Christian practices presented many

<sup>105</sup> MNF IV, 566–7; Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 114; True, *Masters and Students*, 93.

<sup>106</sup> MNF IV, 135–6; Laurier Turgeon, "The Tale of the Kettle: Odyssey of an Intercultural Object," *Ethnohistory* 44.1 (1997): 9–18.

<sup>107</sup> "cette petite furie d'enfer"; "Veux-tu donc te damner?"—"Ouy da! Je suis tout résolu, dit-il, de souffrir les feux et les flammes d'enfer. Je me suis disposé dès mon bas aage à estre cruellement bruslé. J'y ferray paroistre mon courage," MNF IV, 705.

challenges.<sup>108</sup> An especially difficult situation for converts was the social pressure to participate in traditional activities that had become coded as “demonic” in the new religion. A healer trying to cure people struck by disease in a village of the Atignaouatan complained that the Christians were not attending the feast he had organized. He asked one of the new Christians to call with him upon a spirit who would restore health, but the neophyte refused because he had come to believe that the spirit was a demon.<sup>109</sup> Another time, a group of Huron captains ordered a ceremony that was meant to assure a good harvest. The people were to go into the fields each day to throw tobacco on a fire in honor of a spirit; if they failed to do this, they were told, all the grain would be lost. When the Christians refused to join in what they had come to believe was a sacrifice to the devil, saying that they preferred to die of hunger, the captains cried through town that they should not hope for a good harvest, that the Christians were the cause of famine, and that the Christian faith was the ruin of the country.<sup>110</sup> This ceremony was clearly supposed to include the entire community, and a faction’s absence endangered its success. Another Huron captain, recognizing the social rift being torn through his community by the refusal of Christians to participate in traditional rites, asked for a truce of a day between Christian and non-Christian factions. “Our country is being lost; the sick are dying,” he said. “Why do you remove yourselves from our dances? Why do you refuse to render this charity in public? It is the Christians who are killing us, because they do not want to rescue us.”<sup>111</sup> The Indigenous

<sup>108</sup> Even when converting to Christianity, people in Indigenous communities often formed “micro-Christendoms,” a term proposed by Peter Brown for the late antique period and then developed by Kenneth Mills for the early modern Andes. Mills insists on “the local people’s particular, small-scale cultic priorities, their variant Christian enthusiasms, their sometimes idiosyncratic forms,” while “also stressing their persistent and largely self-defined membership in, and relationship to, larger collections of people, beliefs, rules, and practices.” Mills, “Religious Imagination in the Viceroyalty of Peru,” in *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels: South American Paintings 1600–1825 from the Thoma Collection* (Milan: Skira, 2006), 28; cf. Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), especially the introduction and chapter 16.

<sup>109</sup> MNF V, 489–90.

<sup>110</sup> MNF V, 492–3.

<sup>111</sup> “fais trêve pour un jour de la foy. Nostre païs se perd; les malades se meurent. Pourquoy vous retirez-vous de nos dances? Pourquoy refusez-vous de rendre cette charité au public? Ce sont les chrestiens qui nous tuent, puisqu’ils ne nous veulent pas secourir,” MNF V, 490–1. On the formation of Christian factions that cut across traditional lineages

people encountered by the Jesuits in New France were inclined toward pluralism, but if converts accepted the Jesuits' insistence on the exclusive allegiance to a Christian God and the concomitant refusal to serve forces identified as demonic, they further weakened social coherence at just the time when the fabric of families, clans, and nations was already being rent by disease, warfare, and ecological change.

As a result of their encounters with Jesuits, even the Indigenous people who did not convert to Christianity adjusted their beliefs about malevolent spiritual powers more than did the missionaries. They incorporated the Black Robes into pre-existing systems that explained who could wield harmful forces, and they also considered the possibility that European objects like copper pots, or the Jesuits' rituals like prayers and the Eucharist, were new problems causing the unprecedented epidemics. Indigenous groups in North America were accustomed to borrowing rituals from others and integrating these with what they already had in place, so whether they were considering the Jesuits as the sorcerers they already knew, or developing new ideas about harmful magic, they were in some sense following a thoroughly traditional pattern.<sup>112</sup> The Jesuits, meanwhile, were committed to a universal truth in the faith they followed and taught. Even so, they too demonstrated a certain amount of flexibility in their thinking about demons in New France. Individual members of the order came to different conclusions about how demonic power was manifesting itself and acting on the region, and as a group they adjusted their understanding of demons to include responsiveness to local traditions as a strategy to win North American souls. The Jesuits continued to believe that, much like themselves, the demons in New France were of the same type as those in Europe, but willing and able to accommodate themselves to Indigenous North American conditions.

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and tribes to form risks across social groupings, see Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 717, 721.

<sup>112</sup>Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic*, 848.



## CHAPTER 10

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# Angels, Devils, and Discernment in Early Modern Scotland

*Martha McGill*

On November 7, 1721, the *HMS Royal Anne* set sail for the West Indies. Just three days later, it struck a submerged rock near Lizard Point, Cornwall. As the ship broke apart, several hundred passengers and crew members were cast to their deaths. Among them was John Hamilton, the third Lord Belhaven and Stenton, who had been on his way to take up a post as Governor of Barbados.<sup>1</sup> A ballad later lamented Belhaven's unforeseen fate:

Governor unto Barbadoes,  
He was sailing bold and brave,  
Little dreaming it was his Fortune,  
For to have a watry Grave;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A. Boyer, *The Political State of Great Britain*, vol. 22 (London, 1721), 536–9, 547–8; “News,” *Daily Post*, November 27, 1721; “News,” *Daily Journal*, November 27, 1721.

<sup>2</sup>The *Unhappy Voyage* (n.p., n.d.), *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (University of California, Santa Barbara), <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31293/xml>, accessed March 12, 2018.

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However, according to one story circulating in Scotland, Belhaven was fully conscious of the perils of the journey. This story was recorded in 1724, by the Scottish minister and historian Robert Wodrow (1679–1734). Wodrow wrote that on the morning before his departure, Belhaven was organizing his affairs when he was approached by a woman in a mantle and hood. She declared that she had important business to discuss, and the pair of them spent close to an hour conversing in a little closet. Belhaven eventually emerged in a state of “some concern.” Pressed by his friends, he explained that he did not know the woman, but “he believed she was either a god or a devil, for she had warned him not to go aboard the ship, for he would never return; and, as a sign, she told him many secret passages of his life, which he was sure no body but himself could know.” Belhaven resolved to embark on his journey anyway—a fatal misjudgment.<sup>3</sup>

The factual accuracy of this story could certainly be disputed. Nevertheless, it reflects early modern Scottish ideas about apparitions. Belhaven’s speculation that his visitor was either “a god or a devil” would have been understood as loose phrasing. The devil was commonly thought to appear to men; God was not. The question, then, was whether his visitor was *from* God, or a diabolic trick. In choosing to ignore the woman’s advice, Belhaven presumably concluded that the message was not of divine origin. His fate suggested that he had judged wrongly. Spiritual discernment, in this case, became a matter of life or death.

By St. John’s instructions, Christians were not to believe every spirit, but to “try the spirits whether they are of God.”<sup>4</sup> However, Scripture offered little guidance as to how this trial should be conducted. The proper method of discernment was negotiated and renegotiated over the centuries, with practices often reflecting contemporary political or social preoccupations. As all kinds of apparitions or magical presences had to be evaluated, the discourse on discernment was wide-ranging: it included (but was not limited to) ghosts, fairies, witches, visionaries, the Holy Spirit, and the devil.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Wodrow, *Analecta: Or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences*, ed. Matthew Leishman, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842–3), 3:173–4.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 4:1. KJV.

For medieval and early modern Catholic communities, discerning divine from diabolic possession was a particularly high priority.<sup>5</sup> However, Protestant theologians placed heavier emphasis on the activities of the devil. Scotland's Reformation happened in 1560, with the new kirk adopting a broadly Calvinist theology. Brian P. Levack argues that in Calvinist countries, there was no longer any need for discernment in cases of possession: "When possessions occurred—and they took place infrequently in Calvinist communities—they were always interpreted as demonic."<sup>6</sup> In fact, as we shall see, there remained a concept of divine possession, although it was different from the Catholic version. It is true, nevertheless, that possession ceased to inspire such prominent debates. Similarly, apparitions were designated as demonic in the wake of the Reformation. Theoretically, there was no longer much need to "try the spirits."

However, in Scotland—as in Protestant Europe as a whole—methods of discernment remained a relevant and contentious topic.<sup>7</sup> This chapter focuses in particular on discourses regarding angels and devils.<sup>8</sup> Compared to other categories of the Scottish supernatural, angels have been neglected by scholars.<sup>9</sup> Early modern theologians and philosophers, in contrast, readily devoted time and ink to musing over the nature and capabilities of angels (particularly, in the case of the

<sup>5</sup>See Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup>Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 264.

<sup>7</sup>On Europe, see Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), chap. 6; Susan Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Early modern Scots generally used the term "devils" in preference to "demons"; I have followed this convention.

<sup>9</sup>On other aspects of the Scottish supernatural, see, for example, Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001); *Scottish Witches and Witch-Hunters*, ed. Julian Goodare (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science, and Second Sight in Late Seventeenth-Century Scotland*, ed. Michael Hunter (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001); Michelle D. Brock, *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland, c.1560–1700* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

philosophers, from the mid-seventeenth century). They were often discussed in relation to devils, and scholars tended to underline that the two categories of spirit were outwardly alike. To some extent, the practice of discernment diverged from this theoretical framework. Stories of apparitions became increasingly common in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and frequently used factors such as appearance and message to demarcate angels from devils. However, this method of discernment remained open to dispute. The only theoretically sound technique was to be possessed and instructed by the Holy Spirit. This created a dilemma: to discern spirits one had to heed the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but distinguishing this guidance from demonic influences was itself an exercise in discernment. This chapter argues that there was ultimately no sure way to evaluate apparitions, and that this reflects a broader issue: the unknowability of the human soul.

## I

There are two main bodies of sources for looking at early modern Scottish theories about angels and devils: theological treatises and university lecture notes. From the mid-seventeenth century, amid growing interest in the nature of spirits, metaphysics lectures increasingly included sections on “angelology.” The regents (or lecturers) sometimes began by insisting that these spirits existed, as evidenced by Scripture, moral philosophy, and the writings of ancient authorities.<sup>10</sup> John Loudon, regent of St. Andrews and later of Glasgow, explained in lectures given in 1696 and 1700 that the “wonderful” things described by pagan authors, including cases of apparitions and possession, “often cannot be said to come from God but from some evil agent, who has power beyond human strength.” This malignant force, he continued, must be the body of evil angels. Since evil angels were originally good, this also served as proof that good angels

<sup>10</sup>For example, lecture notes of John Macara from Thomas Taylor (1707), MS BC59. V8, St. Andrews University Library [StA], sec. “Appendix de Naturali Cognitione Angelorum,” 1–2 (for another version, see notes of Colin Bennet from Thomas Taylor (1702–3), MS 37861, StA); lecture notes from John Law (1704–5), MS Gen 873, Glasgow University Library [GUL], sec. “De Angelis” (for other versions, see notes of Peter Rae from John Law (1692–3), Dc.8.18, Edinburgh University Library [EUL]; notes of John How from John Law (1700–1), MS Gen 719, GUL).

must exist.<sup>11</sup> This line of reasoning demonstrates the balance of similarity and difference in accounts of angels and devils. On the one hand, angels and devils were opposites, counterweights to one another in a universe understood through the binaries of good and evil. On the other hand, devils were born of angels. In discussions of both their existence and their attributes, the two types of spirit remained closely entangled.

Angels and devils were usually taken to be two homogeneous groups. Medieval theologians described a complex angelic ranking system, first set out around the year 500 by Pseudo-Dionysius. There were three descending hierarchies. The first consisted of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the second, Dominions, Virtues, and Powers; and the third, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.<sup>12</sup> However, most Reformed theologians considered this system to be over-elaborate, and warned against going beyond the bounds of Scripture.<sup>13</sup> In Scotland, it was recognized that both angels and demons were arranged into hierarchies of some description, but there was a tendency to downplay the importance of these distinctions. The Edinburgh regent William Law explained in 1696 that some lesser hierarchy of spirits was consistent with revelation. However, he added that the precise details of this order had “hitherto baffled both pagan and Christian philosophers.”<sup>14</sup> On

<sup>11</sup> “Angelorum existentiam probant philosophi … miris effectis editis olim apud Ethnicos ab oraculis; item a spectrorum apparitionibus, et energumenis linguis ignotis loquentibus; quodque haec et similia saepe dici nequeant a Deo profisci sed a male aliquo agente, cui sit potentia supra vires humanas, hinc concludunt Angelos malos: si autem sunt mali etiam agnoscendi sunt boni; cum ipsi hi mali ab initio boni necessario sint agnoscendi.” Lecture notes of James Craig from John Loudon and John Law (1699–1700), MS Murray 49, GUL, ff. 88 (for another version, see notes of John Craigie from John Loudon (1695–6), MS 37025, StA, 219–20).

<sup>12</sup> Laura Sangha, *Angels and Belief in England, 1480–1700* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 54–5; Joad Raymond, *Milton’s Angels: The Early-Modern Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 49–56.

<sup>14</sup> “Inter spiritus puros quandam esse subordinationem ratio revelationi consentanea nos dubitare non sinit; … qualis autem sit hujus regiminis forma, variasque angelorum ordines sigillatim describive, frustra hactenus attentarunt Philosophi tam Ethnici quam Christiani.” Lecture notes of William Haldane from William Law (1699–1700), Adv.MS.22.7.4, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh [NLS], 49 (for other versions, see notes of Patrick Wilkie from [William Law] (1703), Adv.MS.20.7.1, NLS, 100; notes of Robert Clark from William Law (1696), La.III.152, EUL, sec. “Spirituum purorum numero distinctione et subordinatione”). See also James VI, *Daemonologie, in Forme of Ane Dialogue, in Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I*, ed. James Craigie and Alexander Law (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), bk. 1, chaps. 6, 14.

angels, the minister William Annand declared that “whether Cherubims, or Seraphims, Powers, Thrones, or Archangels, all these being comprehended in this one word, Angel, there being in that holy Hierarchy this equality, that they are all Messengers of God.”<sup>15</sup> Devils were likewise said to be “so united … in wickednesse and in carrying-on their wofull work under one chief head and prince … as if they were but only one.”<sup>16</sup> Although angels and devils served different immediate masters, their societies were thus understood as mirrors of one another.

Angels and devils were also thought to have the same physical nature. They were finite spiritual substances (as contrasted with God, an infinite spiritual substance). They were immortal. Most authors held that they were incorporeal, although William Law suggested that they had either no bodies, or “very pure and subtle” ones.<sup>17</sup> They also had a similar range of powers. Angels carried out God’s will, serving him “alwayes readilie, faythfullie, busilie, fullie, and joyefulie.”<sup>18</sup> At God’s command, they might act as messengers to the elect. Devils served Satan, who could send them (with God’s permission) to “trouble” mankind.<sup>19</sup> Angelic and diabolic powers were strictly inferior to God’s. The minister Patrick Simson explained in 1615 that angels were like “brambles” in comparison to God: “their power is finite and bounded, … but the power of GOD is infinite.”<sup>20</sup> Only God could perform miracles (*miracula*), which violated the laws of nature. However, angels and devils were able to perform wonders (*miranda*)—remarkable occurrences that did not transcend the natural order.<sup>21</sup>

It was through their moral choices, and (by extension) their characters, that angels and devils were divided. Some angels were designated “elect.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>15</sup>William Annand, *Pater Noster, Our Father* (Edinburgh, 1670), 272.

<sup>16</sup>James Fergusson, *A Brief Exposition of the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (London, 1659), 457.

<sup>17</sup>“Spiritus puri … qui aut nulli aut puro admodum et subtili corpori uniti vel unquam uniendi sunt…” Notes of Haldane from Law (1699–1700), Adv.MS.22.7.4, NLS, 47.

<sup>18</sup>David Lindsay, *An Heavenly Chariot* (St. Andrews, 1622), 57.

<sup>19</sup>James VI, *Daemonologie*, bk. 2, chaps. 5, 33. See also James Durham, *A Commentarie Upon the Book of the Revelation* (Edinburgh, 1658), 679.

<sup>20</sup>Patrick Simson, *A Short Compend of the Historie of the First Ten Persecutions Moved Against Christians*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1615), 91–2.

<sup>21</sup>Notes of Haldane from Law (1699–1700), Adv.MS.22.7.4, NLS, f. 52; Wodrow, *Analecta*, 1:4.

<sup>22</sup>1 Timothy 5.21. KJV.

The Westminster Confession declared that “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.”<sup>23</sup> However, theologians were careful to underline that the predestination of the angels (like that of humans) was not incompatible with free will: “Angels of their own accord fell by sin from their first estate and became Devils.”<sup>24</sup> By this choice, devils revealed themselves to be proud and ambitious, whereas angels were humble and wise.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the two sets of spirits remained united in one important respect: they adored Christ.<sup>26</sup> Devils were continuously tormented by their longing to be in Heaven, and were driven wild with jealousy by the knowledge that men—by nature “far inferiour to them”—would take their places.<sup>27</sup> This motivated them to tempt men into sin, which in turn sealed the devils’ own fate. In a work first published anonymously in Edinburgh in 1700, the Irish minister George Monro explained that “Could they but once cease to be Envious; and Malicious, they would cease to be Devils, and turn Blessed Angels again.”<sup>28</sup>

Overall, angels and devils might have been opposites, but they were also fundamentally alike. In organization, physical nature and capabilities, they paralleled one another. As the Kilwinning minister James Fergusson explained in 1659, “though Angels by their fall, have losed much, even all their morall goodnesse, *Joh. 8. 44.* yet their essence and naturall being doth remain.”<sup>29</sup> Through their similarities, angels and devils indicate the fine line between good and evil, and the difficulties involved in distinguishing the two. However, theory and practice did not always align. This chapter goes on to consider how accounts of apparitions reflect on the practical realities of discernment.

<sup>23</sup>“The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646,” in *Protestant Nonconformist Texts, vol. 1: 1550 to 1700*, ed. Robert Tudur Jones, Arthur Long, and Rosemary Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), sec. 3:3, 168.

<sup>24</sup>David Dickson, *The Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh, 1671), sec. “A Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine,” sig. I4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>25</sup>William Cheyn, *The Great Danger and Vanity or Folly of Atheism Discovered* (Edinburgh, 1720), 123; Annand, *Pater Noster*, 274.

<sup>26</sup>Robert Craghead, *An Answer to a Late Book Intituled, A Discourse concerning the Inventions of Men in the Worship of God* (Edinburgh, 1694), 93.

<sup>27</sup>Alexander Pitcairn, *The Spiritual Sacrifice* (Edinburgh, 1664), 363.

<sup>28</sup>[George Monro], *The Just Measures of the Pious Institution of Youth* (Edinburgh, 1700), 178.

<sup>29</sup>Fergusson, *Brief Exposition*, 440–1.

## II

In 1566, the Catechism of the Council of Trent set out the Catholic orthodoxy on angels. It explained that angels acted as guides to Christians as they journeyed through life, and that “innumerable … important services are rendered to us by the invisible ministry of angels.”<sup>30</sup> Around the same time, Protestant theologians were scaling back angelic interventionism.<sup>31</sup> It was commonly accepted that miracles and angelic visitations had taken place in Biblical times, but contemporary revelations were more contentious. In his 1597 *Daemonologie*, James VI explained that “all miracles, visions, prophecies, and appearances of angels or good spirites are ceased.” Apparitions, if not Catholic tricks or the phantoms of a melancholy mind, were manifestations of the devil.<sup>32</sup> The diabolic interpretation of apparitions became dominant in Scotland, but not to the extent that it marked the death knell of discernment as a practice. As the seventeenth century progressed, there was a gradual resurgence of interest in other categories of apparition. The Scottish Covenanters, who fought for a Presbyterian kirk settlement during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms (1639–51), took a particular interest in “special providences.” Special providences were acts of divine intervention. Some were mundane: James Mitchell of Dykes in Ardrossan gave thanks to the work of providence when his laird checked over his accounts for 1643–4, but raised no complaints about the missing meal.<sup>33</sup> However, providences could also include apparitions, from angelic visitations to scenes of ghostly armies fighting in the sky. For the purposes of this chapter, the most important text is Robert Wodrow’s *Analecta: Or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences*, compiled between 1701 and 1734. Wodrow was a staunch Presbyterian, best known for his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* (1721–2). However, he also collected hundreds of accounts of strange occurrences, chiefly from fellow ministers and parishioners. *Analecta* remained unfinished on Wodrow’s death, but when

<sup>30</sup>Cited in Antoine Mazurek, “The Guardian Angel: From the Natural to the Supernatural,” in *Everyday Magic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Kathryn A. Edwards, 51–70 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 51.

<sup>31</sup>On the Protestant/Catholic clash, see Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), chap. 7.

<sup>32</sup>James VI, *Daemonologie*, bk. 2, chaps. 7, 37.

<sup>33</sup>James Mitchell, *Memoirs of the Life of James Mitchell* (Glasgow, 1759), 70.

published by the Maitland Club in 1842–3, it spanned four volumes. It included multiple stories of spirits, including several angels.

Jane Shaw has argued that in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England, some Protestants began to dispute the notion that they were living in a post-miracle age.<sup>34</sup> The Scottish Presbyterians did not go this far. Calvinist theologians generally agreed that special providences were wonders, rather than miracles.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, special providences pushed at the boundaries of orthodoxy. While he acknowledged the belief that miracles had ceased, Wodrow noted that several of his providences “looked like a miracle,” were “next to a miracle,” or “a miracle, almost.”<sup>36</sup> If Presbyterian culture was drifting away from James VI’s inflexible interpretation of supernatural forces, an explanation can be found in the broader religious context. Episcopalianism was reinstated after the 1660 Restoration. The dispossessed Presbyterians used providences to demonstrate God’s support for their cause.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, visionaries described meetings with angels and Christ, prophesying that God would deliver the kirk from Episcopalian clutches.<sup>38</sup> Presbyterianism was reinstated in the revolution settlement of 1689–90, but pamphlets continued to use visionaries’ angelic encounters as religious polemic.

The late seventeenth century was also a period of rapid philosophical development. In Protestant countries (including Scotland), Cartesianism came to dominate the university syllabus. Descartes’s dualistic system of mind and matter was criticized, in some quarters, for undervaluing spiritual entities.<sup>39</sup> Worse still were the broadly materialist philosophies

<sup>34</sup>Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), esp. 1–4.

<sup>35</sup>Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 230.

<sup>36</sup>Wodrow, *Analecta*, for example 1:4–5, 1:89, 3:63, 3:474.

<sup>37</sup>John Livingstone, *Memorable Characteristics, and Remarkable Passages of Divine Providence*, ed. W. K. Tweedie, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1845); Robert Fleming, *The Fulfilling of the Scripture* (Rotterdam, 1669); Robert Law, *Memorials: Or, The Memorable Things That Fell Out Within This Island of Brittain from 1638 to 1684*, ed. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe (Edinburgh, 1818).

<sup>38</sup>See Louise Yeoman, “‘Away with the Fairies,’” in *Fantastical Imaginations: The Supernatural in Scottish History and Culture*, ed. Lizanne Henderson, 29–46 (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), esp. 30–6.

<sup>39</sup>On the Scottish reception of Cartesianism see Alasdair Raffe, “Intellectual Change Before the Enlightenment: Scotland, the Netherlands and the Reception of Cartesian Thought, 1650–1700,” *Scottish Historical Review* 94.1 (2015): 24–47.

of Thomas Hobbes and Baruch Spinoza. George Sinclair, who lost his post as a Glasgow University professor after the Restoration, explained in 1685:

there are a monstrous rable of men, who following the *Hobbesian* and *Spinozian* Principles, slight Religion, and undervalue the Scripture, because there is such an express mention of Spirits and Angels in it, which their thick and plumbeous capacities cannot conceive. Whereupon they think, that all contained in the Universe comes under the notion of things matterial, and bodies only; and consequently, no GOD, no Devil, no Spirit, no Witch.<sup>40</sup>

In England, there was an established tradition of printing stories of ghosts, witches and other preter- or supernatural phenomena, as a way of refuting “atheists.” “Atheism” could connote a range of heresies, but in works of this sort, an atheist was somebody who denied the existence of spirits.<sup>41</sup> Henry More’s 1654 *Antidote against Atheism* was the first collection in this tradition. George Sinclair followed More’s template with his 1685 *Satans Invisible World Discovered*. He was the only Scot to publish a full-length collection, but he was not alone in recognizing the value of preter- and supernatural stories. Robert Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle, recorded his parishioners’ fairy beliefs in *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (completed in 1691). He argued that fairies were “of a midle nature betwixt man and Angell,” and added that they could combat atheism.<sup>42</sup> As well as supporting the Presbyterian cause, therefore, angels became defenders of Christianity as a whole. Wodrow, for his part, explained that his goal in collecting providences was to confirm “the great foundations of our holy religion.”<sup>43</sup>

Debates around guardian angels offer a particularly clear example of how attitudes towards angelic apparitions shifted in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Guardian angels had an uncertain place in Protestant theology. Martin Luther was happy to allow that they existed,

<sup>40</sup> George Sinclair, *Satans Invisible World Discovered* (Edinburgh, 1685), sig. A4v.

<sup>41</sup> On the flexibility of the term, see Michael Hunter and David Wootton, “Introduction,” in *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, ed. Michael Hunter and David Wootton, 1–12 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>42</sup> Robert Kirk, *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns & Fairies*, in *Occult Laboratory*, ed. Hunter, 79, 96.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Wodrow, *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow*, ed. Thomas M’Crie, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1843), 244.

but Calvin declared that “whether individual angels have been assigned to individual believers for their protection, I dare not affirm with confidence.”<sup>44</sup> As Peter Marshall has shown, guardian angels were viewed with suspicion by the first few generations of English Reformers, but were gradually worked into the Protestant schema from the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>45</sup> Scotland followed a similar pattern. Writing in 1656, the theologian William Guild denied the existence of individual guardian angels, implying that this was the orthodox Protestant position.<sup>46</sup> However, in a work published posthumously in 1682, the Kilmarnock minister Alexander Wedderburn wrote that guardian angels made journeys from Heaven to Earth as “messengers for the good of the Elect.”<sup>47</sup> In 1726 the *Caledonian Mercury* reprinted an article that began with the assertion that “The Belief of Guardian Angels is not a whimsical or upstart Notion, but may be plainly proved.”<sup>48</sup> In the late 1720s, the East Lothian minister William Ogilvie suggested “from Time to Time, there are sent from Heaven Angels to guard and Comfort, and to do other special Services to good People.”<sup>49</sup> He added that all families of distinction had guardian angels, as did major towns.

In summary, if the Reformers’ demonic interpretation of apparitions had temporarily cleared the waters when it came to discernment, by the early eighteenth century they were re-muddied. Admittedly, apparitions were most usually identified as devils. The servants of Satan were thought to make much more frequent appearances than God’s angels. Thomas Taylor, regent of St. Andrews, explained in 1707 that angels rarely visited men because they disliked dealing with impious hypocrites,

<sup>44</sup>Euan Cameron, “Angels, Demons and Everything in Between: Spiritual Beings in Early Modern Europe,” in *Angels of Light? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Clare Copeland and Jan Machielsen, 17–52 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 36–7; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.14.7.

<sup>45</sup>Peter Marshall, “The Guardian Angel in Protestant England,” in *Conversations with Angels: Essays Towards a History of Spiritual Communication, 1100–1700*, ed. Joad Raymond, 295–316 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>46</sup>William Guild, *An Answer to a Popish Pamphlet Called The Touch-Stone of the Reformed Gospel* (Aberdeen, 1656), 214–15.

<sup>47</sup>Alexander Wedderburn, *Heaven upon Earth* (Edinburgh, 1703), 109.

<sup>48</sup>“From Mist’s Weekly Journal, Sept. 3,” *Caledonian Mercury*, September 12, 1726, 6111–12.

<sup>49</sup>William Ogilvie, *The Laird o’ Coul’s Ghost*, ed. J. F. S. Gordon (London, 1892), 33.

whereas it was only by the grace of God that devils were not flooding the land.<sup>50</sup> William Ogilvie, having noted that angels attended important families, added: “because, the Kingdom of Sathan is much better replenished than the other, instead of one Devil, in many Instances, there are 2 or 3 commissioned to attend a particular Family.”<sup>51</sup> In 1720, William Cheyn stated that significantly more devils appeared because they needed only God’s *permission* to go to Earth, whereas good angels required a specific *commission*.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, angelic apparitions were less controversial than they had been in the sixteenth century. It seems natural that theories of discernment would therefore take on a renewed importance.

However, it is important to remember that early modern accounts of encounters with apparitions were usually written to be as unambiguous as possible. When accused witches reported on their dealings with apparitions, interrogators shaped the accounts to make it obvious that the apparition in question was the devil. Visionaries, doubtless keen to avoid similar treatment, told stories of angels that were brimming with scriptural references and adulatory adjectives. If an apparition appeared to declare the righteousness of the Presbyterian cause, there was an obvious incentive to bypass awkward questions about the discernment of spirits. Philosophical and theological writing on the nature of angels and devils may have stressed their external similarities, but accounts of actual encounters with good and evil spirits threatened this orthodoxy, paradigm spirits that seemed to fall obviously into one category or the other.

### III

As incorporeal spirits, angels and devils did not have “natural” appearances. When they appeared to humans, they would assume bodies. Most authors held that these bodies were fashioned of condensed air.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup>Notes of Macara from Taylor (1707), MS BC59. V8, StA, sec. “Appendix de Naturali Cognitione Angelorum,” 2.

<sup>51</sup>Ogilvie, *Laird o’ Coul’s Ghost*, 35.

<sup>52</sup>Cheyn, *Great Danger of Atheism Discovered*, 119–21.

<sup>53</sup>See the discussion of angelic bodies in Joad Raymond, “With the tongues of angels”: Angelic Conversations in *Paradise Lost* and Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, 256–81 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 264–79. For an alternative viewpoint see John Fraser, *Deuteroskopia*, in Hunter, *Occult Laboratory*, 203.

Devils could manipulate this air as they wished, and in a much-quoted passage, St. Paul had underlined that Satan could choose to present himself as an “Angel of Light.”<sup>54</sup> In theory, therefore, apparitions could not be judged by appearances. In practice, angels and devils were depicted very differently in apparition stories. Admittedly, it is easy to lapse into circular logic here: “Apparition A appeared as an exquisite young man with wings and a harp, whereas Apparition B took the form of a toad; therefore, Apparition A was an angel, and Apparition B a demon; therefore, angels were presented as exquisite young men, and devils as toads.” Authors were not always explicit about how an apparition should be interpreted. However, the accounts generally give sufficient additional clues, besides appearance. George Sinclair described how a Dutch woman was visited by the apparition of “a *beautiful youth* about ten years of age with curled yellow Hair in White Rayment to the feet.” The youth was not actually termed an angel, but he did announce that he had come as a messenger from God.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, the minister David Thomson was rescued from a flooding river by a “handsome young Gentleman of a Sweet Lovely Countenance with something of Majesty in it,” who later regaled him with a “heavenly discourse.”<sup>56</sup> In looking at how angels and devils were described, I have considered not only accounts that explicitly identify the apparition, but also accounts that do so by implication.

Angels traditionally assumed masculine or androgynous bodies.<sup>57</sup> The German humanist Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) was one of several occultists to warn that good angels never took the form of women.<sup>58</sup> In Scotland, angels generally appeared as young men or boys. William Kerr, Lord Jedburgh, who had a vision of flying in the air with angels in 1696, saw them as sexless:

<sup>54</sup> 2 Corinthians 11.14.

<sup>55</sup> Sinclair, *Satans Invisible World Discovered*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> James Cowan to Robert Wodrow [1707?], Wod.Fol.XXVIII 4846, NLS, f. 222.

<sup>57</sup> Nancy Caciola, “Breath, Heart, Guts: The Body and Spirits in the Middle Ages,” in *Demons, Spirits and Witches*, vol. 1, ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs, 21–39 (Budapest: Central University Press, 2005), 21; Raymond, *Milton’s Angels*, 78.

<sup>58</sup> Deborah E. Harkness, *John Dee’s Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 115.

they neither seemed to me to be cloathed nor naked, such was the perfection of their appearance, neither did it ever enter into my mind to notice if they were male or female at the time ... that part of them was covered by which I should have so distinguished them, neither could I comprehend with what or how that secret part seemed to be covered...<sup>59</sup>

This presentation of angels as men, children, or sexless beings underlined their purity. Similarly, they were associated with light and whiteness. In a particularly effusive passage, the visionary Grizell Love described the angels she had seen when she was wondrously transported to Heaven in 1661:

their robs were so whyt they did dazzle my eyes, of such finness (as I observed) that I could not discern its threed, this rob reached from head to foot, their hair hair [*sic*] yellow as gold, their eyes beautifull and sparkling as Diamonds, without any whyt of ane eye, that I could observe ... they had in their hands every one his harp, their faces were whyt and rudy.<sup>60</sup>

Angels might also be depicted with wings. Jedburgh saw a winged Gabriel. The ten-year-old daughter of Donald McGreger, who had multiple visions of angels in the 1680s, declared that they “had sometimes white feathers in there hands like wings.”<sup>61</sup> Although Biblical descriptions of angels do not always include wings, they had become a standard feature in visual depictions during the early centuries of Christianity.<sup>62</sup> For Jedburgh and McGreger’s daughter, wings were an unsubtle way of identifying the apparitions in question.

In contrast to these chocolate-box angels, apparitions of Satan and his minions were usually described in muted terms.<sup>63</sup> Although Scottish

<sup>59</sup>Vision of Lord Jedburgh, October 26, 1696, GD158/560, National Records of Scotland [NRS], Edinburgh.

<sup>60</sup>Grizell Love, “A Brief Account of the Outgate of a Sharp Exercise which Fell Out February 1661,” Wod.Qu.LXXII, NLS, f. 109.

<sup>61</sup>“Admiranda et Notanda,” Dc.8.110, EUL, f. 8v.

<sup>62</sup>Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, “Migrations of Angels in the Early Modern World,” in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, 1–40 on 5.

<sup>63</sup>There are exceptions; see the encounters with “braw” devils described in Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 62, 118.

texts frequently reiterated Paul's warnings about angels of light, the Perthshire minister Alexander Pitcairn noted that

there be some who affirm, that Sathan is so limited, as to the maner of his apparition, that he cannot assume the perfect shape of a man ... if we did observe and could discern all his wiles and designs, we might see so much deformity in him, and so much crookedness in his best motions, as might make us say, surely the finger of Sathan is here.<sup>64</sup>

Francis Grant, Lord Cullen, seemed to take this line, writing in 1698 that "Providence commonly allowes the Devil to personat only with *cloven Feet*."<sup>65</sup> The devil was often described as black, in contrast to the "whyt and rudy" angels identified by Love.<sup>66</sup> Devils were also thought to be ugly: Robert Wodrow told a story of a spirit who declared that he had come from Hell, and took the form of "ane litle old man about the height of the table, with a fearful ougly face, as if it had been all brunt."<sup>67</sup> While angels were associated with brightness, warmth and vitality, devils were macabre. They sometimes chose to possess dead bodies; most commonly, Satan would assume a dead body to have sexual intercourse with witches. When asked about this experience, several accused witches described the devil as "cold."<sup>68</sup> Archibald Johnston of Wariston, a Covenanter who took a keen interest in the works of God's providence, explained in 1684 that one way to know "whither an aparition be of good or bad angels" was "by the impression of light, lyfe, and heate they leave behind them or not."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Pitcairn, *Spiritual Sacrifice*, 369.

<sup>65</sup> Francis Grant, *A True Narrative of the Sufferings and Relief of a Young Girle* (Edinburgh, 1698), 15. For cloven-hoofed devils, see Joyce Miller, "Men in Black: Appearances of the Devil in Early Modern Scottish Witchcraft Discourse," in *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, and Joyce Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 152–4.

<sup>66</sup> See Miller, "Men in Black," 149–50.

<sup>67</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 1:112–14.

<sup>68</sup> Stuart Macdonald, "In Search of the Devil in Fife Witchcraft Cases, 1560–1705," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare, 33–50 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 42.

<sup>69</sup> Archibald Johnston, *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston*, vol. 2, ed. David Hay Fleming (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1919), 283.

Devils also appeared in animal forms. A couple living in a haunted house saw apparitions of a dog, a cat and a host of “small little creatures … unto which none of them could give a name, as having never in nature seen the like.”<sup>70</sup> A servant, visited by his dead master, perceived him surrounded by a party of people (mostly women), who began to shapeshift into toads.<sup>71</sup> These apparitions were not explicitly identified as devils, but it was heavily implied. Satan himself made frequent appearances in animal form, especially as a dog. One particularly interesting case concerns an Aberdeen man called Andrew Man, who was tried for witchcraft in 1597. Man testified that he had an angelic advisor, Christsonday. Christsonday was also mentioned by other accused witches in the same set of trials, although it was only Man who described him as an angel. Man explained that Christsonday sometimes appeared in the form of a *staig*, or a young horse.<sup>72</sup> It is tempting to use this story as evidence that illiterate folk might have a different conception of angels, a conception that allowed for angels to take animal forms. However, it is impossible to know the extent to which Man’s account was molded by his interrogators. For them, Christsonday was a manifestation of the devil. This was demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt for the readers, with Man acknowledging that “at the day of judgement the fyre will burne the watter and the earth and mak all plain and … Christsonday wilbe cassin in the fyre becaus he dissavis wardlingis men.”<sup>73</sup> For educated folk, at least, an apparition who might appear as a horse remained a devil.

However, despite the differing descriptions of angels and devils, the practice of discernment did not become entirely divorced from theory. The “angel of light” warning continued to cast a shadow over even the most radiant of apparitions. In 1719, a farmer from Dunce called William Rutherford met with a “Young Youth cled in bright Rayiment, his face appearing as the Sun.” He summoned some local ministers, one of whom declared to the apparition: “it is hard for me to know

<sup>70</sup>Sinclair, *Satans Invisible World Discovered*, sec. “An Apparition seen in a Dwelling house in Mary Kings Closs, in Edinburgh.”

<sup>71</sup>See Martha McGill, “Ghosts in Enlightenment Scotland” (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2015), 84–6.

<sup>72</sup> *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, ed. J. Stuart, vol. 1 (Aberdeen, 1841), 119–25 (Andrew Man), 170–2 (Marion Grant), 172–4 (Christian Reid).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 121.

whither ye are of God or the Devil, for the Devil contrives many ways to ensnare poor Sinners.”<sup>74</sup> Donald McGreger’s daughter described glorious winged people, but McGreger himself was nervous, expressing some fear that the devil might disguise himself as such. Local villagers claimed that she had been abducted by the fairies, and that the devil was tricking her.<sup>75</sup> Jonet Fraser, a Dumfries visionary who described a glorious visit to Heaven in 1684–5, was compelled in 1691 to confess to her presbytery that she had “pretended to prophecyng and seeing of visions and that she had sinned greatly in being deluded by Satan.”<sup>76</sup> Accused witch Isobel Watson reported in 1590 that Satan appeared to her in the form of an angel; in 1655, Cathrin Hendrie had the same experience.<sup>77</sup> Appearances counted for something, but no amount of white clothing, wings, or sparkling eyes could definitively prove an angel’s identity.

#### IV

Since appearance alone was not enough, another way to assess an apparition was to look at its purpose. Angels usually appeared to perform a service of some sort. Wodrow described how the Covenanting minister Samuel Rutherford fell into a well as a child, only to be saved by a “bonnie white man,” thought to be an angel.<sup>78</sup> In other accounts, angels protected a minister who fell from his horse, and an elderly lady who tripped on a staircase.<sup>79</sup> As well as rescuing Christians from perilous situations, apparitions brought messages from God. In *Scotland’s Timely Remembrance* (1717), a Selkirk minister called Richard Brightly met with angels who told him that “the Lord is angry with the inhabitants of the Earth, for their abominable and crying Sins.”<sup>80</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *A Wonderful Vision or Prophesie, Which Was Revealed to William Rutherford* (Edinburgh[?], 1719[?]), 4, 6.

<sup>75</sup> “Admiranda et Notanda,” Dc.8.110, EUL, ff. 6<sup>v</sup>, 12<sup>r</sup>–12<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> Yeoman, “Away with the Fairies,” 40.

<sup>77</sup> Stirling Presbytery Records, May 1590, CH2/722/2/25, NRS; Alexander Brodie and James Brodie, *The Diary of Alexander Brodie of Brodie, 1652–1680, and of His Son, James Brodie of Brodie, 1680–1685*, ed. David Laing (Aberdeen, 1863), 134.

<sup>78</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 1:57, 3:88–9.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 1:57, 2:180.

<sup>80</sup> *Scotland’s Timely Remembrance* (Edinburgh[?], 1717), 10. I cannot find any evidence that Richard Brightly actually existed.

William Rutherfoord's angelic visitor prophesied the famines, fires, thunderbolts, plagues, and earthquakes that awaited should the people of Scotland fail to repent.<sup>81</sup> Sometimes these divine messages were political in nature. The daughter of Donald McGreger reported that the angels disapproved of the local Episcopalian ministers, and that Christ had declared that no ministers should take the test oath. The test oath, imposed in 1681, compelled all holders of public office to swear allegiance to the monarch and repudiate the Covenants.<sup>82</sup> In a 1734 pamphlet, a blind man from Kintyre was visited by an angel who spoke of God's anger for "a broken Covenant, Profanation of the Gospel, and innocent Blood, shed."<sup>83</sup>

There was a notion that an apparition could be discerned by its message. John Fraser, minister of Teree and Coll, argued that spirits should be tried by their doctrines.<sup>84</sup> The angel who visited William Rutherfoord, having been challenged by a minister, proved itself by declaring that "the Devil dare not manifold these words that I speak."<sup>85</sup> This method of discernment had its faults, however. In the case of political propaganda, whether the messenger was identified as an angel or a devil doubtless depended on the percipient's or reader's own political views. Even when apparitions were delivering general religious teachings, they could not necessarily be trusted. Alexander Pitcairn explained that the devil might encourage men and women to pray if he could distract them from performing some greater duty, or "make those religious performances a snare to catch our selves and others."<sup>86</sup> The minister Alexander Telfair recounted how an evil spirit tormented a family in Kirkcudbright. This spirit declared that God had given him a commission, and that he was sent "to warn the Land to repent; for a Judgement is to come if the Land do not quickly repent."<sup>87</sup> Thus, religious warnings were not sufficient proof of an apparition's identity.

<sup>81</sup> *Wonderful Vision or Prophesie*, 4–7.

<sup>82</sup> See Alasdair Raffe, "Scottish State Oaths and the Revolution of 1688–1690," in *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions*, ed. Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 182–3.

<sup>83</sup> *An Account of Some Strange Apparitions Had By a Godly Man in Kintyre* (1730; repr., Edinburgh[?], 1734), 3.

<sup>84</sup> Fraser, *Deuteroskopia*, 201.

<sup>85</sup> *Wonderful Vision or Prophesie*, 6.

<sup>86</sup> Pitcairn, *Spiritual Sacrifice*, 369–70.

<sup>87</sup> Alexander Telfair, *A True Relation of an Apparition* (Edinburgh, 1696), 14.

Even rescuing Christians was not beyond the devil's remit. Another story of Wodrow's featured the minister John Campbell of Craigie. Campbell warned his congregation that "no regard was to be had to [Satan] or his creatures, he being a lyar from the beginning." One day he was riding home when he heard a voice calling to him. He could see nothing, but the calls were repeated, and at length he heard hideous laughter and a voice declaring that "the Minister himself must hearken to the Devil!" Campbell rode on, but the voice blared after him, declaring that there was poison in the chicken his wife was roasting for dinner. When Campbell got home, there was a chicken over the fire. He was perplexed, and went to pray, being "in a great strait betwixt a just care of his own health, and taking a warning from an evil spirit." When his meal was served, he saw no discoloration, and resolved to eat. However, at that moment a dog came into the room, and Campbell decided to offer it a piece of the chicken. Upon eating the morsel, the dog immediately swelled up and died. Wodrow's commentary on this curious episode was that "it seems, this devil has been forced to tell Mr Campbell his hazard, and used as an instrument for preserving this good man."<sup>88</sup> God could work his will through angels or devils, so their behavior was not necessarily a guide to their true nature. Overall, it might be possible to get some clues as to an apparition's nature by evaluating its purpose, or by evaluating its appearance, but neither method was wholly reliable.

## V

If analyzing the apparition itself was no sure method of discernment, another option was to analyze the percipient. Gender and social position played some role in determining whether one was likely to be visited by good or evil spirits. Women were believed to be less discerning, and also more lustful and vengeful. As such, they made better targets for the devil.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, God was known to favor the weak, which offered a justification for women to be visited by angels. Many visionaries were female, or socially disadvantaged men (such as the blind visionary of Kintyre). Ultimately, though, the most important qualification

<sup>88</sup>Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4:110–11.

<sup>89</sup>See lecture notes of William Scot from William Black (1707), MS 30314, StA, 60–1 (for another version, see notes of Alexander Irvine from [William Black] (1694), Adv. MS.22.7.15, NLS), 257.

was godliness. William Cheyn argued that only those of “holy pure and unspotted Lives” would be visited by angels. Angels were drawn to piety and goodwill. On the other hand, evil spirits were enticed by “Cursed and unhappy” impulses.<sup>90</sup> James VI went so far as to argue that God would not permit the devil to disguise himself in the presence of the elect.<sup>91</sup> John Fraser, finding that some men of “considerable sense, and Pious and good conversation” had seen apparitions, suspected this must be the work of good (rather than evil) angels.<sup>92</sup>

Stories of angelic encounters usually featured ministers. If laypeople were involved, they were described as being “faithful & Charitable,” “of great solidity and experience in religion,” or similar.<sup>93</sup> When people of questionable religious principles reported meetings with apparitions, the local ministers (or other authorities) were likely to determine that devils were at work. On hearing that an old woman in his parish claimed to have paid a visit to Heaven, Fraser hastened to see her. The woman was not able to come to church, and he was confident that her vision of Heaven was “presented to her fancy by the Devil.” He found all the proof he could have wished for when she confessed that she had made use of a charm, which he described as being “compiled of Barbarous words.”<sup>94</sup> Similarly, an account preserved by Wodrow told of a young man from St. Andrews who was keen to become a minister, but was “very unfit” for the role. A mysterious stranger offered him a rousing sermon with which to impress the Presbytery, in return for a contract of servitude in blood—a warning sign, one might imagine, for a wiser man. He later confessed the whole to the local ministers, who recognized that he had made a compact with the devil, and released him through their prayers.<sup>95</sup>

To some extent, analyzing the percipient worked as a method of discernment. However, there was a problem. Just as angels and devils could not be discerned by their external trappings, it was impossible to pass a definitive judgment on a human soul from the outside. In the end, the answers came not by surveying any aspect of the outside

<sup>90</sup> Cheyn, *Great Danger of Atheism Discovered*, 120, 122.

<sup>91</sup> James VI, *Daemonologie*, bk. 1, chaps. 1, 3.

<sup>92</sup> Fraser, *Deuteroskopia*, 202.

<sup>93</sup> *Wonderful Vision or Prophesie*, 3; Wodrow, *Analecta*, 2:142.

<sup>94</sup> Fraser, *Deuteroskopia*, 196.

<sup>95</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 1:102–4.

world, but rather by looking within.<sup>96</sup> Scripture presented “discerning of spirits” as a gift dispensed to select Christians by the Holy Spirit.<sup>97</sup> Within Covenanting culture, prayer groups offered a space where men and women could air their spiritual problems to fellow Christians, and receive guidance from those more advanced in grace.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, discernment was a skill that everybody was expected to cultivate. The theologian Alexander Henderson explained that “the judgement of weighty things belongs chiefly to those most inspired by the spirit of God, but judgement of discerning things belongs to each particular Christian.”<sup>99</sup> Since it was the life’s work of a Christian to differentiate good from evil, God had made provisions. George Mackenzie, lawyer and later Lord Advocate, wrote in 1663: “if God hath endued man with every thing necessary for working out the work of his own Salvation, with fear and trembling, He hath doubtless bestowed upon him an internal touch-stone, by whose test he may discern betwixt good and evil.”<sup>100</sup>

How was a Christian to use his or her “internal touch-stone” to discern apparitions? First, it was important to be aware that angels and devils did not only have external effects. Thomas Burnet, regent of Aberdeen’s Marischal College, explained in 1686 that both good and bad angels could arouse thoughts in humans.<sup>101</sup> They were also known to manipulate the bodily humors, which had a mood-altering effect.<sup>102</sup> To judge an apparition, therefore, it was necessary to look past its outer trappings, and evaluate one’s own internal response. Wodrow, in

<sup>96</sup>For further discussion of the importance of inner experience within the discernment process, see Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise?*, chap. 6; Wendy Love Anderson, *The Discernment of Spirits: Assessing Visions and Visionaries in the Late Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), chap. 6; R. J. Scott, “Visions, Dreams, and the Discernment of Prophetic Passions: Sense and Reason in the Writings of the Cambridge Platonists and John Beale, 1640–60,” in *Angels of Light?*, 201–33.

<sup>97</sup>1 Corinthians 12.10.

<sup>98</sup>See Louise Anderson Yeoman, “Heart-Work: Emotion, Empowerment and Authority in Covenanting Times” (PhD thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1991), 235–40. I am grateful to Dr. Yeoman for discussion on this theme, and the issues surrounding discernment more generally.

<sup>99</sup>Yeoman, “Heart-Work,” 72.

<sup>100</sup>George Mackenzie, *Religio Stoici* (Edinburgh, 1663), 61–2.

<sup>101</sup>Thomas Burnet, *Theses Philosophicae* (Aberdeen, 1686), 8. See also Fraser, *Deuteroskopia*, 199–200; Cheyn, *Great Danger of Atheism Discovered*, 127.

<sup>102</sup>Notes of Scot from Black (1707), MS 30314, StA, 61.

attempting to discern the nature of a “gloriouse light” that filled the room while one of his parishioners was praying, asked her whether the light had “left or wrought any holy or reverentiall aue of God on her spirit.” When she replied that it had not, Wodrow instructed her that “she had the lesse ground to lay any stresse upon it.”<sup>103</sup> Wodrow’s own wife also saw a radiant light while at prayer. She declared: “Lord, I desire nothing extraordinary; let me have Thy Word and Spirit; let me knou this is from thyself, by an after set of seriousnes and nearnes to thyself.” For the next few months, she remained in a “very sweet, seriouse set of spirit.”<sup>104</sup> Another woman was visited by a pleasant light and a beautiful young child. She found that “high thoughts of God and Christ were thronging in upon her,” leaving her in “a most sweet composure of soul.” Wodrow exclaimed that “this is certainly a plain instance of the Ministry of Angells!”<sup>105</sup>

However, the work of discerning from within entailed more than merely monitoring one’s own emotional state. As Michelle D. Brock notes, early modern rhetoric stressed the idea that devils could actually reside inside man.<sup>106</sup> The Fife minister William Narne declared that “the evill spirits will enter within ones heart”; the Govan minister Hugh Binning wrote of how “our Souls are become the habitation of Devils.”<sup>107</sup> Correspondingly, devils were exorcised by allowing Christ, or the Holy Spirit, to take possession of one’s heart and soul.<sup>108</sup> The Westminster Confession explained that as part of the process of sanctification, the godly had “a new heart, and a new spirit created in them.”<sup>109</sup> Wodrow wrote of a Glasgow man called John Broun who began to entertain atheistical ideas, feeling that as so many religions existed, it was impossible to know which was correct. He then heard a voice declaring: “Since all is soe uncertain, fall doun and worship me!” He recognized then that it was the devil who had “made all this noise in his heart.”

<sup>103</sup>Wodrow, *Analecta*, 1:95.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 4:22–3.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 2:142–4.

<sup>106</sup>Michelle D. Brock, “Internalizing the Demonic: Satan and the Self in Early Modern Scottish Piety,” *Journal of British Studies* 54.1 (2015): 23–43.

<sup>107</sup>William Narne, *The Pearle of Prayer* (Edinburgh, 1630), 335; Hugh Binning, *Heart-Humiliation* (Edinburgh, 1676), 219.

<sup>108</sup>See Yeoman, “Heart-Work,” esp. chap. 4.

<sup>109</sup>“Westminster Confession of Faith,” sec. 13:1, 175.

His heart promptly “rose in such a abhorrency at the proposall, and Christ in his beuty cam in with such a pouer, as gave him ane intire outgate, and his heart closed with him in a degree of fervency he scarce ever felt befor.”<sup>110</sup> If Calvinists could experience divine possession, this was the form it took. It (probably) did not entail rapturous visions of the Catholic tradition, but once one was possessed by the Holy Spirit, discernment became straightforward. George Monro explained that “this Divine Spirit when once he inhabites the Soul, will … more and more enlighten [Christians’] understandings, dispose them to discern Spiritual things...”<sup>111</sup> The minister Alexander Nisbet further clarified that discernment was beyond the powers of the “natural man,” but that “those souls, who may expect that the Lord will keep communion with them, and dwell familiarly in them … must labour to be made spiritual … and elevated to discern things spiritual.”<sup>112</sup> Ultimately, knowledge of spirits was obtainable by escaping the bounds of human flesh, and uniting the soul with higher spiritual powers. Hugh Binning explained that when man achieved communion with God, he became “one *after the Spirit*, an Angel incarnat, an Angel dwelling in flesh.”<sup>113</sup> To recognize angels, the optimal technique was to become one.

If discerning a spirit by its appearance prioritized practical concerns over theory, this method posed the reverse problem. Hearts and souls had depths that were not easily fathomed. How was one to be sure that the Holy Spirit was in habitation? Local prayer groups might offer guidance, but introspective piety remained paramount. Louise Yeoman has suggested that confirmation of Scripture through “the experience of the heart” was “the definitive factor in true Presbyterian spirituality.”<sup>114</sup> Spiritual diarists obsessively chronicled the undulations of their inner lives, looking for indications that they were among the elect. However, the process was generally fraught: diarists would bask for a time in God’s favor, only to plunge into misery soon afterwards, having detected some

<sup>110</sup>Wodrow, *Analecta*, 1:70–2.

<sup>111</sup>[Monro], *Pious Institution of Youth*, 92.

<sup>112</sup>Alexander Nisbet, *A Brief Exposition of the First and Second Epistles General of Peter* (Edinburgh, 1658), 82.

<sup>113</sup>Hugh Binning, *The Sinners Sanctuary* (Edinburgh, 1670), 139.

<sup>114</sup>Yeoman, “Heart-Work,” 153.

sign of Satan's influence.<sup>115</sup> Visionaries certainly attempted to demonstrate that their experiences were guided by the Holy Spirit. Grizell Love explained that she was "led through" her visions by God, and that she remained "altogether passive." But there was still no guarantee that the whole was not a diabolic trick. Love became afraid after some of her experiences, fretting that "its said Sathan transforms himself into an Angel of light."<sup>116</sup> We might also recall the case of the visionary Jonet Fraser, who confessed to her presbytery that she had been "deluded by Satan." Lapses into doubt were even expected; the theologian David Dickson explained that God "intendeth the tryall of man," and that "both the elect and reprobate are concluded under sin and unbelief of themselves."<sup>117</sup> Within this environment, there was little scope to cultivate the self-assurance of Binning's "angel incarnat."

## VI

Overall, angels and devils were believed to be outwardly alike, differentiated only through their moral cores. However, stories of encounters with spirits frequently defied this orthodoxy. These accounts were used for religious or political purposes, and authors sought to make the apparitions unambiguous; angels and devils assumed very different guises. Perhaps this indicates a challenge to traditional authority. In describing encounters with effulgent angels, men and women—often laypeople—were asserting their own power to receive divine messages, and interpret them independently. However, this supposedly objective method of discernment could always be disputed. The deceitfulness of devils continued to prey on the mind of early modern Scots, and there was doubt about even the most lustrous of apparitions. To appreciate the complexities of assessing an apparition by its appearance and behavior, we need only return to the unhappy history of Belhaven. He was visited by a hooded woman. To judge by precedent, this was a devil; angels did not customarily take female forms. However, the apparition's warning proved prescient, so this was not a case of demonic trickery. Possibly the apparition was a devil, but directed in its actions by God. This case demonstrates

<sup>115</sup>For examples, see *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self c. 1670–1730*, ed. David George Mullan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>116</sup>Love, "Brief Account," Wod.Qu.LXXII, NLS, ff. 107<sup>v</sup>, 110<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>117</sup>David Dickson, *Therapeutica Sacra* (Edinburgh, 1664), 130–1.

that discernment was less about categorizing apparitions, and more about comprehending God's will. The evidence of the senses, and the dictates of reason, would never be sufficient to penetrate the depths of divine mysteries.

The theoretically reliable method of discernment required a complete surrender of authority. By giving up the heart and soul to the possession of the Holy Spirit, Christians had the potential to reach a level of spiritual purity on a par with the angels themselves. As the answers came from within, there was no scope to be deceived by the outer trappings of apparitions. However, this meant that discernment was a subjective business, with every Christian governed by the biddings of his or her own heart. Identifying the inner workings of good and evil was a harrowing process, and states of assurance often proved short-lived. It is little wonder that men and women might turn to stories of winged angels and cloven-hoofed devils. Not only did these accounts have religious import, they also offered a comfortingly transparent view of good and evil. Equally, it is no surprise that in a period when religious culture was encouraging intensive inner scrutiny, there was a surge in popularity for outward manifestations of God's favor. In the end, though, there were no easy answers when it came to discernment. Knowing the spirits was really an exercise in knowing oneself—and, in Calvinist culture, knowing oneself was a formidable undertaking.



## CHAPTER 11

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# Discerning Spirits in the Early Enlightenment: The Case of the French Prophets

*Michael B. Riordan*

Medieval theologians distinguished between spiritual gifts which came from God and those the devil used to deceive men and women. Mystics produced an extensive literature on how to discern the true prophet from the imposter (often concentrating on gender).<sup>1</sup> In the early modern era, these arguments were taken forward by Counter-Reformation mystics such as John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. Despite claiming divine authority for their own pronouncements, St. John and St. Teresa were keen to limit others' revelations. The Illuminist controversy in sixteenth-century Spain and the storm over Quietism in seventeenth-century France led

<sup>1</sup> Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (York: York Medieval Press, 1999); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Wendy Love Anderson, *The Discernment of Spirits: Assessing Visions and Visionaries in the Late Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

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Catholic theologians to restrict prophesying. In 1687, following clerical disquiet over Miguel de Molinos' *Spiritual Guide*, Innocent XI issued an encyclical, *Coelestius pastor*, which deemed that all contemporary claimants to God's inspiration were illegitimate.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, some Catholics continued to insist that revelations were acceptable. The attempts of the Welsh Benedictine monk Augustine Baker (1575–1641) to defend mystical inspiration caused a schism within the English Catholic community between those who accepted his position, and those who did not think it could be reconciled with *Coelestius pastor*.<sup>3</sup> Yet early modern men and women did not divide neatly between the credulous on one side and their critics on the other: superstition was a “contested concept” in that there was no agreement on what it meant to hold a correct belief.<sup>4</sup>

Moshe Sluhovsky has offered a wonderfully rich account of the Catholic Church's dealings in discernment.<sup>5</sup> Catholics developed an important new explanatory framework for explaining what was natural and what was supernatural, what came from God, and what from the devil. Little, however, has been written about how Protestants understood spiritual discernment. But not only did Protestants use the Catholic discourse, they used Catholic arguments about discernment to make their respective cases. This chapter focuses on one such episode: the debate between different groups of mystics and prophets in early eighteenth-century Scotland. It argues that only the language of discernment allows us to see religious enthusiasm from the inside. Debates about discernment show that mystics and prophets were not the superstitious “enthusiasts” presented by their critics, but rational actors anxious to police the acceptable bounds of their belief system.

<sup>2</sup> Robert P. Baird, “Miguel de Molinos: Life and Controversy,” in *Miguel de Molinos, The Spiritual Guide*, ed. and trans. Robert P. Baird, 1–20 (New York: Paulist Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Claire Walker, “Spiritual Property: The English Benedictine Nuns of Cambrai and the Dispute over the Baker Manuscripts,” in *Women, Property and the Letters of the Law in Early Modern England*, ed. A. R. Buck, Margaret Ferguson, and Nancy E. Wright, 237–55 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004); Victoria van Hyning, “Augustine Baker: Discerning the ‘Call’ and Fashioning Dead Disciples,” in *Angels of Light?: Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Clare Copeland and Johannes M. Machielsen, 143–68 (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Michael David Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, and Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), chap. 4.

The French Prophets emerged among the radical Huguenots of south-west France, fresh from fighting a bloody civil war against the government of Louis XIV, which was intent on persecuting France's Protestant minority.<sup>6</sup> After their resistance fell, many radicals fled to London, where they delivered apocalyptic predictions while under ecstatic trances they claimed to receive from the Holy Spirit. The prophets soon made converts among the English and Irish elite. Attracting over four hundred converts during their first two years in England, observers dubbed the group "the French prophets" in reference to their Huguenot heritage, rather than the nationality of their followers, who were mostly English.<sup>7</sup>

Thanks to pioneering research by Hillel Schwartz and Lionel Laborie, we now know a great deal about the French Prophets and how they got along with their English contemporaries.<sup>8</sup> Existing work on the prophets tends, however, to follow the governing paradigm of eighteenth-century intellectual history: the Enlightenment. Viewing the prophets as a force of a religious (or counter-) Enlightenment, Laborie and Schwartz have been attentive to how the group was judged by its critics. The prophets were censured by the church and university establishments who condemned them as "enthusiasts," a moniker coined by Luther to counter Catholic miracle-working and the antinomianism of the more radical of his Protestant contemporaries. The prophets were locked up by local magistrates, medical men examined them for signs of illness, while incredulous freethinkers gawped on in amazement. On the readings of Schwartz and Laborie, then, divisions within the movement are interpreted along the lines of contemporary censure: evidence that the prophets were fundamentally incoherent in their approach to prophecy and thereby a reserve of ungodly superstition. Because Laborie and Schwartz interpret the prophets through the eyes of their critics, they present them as the last gasp of backward superstition revolting against the inevitable onset of modernity.

<sup>6</sup>W. Gregory Monahan, *Let God Arise: The War and Rebellion of the Camisards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>7</sup>Lionel Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm: Prophecy and Religious Experience in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 5 and 52.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.; Hillel Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

This chapter offers an alternative to the critics' view of the prophets. By looking at the prophets' own debates about spiritual discernment—that is, how they understood the distinction between true and false prophecy—and how their prophecies were perceived by other religious enthusiasts, we can inject some sympathy back into our interpretations. Division among the prophets should not be taken as proof of fuzzy logic, but the result of serious attempts to determine the limits of their own beliefs. To be sure, early eighteenth-century enthusiasts needed to be on constant guard against an increasingly vocal group of rationalist critics. But scholars have overplayed the debate between rationalism and enthusiasm, obscuring the fact that most people held superstitious beliefs to some degree. Debates among the French Prophets shows how those labeled “enthusiasts” by rationalist critics continued to disagree about the limits of correct belief in an era where all claims to the supernatural were being challenged.

The French Prophets drew support from across the social spectrum and made converts in the established Church and among dissenters. This wide support base meant there were constant disagreements among the prophets themselves. Existing scholarship, quite correctly, offers sociological explanations for these divisions, such as men and women's differing views about prophecy or the distance between the prophets' leaders, who came from the middling sort, and their followers, who were often poor and illiterate.<sup>9</sup> But these sociological factors form only part of the story. What significance is ascribed to class and gender must be interpreted within the worldview of the prophets and their contemporaries: a worldview which was theological by nature.

Elizabeth Bouldin has shown how the prophets and their followers in London's ecumenical Philadelphian Society split along one theological axis: election.<sup>10</sup> While the Philadelphians believed all souls would ultimately be reconciled with God, most of the prophets disputed this, claiming they alone would be accorded salvation. This chapter looks at another theological fault line that sprung up among the prophets when they journeyed to Scotland. The prophets attracted the interest of a group of self-described “mystics,” who believed that divine inspiration came from within. The debate between mystics and prophets illustrates

<sup>9</sup> Schwartz, *French Prophets*, chaps. 7–8; Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm*, chap. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Bouldin, *Women Prophets and Radical Protestantism in the British Atlantic World, 1640–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), chap. 4.

how different interpretations of religious texts could affect how equally pious people responded to prophetic enthusiasm.

The period from 1660 to 1715—from the Restoration of Charles II to the first Jacobite uprising—was a mystical age, when the Catholic language of contemplation became fashionable among Protestants of different stripes.<sup>11</sup> Retreat from the world was all the rage, talk of monkish “austerity” rolled off the tongues of the middling sort, and Protestants even embraced the monastery, a model replicated in new scholarly foundations like the Royal Society in London.<sup>12</sup> Moderate Episcopalians in Scotland played a key role in the mystical revival. They were the ones who translated the works of medieval and Counter-Reformation contemplatives and distributed them among their fellow Protestants.<sup>13</sup> Some of the Scottish mystics reveled in the prophets’ millenarianism, but others stayed skeptical. As we will see, it was the contrasting arguments used by different figures in the Catholic mystical tradition that determined how the modern Protestant mystics responded to the challenge of the French Prophets. In religion, as in every other aspect of history, ideas mattered.

## I

Thanks to Aldous Huxley, many now see mysticism as a “perennial philosophy,” which had existed across different religious cultures since time immemorial. Histories of mysticism usually run from Plato’s *Republic* through to the mystical revival in the first half of last century, which produced Evelyn Underhill’s classic *Mysticism* (1911) and Huxley’s *Perennial Philosophy* (1945).<sup>14</sup> This interpretation would be alien to men and women in early eighteenth-century Britain, where “mysticism” was

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Apetrei, “‘Between the Rational and the Mystical’: The Inner Life and the Early English Enlightenment,” in *Mysticism and Reform, 1400–1750*, ed. Nigel S. Smith and Sara S. Poor, 198–219 (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Helen Berry, “The Pleasures of Austerity,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37.2 (2014): 261–77; Greg Peters, *Reforming the Monastery: Protestant Theologies of the Religious Life* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 58–9.

<sup>13</sup> Michael B. Riordan, “Mysticism and Prophecy in Scotland in the Long Eighteenth Century” (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2015), chap. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Mysticism*, 6 vols. (New York and London: SPCK and Crossroad, 1992–2017); Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man’s Spiritual Consciousness* (London, 1911); Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper, 1945).

a brave new word. The term was first recorded in the 1630s to represent writers, in the tradition of St. Benedict of Nursia (d. 547), who produced *regulae* for the governance of the clostral life.<sup>15</sup> The phrase “mystic author” was coined by the confessor to the English nuns at Cambrai, Augustine Baker (1575–1641). Baker wrote a series of guides for his charges that attempted to revive the works of medieval contemplatives among the deeply divided Benedictine order. He called the writers of these guides “mystick authors” because he believed contemplation should be reserved for the enclosed—secret, or “mystic”—orders.<sup>16</sup>

Baker’s works were popularized by Serenus Cressy (1605–1674), who published a digest of his mentor’s scribblings, the *Sancta Sophia*, in 1656. Cressy thought Protestants lacked a devotional literature of their own. He had himself converted to Catholicism after a visit to a Carthusian monastery and reasoned that if Anglicans accepted Baker, they would follow him back to the true church.<sup>17</sup> Cressy’s publication of the *Revelations of Divine Love* of Julian of Norwich (d. 1416) prompted him to enter a pamphlet war with Edward Stillingfleet, for whom Julian’s revelations were superstitious—no better than the “Visions and Revelations of your late Saints.”<sup>18</sup> But Stillingfleet’s approbation failed to convince many Anglicans and Dissenters, who came to believe that Catholic “mystics” could reverse Britain’s moral degradation. They believed quiet retreat could unify Britain after years of civil strife. The wars that gripped Scotland, England, and Ireland in mid-century had resulted from Britain’s division among numerous “sects and parties.” Competing factions wrangled over ecclesiological and liturgical externals, which many now came to see as irrelevant to salvation. Instead, lives must be redirected to God, who could be found “in the soul of man,”

<sup>15</sup> Liam Temple, *Mysticism in Early Modern England* (Martlesham, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, forthcoming).

<sup>16</sup> Elisabeth Dutton and Victoria Van Hyning, “Augustine Baker and the Mystical Canon,” in *Dom Augustine Baker, 1575–1641*, ed. Geoffrey Scott, 85–110 (Leominster: Gracewing, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Patricia Brückmann, “Paradice It Selfe: Hugh Cressy and Church Unity,” *1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 1 (1994): 83–107; Gabriel Glickman, “Christian Reunion, the Anglo-French Alliance and the English Catholic Imagination, 1660–72,” *English Historical Review* 128.531 (2013): 263–91.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Several Late Treatises, Occasioned by a Book Entituled a Discourse Concerning the Idolatry Practised in the Church of Rome, and the Hazard of Salvation in the Communion of It*, vol. 1 (London, 1673), 9.

as the Professor of Divinity at King's College, Aberdeen, Henry Scougal (1650–1678), memorably put it in his 1677 work of that title.<sup>19</sup>

This inward reorientation—what Scougal called a “reformation of our lives”—was made possible by a wholesale appropriation of Catholic devotional literature.<sup>20</sup> Protestants produced translations of European mystical texts, based on reading lists which Baker had prepared for the nuns of Cambrai. English renditions were published in cheap editions distributed by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and competing foundations across the archipelago. The enclosed life now flourished on the open market.<sup>21</sup>

This project was piloted from Scotland. Following the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Episcopalians surrounding the Bishop of Dunblane, Robert Leighton (1611–1684), first alighted on the idea that mysticism could support a Protestant moral reformation. The “fatal error” of the Reformation, Leighton believed, was that the monastic way of life had not been preserved. Protestants enjoyed “neither places of education, nor retreat for men of mortified tempers.” Mystical texts were needed to spread Christ’s message of love to nations now divided over dull theological debates.<sup>22</sup>

After Episcopacy fell from favor in 1690, the mystics retreated to the home of Alexander, Lord Forbes of Pitsligo (1678–1762), in the village of Rosehearty on the north-eastern coastline.<sup>23</sup> There, Forbes’ friend George Garden (1649–1733) began to publish translations of the works of European mystical authors based on the list compiled by Pierre Poiret, whose *Bibliotheca Mysticorum Selecta* contained a Who’s Who of mystics, encompassing multiple traditions from across Europe. The aim of Poiret’s scheme was to construct a canon of mystic writers who would be acceptable to Protestants—but many, like the church historian Robert Wodrow, accused him of being a Catholic agent.<sup>24</sup> The Scottish

<sup>19</sup>Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (London, 1677).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>21</sup>Riordan, “Mysticism and Prophecy in Scotland,” chap. 3.

<sup>22</sup>Gilbert Burnet, *History of My Own Time: The Reign of Charles II*, ed. Osmund Airy, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1897), 246–7.

<sup>23</sup>Michael B. Riordan, “The Episcopalians and the Promotion of Mysticism in North-East Scotland,” in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* (forthcoming).

<sup>24</sup>Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or, Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences Mostly Relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 1843), 174.

mystics worked closely with Poiret. When the *Bibliotheca* was published in 1708, it came introduced by a translation of *Comparative Theology* by George Garden's brother, James, which attempted to explain the rationale behind Protestant mysticism.<sup>25</sup>

This rationale is also set out in a manuscript sermon, scribed in Pitsligo's hand, which survives among his papers in the National Library of Scotland. The text argues that Protestants had been put off by language employed by the lesser mystics, full of "extraordinary & even extravagant terms," which show that they had not fully grasped their subject.<sup>26</sup> Mystics who "have their Maker below them, or on the same Levell with them" had been shunned for the lapses of these mediocre followers, who have not approached the inner sanctum. Lesser mystics justified their obscurantism by claiming their "obscurity preceded from the sublimity" of their subject and its object, the secrets of the divine, which could not be shared publicly. Like modern doctors and chemists, they concealed their "Science under these terms, from such as were not capable of it, while the Mystiques did sufficiently understand one another." Believing that this elitism is not in the spirit of the Gospel, the preacher instead proposes that Protestants turn to the sayings of Christ for true mysticism. Christians must stop obsessing over worldly goods, and be "poor in spirit." The Gospel taught "the whole Mystick way," which consisted in denying one's own will and doing the will of God, in emulation of Christ. Union with God, he insisted, was something all Christians could attain in this world.

In 1699, George Garden wrote an apologia for the Flemish mystic Antoinette Bourignon (1616–1680) that met censure from both the established Presbyterian Church and Garden's fellow Episcopalians.<sup>27</sup> In 1701, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland relieved him of his ministry, citing the many Catholic tenets in Bourignon's writings.<sup>28</sup> Garden's translator, James Keith, fled to London where he joined the

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Poiret, ed. *Bibliotheca Mysticorum Selecta* (Amsterdam: 1708), 5–95.

<sup>26</sup> "Of the Simplicity of The Interior & The Conformity to The Holy Scripture," Fettercairn Papers, Acc.4796, Box 104, Folder 2, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

<sup>27</sup> George Garden, *An Apology for M. Antonia Bourignon in Four Parts* (London, 1699).

<sup>28</sup> Henry R. Sefton, "Bourignonism in North East Scotland," in ed. James Porter, *After Columba—After Calvin: Community and Identity in the Religious Traditions of North East Scotland*, 55–9 (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute, 1999).

mystical Philadelphian Society. In England, Keith continued to promote the interior life by directing the funding, translation, publication, and distribution of a large body of mystical divinity.<sup>29</sup>

What led Garden to publish Bourignon's works? Like the Scottish mystics, Bourignon believed that real Christianity consisted in simply loving God. Christian piety would be reflected in the love the believer showed their neighbor. Contemporary factionalism showed Christians failed to live up to these standards: they lived in an Antichristian age. The devil had led people away from the Gospel's simple message of love.<sup>30</sup> Unlike most Scottish Episcopalians and Presbyterians who decided they were content squabbling among themselves, Bourignon and her Scottish followers foresaw a new spiritual age in which Christ would come and reunite Christians.

By “continual” or constant prayer, even the poorest maid could live in accordance with God's teachings. “Continual prayer” was the key tool in the mystics' pedagogic kit. Bourignon describes what it meant:

He who lifts up his Heart to God only when he is in the Church, or sayes his Pater Noster's, does not pray alwayes: Because he cannot be alwayes in the Church, nor mutter his Prayers from Morning till Night: But he who resigns his Will to that of God prayes continually, whether he eat, drink, walk, or take his rest: He is alwayes by his Will united to God, and has no need of other Means because he is arrived at the End, where Means would be a Hindrance to him.<sup>31</sup>

This is a wonderfully vivid description of mystical prayer and divine union. Bourignon reads the union as something everybody can achieve in this life by quietly praying through it.

It would be a mistake to overplay Bourignon's significance for the Scottish mystics. Their mysticism was eclectic, in the sense that it drew from a wide variety of traditions, Christian and non-Christian.<sup>32</sup> This eclecticism was designed to create a Christian piety that all Protestants could accept, irrespective of their church, sect or party. As Garden argued in his *Apology*, it did not matter if one believed in Episcopacy or

<sup>29</sup> Riordan, “Mysticism and Prophecy,” 111–19.

<sup>30</sup> Antoinette Bourignon, *L'Antichrist Decouvert* (Amsterdam, 1681).

<sup>31</sup> Bourignon, *An Admirable Treatise of Solid Virtue* (London, [1693 or 1698]), 102–3.

<sup>32</sup> Riordan, “Episcopalians and the Promotion of Mysticism.”

Presbytery. Our one essential duty was to love God and our neighbors.<sup>33</sup> Religious controversy had to be abandoned so that Christians could focus on living pious lives directed by God. This view, however, itself stoked controversy, because it rendered non-essential a topic hotly contested in seventeenth-century Britain: “church government.”<sup>34</sup>

## II

The French Prophets arrived in Scotland in 1709. While some members of the Scottish church welcomed the prophets as harbingers of Christ’s second advent, others rejected them as servants of Antichrist. This debate revolved around different interpretations of spiritual discernment, which in turn depended on which different mystics each party of the kirk chose to listen to.

The prophets came to Edinburgh in March under the leadership of Thomas Dutton, a London lawyer with connections to the Scottish legal fraternity.<sup>35</sup> Their first mission to Scotland was unsuccessful, but when the prophets returned in August, they quickly gained the support of influential members of the Scottish elite, which allowed them to spread their message to all corners of Scotland.<sup>36</sup> They kept meticulous records which allow us to reconstruct their daily movements between 1709 and 1714.<sup>37</sup> These records show that the prophets drew audiences in four of Scotland’s large burghs (Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Glasgow) and smaller towns across the country: Kilsyth in the west, Montrose and Stonehaven in the northeast, and further south in Ceres, Costorphine, Linlithgow, and Stirling. An indication of the scale of the enterprise is given by one manuscript which lists 248 prophecies delivered by one

<sup>33</sup>Garden, *Apology*, 352.

<sup>34</sup>I examine the tensions that arose between Garden and the Episcopalian wing of the Scottish church in “Episcopalians and the Promotion of Mysticism.”

<sup>35</sup>James Lundie to Archibald Lundie, August 17, 1709, Lundie Papers, MS 9847, f. 11, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.; Thomas Dutton and James Cunningham letters, MS 569590, 16–44, Mitchell Library, Glasgow (henceforth DCC; all letters are undated and unaddressed, unless indicated).

<sup>37</sup>MSS 2686, 5166, Acc.5892, National Library of Scotland; La.III.708–9, University Library, Edinburgh; MS 53, Sir Duncan Rice Library, University of Aberdeen; MS 5012, University Library, St. Andrews; A.2.82, Chetham’s Library, Manchester.

speaker, James Cunningham, between the end of 1710 and the beginning of 1714.<sup>38</sup>

The prophets claimed they were heirs of the second-century Montanists, who had defended the continuing work of the Holy Spirit through the spontaneous inspiration of Christians.<sup>39</sup> Like the Montanists, the mission claimed not only to be inspired by God, but possessed of him.<sup>40</sup> This explained the curious “agitations”—or ecstasies—which “instruments” experienced when they were delivering their prophecies, which they called “warnings.” One Scottish observer reported how each “agitation lasted about quarter of an hour, and was pretty severe” but did not cause the prophet to tire, “for it neither altered her colour nor put her into a Sweat.”<sup>41</sup> In fact, to those who took the time to assess them, the possibility that the prophets feigned their “agitations” appeared far-fetched. The prophets in Edinburgh were subjected to medical examination by interested bystanders. The pulse of one prophet, Ann Topham, was observed to have gone “very slow” under agitation. She “had no breathing in her heart, nor was she in a sweat.”<sup>42</sup> Such peculiar physical phenomena convinced many observers that the Holy Spirit had given them the gift of prophecy. English prophets claimed spiritual gifts defined in 1 Corinthians 12: the power to foretell the future (prophecy); perform miraculous cures (thaumaturgy); and speak in another language (glossolalia). One Scottish prophet, Katherine Gordon, spoke in tongues.<sup>43</sup>

These happenings may have appeared miraculous, but it was the mission’s message which ultimately instilled conviction. The prophets’ “warnings” lamented the spiritual laxity of contemporary clergy, who did not teach the ways of God but were “Task-Masters of the World.”<sup>44</sup> They

<sup>38</sup> La.III.708, University Library, Edinburgh.

<sup>39</sup> Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>40</sup> J. Ramsey Michaels, introduction to John Lacy, *The Spirit of Prophecy Defended*. ed. J. Ramsey Michael (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xxvii and xxxii.

<sup>41</sup> James Lundie to Archibald Lundie, April 7, 1709, Lundie Papers, MS 9847, f. 9, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm*, 97–101; Thomas Dutton to Isabel Cameron and Katherine Orem, January 17, 1709, DCC, 125.

<sup>44</sup> John Lacy, *Prophetic Warnings of John Lacy* (London, 1707), 35.

saw themselves as an ecumenical mission, who advocated an anti-partisan message. The Spirit speaking through John Lacy proclaimed that God was “not a party God.”<sup>45</sup> As “Father of all the Families of Heaven and Earth,” God was not attached to any one faction.<sup>46</sup> Sects and parties were created by Satan to divide humanity. The problem was not merely that division made God the father of only a fraction of his creation, but that people came to God with “set purposes,” eliciting His support for their party line or personal opinions. To receive His message, they must “come to” Him “teachable.”<sup>47</sup> The prophets’ distrust of faction had eschatological implications. Placing too much emphasis on a party line is to stake “all things before they are renew’d” in the New Jerusalem, where Christ alone will arbitrate truth.<sup>48</sup>

By the second half of the seventeenth century, prophets like Jane Leade (1624–1704) had started to suggest that a reformation of inner and outer lives alike was needed to prepare people for the second coming. Leade’s prophecies chimed with broader reformist tendencies in the later Stuart church, which emphasized practical piety.<sup>49</sup> The French Prophets fed into this strain of thought, arguing that Christians must abandon the party line to be in a constant state of preparation for His kingdom. Only those who come prepared would be saved. One French Prophet, John Moult, advised an audience at Edinburgh to “repent … for the Kingdom of God is near.”<sup>50</sup> The prophets came as “Messengers” to “call them back from their evil ways” because “the Day shall come when they that call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.”<sup>51</sup> While historians sometimes read millenarian movements as naysayers of apocalyptic catastrophe, for most early modern prophets, doomsday was conditional upon human conduct. A hellish end was reserved only for those who did not alter their behavior.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>46</sup> *A Collection of Prophetical Warnings of the Eternal Spirit* (London, 1708), vi.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., vi.

<sup>49</sup> Apetrei, “‘Between the Rational and the Mystical’, in Apetrei, *Women, Feminism and Religion in Early Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 60.

<sup>50</sup> *Warnings of the Eternal Spirit, Pronounced at Edinburgh* (London, 1709), 4.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 6.

The moral decrepitude of the world meant that the prophets never assumed they would be taken seriously. They constantly told their auditors to seek God's assurances of their divinity. Moult exhorted the Edinburgh crowd to "go into your Closets, and desire to make ye sensible that this is his Spirit" and assured them that "He will do it."<sup>52</sup> Most did not follow this advice, or else God came back silent. The prophets were subject to more censure than credit. At the start of 1710, for example, a group of inspired was forced to flee the Edinburgh mob.<sup>53</sup> They were imprisoned in Edinburgh and Glasgow.<sup>54</sup> Contempt was not confined to one side of the ecclesiological fence. While members of Scotland's established Presbyterian Church rushed to link the new arrivals with disturbances among Edinburgh's Episcopalian minority, who wished to bring the Anglican service back to Scotland, some of the harshest critiques of the prophets flowed from the inkwells of their fellow Episcopilians, keen to distance themselves from the prophets' fanaticism.<sup>55</sup>

The mystics who gathered at Pitsligo's estate of Rosehearty, however, looked at the prophets "in another kind of seriousness."<sup>56</sup> Many were convinced the mission was sent by God to deliver a divine message. Following the teachings of Bourignon, the mystics believed they were living in the final age of the world, the "age of Antichrist," where there "are no more true Christians upon the Earth." So-called Christians actually follow churches and "societys" governed by a spirit who worked to oppose the spiritual example set by Christ.<sup>57</sup> The "age of Antichrist" would soon give way to a sixth and final age in which Christ would descend and humans would be restored to the perfect state which Adam and Eve had enjoyed in Eden.

Many of the mystics saw the prophets as heralds of this new age. Data compiled by Lionel Laborie show that at least seventeen Scottish

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>53</sup>Cunningham, January 24, 1710, DCC, 259–60.

<sup>54</sup>Cunningham, DCC, 287; warning, October 18, 1710, MS 5166, 22–31; Acc.5892, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>55</sup>*A True Copy of Letters Past Betwixt Mr. Robert Calder, Minister of the Gospel, and Mr. James Cunningham of Barns* (Edinburgh, 1710).

<sup>56</sup>Alexander Falconer, commentary, DCC, 218.

<sup>57</sup>Bourignon, "Antichrist Discovered," MS 512, 4 and 15, Sir Duncan Rice Library, University of Aberdeen.

mystics came to see the group as divine. Seven are recorded to have delivered prophecies themselves.<sup>58</sup> One of the first to fall “under the agitations” was a young Fife widow, Katherine Pringle, the Lady Abden (1682–1747). In September and October 1709, Abden gave a series of “warnings” at Linlithgow and Stirling which, she claimed, constituted “The Last Revelation that shall be put in print to the sons and children of men.”<sup>59</sup> The “Last Revelation” was copied into manuscript by James Garden, the nephew of George Garden, who ministered to the mystics of Rosehearty.<sup>60</sup> It was important because it took the form of an explanation of many central Bourignonist tenets seemingly delivered by the Spirit while Abden was under the agitations. That is, it attempted to buttress Scottish mysticism by giving it the Spirit’s seal of approval. The debates between the mystics and prophets over the correct way to discern true prophecy all stemmed from arguments over whether Abden’s text was a true prophecy or a diabolical deception.

In many respects, the “Last Revelation” can be considered a synopsis of Scottish mystical theology. Abden argued that men and women could be restored to the perfection the first parents enjoyed in Eden by practising silent prayer. Adam was created in the image of God, with “a glorious Luminous, angel body” and two sexes (an idea taken from Bourignon).<sup>61</sup> When Adam turned its desires away from God, its fall from androgynous greatness ensued. Since the Fall, God had sent many prophets to call his creatures back to prelapsarian faultlessness, yet people grew ever further from their creator. The French Prophets offered another opportunity to recover God’s favor, if men and women owned up to their faults and accepted His punishments. Reconciliation would be possible only if people stopped pursuing their worldly interests and practised continual, silent prayer, which would direct them back to God.

Abden’s warnings convinced many of her mystical friends that the prophets were divine. James Cunningham began to prophesy after he heard Abden’s prophecies, which gelled with his own beliefs. But it would be wrong to assume—as contemporary rationalists and

<sup>58</sup> Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm*, 252–84.

<sup>59</sup> Katherine Pringle, Lady Abden, “The Last Revelation that shall be putt in Print to the Sons and Children of Men,” BrMS 2/5/4, Brechin Diocesan Archive, University Archives, Dundee (henceforth “LR”).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 4.

freethinkers said—that “pathetic prophecy” and “mumbo-jumbo mysticism” were perfectly aligned. The mystical fraternity remained divided. The majority at Rosehearty, including Bourignon’s publisher, George Garden, saw the group as “false preachers and teachers”: they did signal the Last Age, but came as instruments of Satan, not messengers from the true God.

To understand this disagreement, we need to appreciate that the theologies of the prophets and the mystics were different. Quite unlike Garden, Abden argued that men and women should trust in words spoken by prophets of the last days. Most Protestant theologians believed that the age of miracles had ceased and that prophets were no longer needed.<sup>62</sup> Bourignon had been more specific, warning against prophets who proclaimed the imminent destruction of the world with outward spectacles.<sup>63</sup> Drawing on Lacy’s arguments in *The Spirit of Montanism Defended*, Abden contended that the French Prophets were the latest in a line of post-Biblical prophets, whom God has employed to renew the faith of backsliding Christians.<sup>64</sup> Prophets were vital at times when men and women failed to live up to their duties as Christians. Yet the Bible was clear of the danger of false prophecy: those who went around proclaiming the end of the world were instruments of Antichrist. How, then, was it possible to tell—to discern—the true prophet from the diabolic interloper? Abden argued that false spirits would be unable to deceive those who followed the true Christian path, and placed the burden on the prophet to interpret their own prophecies.<sup>65</sup> It was this argument which worried mystics like Garden, who believed that individuals could not be relied upon to work alone but needed “spiritual directors” to interpret the messages they received from God.

The Scottish prophet for whom we have the most evidence is James Cunningham, who led the Scottish mission until his death in 1716. Cunningham was a descendent of one of the principal families of Fife, and the grandson of James Sharp, the Archbishop of St. Andrews murdered by Presbyterians in 1679. Not much is known about his life until

<sup>62</sup>D. P. Walker, “The Cessation of Miracles,” in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, ed. Ingrid Merkel and Allen Debus (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1988), 111–24.

<sup>63</sup>Bourignon, *L’Antichrist Découvert*.

<sup>64</sup>LR, 200–2.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 221–3.

1706, when he inherited the family estate of Barns.<sup>66</sup> Cunningham was an ineffective manager and accrued rising debts which forced him to sell out to the family's historic rivals, the Scots of Scotstervet in 1711.<sup>67</sup> An avowed Jacobite, he played an important role in the rebellion of 1715, instigating the failed attempt to scale Edinburgh Castle. Cunningham fought on the losing side at the Battle of Preston in November. He spent his final days in Chester Castle, where he provided spiritual consolation for his inmates. His persistent penury meant that Cunningham was forced to emigrate rather than pay the fines levied on noble Jacobite belligerents. Although he looked forward to missionary work in the West Indies, he died in December 1716 from rheumatic fever—apparently, the result of the coldness of the prison—before arrangements could be made for his transportation.<sup>68</sup>

Cunningham “beganne to look into” the prophets while recovering from a lengthy period of illness in England.<sup>69</sup> On his return to Scotland, Cunningham found that his friend Lady Abden had begun to prophesy. He became convinced that her “warnings” were the word of God. His conviction that this prophecy was compatible with his own mystical predilections led him to enter a war of letters with Scottish mystics who did not accept the prophets were of God.

At the end of 1709, the Rosehearty mystics sought advice from Pierre Poiret about how they should respond to the prophets in their midst.<sup>70</sup> Poiret replied in a circular to his Scottish friends, which argued that “the kingdom of God comes not from external appearance and demonstration.”<sup>71</sup> He recommended *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* (1578–1579) by the Spanish Carmelite saint, John of the Cross (1542–1591), which questioned the legitimacy of outward ecstasies. His choice was telling:

<sup>66</sup>G. D. Henderson, ed. *Mystics of the North-East* (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1934), 198.

<sup>67</sup>Falconer's commentary, DCC, 293; register of sasines, Crail, B10/2/3/44; “Memorial from James Cunningham, late of Barnes,” GD1/1234/3, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>68</sup>DCC, 344–68; list of prisoners at Preston, GD1/53/72/1, National Records of Scotland; list for Wigan, KB6/86/1, National Archives, London.

<sup>69</sup>Cunningham, DCC, 218.

<sup>70</sup>Thomas Hope to Andrew Michael Ramsay, September 2, 1709, Fettercairn Papers, Acc.4796, Box 104, Folder B, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>71</sup>Pierre Poiret to [Andrew Michael Ramsay], n.d., Episcopal Chest, CH12/12/669, National Records of Scotland.

John's theory of divine illumination left no room for external inspirations. Garden used St. John's arguments to convince his friends at Rosehearty to reject the prophets. His efforts seem to have met with some success. Others, however, were not easily dissuaded. Cunningham believed he was safe from the wiles of Satan, because he had first heard the prophets in a state of quietude which protected him from the Adversary. This view relied on Serenus Cressy's *Sancta Sophia* (1657). Cressy sets out a far more optimistic attitude to prophecy, in opposition to Protestant claims that Catholicism itself was "enthusiastic." It was the different contexts in which John and Cressy wrote, and their different understandings of what made a true prophet, that determined the conflicting responses of Garden and Cunningham. The contrasting positions of these two mystics informed the Scottish debate over the French prophets.

St. John wrote in response to the Spanish "alumbrados and fools," spiritual directors who had tried to lead their charges away from silent contemplation.<sup>72</sup> His *Ascent* set out the difficulties faced by nuns trying to achieve divine union. St. John argued that God sat at an infinite distance from his creation. It followed that there was nothing in the created world that could make people unite with their creator. Before embarking on a journey to naked faith, one must detach entirely from things in this world. Only then will he or she be able to proceed through the "dark night" of the world in safety. John's distrust of created reality extended to supernatural visions, which rely on the senses. While John could not discount the possibility that visions were divine, he argued that there was no way of proving they were not sent by the devil, and therefore they must be ignored. The only reliable knowledge of God would come from mystical contemplation.<sup>73</sup>

St. John stood alone among the mystics in his argument that visions are so unreliable no attempt should even be made to discern them. Poiret used this indictment of the senses to argue that "one should withdraw from the crowd, to achieve silence of the heart, and that the tranquil and mild soul of Christ be adhered to." No trust should be placed in external appearances, which relied on worldly distractions. Even those who "exceptionally know" that they have been "transformed [into

<sup>72</sup>Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit*, 112.

<sup>73</sup>Colin Thomson, "Dangerous visions: The experience of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross," in Copeland and Machielsen, eds., *Angels of Light?*, 53–73.

angels] of light" accepted that this light "can intermix" with "delusions" and "fears." By the time he composed his letter on the prophets, the French pastor realized that his was fast becoming the minority view among his Scottish flock. Those who "profess to love spiritual writings," he warned, have begun to labor "under anxieties of soul" and had "fall[en] to deception."<sup>74</sup>

Poiret's main target was Cunningham, by this stage the principal cheerleader for the mystics-turned-prophets. His interest in the *camisards* was not the result of crazed enthusiasm, but his reading of Cressy's *Sancta Sophia*, an essential addition to the library of any self-respecting Protestant mystic. Cressy's work reads as a practical guide for those contemplatives who wish to achieve divine union. Cunningham's letters to Garden show that he had been using Cressy's work in this way. He turned to *Sancta Sophia* in a state of physical and mental instability. He attempted to alleviate the physical symptoms by practising the "prayer of the affections," which Cressy recommended to those suffering from physical ailments. Cunningham recorded that when he heard that the prophets had arrived in Scotland, he followed Cressy's advice and retained a steadfast "irresolution" against them until he could find certainty within.<sup>75</sup> While in this state, he traveled to Edinburgh to hear Lady Abden prophesying. She warned her hearers they must remain skeptical until they found certainty, "by retiring into their closets" and practising silent prayer. Cunningham was satisfied that if he did so, he "could be expos'd to no delusion." Abden's exhortation moved him to the prayer of interior silence, the next level of Cressy's ladder to perfection. Cunningham's certainty and the efficacy of his prayers reinforced each other: "The more silent my prayer was, and the less mixture of anything of my own, the stronger my conviction; ... my belief more powerfully promoted my prayer, and rendered it more habitual and delightful." The prophets, he wrote, "only served to confirm my belief in the benefits of the interior life," and to put in practice "those things I knew before but in story."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Poiret to [Ramsay], n.d., Episcopal Chest, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>75</sup> [Serenus Cressy], *Holy Wisdom: Or, Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation*, ed. J. Norbert Sweeney (Wheathampstead, Herts.), 417–32.

<sup>76</sup> Henderson, *Mystics*, 201–3.

Cunningham's mystical experiences were buttressed by a theory of spiritual discernment cribbed from Cressy. He argued that the French Prophets could not be the devil's work, because they drew him into a state of internal silence the Adversary could not penetrate. Satan could only act through corrupt human actions, or by presenting images to the understanding or affections. The prayer of interior silence silenced these lower faculties, reserving entry into the higher faculties to God alone. The devil, Cressy explained, "is an absolute stranger to all that is performed in that mysterious silence." Still, there remained the danger that Cunningham's soul may not have been fully subdued. In this state, Satan could "represent some images to our mind," because the soul "abandons its prayer of silence."<sup>77</sup> Far from leading him to abandon silent prayer, however, the prophets drew him into a deeper state of prayer where outward distractions bothered him less. To resist the prophetic dispensation, which produced such positive effects on his soul, would be a loss to his spiritual state.

To grasp Cunningham's arguments here, we need to appreciate that Cressy had a very different take on discerning spirits from John of the Cross. Where John was highly restrictive about those one should trust, Cressy believed a soul could be enlightened by divine graces more often than theologians in Rome might care to countenance. Even worse for his Catholic detractors, when a soul has achieved the level of "passive union," Cressy thought it would receive occasional "supernatural graces," such as lights, visions and prophecies. If these seem to "direct to the real good (as to the love of God, humility, &c.)," they should be trusted as divine. After all, the devil cannot inspire anyone to do good.<sup>78</sup>

The Cunningham-Garden dispute reveals two distinct interpretations of mysticism: while Garden insisted that Quietism required Christians to retreat inwards, Cunningham highlighted how union with God transformed human ability to discern spiritual truth. These debates centered on Garden's and Cunningham's contrasting interpretations of spiritual discernment, a dispute which arose because the two men relied on texts from different traditions: where St. John's *Ascent* responded to the *alumbrados'* religious fanaticism, Serenus Cressy's *Sancta Sophia* had attempted to justify the spiritual experiences of Benedictine nuns.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>78</sup>[Cressy], *Holy Wisdom*, 70, 520 and 522.

## III

The argument between Cunningham and his friends at Rosehearty was not, however, the only flashpoint the French Prophets' mission grappled with in Scotland. The conversion of Lady Abden to the mission led some prophets in England to question whether her prophecies were divine. Garden's problem had been with the prophets' outward behavior, which proved their predictions did not proceed from God. Conversely, some English prophets came to suspect that the mystics had corrupted the message God spoke through the prophets by substituting their own ideas. Like the debates among the mystics, these deliberations should not be read as evidence of an intellectual incoherence common to the religiously-deluded. Quite the contrary, they illustrate the importance early modern enthusiasts ascribed to sorting out God's work from the delusions of people like themselves.

Evidence for the English prophets' view of their Scottish confreres comes from letters written by Thomas Dutton, a London lawyer who first brought the prophets' mission to Scotland.<sup>79</sup> Dutton's letters to his Scottish friends suggest the mission's leaders in England, and their colleagues among the original French prophets from the Cevennes, were uneasy with the mystical prophecies delivered in Scotland. As in Scotland, the controversy south of the border was set off by prophecies delivered by Lady Abden. The English prophets John Lacy and Elie Marion received assurances from the Holy Spirit that Abden's words did not come from Him, but were Abden's own inventions. The Spirit got more specific with Thomas Dutton, informing him the problem lay with Abden's prophecies in the autumn of 1709, which he had seen in the manuscript "Last Revelation." Dutton had only read through its opening pages, but the Spirit assured him that the book was its work.<sup>80</sup>

The English believed Abden had delivered her warnings under the temptation "of a foreign spirit" that seduced her "to uttere her own thoughtes, or his suggestions" in the agitated manner of their instruments.<sup>81</sup> She had not done this on purpose—Abden's inexperience led to her temptation. She could not be condemned for this, which was not in her power to control. Temptations were the work of the devil, who

<sup>79</sup> Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm*, 96, 259.

<sup>80</sup> Dutton, DCC, 82.

<sup>81</sup> Dutton, October 27, 1709, DCC, 98.

attempted to erect barriers against God's plans. The prophets' missions in England showed "how readey the Devil is to blowe about any thing prejudiciale to this work."<sup>82</sup> Dutton cites the controversies over the failed resurrections of two English prophets, Thomas Emmes and Stephen Halford, as examples of the devil's attempts to waylay the *camisards'* progress spreading God's message to the world.<sup>83</sup>

What convinced the English the "Last Revelation" was not divine? The Spirit chucked the book out of Dutton's hands, intimating "that it was not of divine authority, and so not fitt for publick view," but it did not elaborate on why it did so.<sup>84</sup> Taking interpretation into those hands, Dutton agreed with an English correspondent who thought the Spirit had been disquieted by the mystical overtones of the "Last Revelation." Divine displeasure, the correspondent inferred, arose from Abden's employment of "some of A[ntoinette] B[ourignon]'s accessory sentiments, and in some of Ja[cob] Beh[me]n's mistick theology, literally applyed and understoode."<sup>85</sup> In other words, Abden had taken beliefs she had previously read in the writings of Antoinette Bourignon and the sixteenth-century German prophet, Jacob Boehme, and assumed these had come courtesy of the Holy Spirit.

Dutton blamed this mistake on Abden's Scottish context. He believed that the Scottish mystics had placed too much weight on the theology of the mystic divines, which blinded them to the work the Holy Spirit had done through prophets over time. Dutton advised one mystic to "study of the Scriptures, rather than the mystick authours" and to another, he explained that the Spirit is "a better Instructor than Mrs. B[ourignon] or any mystick author whatsoever."<sup>86</sup> God will give "far clearer knowledge of the word of God, than any of these authors can."<sup>87</sup> This was not to say that some mystics (including, at times, Bourignon herself) "were not divinely illumin'd." But when it spoke through them, the Spirit:

delivered thinges darkly; it wrapt up in mysterious termes many noble truthes. But then 'tis only one illumene'd by the same Spirit that discoveres

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Dutton, DCC, 89.

<sup>84</sup>Dutton, December 6, 1709, DCC, 121.

<sup>85</sup>Dutton to Isabel Cameron and Catherine Gordon, January 14, 1709, DCC, 124.

<sup>86</sup>Dutton, December 6, 1709, DCC, 119.

<sup>87</sup>Dutton, November 22, 1709, DCC, 113.

them. For the literalle meaneing is altogether wide of the spirituall intention, and the wildest doctrines imaginable might be drawen from some of the mysticke authoures, if wee take that literally which they meanted in a mysterious spirituall sense.<sup>88</sup>

To attain inspiration, one cannot rely on reading about others' experiences but must go back to the source. Why "seek light from the starres when you may have it from the Sun" which illuminates them? By literally speaking with God's words, the French Prophets were unveiling the source with a perfect clarity, which no mystic could master.<sup>89</sup>

The prophets' belief that Spirit which acted through them superseded all other authorities had implications for the process they employed to distinguish the true teacher from the false preacher. Where mystics-turned-prophets found safety in their own internal convictions, the prophets turned to their own number, who collectively acted as judges in cases of uncertainty. Dutton criticized James Cunningham's argument that in the state of interior silence he was free from the wiles of Satan: "There is an error" among some of the mystics, in drawing an equivalence between how God deals with a "private soul" trying to receive "sanctification"—or divine union—and "the rules of his procedour in a publick work." It may have been appropriate to ascend the mystical ladder in one's spiritual exercises, but this did not apply in the public sphere, where other standards of interpretation must come into play.<sup>90</sup>

The English prophets usually asked for the Spirit's guidance on how to carry the mission forward, and doubtful prophecies were just one of several instances where they sought its approval. The political implications of their prophecies, and the dire consequences of getting it wrong, meant that English prophets chose to employ a democratic procedure to discern true prophecies from false. Doubtful cases were submitted to the judgment of the body of the Inspired, where they needed the approval of "three mouthes of unsuspected authority" before they could be deemed safe.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup>Dutton, December 6, 1709, DCC, 119–20.

<sup>89</sup>Dutton to Isabel Cameron and Catherine Gordon, January 14, 1709, DCC, 129.

<sup>90</sup>Dutton, October 27, 1709, DCC, 100–1.

<sup>91</sup>Dutton, DCC, 86.

Many of the mission's printed prophecies contain an "order" from the Spirit to publish—a divine copyright notice.<sup>92</sup>

In the case of Lady Abden, her prophecies were exposed as false by John Lacy, before they were "taken and torn" by Elie Marion acting under the Spirit's inspiration. Another English prophet, Thomas Alderidge, declared that one of her prophecies "was not from this Holy Spirit," and Dutton received similar messages in public and in private. After reading from the "Last Revelation," Dutton ordered that "every copy you meet with" should be marked as "condemned by the Spirit in me."<sup>93</sup> The fact that the surviving copy of Abden's "Last Revelation" bears no such inscription suggests English prophets were not successful at convincing their fellows in Scotland to accept their view of discernment.

#### IV

Despite the criticisms levied at Lady Abden by Thomas Dutton, in the prophets' camp, and George Garden, in the mystics' camp, many mystics at Rosehearty were less clear how to proceed. Alexander, Fourth Lord Forbes of Pitsligo found himself "as much upon the neutrality as most people"—mystics—"I meet with." Pitsligo qualified this "neutrality," however, by praising James Cunningham. The "perfect indifferency" with which Cunningham approached the prophets persuaded Pitsligo that God was responsible for his friend's conversion.<sup>94</sup>

The "Last Revelation" was used by Pitsligo and others to convince their friends that the mission was the work of God. Pitsligo sent the work to Andrew Michael Ramsay to assuage his doubts.<sup>95</sup> Pitsligo probably offered the prophets aid when they visited Aberdeen, and we know his sister was delivering prophecies in 1711.<sup>96</sup> Cunningham

<sup>92</sup>For example, *Warnings of the Eternal Spirit, to the City of Edinburgh, Pronounced by the Mouths of Margaret Mackenzie, and James Cunningham* (Edinburgh, 1710), ii.

<sup>93</sup>Dutton, November 22, 1709, DCC, 113.

<sup>94</sup>Forbes of Pitsligo to Andrew Michael Ramsay, November 20, 1709, Fettercairn Papers, Acc.4796, Box 104, Folder B, National Library of Scotland.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Warnings at Aberdeen, Acc.2686, 51–79 and 83–92, National Library of Scotland; Lord Grange's notes on a packet of letters from Jean Forbes, Mar and Kellie Papers, GD124/15/1081, National Records of Scotland.

sent copies of the “Last Revelation” to James Inglis, who in 1699 had been deprived of the charge of Burntisland, for the unhealthy interest he showed in the theology of Jacob Boehme.<sup>97</sup> Mystics with close associations to Abden became eager advocates: Pitsligo’s kinsman, John Forbes of Monymusk, first heard Abden at the prophets’ meetings in Edinburgh and attended on the mission when they came to Aberdeen. There, Monymusk “was made by the Spirit [to] speake a great deal and to sing most melodously.”<sup>98</sup> Abden’s patron, Thomas Hope, gave over his estate at Craighall for the use of James Cunningham and other prophets. In 1709, Craighall was the backdrop to warnings delivered “by the mouth of that young vessel,” Christian Wardlaw, Lady Abden’s infant daughter.<sup>99</sup> As late as 1713, Sir Thomas retained a firm conviction in the prophets: in October, Craighall again hosted a meeting of the prophets, which produced a detailed set of records.<sup>100</sup> These examples demonstrate that many Scottish mystics believed the prophets were sent by God. Above all, it was the prophecies of Lady Abden that cemented their confidence.

The prophecies given by these men and women emphasize central elements of the mystics’ conceptual toolkit, unavailable to their English cousins. James Cunningham stressed the importance of leading an inward spiritual life by mortifying outward senses to let the Holy Spirit inspire. As he explained to James Inglis, one must “not only” abandon “all particular desires” but silence “our general desire of God” to unite oneself in the “incomprehensible abyss of the Will of God.” Only when this mystical union is achieved will one be able to see “the manifestation of the trully divine Light, which will then shine out of it into our own soules.”<sup>101</sup> Such advice was not limited to his private epistles. Cunningham’s prophecies to the Edinburgh crowd called on his listeners to “disengage the Heart, from this world.” The test of a true spirit lies in “internal Soul-satisfying Peace,” which provides “Serenity, and Joy, in the midst of all Outward suffering.” Outward things are an

<sup>97</sup> Cunningham to James Inglis, DCC, December 6, 1709.

<sup>98</sup> Alexander Falconer, commentary, DCC, 210.

<sup>99</sup> Henderson, *Mystics*, 203; James Cunningham to George Garden, November 17, 1709.

<sup>100</sup> Records of prophets’ meeting, October 2, 1713, La.III.709, 308–14, University Library, Edinburgh; MS 1012, 572–4, University Library, St. Andrews.

<sup>101</sup> Cunningham to Inglis, December 13, 1709, DCC, 230.

“Abomination” to God.<sup>102</sup> Spiritual guidance cannot come from external sources, but must flow from the Spirit of God inside every Christian.

Cunningham’s prophecies decried “false Teachers” rejected by Bourignon, teachers whom he contrasted with the true prophets of the new dispensation. False teachers are those who “value the outward Form, and Shew of Godliness,” while remaining “absolutely destitute of the true Spirit.” In contrast, true prophets discover themselves by their inward convictions. Cunningham believed that the Spirit sent a message of unity. It will be placed “on everyone ... disposed to receive,” through the practice of good works and charity. If everyone followed the Spirit, “all the Kingdoms of the World” would “become the Kingdoms [*sic*] of Christ.” Prophets have come now because it is the final age of the world and there is little time for people to save themselves and be sanctified in the Spirit of Christ. Cunningham reinterpreted Christ’s coming in the mystical sense: The Kingdom of God came not “in outward Things, but, in [that] Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>103</sup>

## V

An older breed of scholar saw the eighteenth century as the age of Enlightenment, where “reason” successfully overcame “superstition.”<sup>104</sup> More recently, scholars have complicated this picture, pointing to the importance of religion in many aspects of eighteenth-century life.<sup>105</sup> One of the most significant ideas to come from this line of research has been the realization that radical prophesying of the mid-seventeenth century could be found in later seventeenth-century groups, like the Philadelphians, and early eighteenth-century movements, like the French Prophets, whose ideas in turn shaped eighteenth-century movements for

<sup>102</sup> *Warnings of the eternal spirit ... of Mackenzie and Cuninghame*, 9, 10.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 18, 27, 29 and 30.

<sup>104</sup> Its classic statement can be found in Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Knopf, 1969).

<sup>105</sup> *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth Century Britain*, ed. Knud Haakonson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); B. W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth Century England: Theological Debate from Burke to Hume* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000); S. J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

religious renewal such as the English Methodists or the Shakers across the Atlantic.<sup>106</sup>

This reimagining of the long eighteenth century as an age of enthusiasm has, however, largely been directed towards debunking the mythologies of the “Age of Enlightenment.” Less attention has been paid to how religious “enthusiasts” themselves sorted the wheat from the chaff: the genuine prophet from the deluded fanatic. This chapter has attempted to show how one such debate can enrich our understanding of an eighteenth-century religious movement. For detractors, Scottish mystics and French Prophets may have seemed like two sides of the same coin, but they disagreed profoundly amongst themselves about what it meant to be an instrument of God.

<sup>106</sup>Schwartz, *French Prophets*; Apetrei, *Women, Feminism and Religion*; Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm*; Clarke Garrett, *Origin of the Shakers: Spirit Possession and Popular Religion: From the Camisards to the French Prophets* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

PART IV

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## Afterword



## CHAPTER 12

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# The Science of Knowing Spirits: Rationality and the Invisible World

*Nancy Mandeville Caciola*

In the beginning—the *very* beginning—God created spirits. Before the material world existed, before the heavens were ornamented with lights, before the firmament was set apart from the waters, before the fixed, dry earth was populated with plants and animals, and, finally, before the human race was formed from the dust of the earth, spirits already flitted above the stars. The spirit world is, according to Christian understanding, the very oldest aspect of the universe after God himself.

To investigate the invisible world of spirits, then, was to seek to know God's creative activity on the most primordial possible level. What is perhaps most surprising in the history of this endeavor was how broad were the areas of consensus about spirits for a millennium or more, at least in theory. From the Church Fathers on down through the dusk of the Middle Ages, Catholic thinkers considered spirits a part of nature, not of supernature; they agreed that all earthly spiritual intelligences—fairies, fauns, muses, pagan gods and landscape spirits, for instance—were really demons in disguise; and they likewise placed strict limitations upon

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the abilities of angels and demons directly to affect the material world, reserving this kind of intervention for God alone.

If spiritological understandings were marked by broad consensus on the theoretical level, the practicalities of understanding how spirits influenced the material realm, including human bodies, was a more vexed undertaking. The question of how to discern spirits—that is, to understand the inspirational capacities of good versus evil spirits within the human organism—was a long-term debate that remained resistant to resolution. Discernment could only be achieved through second-order strategies: spirits remained unseen, but their influences might be inferred from their visible effects on bodies and on the material world. Other realms of spiritual activity were similarly fraught. For instance, the practicalities of understanding demons' roles in empowering witches were just as complex as the question of discernment. As the witchcraft stereotype came to be consolidated in the later Middle Ages, questions of how demons managed to seduce their devotees, both spiritually and sexually, likewise spawned vivid debates about spiritual capacities in the material world. The practicalities of knowing a wholly invisible world of spiritual intelligences always were more challenging than creating purely theoretical taxonomies and other forms of armchair theorizing.

The early modern centuries, as this collection shows, saw some shifts and innovations in spiritological discourses. Areas of commonsense consensus on spirits that had emerged in the Middle Ages were not entirely rejected, but they were complicated by the shifting epistemological horizons of the early modern period. This was a transformative moment in the balance between the spiritual and the material. Newly emergent scientific paradigms; the beginnings of transnational colonial empires; multiplying sectarianism and models of religious authority; and lastly, fresh understandings of the human being or self all spurred debates over the nature of spirits and their relationship with the material world. At the same time, areas of unresolved dispute that had existed in the medieval period continued to spur dialogue, eventually accreting entirely new areas of discussion. Since spirits both preceded material creation and also lived throughout it, adjustments in knowledge of the world required shifts in knowing spirits as well. Quite evidently, early modern discourses on spirits, far from being specialized, static, or isolated, were fully in the mainstream of the broader epistemological debates of the time.

The articles in this collection unveil these shifts and continuities in a wide variety of different cultural realms; one might construct a

correspondingly wide variety of different taxonomies in order to take account of the insights included here. My remarks attempt to frame the investigations included in this collection in a way that cuts across the divide between theory and practice, drawing comparisons from across the entire collection. My approach focuses upon the transitive verb *to know*: how could the world of invisible intelligences become an object of apprehension for human intellects that *knew* chiefly through the material senses? What points of entrée could be found for knowing demons, knowing spirits? And what kinds of triangulation, discrimination, and comparison did early modern thinkers utilize when seeking to know the spirit world?

Spirits functioned within highly rationalizing discourses in the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods. While some modern readers may be inclined to assume that thinking about spirits represented an irrational or superstitious realm of inquiry, this was not actually the case. Spirits functioned as basic hermeneutical devices that helped thinkers to understand the structure of the created world: they represented a vast array of motivating forces, invisible impulsions, and unseen inspirations that helped endow the often-confusing, chaotic material realm with meaning and coherence. Thus, investigation into the natures of spirits and demons was embedded within rationalist and analytical forms of inquiry. Natural philosophers as well as demonologists and theorists of spiritual discernment all employed empirical evidence drawn from the sensory world in order to make inferential arguments about the nature of abstract spirits. Though their conclusions are not ones we would accept today, their methods were proto-scientific in many ways, beginning from the certain and known in order to extrapolate information about the unknown. To seek to know spirits was to engage in forms of logical inquiry.

In this collection I discern three broad patterns for approaching the problem of knowing spirits. First, there is a set of chapters that explore early modern taxonomies *within* the category of spirits. These chapters investigate how spirits came to be objects of apprehension through comparisons with one another. Second, there is a set of chapters of how spirits were believed to interact with human beings. These chapters show how spirits were known by extrapolation from their effects on the human mind or body. A third group of chapters focuses upon how traditional discourses on spirits adjusted to the early modern expansion of scientific knowledge and observation about the world. These chapters demonstrate how spirits were known by analyzing their shifting place within newly emerging paradigms of the world and the cosmos.

## KNOWING SPIRITS THROUGH OTHER SPIRITS

This method of knowing spirits is in continuity with the medieval past: knowing spirits by comparing them with one another was a continual pattern throughout the history of Christianity. As the early Church expanded throughout the Mediterranean and eventually into northern Europe, vast numbers of spiritual beings recognized by the previous pagan religions of these regions—landscape sprites, elves, fairies, shades of the dead, muses, geniuses, and gods—were assimilated to the Christian worldview. Under the lead of thinkers like Augustine of Hippo and Martin of Braga, these sorts of spirits came to be recategorized as demons, a move that ultimately ended in multiplying the degree of internal variation within the category of the demonic. Likewise, the demonic hierarchies sometimes were compared with the celestial ranks of angels, and regarded as an inversion of the same: the thrones, seraphim, and cherubim of the heavenly choirs had their counterparts in the infernal ranks of demons. Finally, the practice of discerning spirits, or attempting to determine the malign or benign source of spiritual inspiration or possession experienced by particular individuals, expanded rapidly in tandem with the rise of lay piety that began in the twelfth century. The struggle to adduce clear discernment of spirits criteria continued throughout the Middle Ages, never achieving a clear resolution. In sum, attempting to discriminate among different types of spirits with an exacting level of logical precision was a practice with a long intellectual history behind it.

This means of knowing spirits continued into the early modern period. Yet at the same time, the previous medieval religious unity was decisively fractured in the early modern period, and a variety of new structures of religious authority, new kinds of texts, and new forms of spiritual practice emerged. The science of discriminating among different spirits now flourished in multiple, parallel lines of debate. The chapters by Martha McGill, Daniel Harms, Michael B. Riordan, and Dmitriy Antonov all explore juxtapositions of spirits that would have been familiar to medieval thinkers, though the problems that were raised by these comparisons were posed within entirely new intellectual contexts.

McGill’s “Angels, Demons, and Discernment in Early Modern Scotland” shows how Scots thinkers wrote of angelic and demonic spirits as fundamentally similar spiritual essences, yet as radically morally opposed creatures. Either one could influence the human being. Though this notion has a medieval antecedent in medieval discernment

discourses, the shape of the debate within Reformed Scotland was quite new and distinctive. In the Middle Ages, discernment usually was a matter of distinguishing diabolic stimuli from those of the Holy Spirit; as McGill shows, the post-Reformation Scottish debate was a matter of angels and demons and was played out through intense scrutiny over the inner feelings and movements of the heart. Here we see an attempt to offer an empirical test for knowing one spirit from another. Daniel Harms' "Hell and Fairy" likewise investigates how spirits were distinguished from one another within a distinctively early modern context, this time by exploring the ritual conjuration of fairies and of demons. Whereas in the Middle Ages, learned thinkers would have eschewed any such distinction, regarding fairies as demons masquerading as more innocent spirits, in early modern Britain this juxtaposition gained traction, particularly in early modern magical texts. Magicians sought to conjure fairies through esoteric and elaborate rites, which gave them the purity and preparation to interact with such spirits face-to-face.

Turning to the case of exiled French prophets in early modern Scotland, Michael B. Riordan's "Discerning Spirits in the Early Enlightenment" traces the continued vigor of debates over the discernment of spirits into the eighteenth century. Far from being a relic of the Middle Ages, discussions over how to interpret the origins of prophecy continued into a period that now is known for its skepticism and rationality. Yet as Riordan shows, discernment was itself a rationalizing discourse that attempted to apply strict criteria to the realm of spirits' inspirations. Finally, in "The Damned Trinity", Dmitriy Antonov fruitfully applies Jérôme Baschet's concept of the iconographic hypertheme to Russian images of demonic triads comprised of a varying cast of evil characters. The hypertheme is a way of reading iconography that, like textual practices of discernment, makes its subject meaningful via contrasts and alignments with similar motifs. The hermeneutics of spirits are thus more broadly cast into high relief.

### KNOWING SPIRITS THROUGH THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL

Another means of knowing spirits was by tracking their observable influences upon the human organism. Though spirits were invisible, their effects could be seen. Since spirits were thought continually to tempt, to possess, and to obsess human individuals, the tracks of their

interventions might be read and evaluated. In sum, one might know spirits through inference, using their purported effects on the human mind and body as empirical evidence for the task of knowing. Like other means of knowing spirits, this was a technique that went back to the time of the primitive church, and that was used throughout the medieval period as a strategy for deducing things about the spirit world. In the early period from 1400 to 1750, however, shifting theories of interiority, of selfhood, and of individual psychology gave rise to entirely new approaches to knowing spirits in this way. As notions of human nature were re-thought, so too did the human impulsions and motivations that were ascribed to spiritual interference slowly come into a different focus. The interior landscape of the person came to be conceived as a more autonomous and discrete sphere than was previously the case in the Middle Ages: the latter period tended to emphasize collectivity and relatedness rather more than the humanist and religiously reformed world of early modern Europe. Thus a science of spirits based on observations of their effects upon the human organism underwent corresponding adjustments, as spirits came to be seen as remolding individual bodies in unique and individualistic ways.

The chapter by Gary K. Waite, “Knowing the Spirit(s) in the Dutch Radical Reformation,” provides a clear exemplar of these new approaches. Exploring the thought of religious nonconformists in the Dutch Reformation, Waite describes a trend of radical skepticism that doubted the independent existence of the devil and of evil spirits, seeing these entities as, rather, impulsions originating from within the human person. In rejecting the external existence of the devil and, instead, locating evil “spiritual” impulses entirely within the individual, the thinkers Waite examines put forth a radically new vision of how to understand the invisible world. In a somewhat similar vein Andrew Keitt also explores how putatively spiritual gifts might sometimes be reconfigured as purely human capacities. His “Preternatural Peasants and the Discourse of Demons” takes us to quite a different context, Counter-Reformation Spain. Keitt explores how writers on the humors debated whether melancholia might provide a purely natural explanation for extraordinary powers such as xenoglossia and prophecy, even as religious theorists insisted that demons were the source of such powers. Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter’s “Testing for Demonic Possession” also fits into this paradigm of knowing spirits by knowing their effects upon the body. This chapter takes up the writings of philosophers on the efficacy of the famous

“water test” for witches: the bound woman who floats, when placed in a body of water, is guilty, while one who sinks is innocent. Through intense discussion of how spirits can affect the humoral balance and the essential airiness of the body and soul, the pair of early modern philosophers discussed by Heßbrüggen-Walter seek to understand the nature of the spirit world by inquiring into spirits’ alterations of the human body.

### KNOWING SPIRITS THROUGH NATURE AND THE WORLD

Finally, spirits also might be known through the realm of nature and the structure of the material world: since spirits were regarded as a part of nature, rather than as supernatural beings, any knowledge of the material world could hold implications for the understanding of spirits. Knowledge of nature and of the structure of the world itself was shifting rapidly in the time period between 1400 and 1750. New scientific paradigms and standards of experimentation and proof provided a stream of fresh data for spiritologists to consume. In addition, new discoveries about geography challenged longstanding notions about spirits and creation. The establishment of the first overseas colonies gave European thinkers newly detailed information about societies of which they had known little, if anything, previously. Learning about forms of collective organization that differed from European models opened up new questions about how demons and spirits had helped to shape those societies in the absence of Christianity. In sum, learning more about the visible world could help thinkers to better know the invisible world of spirits that interwove all of material creation.

Frank Klaassen’s contribution, “Curious Companions”, addresses a new closeness between alchemy and spirit conjuring that developed in the sixteenth century. He attributes the shift to the fact that both practices relied upon verifying principles that looked to direct experience of the senses for confirmation of their successes. As such, both alchemists and conjurers credited experimentation over authority, utilized close observation, and endeavored to provide rational proofs for the results they sought. While neither practice would be considered sciences by modern standards, both formed part of the movement towards a more scientific spirit within early modern discourses.

The other two chapters form a pair focusing on the European reception of knowledge about overseas societies, and the implications this knowledge held for knowing spirits. Richard Raiswell’s “Edward Terry

and the Demons of India" focuses upon seventeenth-century reports about South Asia, whereas Mairi Cowan's "Accommodationist Demons and the Jesuits of New France" takes up European discussions of societies existing in North America. Raiswell's work explores British imaginings of early modern India as a land wholly given over to the devil. Whereas Satan's powers were limited to occasional temptations and possessions in the west, due to Calvinist piety, India was a realm where God permitted the devil free reign over the whole of society. Hindus had therefore lapsed into demonic idolatry even though they possessed the natural human gifts of reason and logic. God's omnipotent providence had allowed this state of affairs to come about as an object lesson for the English, a sort of rhetorical device writ upon the world, to move Christian souls towards greater piety.

Cowan's chapter likewise addresses Europeans' perception of foreign lands as wholly under the influence of unclean spirits. Her study of French Jesuit missionaries' writings on demonic rule over the cultures in "New France" shows Europeans adapting their traditional demonology to the challenges of understanding the peoples of the new continent. Like the Indians of East Asia discussed by Raiswell, the Indians of the Americas were thought to be descended from Adam and Eve and therefore to have access to an inborn knowledge of God's natural law. Yet they deviated from the prescriptions of this law and failed to recognize and honor their creator. Jesuits sought to instruct the Indians in true belief, but continually found themselves hampered by what they saw as the local demons' cunning counter-tactics. Both missionaries and demons were described as flexible and adaptive in their attempts to persuade; demonic forces acted like missionaries for the cause of the devil in the battle for the Indians' loyalties. Thus new world spirits came to be understood and known by Europeans, who assimilated them as a new taxonomic category within traditional demonological epistemologies.

### SPIRITS AND DISENCHANTMENT

Perhaps ironically, this book demonstrates that the early modern project of knowing spirits may be conceived as part of the project of disenchantment. The traditional historiographical narrative of disenchantment tells of a credulous and spirit-filled world at 1400, which came to be conceived in purely materialist terms by 1750. *Knowing Spirits, Knowing Demons* shows us that discourses about the nature of spirits were

themselves rationalistic and, as such, may be seen as part of the project of disenchantment writ large. Our mechanistic model of the universe still, of course, recognizes forces that are invisible to the human eye, and that regulate the operations of the world around us. We do not name such forces spirits, and do not credit them with moralities and with intelligences, but we know them just as our forebears knew spirits.

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