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POWER AND FEMININITY: REPRESENTING THE DEVIL IN EARLY MODERN SCOTLAND

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"The Devil as a Roaring Lion goes continually about seeking whom he may Devore, he is constantly in his Watch, ready to seize his unguarded Prey, and to seduce unhappy inconsiderate Men into Everlasting Ruin, and yet we Live as if there were no Danger …"

***A Full and True Account of A most Horrid, Barbarous, and Bloody Murther Committed by Owen Brady* (Dublin and Edinburgh, 1717)**

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Pauline LEVECQ

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Introduction

From exposing an overview of the different manifestations of the Devil in Early Modern Scotland, this research project has evolved to pay a closer attention to what can be considered emblematic figures of the times: witches and so-called "evil women". Yet, recognizing this pattern of prevalence only paved the way to further questioning: why were there more female than male witches?[1] Why were women more readily represented as being evil than men? How deeply is it tied to matters of power and authority?

Before attempting to answer those questions, it seems fitting to first expand on the title of this research project: *Power and Femininity: Representing the Devil in Early Modern Scotland*. This study thus gravitates around four different notions: the one of power, questions of femininity and the specific issues they may have had to face, the concept of representations and their social impact, and finally the one of evil and its main threat, the Devil. By looking at how the Devil and evil beings were represented, especially when these representations focused on women, and given the influence they may have over a society, this study aims at uncovering the balances of power at play: from being in the power of someone or of an institution to a possible place of empowerment. This focus on evil is rooted in the specific context of Early Modern Scotland, when the religious changes introduced by the Reformation led to a stronger emphasis on sin and the prevalence of the Devil within one's heart. From then on, their[2] figure which was seldom used became more common, whether it is in religious preaches, political measures or artistic creations. Over the course of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, Scotland saw a dark period when witch-hunts and trials led to

> 2,000 executions for witchcraft, plus another 2,000 or so formal accusations that did not end in execution. Per head of population, this execution rate was about four times the European average, probably because of the intensity of Scottish enforcement of godliness.[3]

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[1] The distinction between "witch" and "wizard" or "sorcerer" resides mainly in the way they get access to their powers. Whereas witchcraft derives from an oral tradition – and thus uncontrollable – "high magic" and sorcery are learnt from written texts. Literacy and education were highly valued, and men were more likely to benefit from them than women. However, some men were still convicted for witchcraft and association with witches, especially as James VI strengthened the policy against witchcraft.

[2] Given the importance laid on gender in this study, it has been used to refer to the Devil in a plural form. Indeed, their representations vary widely between male, female and animal features. As this study aims at deconstructing the importance of gender regarding the Devil, it seems fitting to use an inclusive form of writing, as to remain neutral and avoid any generalization and refer to the collective meanings of the Devil instead of focusing on one specific side of their identity.

[3] Julian Goodare. "Witch-hunts." in Michael Lynch (ed.) *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, Oxford University Press: 2011, p.644.

Thus, even though witch-hunts happened in many places of Europe (mainly in "France, England, […] the Low Countries, Scandinavia, parts of Germany [as well as smaller states such as] Luxembourg, Lorraine, Switzerland and Savoy"[4]) the case of Scotland is interesting in its intensity.

Witchcraft studies saw a boom in this field in the 1960's, though as underlined by Sidney Anglo, these studies mainly focused on the witch-trials and their records to draw conclusions over the whole period. Unfortunately, by doing so, they were explaining folk-level processes while this part of the population was mainly illiterate and could not thus leave written records.[5] The decision has thus been made to focus on the literature of witchcraft and evil women, so as to "consider beliefs of educated men who actually took the trouble to argue their case to posterity".[6] Indeed, when paying attention to written texts of the times, the idea of "building a case", using multiple arguments and pieces of evidence is central: it was not only a question of common beliefs which resulted from a more global cultural context, but a struggle to prove the existence of living and breathing witches set out to harm their neighbours, spouses or King. The information and data that can be found in trial records remain relevant and can prove to be useful, though it can be argued that such documents must be used with caution, especially when considering confessions as they might have been tampered or reformulated. Two main literary sources will thus be studied: King James VI's *Daemonologie* and the *Bannatyne Manuscript*. This first document, written by the king who took the measures deemed necessary to eradicate witches, develops an argument aiming at proving the existence of witches, the evil they can do and the need to fight a crusade against them and their master, the Devil. It is a finely pondered argument crystallizing the position of a ruler trying to secure his authority both over his realm and religious matters – and thus the whole society. The second document, on the other hand, can be considered as reaching a broader scope: by compiling over four hundred poems, Bannatyne's collection may be perceived as offering an overview of the general consensus of the times, picking the views of different writers scattered around the kingdom in different locations. Attention will therefore be paid to the different ways in which the Devil and their minions were represented either in political and demonological treatises or in poetry and literature. It should also be noted that

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[4] Robin Briggs. *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft. Second Edition*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002, p.27.
[5] Sidney Anglo. *The Damned Arts: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, p.1-2.
[6] *Ibid*, p.2.

this research project focuses on sources in English and Old Scots, excluding documents in Gaelic.

On the notions of representations and reality

One could argue that representations are distinct from the concept of reality, that is to say that a reconstructed image cannot perfectly overlap and have an influence over its referent. A representation may be more or less detailed, some depicting more objectively a subject matter than others. Representing is necessarily a subjective process as it relies on an individual's perception and rendition of the referent. They can come in many forms, from drawings and paintings to written documents, including simple mental images, or *ideas* in the Platonic sense of the term.

On the one hand, representations can be thought of as simple reflections of one's environment, as the re-creation of a real object without any tangible link to reality. René Magritte, in his painting *La Trahison des images* showcasing a pipe and the caption "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." expresses this idea and questions the semiotics of images and art in general.[7]

Magritte, René. *La Trahison des Images*. Oil on Canvas,
Los Angeles County Museum of Arts, Belgium, 1929.

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[7] Martin Lefebvre gives the following examples of semiotic links between Magritte's painting and the world:
> Soit, donc, le tableau de Magritte et quelques uns de ses rapports sémiotiques au monde : le tableau peut servir à représenter une pipe ; il peut servir à représenter l'existence de ce genre d'objet qu'on appelle pipe ; il peut servir à représenter Magritte ou son style ; il peut servir à représenter des couleurs ; il peut servir à représenter une proposition négative ; il peut servir à représenter la peinture moderne ; il peut servir à représenter le musée où il est abrité ; il peut servir à représenter une exposition Magritte ; il peut servir à représenter un mode de représentation ; il peut servir à représenter la Belgique ; il peut servir à représenter le goût d'un amateur d'art ; il peut servir à évoquer des souvenirs ; il peut me servir à me représenter où je me trouve dans un musée si je me suis égaré ; etc., etc., et ce, de façon indéfinie car on ne saurait épuiser le potentiel sémiotique d'une chose du monde.

Martin, Lefebvre. " 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe(rie)' : bref propos sur la sémiotique et l'art de Magritte." in Bernard Darras (ed.) *Images et Sémiotique : Sémiotique Pragmatique et Collective*, Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, 2007, p.49.

On the other hand, they can also be used as a way to reveal what is invisible, as it has been done countless times in religious art, for instance in Michelangelo's fresco *The Creation of Adam*, where God is made visible and breathes life into Adam. Metaphors, allegories, and symbols stand for a notion or a concept without resorting to exact resemblance but by suggesting what it may refer to. For example, one of the most common and acknowledged symbols for peace in the European world and Christian culture is the white dove, referring to the Bible when the dove Noah had sent out returned with an olive leaf in its beak (Genesis 8:11).[8] Yet, a dove is not peace, they are not clearly linked in the real world, it is but an allegorical representation of it.

However, it could also be argued that representations cannot be dissociated from the concept of reality. The notion of reality, as understood by the sociologist Emile Durkheim can be divided into three categories. The first one would be the chemical processes, that is to say, the neurological and sensorial experience of the world surrounding us. The second one is an extension of these chemical processes. He calls them "individual representations", which are deeply personal and vary from person to person: he describes them as being the "ways of mentally dealing with experience (…) which are unique to the individual".[9] It is what someone makes of what they perceive, the process of interiorization and acknowledgment of their surroundings. In other words, individual representations correspond to the mechanism whereby a physical information becomes a mental projection. The last type of representations as classified by Durkheim is the one mainly used in sociology: "collective representations". As suggested by its adjective, collective representations encompass those shared by a society. He argues that they are "what makes a human being human [for] a man who does not think in concepts (collective representations) 'would not be a social being'".[10] According to Durkheim, it is only through this shared set of representations that men and women can first, mutually understand each other and second, make it possible for a society to appear. They permit the creation of social institutions, such as ideologies, religions, myths, or global forms of knowledge.[11] However, this public opinion is not to be equated to the sum of individual

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[8] "And the dove came in to him in the evening ; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth."

[9] William Stuart Frederick Pickering. *Durkheim and Representations*, London: Routledge, 2000, p.14.

[10] *Ibid,* p.14. The indented quotation is issued from *Les Formes Elementaires*, written by Emile Durkheim. The reference given by the author is the following one: J.Redding and W.S.F.Pickering. *Durkheim on Religion: A Selection of Readings with Bibliographies and Introductory Remarks*, edited by W.S.F.Pickering, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p.439, p.626. Pickering furthers his explanation by adding the following quotation: "'If reduced to having only individual perceptions, he would be indistinguishable from animals' (ibid.)".

[11] Isabelle Danic. « La notion de la représentation pour les sociologues : premier aperçu. » *ESO Travaux et Documents : Espaces et SOciétés*, vol. 25, 2006, p.29.

representations: Cooley argued that it is not a "mere aggregate of separate judgements, but an organisation, a co-operative product of communication and reciprocal influence".[12] Therefore, it seems that the link between representation and reality can be approached in two different manners. If one were to follow an objective approach, a representation is the product of the perception of reality, standing at the sensory level of chemical processes; whereas a subjective approach sees representations as producing reality and shaping the world.[13] This divide can be summarized by the opposition between receiving an image and creating a reality by the means of representations.

Yet, these two approaches are not bound to be necessarily mutually exclusive. As Isabelle Danic explains, constructivist theories try to go beyond this divide and share the following postulates in a two-fold process:

> Le premier est que la réalité est construite historiquement, dans la durée, et reconstruite, reproduite, transformée dans les pratiques et les interactions quotidiennes. Ce processus de construction génère un monde à la fois objectivé et intériorisé : nous faisons nôtre le monde objectivé que nous trouvons à notre naissance, les espaces, les objets, les institutions, les règles, le langage, etc., qui constituent autant d'éléments contraignants et structurants de nos actions. Simultanément, nous l'intériorisons sous la forme de perceptions, de connaissances, de représentations qui nous permettent d'agir. La réalité objectivée et la réalité subjectivée se génèrent l'une l'autre : la réalité résulte à la fois de « l'extériorisation de l'intériorité et de l'intériorisation de l'extériorité » pour le dire comme Bourdieu. Dans cette approche, la réalité n'est pas réductible aux représentations : les représentations contribuent à la production de la réalité. La réalité existe ici, non comme donné naturel, atemporel, mais comme construction humaine, socio-historique.[14]

All of these elements make any representation an object of study worthy of interest, on several levels. The first one would be artistic or literary qualities. However, by focusing on which aspects the artists used in their representations and confronting those details to other representations, it might be possible to unveil a bigger structure. Following an intertextual approach, this web of connexions between several but similar representations found in the works of different persons can bring forth a new light on past events and societies, as well as

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[12] Alpert H. *Emile Durkheim and his Sociology*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1939, p.160 *in* David Bloor. "Collective Representations as Social Institutions" *Durkheim and Representations*, William Stuart Frederick Pickering (ed.), p.159.

[13] Isabelle Danic. « La notion de la représentation pour les sociologues : premier aperçu. » *ESO Travaux et Documents : Espaces et Sociétés*, p.30. Here Danic adds that this subjective approach is mainly used in ethnomethodology or phenomenology, and that they use representations as a starting point in order to understand a social phaenomenon.

[14] Isabelle Danic. « La notion de la représentation pour les sociologues : premier aperçu. » *ESO Travaux et Documents : Espaces et Sociétés*, p.30.

making their impact on later periods more salient, as the representations found there can testify of past institutions and past public opinion.

There are nonetheless other readings of the word "representation", by focusing on the etymology of the word composed of the prefix *re-* and the stem *presentation*. This prefix has an iterative value, thus *re-presentations* can be studied by observing the different takes and retakes of the same idea or concept. Yet, there is a temporal element in *presentation* which has been addressed by Gillian Beer: "It can also mean re-presenting: making past writing a part of our present, making present what is absent".[15] This definition of representation as "re-presentation" enables us to draw links between past events or writings and nowadays' reality. This notion of re-presentation may help underlining different patterns of influence and understanding how past beliefs came to shape societies into becoming what they were and still are today, in the twenty-first century. It might thus be interesting to pay attention to the "legacy" witches and witch-hunters left — and see how past beliefs which were set in a particular religious and cultural context influenced today's societies while this specific context no longer applies.

On the Devil

Having introduced the impact of representations on reality and societies, it is possible to turn to one of the social institutions mentioned earlier, which had a great influence on day to day life and even more so in medieval Europe: Christianity. Still according to Durkheim, religion is at the origin of collective representations, notably "with its fundamental notions of gods and spirits".[16] Moreover, he stated that religion held a "social virtue".[17] Indeed, belonging to a society also meant being included within a religious community and the two aspects could hardly be differentiated. This body of people was structured around different steps and tasks that had to be performed in order to be part of the group and be recognized and accepted as an active member of the community. From baptism which marked the beginning of a religious life and an allegiance to God, to burial in sacred grounds that could only be granted if the person had been baptised, religions rhythmed the days and lives of many people. For most, religious education achieved through sermons gave meaning to the world and advice on how to live the best life possible that would open heaven's gates at their deaths and avoid eternal

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[15] Gillian Beer. "Representing women: Re-presenting the Past." in Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (eds.) *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, London: MacMillan Press,1989, p.67.
[16] William Stuart Frederick Pickering. *Durkheim and Representations*, p.14.
[17] *Ibid*, p.1.

suffering in hell — hell being the Devil's realm where they torture sinners and lost souls. This central and crucial opposition between good and evil found its greatest expression in the divide between God and the Devil. The former being the reason for everything that is good and beautiful and the latter, responsible for all human suffering, in their bodies as well as in their souls. Physical human suffering could take the form of global diseases such as the plague, or famines for instance, or on a more personal level, common injuries or financial straining. On the other hand, spiritual hardship was brought by sin and temptation. This emphasis and divide grew even stronger in Scotland at the end of the fifteenth Century with the rise of Reformed theology. This new take on religion stressed the existence of sin and that every man and woman was born a sinner.[18] Carrying this sinfulness within their hearts, they became easy preys for the Devil and thus had to fight their inner desires and thoughts in order to avoid eternal damnation. As phrased by Michelle Brock, "for many Scots, the battle between Good and Evil was not cosmic but domestic, occurring not in the heavens but in their own corrupted hearts and minds".[19] This stress and emphasis on human depravity and the possibility of falling to the Devil turned them into a very real threat, as they left the literary world of literate theologians to pervade every stratum of the society, including the illiterate laity.[20] Defining *who* or *what* 'the Devil' are will prove to be quite tricky and many artists through ages represented them differently:

> Until the eleventh century, the Devil was generally portrayed as either a human or as an imp, and this tendency persisted in Byzantine art. In the West, beginning in England about 1000 and spreading to Germany about 1020 and then beyond, the Devil tends to be a monstrous composite of human and animal. The grotesque was brought to artistic heights in the fifteenth and sixteenth century by Derek Bouts, the Van Eycks, Hans Memling, Hieronimous Bosh, Pieter Brueghel, Jan Mandyn and Peter Huys.[21]

At times human or animal, or at times a blend of both, the Devil came in different shapes and sizes. Their most common attributes include hooves, a tail, or horns but they can also take the appearance of a snake or even as a "long-tailed dragon headed 'ugly devillis' with glowing

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[18] John Calvin defined original sin, *i.e.* the sin carried within because of humanity's fallen nature, as "a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul".
John Calvin. *Institute*, II.1.8, Donald K. McKim (ed.). Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, p.35.
[19] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland, c.1560-1700 (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History)*, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016, p.1.
[20] Jeffrey Burton Russell. "Lucifer in High Medieval Art and Literature." *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca ; London : Cornell Univ. Press, 1992, p.208.
[21] *Ibid*, pp.209-210.

eyes and 'warwolf nails' in the circa 1500 poem known as "Rowll's Cursing".[22] However, most agree on their powers and responsibility in the event of misfortunes. The belief in their part in tragic events or danger turned them into a great source of fear and anxieties. People's souls being at stake at any moment of the day, Reformed theology brought believers to be aware of their very thoughts and actions. Michelle Brock describes this necessary awareness as a never-ending cycle:

> Struggles with Satan reveal the specificities and complexities of inner piety as well as individual and communal expectations. When considering the large body of demonic experiences found in Scottish self-writings, a distinct pattern emerges. As demonstrated above, encounters with Satan generally adhered to a cycle of demonically induced sin or doubt, followed by fear of God and the Devil, and finally relief provided by God's mercy and the knowledge of election.[23]

It seems to have grown even stronger in Scotland, after years of "war, plague and political crisis" led to the apparition of a stream of Apocalyptic thoughts.[24] This fear and incentive induced the population into creating and earning to be part of a godly society, one that would survive the Apocalypse and not take part in the ascension of the Devil. In order to do so, several measures had to be taken, both on a personal and on a global level. Individuals had to fight a battle against Satan as well as against themselves, hoping to find salvation in God's election. However, it appears that all individuals were not equal in front of the Devil. During the trial of the North Berwick witches, Agnes Sampson declared that "the Devil considered [James VI of Scotland] to be his chief opponent, and it was for this reason that Satan hated him and wished to bring about his death".[25] This decided the king to take upon himself, along with "many others who came before and after, to rid the world of contaminants like Catholicism, irreligion and witchcraft during its waning days". [26] Indeed, in his demonology treaty entitled *Daemonologie*, the king did not hesitate to compare himself to a warrior on a white horse upholding God's justice against the Devil's minions:

> By this extraordinary statement the Devil cast James into the role of an avenging knight of the Christian faith. James was fond of making reference to the warrior mounted upon a white horse

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[22] Jack Ronald Dice Sadler. *The History of Scottish Literature, volume 1: Origins to 1660*, Aberdeen : Aberdeen University Press, 1989, p.232.
[23] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.94.
[24] Carol Edington. "John Knox and the Castillians: A Crucible of Reforming Opinion." in Roger A. Mason (ed.) *John Knox and the British Reformations*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998, 29–50, p. 46.
[25] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I: Includes the Original Text of Daemonologie and News from Scotland*. MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2011, p.3.
[26] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: the Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.44.

(Revelation 19:11-16) who is prophesied to descend to Earth to punish the wicked in the latter days, which James believed to already have arrived.[27]

Hunting heretics or those who allied with the Devil and work for their ascension became a great preoccupation during the Early Modern period. One of its strongest manifestations in Scotland took the form of witch-hunts from about 1550 to 1700. Through demonological treatises, such as *Daemonologie* and sermons, witches came to be closely associated to the Devil. Among their many forfeits, it was believed that they had renounced their baptisms and sworn allegiance to Satan. In order to eradicate this threat, witches were hunted, prosecuted and at times executed. Several panic periods took place in the years 1590-91, 1597, 1628-30, 1649-50, and 1661-1662, during which 82 percent of the cases ended in an execution.[28] Witchcraft became a statutory crime in 1563 with the Scottish Witchcraft Act, which was only to be repealed in 1736. Witches could be prosecuted for different reasons, such as slander, ill-wishing, interfering in their neighbours' everyday life as well as with the sexual act — by "making [men] unable for women", for instance — and childbirth whether through infanticide, meddling with labour or providing with means of abortion.[29] Accused of *maleficia*, in other words using magic in order to harm others, it was believed that they had made a pact with the Devil to be granted their magical powers. Thus, the concept of the Devil in Early Modern Scotland encompassed two main manifestations of their presence: doubt and human sinfulness in a process of internalization of the Devil, and a direct bodily threat to the population through the means of witchcraft, which thus became a direct embodiment of the Devil on earth.

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[27] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.4. Such mentions of the white horse can be found in this edition of *Daemonologie* on the pages 143 and160.
The relevant verses of the Bible are the following ones (Revelation, 19:11-16):
  11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
  12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.
  13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.
  14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
  15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
  16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.
[28] Julian Goodare. "Witch-hunts", *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, edited by Michael Lynch, Oxford University Press, 2011, p.644.
[29] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.46.

On the notions of power and authority

A central notion to this research project is the one of power. Even though the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives multiple definitions, our focus will especially lay on two of its meanings: power as ability and power as a means of control or authority.[30] It is possible to expand on those two definitions. On the one hand, power as "ability" refers to what one can – or cannot – do. It may focus on the ability to act, as one may have in a political setting, that is to say the capacity to act in certain ways that may not be shared by all. Considering the context of this study, different examples of such actions can be given: the ability to speak out publicly, to hold certain professions, or even to perform certain sexual acts. Yet, there is another side to these actions that some were *in the power* to do: magical powers, which included, for instance, the ability to injure their neighbours, provoke abortions or curse someone into giving birth to a stillbirth. The North Berwick Witches were charged of attempting to sink James VI's ship as he was going to Denmark to marry his fiancée, by raising terrible storms on his way. He was deeply shaken by what he felt was a supernatural plot on his life orchestrated by the Devil himself. Indeed, he saw in that attack the confirmation of his legitimacy, and as was seen earlier of his status of "white knight of God who dispersed the wrath of heaven against the wicked, using as his weapon the power of the word".[31] This event would later be alluded to in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (4.1.66-70), where the three weird sisters (or the three witches, depending on the edition used) appear for the second time and have a talk with Macbeth:

> MACBETH:
>
> I conjure you by that which you profess,
> Howe'er you come to know it, answer me.
> Though you untie the winds and let them fight
> Against churches, though the yeasty waves
> Confound and swallow navigation up[32]

After this perceived attempt to shorten his life, the King wrote *Daemonologie*, with an aim clearly led out in its preface: he was decided to prove the existence of the Devil, of magic

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[30] "power, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, November 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/149167. Accessed 12 November 2017.
[31] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.21.
[32] William Shakespeare. *The Complete Works: Compact Edition*, Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds.), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p.991.

and witches, and what punishment they should deserve.[33] What is interesting is that even though he could have taken more straightforward measures, as a king, to counter the menace, he instead first set upon using the "power of the word". Here, power refers to knowledge, literature and the power and influence literary works can have on the population on all levels. Every claim needs to be backed by evidence, and such works were supported by authoritative evidence, the strongest one being the Scriptures. Thus, their arguments were finely carved and backed up by pieces of evidence, giving it an almost scientific tone. From this power of literacy and education derived another side of power: political influence, which may also be referred to as authority. Political positions were first given to educated men. The clergy was literate. This education and literacy was a symbol status and power as it granted those who beneficiated from it a higher place on the social hierarchy.

The strongest position of political power was the one of the king. James VI asserted his authority over the kingdom and over the church by enacting in 1584 the Black Acts, "a collection of statutes that declared that the king's power over all men was absolute".[34] In *Daemonologie*, King James VI declares himself head of state and father of the realm, comparing Scotland to a house over which he had full authority and control. Matters of power and domination were key issues at the time. However, this domination does not only take place at a political level: social domination and the construction of a certain social order can also be perceived as an expression of power. Isabelle Danic explains that these social struggles are at the heart of constructivist theories:

> Dans une approche constructiviste, les représentations sont au cœur de la production des inégalités sociales et de leurs traductions spatiales, comme éléments constitutifs du phénomène : les rapports sociaux sont eux aussi des rapports de sens, de représentation. Les rapports de domination comportent une dimension symbolique : ils ne se pérennisent que s'ils apparaissent légitimes, naturels, c'est-à-dire si les dominés adhèrent aux représentations des dominants.[35]

It appears therefore that the impact representations can have on the society is bound to influence to a certain extent its order and organisation. As collective representation produce reality, they can be used and tweaked at someone's or at a class's advantage.

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[33] "My intention in this labor is only to prove two things, as I have already said: the one, that such devilish arts have been and are, the other, what exact trial and severe punishment they merit." James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.46.

[34] Timo Ryynänen. "Scotland and its Religious Situation at the End of the 16th Century", *James VI: the Demonologist King – Demonic Descriptions and their Context in James VI's Daemonologie*, University of Eastern Finland, 2010, p.3.

[35] Isabelle Danic. « La notion de la représentation pour les sociologues : premier aperçu. » *ESO Travaux et Documents : Espaces et SOciétés*, p.32.

Such interiorized representations may be issued from literary works, which enables us to reintroduce the notion of authority. The nouns 'author' and 'authority' are linked from an etymological standpoint, as they both stem from the Latin *auctor* according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The first definition given by the dictionary for authority is "a book, passage, etc., accepted as a source of reliable information or evidence, esp. one used to settle a question or matter in dispute"[36], before it came to be used more commonly today to designate those who possess power and use it over others. It is therefore possible to suppose that matters of power are linked to the act of writing, its strongest expression for Christians being the absolute Word of God that needs to be obeyed. From then on, it seems reasonable to admit that managing and mastering a narrative can give a form of authority and control over those who receive this narrative. An example of this would be the narration of a battle: the victor's side is often remembered and commemorated; either in patriotic feelings and pride but it must not be ignored that these parts of history can be used as manipulative tools, as well.[37] Similarly, when it comes to social institutions, the collective representations shared by the dominant class are likely to be interiorized and admitted by the dominated one - unless they decide to organize a form of opposition and resistance, as it happened for instance with Marxism. The dominant narrative is not only the one of the authority, it can also be the one of the majority. With this idea in mind, the study of a manuscript compiling the works of many anonymous or famous writers could give an idea of what was the dominant opinion at the time. Such documents exist and the *Bannatyne Manuscript* is one of them. Published in 1568, it is an anthology of over four hundred items qualified by Sebastian Verweij of:

> This manuscript is a crucial witness for a range of works by canonical Scottish poets (William Dunbar, Robert Henryson, Gavin Douglas, David Lindsay, Alexander Scott), and for a bewilderingly large array of poetry, much of it anonymous, that represents almost the entire generic range of the Older Scots literary tradition.[38]

After collecting those many elements, George Bannatyne arranged this collection in five parts entitled respectively: "Ballatis of Theologie", "Ballatis full of wisdom and moralitie", "Ballatis mirry", "Ballatis of luve" and "Fabillis of Esop with diuers vþir fabillis".[39] As it is

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[36] "authority, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, January 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/13349. Accessed 18 January 2018.

[37] However, this does not imply that history is only written by the "victors" and that they are the only one able to manipulate and commemorate past events.

[38] Sebastian Verweij. *The Literary Culture of Early Modern Scotland: Manuscript Production and Transmission, 1560-1625*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p.135.

[39] *Ibid*, p.136.

not organized by chronological or geographical order but rather following certain themes, it is safe to assume that this organisation was carefully planned and reflected upon. This idea also applies to museums, where paintings are associated and arranged as to tell a specific story that can change from an exhibition to another. Therefore, it might be possible to find two levels of information in the *Bannatyne Manuscript*. The first can be found in the items themselves, studied independently though contextualized in order to unpack and unveil what collective representations can hide beneath the text. The second one is broader, and directly result from the work George Bannatyne put in the redaction of his manuscript: by analysing his editing work and the organization of the different extracts, it is possible to discern patterns and broader stories emerging from this composition, which can create a specific narrative.

This research project proposes to study the links between the Devil, power and femininity in three parts: "The Mechanism of Inversion", " 'The Rod of Correction': Representations and Domination", and finally, " 'Unsex me here': Witchcraft and Feminine Power", which will be furthered introduced below.

The Mechanism of Inversion

This first chapter endeavours to introduce the religious and social background in which these issues of witchcraft were set, as to highlight different patterns that structured Early Modern Scottish thought. As alluded to in the title of this section, it will be question of "mechanisms" and "inversions". Indeed, any institution or society may be considered as a machine with multiple components working together within a single structure I shall call the mechanism. This mechanism organizes the cogs within the machine and how its different parts are related to each other. By uncovering the structural background of Early Modern Scottish society, it will be possible to explain how problematic witchcraft and "evil women" were. In order to understand the writings tackling this problem and the event surrounding it, it seems important to locate both in the setting they belong to.

This setting is thus a matter of "inversions". As to give a further explanation, it might be interesting to turn to the etymology of the term. 'Inversion', or its verb 'invert', both come from the Latin *vertere* (to turn) where was added the prefix 'in-', introducing a sense of direction.[40] An inverted notion can thus be understood as one that has been turned upside down, or inside out as interiorized processes may be exteriorized. Inversions are often found when looking at how structures and these dualities and oppositions have been recognized by

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[40] "invert, v." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/99011. Accessed 4 July 2018.

structuralists as the very basis of any system. Saussure, for instance, introduced this concept in the field of linguistics, and following a structuralist standpoint, languages are organized on several oppositions. Notions are not understood for themselves, but *as opposed to* another, or *in relation to* yet another.

Now, when looking at the context we are interested in, it appears that these series of inversions, oppositions and links were not inconsequential, and Allison Coudert went as far as asserting that these binarities "characteriz[ed] early modern thought"[41] and organized the whole cosmogony of the times, which shall be studied first. The Manichean inversion will thus be tackled first theoretically and then by looking at how the taught precepts were manifested in accounts of day-to-day life and in the broader religious context this subject is set in.

It is possible to isolate another set of central binary opposition: the one between genders and the roles and places in society each had to hold. This part will thus turn to social and cultural structures, and it will allow us to give a broader insight into the figure of witches and of the threat they represented. This threat was expressed on multiple levels: their connection to the Devil and the rebellious intent to overturn contemporary social structure and hierarchy made witches appear even more dangerous. This danger can be characterized of "domestic", striking at the heart of the house – all the way to the bedroom, as indeed, sexuality and sexual independence were considered as problematic.

"The Rod of Correction"[42]: Representations and Domination

The image of the rod has been used countless times and can represent several different notions, concepts, and ideas. Amongst these different possibilities, a rod can refer to a stick that can be used as a walking stick, or as an instrument of corporeal punishment, for instance. Rods and images of rods have also been used as symbols for positions of authority: kings have sceptres that can be called rods, and there is even a political distinction in the United Kingdom called 'Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod'. This connection between rods and authority may come from the Bible, where the expression "iron rod" appears multiple times in reference to positions of authority. You may find one instance of this in the previously quoted verse from Revelation (19:15):

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[41] Edward Bever. "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2002, p.957.

[42] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I: Includes the Original Text of Daemonologie and News from Scotland*, pp.46-47.

> And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The image of the iron rod conveys great strength and authority, and emphasizes the ability of a ruler to hold others in submission. This idea may be even more striking in the following verse: "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers" (Revelation 2:27). There is yet another symbolism behind 'rod' that must be accounted for, especially as this research projects deals with issues related to gender: rods carry blatant sexual allusions and have been used as images to represent male sexual organs, especially in their erect form. These different connotations combined may explain why, among many other explanations, in our historical and cultural setting that heavily relied on religion for their formation, men and their phalluses came to be associated to a source of power and authority.

As implied in the title of this section, rods may carry a corrective value. This expression is in fact a quotation from James VI's *Daemonologie*, in the preface of which he explains:

> God by the contrary draws ever out of that evil, glory to himself, either by the wreck of the wicked in his justice, or by the trial of the patient and amendment of the faithful, being wakened up with that rod of correction.[43]

This question of 'correction' is a key concept in this research project. The idea of correcting behaviours implies a form of judgement, and the desire to control and bend those behaviours into what the 'corrector' deems to be the morally just and correct. This corrective intent, that is to say, the fight against forms of corruption which were considered as plaguing community, was performed in different ways.[44] Correction could be equated to corporeal punishment and executions. It was also rooted in literary texts, as writers laid out the problems of a morally corrupt society, trying to show how wrong those behaviours were or giving direct orders and suggestions as to what should be done in order to eradicate these threats.

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[43] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I: Includes the Original Text of Daemonologie and News from Scotland*, pp.46-47.

[44] Corruption is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the destruction or spoiling of anything, *esp.* by disintegration or by decomposition with its attendant unwholesomeness; and loathsomeness; putrefaction."
"corruption, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, July 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/42045. Accessed 11 September 2018.
In this context, corruption is mainly focused on the mores and moral values which were considered to be "corrupted" by the Devil.

Thus, having first set, in the first part of this research project, the representations that will be studied in their contexts, this second part will in turn focus on how people from different horizons "corrected" those flaws in their community. Judicial correction will thus be the first aspect to be studied of this corrective intent. Justice, magics and politics were indeed deeply tied together around the King's figure. This fight against the Devil and witchcraft may in fact have been a personal enterprise around which James VI built his whole idea of kingship and monarchy.

Yet, justice was not the only tool used for correction: words played an important role in this endeavour. The words of God and the words of the King were to be considered as absolute. Claims and judgments had to be backed up by authorities and evidence in order to be accepted as a sound argument. The scope of authorities varies a lot from the Bible to classical studies and past history and was used extensively in multiple texts.

As has been previously highlighted, sexuality and especially female sexuality appeared problematic at the time. Considered as deviant, female sexual independence needed to be controlled and suppressed. A case study of the *Bannatyne Manuscript* may allow us to illustrate these concerns and dive more deeply into the issues caused by sexuality and sexual matters. Indeed, the use of satire can convey a corrective intent that writers may have harboured and a strong emphasis on such matters can be found in the *Manuscript*, either in the texts themselves or in Bannatyne's edition and organization of those documents.

"Unsex me here"[45]: Witchcraft and Feminine Power

Quoting Lady Macbeth and her famous abdication of her femininity will allow us to cast another perspective on the question of witchcraft. Indeed, there are two diametrically opposed stances that can be taken on the matter. On the one hand, as has been done in the previous part, witchcraft can be considered as a way to confine and exclude some members of the society, trying to correct their behaviours and force them to adopt a given morality and specific points of view.

Yet, there is another side to this same coin of witchcraft: it can be argued that for some, this set of atypical behaviours was actually a way for them to go against traditions and vouch for their own power and freedom in day-to-day life. Witchcraft and the necessities implied by witch-trials may have been used as a way to claim one's independence and power of agency. This different perspective enables to consider witches not as a uniform body of

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[45] William Shakespeare. "The Tragedy of Macbeth", *The Complete Works: Compact Edition*, p.980.

souls lost to Satan following blindly the directives given, but instead brings forth the unicity of their situations and the personal interests some may have had in being recognized as witches or in participating in the prosecutions, as opposed to the belief according to which they were working together to raise the Devil above God. It has also been argued that witchcraft was used as a formidable outlet for the fears, anxieties and even fantasies that they could not traditionally express. Drawing away from the quotidian events and tasks that had to be performed by anyone, this second section turns to a more sociological or even psychological approach of the matter, and tries to unpack the signification of the witches' representations… in the eyes of the same witches.

This research project thus deals with the issue of an apparently intractable subject. In troubled times, deeply influenced by its political and religious contexts, the perception of witches and women was ambivalent, as will be shown, and at the core of questions of power and authority.

Part I: The Mechanism of Inversion

As broached in the introduction, it is possible to observe oppositions in the structure of a system. For instance, within electronic devices, the electric current is bound to flow from a negative to a positive pole. The same can be said of languages, according to structuralism: each element of the system can only be defined through its relations with the other elements of the system, and oppositions are one of those possible relations. This structuralist approach of linguistic has consequently been used in other subjects such as literature or ethnology with Durkheim and Levi-Strauss. These theories relying on relations and oppositions can promptly be adapted to the period under study here. Indeed, Allison Coudert depicted dualism as "characterizing early modern thought"[46]:

> Early moderns linked a whole series of polar opposites like men and women, 'public/private, dominant/subordinate, aggressive/passive' and so on. Women, presumably because they weren't the ones devising the system, simply ended up on the wrong side of the divide.[47]

'Polar oppositions' thus laid the basis of Early Modern society in general. These oppositions may be narrowed down to two main sets: men/women and good/evil, to which other binary oppositions will be added to further build these primary oppositions. These two primary sets will be studied in turn. Our focus will first lay on the good/evil oppositions and the construction of *The Devil's "mundus inversus"*, before turning to the traditional dichotomy between genders and the feminine aspect of *The Threat of Witchcraft*.

1. The Devil's "*Mundus Inversus*"

As underlined in the introduction to this research project, the events and texts under study here belong in a social and cultural context that greatly differs from ours. It thus seems that these elements cannot be studied by comparing them to our modern outlook, but instead, there are several notions and ideas that must be taken into account. One of these would be the cosmology of the times. Allison Coudert highlighted the Early Modern propension to refer to dualities. However, this perspective did not appear then, but instead goes back to much older

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[46] Edward Bever. "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community", *Journal of Social History*, vol.35, no4, 2002, p.957.
[47] *Ibid*, p.957.

traditions and thinkers. The Ancient Greek exhibited a habit of thinking in antitheses, as to determine which occupation or quality would be the best.[48] Systems of classifications appeared and laid oppositions at the basis of such systems. Yet, there are different kinds of oppositions and they have been summarized by Aristotle in the *Categoriae* as follows: "Things are said to be opposed in four senses: (i) as correlatives to one another, (ii) as contraries to one another, (iii) as privatives to positives, (iv) as affirmatives to negatives."[49] This helped shape the minds of the Early Modern, especially given the Renaissance's renewal of interest in Antique culture and thought, along with other styles of associative thinking, such as the theory of correspondence.

These theories thus built a web of relations of correspondence and contraries, which would then structure modes of thinking and moral compasses. Stuart Clark recognizes that the "absolute primacy of religious values and the extent to which they encapsulated other values" necessarily coloured judgements and led to unequal valuations of the different terms.[50] He adds:

> The important consequence was that the reversing of an oppositional relationship invariably meant the inversion of it. Moreover, the universal habit of representing order as a combination of things 'high' with things 'low' meant that the extension of spatial imagery of opposition and inversion to non-spatial relationships was not (*pace* Needham) merely metaphorical; it was deemed to have the power of logical argument as well. Spatial imagery was, at the same time, rational proof.[51]

These spatial relations thus participated in the creation of hierarchy which would classify each element. In order to be intelligible, the world needed to be understood through the contrastive prism of oppositions, which gave a sense of order where each element would find its rightful place. Yet, this order could be unsettled: the world could be turned upside down, on multiple occasions. Carnivals, for instance, brought celebrations where inversions played an important role. It was a "symbolic disruption and subversion of authority; a turning upside down of the hierarchical scale (*e.g.* Feast of Fools, the Abbot of Misrule, the Boy Bishop)".[52] In times and

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[48] Stuart Clark. *Thinking with Demons*: *The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 35.

[49] Aristotle. *Collected Works*, E.M. Edghill (trans.), W.D. Ross (ed.), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910, p.33.

[50] Stuart Clark. *Thinking with Demons*, p.40.

[51] *Ibid*, p.40, quoting M.-L. Launay, '*Le Monde renversé san-dessus* dessous de Fra Giacomo Affinati D'Acuto : Le monde renversé du discours religieux', in Jean Lafond and Augustin Recondo (eds.), *Le monde renversé et ses représentations littéraires et para-littéraires de la fin du XVe Siècle au milieu du XVIIe,* Paris : Vrin, 1979, p.142.

[52] J.A. Cuddon. "carnivalization/carnivalesque", *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary History*, 5th ed., Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, p.104.

places where order was at the centre of the preoccupations of some, carnivals celebrated disorder, 'misrule', the transgression of common customs and traditions. Yet, even though these events went against the normal order, they are not to be equated to any form of chaos:

> Whatever the case, however, seasonal misrule was not simply a matter of riot or confusion, nor were its meanings casual or indiscriminate. It involved conventional styles of ritual and symbol associated with inversion – what Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* called 'uncivil rule'.[53]

Carnivalesque disorder was thus just as codified as other events. It belonged within a set of customs and was part of the same system it feigned to go against. This specificity is to keep in mind for the time when the theme of witchcraft itself will be tackled.

The Devil also has a place within this set order and hierarchy, and so does God. In his *Divine Comedy*, Dante narrates a journey through the realms of souls after death. Accompanied first by Virgil and then by his beloved Beatrice, the hero, Dante himself goes through Hell and the Purgatory before arriving in Paradise. Dante's cosmology is deeply rooted in the beliefs of the times, when neither the Americas nor Australia were known. It was believed that the world was separated into two hemispheres, one was occupied by lands – it would correspond to nowadays conception of the northern hemisphere – and another side completely flooded by waters, in an unnavigable immensity.[54]

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[53] Stuart Clark. *Thinking with Demons*, p.17.
[54] Marianna Lamberti. "Dante Alighieri's Cosmic Vision in the *Divine Comedy*: Earth, Universe, and God", in Kala Acharya, Ignacio Arellano, Mariana Iture, Prachi Pathak, Rudrashka Sakrikar (eds.) *The Cosmic Elements in Religion, Philosophy, Art and Literature*, Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2015, p.129.
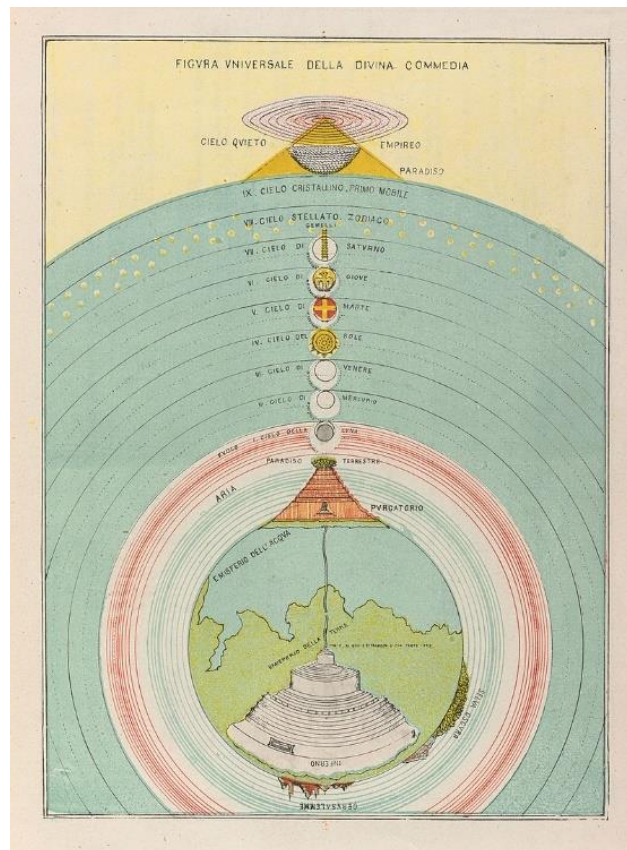
Michelangelo Caetani. *Figura Universale della Divina Commedia* in *La materia della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri dichiarata in VI tavole*, Montecassino: Monaci Benedettini di Montecassino, 1855. Accessible on: https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:3293735

In Caetani's representation, the land hemisphere can be seen on the bottom of the panel, with Jerusalem sitting on the extremity of the pole. Beneath the holy city stands Hell, a gigantic, empty, inverted cone composed of nine circles growing progressively smaller as the severity of the crime increases, reaching the centre of the globe. The idea of inversion can be perceived as a silver lining of Dante's cosmology. The Empyrean where can be found Paradise and the Garden of Eden is on the opposite side of the Earth, high above the water hemisphere and the planets of our solar system. In order to get there, Dante and Virgil had to descend into Hell before climbing the Mount Purgatory. Order and harmony were deep concerns, as it was believed that the material world should reflect the spiritual one. This attention to symmetry is obvious in Dante's cosmology and Caetani's rendition of it:

> The geometrical shapes of Hell and Purgatory – one a hollow void, the other a solid mass – are complementary. The cavity of the underworld roughly corresponds to the impression the mountain of Purgatory would make if it were inverted and plunged into the earth. These two

inversely proportional realms have the same origin. In addition to transferring land mass from one hemisphere to the other, Satan's fall displaced a quantity of earth from the interior of the globe. This quantity surfaced to form the island mountain of Purgatory.[55]

Hence, in Dante's vision of the world, the earth as it was known was such because of Satan's fall, and he resided in its deepest core. Lamberti shows that the Devil's condition entirely changed through their lapse: from the brightest angel ('Lucifer' coming from *lucem-ferens*, the one who bears the light), Satan lost his privileged position and was turned into "its opposite, a mass practically inert, awful, and thrown into the place farthest from God".[56] Being secluded in the depth of the world, one might think of the Devil as occupying and dominating the place, as if God had grouped together those who had 'betrayed' the trust that had been given: his favourite angel and those created in his image. Yet, this could not be further from Dante's cosmology: "from the perspective of the Purgatory and the Garden of Eden in the uncharted seas of the southern hemisphere, it becomes clear that Satan is in fact upside down".[57] This impression is only furthered in the Canto XXXIV of the Inferno, as Dante and Virgil leave Hell, only to see the Devil's legs sticking up. When they finally rise out of Hell, Satan is indeed upside down: as they passed the centre of the earth and emerged on the other side, the gravity had changed and thus the orientation of the different elements had changed as well.[58] It thus appears that the Devil and the representations of Satan relied heavily on the concepts of inversions and oppositions within a set order and hierarchy, on a spatial as well as on a spiritual level.

The Devil, figure of chaos and of corruption is thus set in an upside-down world, or "*mundus inversus*" to borrow the Latin expression. This primary polarity was at the basis of religious practices – which, by definition, implied a certain relation to the Devil: one of fear,

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[55] Alison Cornish. "Dante's Moral Cosmology", in Norriss S. Hetherington (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Cosmology: Historical, Philosophical, and Scientific Foundations of Modern Cosmology*, New York, London: Garland Publishing, 1993, p.143-144.

[56] Marianna Lamberti. "Dante Alighieri's Cosmic Vision in the *Divine Comedy*: Earth, Universe, and God", *The Cosmic Elements in Religion, Philosophy, Art and Literature*, p.130.

[57] Alison Cornish. "Dante's Moral Cosmology", *Encyclopedia of Cosmology: Historical, Philosophical, and Scientific Foundations of Modern Cosmology*, p.142.

[58] Virgil explains this phenomenon to Dante, as the poet is clueless as to what had happened (Inf. Xxxiv, 106-111):

> And he told me, "You picture yourself still
> On the other side of center where I caught
> The hair of the vile worm that pierced the earth.
>
> "You were there as long as I climbed downward.
> 110   When I turned myself round you passed the point
> To which all weight on every side pulls down.

James Fin Cotter (trans.), "Inferno, Canto xxxiv: Lucifer, Judecca", *Italian Studies*, Stony Brook University, 2006, http://www.italianstudies.org/comedy/Inferno34.htm.

rejection, and struggle. Knox summarized plainly this feeling: "In religioun thair is na middis: either it is the religioun of God… or els it is the religioun of the Divill".[59] There was indeed no middle ground when it came to faith, one could either follow the rules or decide to do away with them and pay the price later on. This concern was deeply tied to the Protestant Reformation and the evolution of the faith. We may turn back to Dante's cosmology to illustrate those changes, as their purposes were similar:

> Upon conceiving his epic poem, Dante's ultimate intention is a total regeneration of mankind, beset by Evil on two fronts: the individual, *i.e.*, sin, and the collective: a society that is poorly governed, both materially and spiritually, which fosters internal rivalries and wars, and that is not restrained by civil power (which for Dante should consist in the supreme authority of the Roman imperial system) or by religious authority, as the Church has been corrupted by worldly interests that have stripped it off its spiritual mission.[60]

The Reformation led by Calvin and Knox in Scotland slowly brought tremendous changes to the way people envisioned and practiced their faith. The process was not one swift swapping of a religion for another but took over a century of conflicts and changes before getting to the settlement of 1690 when the reformed Scottish Church settled as Presbyterian. In 1517, Luther nailed Ninety-Five Theses to the door of All Saints in Wittenberg (Germany). He strongly questioned the practice of indulgences, by which people could pay the Church to shorten the time spent in Purgatory and buy their way into heaven. The money thus collected would then depart for Rome and be used to rebuild St Peter's. The printing press played an important role in the spread of his ideas, and they were introduced in Scotland by Patrick Hamilton who was martyred at St Andrews in 1528.[61] John Knox joined the movement, and saw his first victory, when in 1560, the Scottish Parliament effectively rejected papal authority and outlawed the Mass for being a form of idolatry not present in the Scriptures – and thus should not be performed as it strays from God's absolute Word.[62] Yet, the Reformers did not want to create a New Church, their aim was to reform and strip the existing Church from its defects and what they deemed was improper ways of celebrating one's faith.

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[59] John Knox, *Works*, 6 vols, David Laing (ed.), Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1846-64, iv p.232.

[60] Marianna Lamberti. "Dante Alighieri's Cosmic Vision in the *Divine Comedy*: Earth, Universe, and God", *The Cosmic Elements in Religion, Philosophy, Art and Literature*, p.128.

[61] As a side-note, a commemorative cobblestone, referred to as the 'PH' was set in front of Saint Salvator's chapel where Patrick Hamilton was burnt. It has since then been appropriated by students and there is a specific tradition surrounding it: students are not to step on the PH, otherwise they are taking the risk of being cursed into failing their degrees. This curse can only be lifted by performing the May Dip: jumping into the sea at dawn on May 1st. This bit of tradition shows how important the reformation was, and what impact it did have over future generations, centuries later.

[62] See John Knox's "Vindication of the Doctrine that the Sacrifice of the Mass is Idolatry", 1550.

The Reformers laid a strong emphasis on three main items: "the sovereignty of God, double predestination and total human depravity".[63] God's sovereignty relied on the fact that in the end, his word was absolute. Beza believed firmly in the theory of double predestination, following which "God, 'according unto his eternal Predestination', shall 'adjudge [the reprobate] together with Satan unto eternal punishments, laying open in their just destruction, the glory of his great and most just hatred against evil'"[64] whereas those he approved of, the elected or the godly would not have to suffer in hell. Yet, it did not mean that they were exempt from sin and temptation, or that the Devil would never try to subdue them. They, like anyone else, had to fight against their inner sins, avoid committing them and listening to the Devil's voice. Though, "as Knox had averred, true godliness would require not only abnegation of sin, but also active combat against the sins of others".[65] The fight was thus "internal", to borrow Michelle Brock's phrasing: sin was always carried within one's heart, the result of the Fall of Man and human imperfection. It meant a constant struggle against oneself, one's desires and impulses. At the same time, this ongoing war was external: everyone's responsibility was to protect the community, to try and cultivate a godly society, devoid of sins and temptations. By relying on their reason and doing away with desires of the flesh, they would be able to earn their salvation.

This new take on the practice of religion effectively made the Devil appear much closer to the people than it used to be. Satan left the pulpits and religious treatises to become much more prevalent and present. If God was to be unattainable and in a complete state of remoteness from the believers, its opposite, the Devil was closer, more materialistic and human. While God could not be represented, as that would fall under the category of idolatry, the Devil appeared more readily in everyday life. This constant proximity of the Devil rendered him more dangerous and effective, hidden in broad daylight, as opposed to a presence lurking in mystical and spiritual shadows. According to Joyce Miller, "even in the Bible, the Devil could take several forms, mostly animal, although one had a human face": indeed, the Devil appears as a lion (I Peter, 5:8), as a calf, an eagle or a beast with a man's face in Revelation, and later on as a dragon or a "chimera-like [beast] (…) one with seven

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[63] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.19.
[64] *Ibid*, p.24. Here, Brock refers to : Theodore Beza, *Propositions and principles of diuinitie,* Edinburgh, 1591, p.22.
[65] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.37.

heads and ten horns, that had ten crowns on its horns".[66] Yet, as it appears in the *Survey of Scottish Witchcraft*, the Devil is referred to with more domestic and prosaic images:

> The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft recorded 392 references to a Devil, or non-natural being as it was categorised for the purposes of the database during the research period. Out of those 392 citations, 276 took human form. Of those, 250 were male and 26 were female. Individually, the Devil in male form was the most common by far; the second most frequent was in the form of an animal, which had 60 references. Next were those in the form of a female, then fairies, which accounted for 18 (nine male, six female and three non-specific gender). This was followed by the category of unidentified spirits, which were mentioned 17 times, then ghosts, which had five references. There were three mentions of inanimate objects including a ruck of hay and a wind, and on one occasion a whirlwind. Finally, appearances of the Devil in the form of an insect, a baby or child were all mentioned once, and were therefore statistically not really significant.[67]

Thus, a stark difference can be spotted between the representations of the Devil in the Bible and those that were made later on, especially when linked to witchcraft. Indeed, even though he appeared at times as an animal in the Bible, the animal used, apart from the calf, are mainly wild beasts or chimerical ones. On the other hand, the Early Modern Devil took primarily human forms, mostly male. The animals, as Miller points out, "were hardly grotesque. These included dogs, cats, birds, horses and foals, deer or stags, cows and calves, labs, rats and 'beasts', which had six mentions each".[68] There is thus a strong visual contrast regarding how the Devil was then envisioned: at times human, at others common animals that could easily be mistaken for those already present within a household.

Henceforth, the Early Modern concept of evil and of the Devil can be understood within a frame of oppositions and inversions. This way of structuring the world can be felt in multiple cosmologies which in turn shaped the way the Devil was perceived by the population. Social and cultural changes came with the Protestant Reformation. Reformers placed a stronger emphasis on human depravity and double predestination. Sin was a natural urge because of the people's fallen nature, a condition inherent to humanity that had to be fought on a daily basis within one's soul and flesh. The Devil was as much internal as it was external, as it was believed that Satan himself also tried to plague the godly and to corrupt them. The image of the Devil was repeatedly used in preachings, so that it became "a well-known figure to the educated and uneducated audiences alike".[69] This figure thus became

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[66] Joyce Miller, "Men in Black: Appearances of the Devil in Early Modern Scottish Witchcraft Discourse", in J. Goodare, L. Martin, J. Miller (eds.) *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 146.
[67] *Ibid*, p.148.
[68] *Ibid*, p.153-154.
[69] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.47.

inherently domestic and close to the people – a domesticity which characterized the threat caused by witchcraft.

2. The Threat of Witchcraft

When it comes to the study of witchcraft, a particularly controversial topic remains the role gender played in the prosecutions. It might thus be interesting to turn to the traditional representations of women and the place they held within Scottish society. First of all, women had a subordinate status within a patriarchal society.[70] For instance, they had very few legal powers: they had no status in court and stood on the same level as children and convicted felons.[71] This created a distinctive division between two different spheres: one was public and the other domestic. The public sphere, concerned with politics or legal matters, is where men evolved. Women, on the other hand, were in charge of the domestic sphere and the different responsibilities that it implied, such as motherhood or childbirth and managing the household effectively. Collective representations and traditions created certain patterns of behavioural expectations. Men and women alike, all over the social class ladder thus had to play a role carefully carved out by the society as a whole. This idea of performativity has been coined by John McGavin under the term "theatricality": to him, theatricality is not only concerned with on-stage performances, but an important part of everyday and social life. According to him, theatricality corresponds to

> the ways in which humans publicly perform their own individual and group identities, witness and respond to such performances from others, and endeavour to create performances which will affect the identity of others. This is the realm of social performativity, and it covers not just identity (…) but all those areas of social interaction, from gender to geography, and self to sales, through which societies seek to manage themselves.[72]

What it supposes is that there is always a form of dramaturgy and spectatorship in social contacts.[73] Social constructs and preconceptions — by the way of collective representations

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[70] Sandy Bardsley. *Women's Roles in the Middle Ages (Women's Roles through History)*, London: Greenwood Press, 2007, p.1.
[71] Lawrence Normand. *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's* Demonology *and the North Berwick Witches*, Lawrence Normand ; Gareth Roberts (eds.), Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000, p.60.
[72] John McGavin. *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval Early Modern Scotland*, Aldershot ; Burlington : Ashgate, 2007, p.15.
[73] This is what Freund will call a "dramaturgical society", that is to say a "manipulation of appearances" in "an important skill and highly complex and self-conscious act", as quoted by McGavin from Freund's *Emotions in Social Life* (p.280) in *Theatricality and Narrative in Medieval Early Modern Scotland*, p.16.

— shape the way people feel they are supposed to act. In the Middle Ages, for instance, nobles and peasants had to observe certain codes of conduct, know their place and act according to their rank. To this effect, after the Black Death ravaged Europe, sumptuary laws were enacted to make sure that class distinctions remained clearly defined. The economic crisis it provoked made it so that some peasants were able to acquire more wealth, sometimes even more than the nobility. Sumptuary laws controlled everyone's display of wealth, especially when it came to fine fabrics and clothing peasants were forbidden to wear.

This notion of theatricality is thus deeply linked to the seeing eye: as actors perform for an audience, men and women also performed for an audience, which this time encompassed the society as a whole. This theatricality thus pressured people into acting in certain ways. Yet, women were at a disadvantage when it came to fight off judgements and accusations. It is tied to an important concern of the time: reputation. Even though men and women alike had to protect their reputations, "men generally had access to a wider range of social action to create and protect their reputations — including physical violence, recourse to law, and economic or social power — and in any case were less dependent than women on sexual behaviour for their reputation".[74] Women were highly dependent on their reputations, and one who had sexual relations out of wedlock would run the risk of being 'ruined' as it was called, and severely compromise any chance of marriage later on. However, it may engender other, stronger implications, and there may be only a small step for a bad reputation to turn into a witchcraft accusation.

2.1 Satan and Witches

In an inverted world, where the Devil is king and God, witches would hold the position of bishops. Their subversive power threatened many traditional institutions and "in other words, represented disharmony, imbalance and chaos in people's everyday existence".[75] Witches, by following and obeying the Devil into acting in subversive ways thus tipped the balance, went against several traditional expectations and social conventions. Witches were social and religious dissidents. The religious context of Reformed Protestantism and the earnest desire to

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[74] Sandy Bardsley. *Women's Roles in the Middle Ages*, p.61.
[75] Lizanne Henderson, "'Detestable Slaves of the Devil': Changing Ideas about Witchcraft in Sixteenth-Century Scotland", in Edward Cowan; Lizanne Henderson (eds.) *A History of Everyday Life In Medieval Scotland, 1000 to 1600*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011, p.227.

create a godly society led to a global intolerance for those who strayed away from God's path.[76]

Before studying witchcraft *per se*, it seems fitting to look at its demographics – and thus justify this stronger emphasis on women than men. Over the period between the mid-sixteenth century to the early eighteenth, there were 394 accusations, of which 84% of the prosecuted were women. The following graph is borrowed from the *Scottish Witchcraft Survey* and shows the difference in number between female (red) and male (blue) witches:
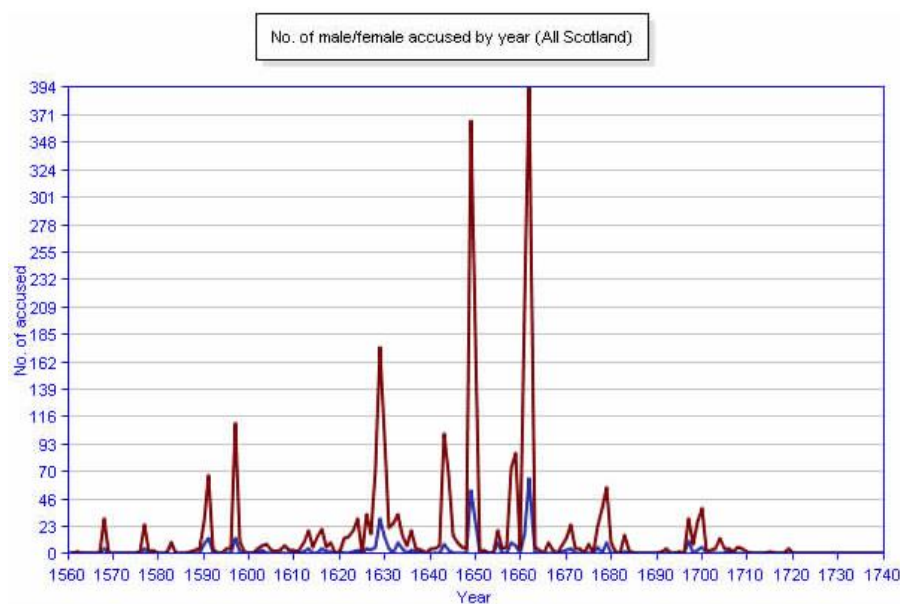
University of Edinburgh. "Number of male/female accused by year (All Scotland)." *Survey of Scottish Witchcraft Database*, Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman, University of Edinburgh, 2003, http://witches.shca.ed.ac.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.graph4

The number of women prosecuted is thus significantly more important than the one of men who underwent the same treatment. Yet, it does not negate their existence: men could also be prosecuted for witchcraft.

Multiple reasons were given by demonologists as to why women may have been more easily subverted by the Devil than men, however most of them boil down to what was considered as women's natural inferiority. The Bible explains the creation of man and woman as follows: Adam was made perfect, in God's image. Eve, on the other hand, was made from

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[76] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.150.

Adam's bent rib, and thus the product of an imperfection. Moreover, she was the one who was first deceived by the Devil and ultimately led to the Fall of Man. This link to the Devil and association has since become a motif in literature and some social institutions (by the way of collective representations). For instance, it might be possible to turn to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which Eve and Satan are more similar than one might expect, as we shall see later on. The *Malleus Maleficarum* ('Hammer of Witches') was first published in 1486 and was printed throughout the Early Modern period and came to be recognized as an authoritative text in the field of demonology. As in *Daemonologie*, Jacobus Sprenger and Henricus Institoris aim first to demonstrate the existence of witchcraft and the threat it poses, second, "provide sufferers from witchcraft with a broad range of remedies, both legal and spiritual, of proven effectiveness", and finally, to help civil and religious authorities in their witch-hunts and how the prosecutions should be performed.[77] This text is notorious for the insight it gives into witchcraft belief, it is, indeed, one of the first major documents of the sort. Yet, there is another reason for which the *Malleus* is known for: the way in which women are portrayed. In the introduction to his translation of the treaty, Christopher McKay gives one explanation as to how the *Malleus* came to be "clearly permeated with a hostile and negative view of women as a whole": in both the Old and the New Testaments, women have often been depicted in a negative light, and this view spread along with Christian thought.[78] The *Malleus*, thus, gives several explanations for women's propensity to dally with the Devil: (1) women easily believe others and thus are easy targets for Satan's attempts to corrupt their faith, (2) women are more likely to be impressed by disembodied spirits, (3) women have "loose tongues and can hardly conceal from their female companions the things they know through evil art, and since they lack physical strength, they readily seek to avenge themselves secretly though acts of sorcery", (4) women are inferior to men because of their bodily functions, (5) etymologically speaking, the Latin for 'woman', '*femina*', is composed of '*fe*' ('faith') and '*minus*' ('less') : women thus have a weaker faith than men and can easily be corrupted.[79] According to James VI's *Daemonologie*, "where the Devil finds greatest ignorance and barbarity, there assails the most grossly", which is why there were more female than male witches.[80] Edward Bever gives other reasons for which women may have been more attracted to witchcraft than men,

[77] Hans Peter Broedel, *The* Malleus Maleficarum *and the Construction of Witchcraft : Theology and Popular Belief,* Manchester ; New York : Manchester University Press, 2003, p.3-4.
[78] Christopher, McKay. *The Hammer of Witches : a Complete Translation of the* Malleus Maleficarum, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2009, p.26.
[79] *Ibid*, p.164-165.
[80] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.165.

using a more biological perspective. [81] Bever begins by considering the age of witches prosecuted, and especially the case of elderly women. According to him, "elderly women were beset by socioeconomic problems like poverty and marginality and frustrated by sociocultural restrictions like limited legal rights and restricted outlets for sexuality". [82] He furthers his argument by adding that the adjustments induced by menopause often led to irritability, aggressiveness, or other instances of disruptive behaviours. He also raises the role hormones may have played in reactions: testosterone can induce aggression, whereas oestrogen promotes calmness and composure. [83] The influence of those hormones can be felt in the way both gender react:

> Across cultures, males are more likely than females to use direct physical aggression; the two genders tend to be roughly equal in their propensity toward verbal aggression; and females are more likely than males to use indirect aggression: spreading gossip, manipulating surrogates, and other forms of covert attacks. When women do commit acts of direct aggression, like murder, they tend to use surreptitious means that minimise the actual violence, like poison or battery against a sleeping foe, although when they have power and think they are unobserved (as when they care for children and aged people) they are less reticent about resorting to direct physical violence. [84]

Yet, theatricality and the internalization of expected and appropriate behaviours may be at the root of such attitudes as well: unable to resort to heavy violence or wield a weapon such as a sword, they may have been more inclined to use devious means at their advantage.

Women thus appeared more vulnerable when Satan decided to attack them. A demonic pact had to be taken between women and the Devil and was "central to the accusation and conviction of many Scottish witches". [85] This pact followed a specific ritual: first came the soon-to-be witch's renunciation of Christian baptism, then both Satan and the witch entered a contract that would be sealed through a sexual intercourse which would leave a mark, that would be used as an irrefutable evidence of witchcraft. Michelle Brock recognizes in this ritual an inversion of other traditions:

> This pact with Satan represented the inversion of two related and common practices in early modern Scotland: banding and covenanting. Bands, usually made by men as oaths of fidelity or friendships, had a long history in Scotland. Covenants, to simplify a complex legal and

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[81] Edward Bever. "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community", *Journal of Social History*, p.967.

[82] *Ibid*, p.967.

[83] *Ibid*, p.969.

[84] *Ibid*, p.968.

[85] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.152.

theological term, were religious, and often political, manifestations of this process of banding. (…) Sometimes authorities described the pact with the Devil as a covenant in wicked reverse, as in the 1650 case of Archibald Watt, who was accused of 'making covenants with the devil' and having attended 'many meetings since his covenant with the devil'. Thus the pact with Satan that lay at the heart of Scottish witchcraft belief was both an affirmation and an inversion of a familiar practice in early modern Scotland.[86]

Other than the demonic pact, there is yet another ritual typical of witchcraft: the emblematic witch's Sabbath. There are at least two different conceptions of Sabbaths' celebrations: Continental and Scottish. The Continental representation of the Sabbath includes orgies, naked dancing, cannibalism… in an extreme night of revelling and worshiping of the Devil.[87] This type of Sabbath has been extensively represented in medieval art. For instance, Hans Baldung Grien represented three witches engaged in wild celebrations of the Devil. The
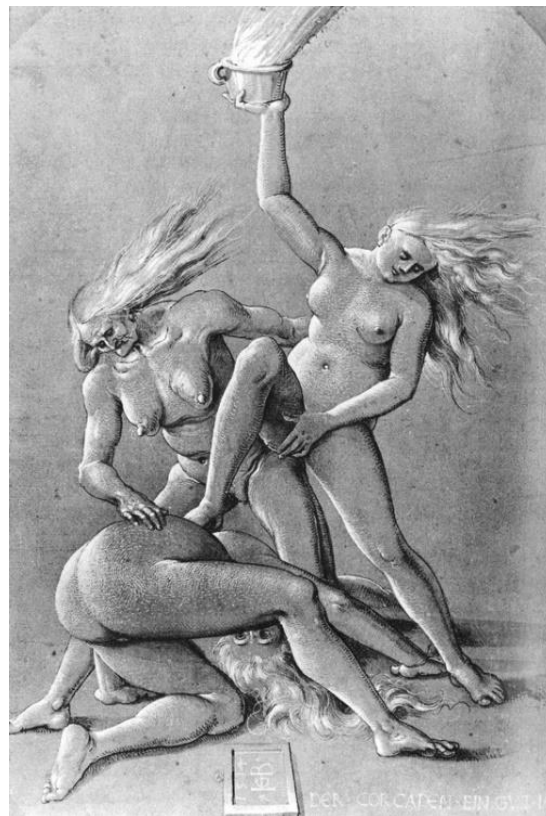
Hans Baldung Grien. *Three Witches*. Drawing, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna, 1514.

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[86] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.152.
[87] Julian Goodare ; Lauren Martin ; Joyce Miller. *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, Basingstoke : Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, p.41.

witches are naked and "two of the bodies are young and meant to be alluring to men", especially given how they are positioned.[88] There is an impression of dynamism that spreads from the drawing, brought by the sway of their hair worn down and by the contents of the jar held high over one of the witch's head. It is thus easy to picture them as revelling wildly in the night, dancing as if they were in a trance. In his analysis of the drawing, Stuart Clark focuses on the witch at the bottom of the picture who is on her knees and whose gaze can be caught as she stares at the world through the space between her legs. He argues that this position and the possible interaction with the spectator symbolize witchcraft. Indeed, there was a German proverb according to which "those who adopted the pose would be sure to catch sight of the devil".[89] By bending over and watching in this position, the witch's vision of the world is turned upside-down, as is typical of witchcraft. Yet, Clark raises another interesting point: according to him, the fact that the bottom witch is staring directly at the spectator creates a connection and thus links the world of witchcraft and the 'regular' one: "if all three witches were as inwardly preoccupied as two of them undoubtedly are – this would suggest that their world was independent from ours and that its meanings were autonomous".[90] This possible exchange between two diametrically opposed worlds creates the condition necessary to stop, ponder, and "*interpret* the sabbat". [91] Thus, in Baldung's representation of these three witches, witchcraft is once more concerned with inversions.

Yet, as mentioned briefly earlier, Scottish sabbaths had few things in common with their Continental counterpart. In 1611, Sir Thomas Hamilton explained that witches might typically be "tane in the actual fact of witchcraft or incantation, or in any kirkyard raising deid bodies and cutting af thair joyntis, or dansing in any desert kirk at midnight".[92] Revelling with the Devil and performing rituals and incantations were thus two ways in which both Scottish and Continental witches celebrated their Sabbaths. However, the exhumation of corpses for magical purposes was a specificity to Scotland. These bodies could be either raised back from the dead by witches who dabbled in necromancy, a form of magical tradition which was "prominent in sixteenth century Scotland".[93] Corpses could also be dismembered, disjointed, and those parts used in the confection of magical potions or involved in performing certain

[88] Stuart Clark. *Thinking with Demons*: *The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, p.11.
[89] Stuart Clark. *Thinking with Demons*: *The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, p.13.
[90] *Ibid*, p.13.
[91] *Ibid*, p.13.
[92] Julian Goodare ; Lauren Martin ; Joyce Miller. *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, p.40.
[93] *Ibid*, p.41.

magical rituals. In 1590, witches gathered at the North Berwick Kirk on Halloween night.[94] There, they drank and danced to the tune of "a Jew's harp played by Gilly Duncan" outside the church before entering it and meeting their master.[95] The Devil was standing in the pulpit, dressed in black from head to toe, and the church was full of burning black candles. One might add that, "in Melville's *Memoirs* he is described as terrible in appearance, with a nose like the beak of an eagle, great burning eyes, hairy hands and legs, with claws upon his hands and feet like those of a griffon".[96] After having heard the evil deeds the witches had performed in Satan's name, they began plotting against King James' life:

> They discussed their efforts to bewitch a wax image of King James to bring about his death. The Devil instructed them to dig up four corpses, two outside the church in the graveyard and two that had been buried inside the building in vaults. From the corpses they removed the joints of the fingers, toes, and knees, and divided the parts up between them. The Devil told them to let the joints dry, then powder them and use the powder in works of evil magic. At one point during the evening they all kissed the Devil's bared buttocks as a homage to him.[97]

As in Hans Baldung Grien's representation, inversions are at the heart of this gruesome account. One might first consider the setting in which this North Berwick Sabbath took place: the holy ground of a church, even though the events that happened there were far from holiness. Churches are the place where believers are closer to their faith, a place where they can meet religious officers who can offer advice and redemption. On this instance, the 'house of God' has been invaded by what was considered heretics. The Devil officiated the sabbath from the pulpit, standing on the same spot as ministers while officiating. Moreover, whereas sermons were usually aimed at teaching the believers how to better their faith and showing how the Scriptures can be applied in day to day life, the Devil cared for the ways in which evil had been performed and how they could get rid of the King, the traditional representative of God's will. Similarly, even though Reformed Protestants do not believe in transubstantiation, they do share bread and wine, as a symbol of Christ's resurrection, only it is not called Eucharist but Lord's Supper. Here, in this account, they share symbols of death, body parts from corpses that will be used to bring about evil and death. This inversion of traditions goes as far as associating Lord's Supper and kissing the Devil on his bare buttocks, as if mocking God. The exhumation of bodies buried on sanctified grounds furthers the

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[94] The following account of a sabbath is taken from James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.17-18.
[95] *Ibid*, p.17
[96] *Ibid, p*.17.
[97] *Ibid*, p.17-18.

corruption the Devil was trying to spread. Only believers who had performed certain religious rituals, such as baptism, could be inhumated in hallowed grounds, which would in turn protect them and their souls in afterlife. The corpses chosen came from multiple origins: commoners buried outside, and religious dignitaries or nobility whose tombs were located inside the building. Distinctions of class are erased, strength of faith and divine protection forgotten.

Thus, the Devil appears intrinsically linked to witchcraft, the master of 'detestable slaves of evil', to borrow King James' phrasing.[98] These 'slaves' were mainly women: some might argue that it was due to their natural fallen nature, imperfection and deviousness, while others raise the issue of biology, socioeconomic situations, or learnt behaviours. There were several rituals that had to be performed by witches, the two main ones being the demonic pact and sabbaths. Both fit in the mechanism of inversion discussed here: these rituals mirror others, more traditional ones, such as banding and covenanting or religious sacraments.

2.2 Witchcraft in Action

Now that the links between the Devil, women and witches has been explored, it seems fitting to turn to how witches actually had an impact on their society and to what extent they were considered harmful. Scholars and demonologists attempted to classify acts of witchcrafts following different types, using mainly a dual classification.

In *Daemonologie*, King James VI explains that witches' evil deeds can be divided into two categories: they could either use witchcraft for their own personal purposes or use it towards others.[99] According to him, they acted either out of greed, of a desire of revenge, or simply to hurt others and bring misery. He gives several examples of the different acts they could perform: cure or cast diseases using poison, spells or wax effigies, make members of their community love or hate each other, bewitch people and take their lives, raise storms and tempests upon sea or land, bring a victim to madness, command spirits to haunt houses and trouble its inhabitants, and even to possess them.[100] Michelle Brock argues that accusations "generally consisted of two elements: *maleficium*, meaning harmful magic, and diabolism, the assertion that witches worshipped the Devil in a variety of ways".[101] These two different kinds of concerns can directly be ascribed to the social class of the people concerned: ordinary Scots cared more about their personal health and their families' and their crops, while the elite

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[98] *Ibid*,p.45.
[99] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.115.
[100] *Ibid*, p.128-130.
[101] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.162.

thought more in terms of theology and religious harm.[102] It can be argued that this category of *maleficia* can be furthered down into two kinds of damages, either related to the body, or to one's financial situation.

When it comes to health, witchcraft could be used to cure as easily as it could be used to cast. For instance, in 1650, Marione Corsan confessed to having cured one of her neighbours by having her lay in a newly dug grave and cutting her belt in nine pieces. However, they later had a falling out and the illness returned, raising suspicions on Corsan which would ultimately lead to her execution.[103] The relation between Scottish folk-healing and witchcraft is a complicated one. Charmers and folk-healers had traditionally been exercising their art and medicine to cure many different ailing, a "highly necessary service in communities devoid of alternative medical assistances".[104] The origins of their knowledge could hardly be asserted with certainty: some attributed their powers to spirits, others to faeries which were important figures in traditional folk tales and beliefs, or to their ancestors who transmitted their knowledge orally. The 1563 Witchcraft Act condemned any form of magic and sorcery, including these traditions, which endangered folk-healers, even though it seems that the confusion was "more pronounced among the learned and the literate classes than among the folk at large who may have had a much clearer idea of the distinctions".[105] Poison and direct physical aggressions were also common occurrences, as were the different methods they used to help women during their pregnancies, ranging from reducing labour pains to terminating those pregnancies. These instances of physical harm often came as retaliation for a perceived slight in neighbourhood disputes, and thus fall under James VI's "revenge" classification.

These revenges could also take a more financial turn. For instance, Elspeth Cuninghame went to an alehouse in 1651, but she was refused her pint. She thus decided to destroy all of their ale in a manifestation of her displeasure.[106] However, the most common form of attack on another's property and means of income was attacking their cattle and crops. Julian Goodare explains how Scottish peasants were especially afraid of witches using their abilities to modify the weather and raise storms in order to destroy all of their crops, but it seems it never really happened: witches tended to focus on a particular person instead of the

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[102] *Ibid*, p.162.

[103] Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman, "Marione Corsan (20/7/1659)", *The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft Database* , http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/witches/, 2003.

[104] Lizanne Henderson, " 'Detestable Slaves of the Devil': Changing Ideas about Witchcraft in Sixteenth-Century Scotland", *A History of Everyday Life In Medieval Scotland, 1000 to 1600*, p.238.

[105] *Ibid,* p.239.

[106] Julian Goodare, Lauren Martin, Joyce Miller and Louise Yeoman, "Elspeth Cuninghame (30/3/1659)", *The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft Database* , http://www.shca.ed.ac.uk/witches/, 2003.

whole community as they all depended on the success of those crops to assure their subsistence.[107] On the other hand, harming a particular farm's animals could turn into a devastating economic blow for families who could only afford few animals.[108]

In his study, Edward Bever questions how malevolent intents could translate into actual diseases. He argues that psychological distress played a crucial role and may have contributed to the contraction of some illnesses, psychological distress which have may been reinforced by stress factors, such as interpersonal conflicts, though it seems relevant to add that financial distress brought by witchcraft also brought its share of stress.[109] There are multiple dermatological afflictions that can be exacerbated by stress, such as eczema or psoriasis, and it seems plausible to suppose that the apparition of such rashes after having been cursed by a witch may be all the proof they needed. Bever argues that

> [a]ny negative feelings that are strong enough – fear, anxiety, anger, depression, despondency, resentment or frustration – will do.
> The key words here are "strong enough," for this would seem to be the source of malevolent power in many witchcraft cases. Deliberately or inadvertently, it appeared that a threshold had been crossed when interpersonal antipathy burst forth in physiological symptoms. (…) The effect of salves and poisons, like many other somatic disorders, probably involved a complex interplay between physiology, psychology, and cultural expectations.[110]

Indeed, the threat of witchcraft is deeply tied to negative feelings, and especially fear. As emphasized by Joyce Miller, "the Devil was more effective disguised in domesticity than in disgust".[111] Witches being mainly women, and women being traditionally in charge of domestic matters, the threat was made even more salient. This might explain why witches' attributes came to be mainly those that could be found in households of the times: cauldrons, brooms… Cats were used on multiple occasions for their rituals: for instance, Agnes Sampson was accused in 1591 of having thrown a cat into the sea in order to sink a ship.[112]

Witches were thus represented as dangerous and threatening persons, who attacked at the heart of the household, either by direct physical aggression and attacks on one's health through poison or diseases, or by creating the conditions necessary for financial distress,

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[107] Julian Goodare ; Lauren Martin ; Joyce Miller. *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, p.29.
[108] Edward Bever. "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community", *Journal of Social History*, p.961.
[109] Edward Bever. "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community", *Journal of Social History*, p.963.
[110] *Ibid*, p.964.
[111] Joyce Miller, "Men in Black : Appearances of the Devil in Early Modern Scottish Witchcraft Discourse", *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*, p.154.
[112] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.132.

destroying their means of income by injuring their crops, cattle, or businesses. There is yet another main aspect that appears prevalent in the representations of witches and of the devil: the witches' supposedly unbridled sexuality and ability to meddle in any sexual matter.

2.3 Sex and Witches

The Devil was considered a deeply sexual being. James VI highlights the existence of sexual intercourses between humans and spirits, the "old incubi and succubi". The Devil could also appear as a spirit who stole the sperm of dead bodies, or as borrowing said corpses to abuse men and women alike, of all horizons. Indeed, a monastery of nuns was burnt after having been abused by such spirits.[113] However, these sexual relations were not only the result of abuse: some witches declared having willingly partaken in intercourses with the Devil. As was seen with Hans Baldung Grien's drawing (p.13), the sexual aspect of witchcraft has often been pointed out more specifically, by artists, preachers or demonologists, to the point where sexual deviance became inherent to the representation of witches. Before diving into the theoretical background of this focus, it might be interesting to first observe the different ways in which this sexuality was manifested.

To begin with, witches were sexually connected to the Devil: the pact they had to perform was concluded by a sexual intercourse with Satan, intercourses which might be reiterated on other occasions. For instance, Isobel Gowdie confessed to having had carnal relations with Satan:

> Isobel Gowdie characterized Satan as a 'meikle black roch man' with a very large and cold 'nature'. Gowdie went so far as to aver that certain young women had 'veerie great pleasure in their carnall cowpulation with him, yea much mor than with their awin husbandis'.[114]

This emphasis on carnal relations with the Devil can also be reflected through the point that was made during the prosecutions to find the Devil's, or witch's, mark. This mark could appear anywhere on the body and was the result of the finalization of the pact (ie. the intercourse with Satan). Yet, they looked more closely at the genital region to find it, instead of, as suggested by Stephanie Irene Spoto, searching for such marks on hands which gathered

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[113] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.163-166.
[114] *Ancient Criminal Trials in* Scotland, ed. Pitcairn, iii.602-15 in Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.158.
"Nature" was often used as a way to refer to penises.

herbs and materials for their brews, or around the mouth which uttered blasphemies and curses.[115] The focus on this location can suggest that these marks were in fact associated to the manifestation of sexually transmitted diseases, such as the syphilis or genital warts. Fornication and adultery were also considered as sins and crimes to be punished.

Witches were also accused of performing multiple kinds of "love-magic", that is to say, magic which had an influence over sexual relations or marital affairs. People could come and consult them, seeking charms and brews that might provoke love or passion. As they were related to folk healers, women often consulted witches regarding their pregnancies, either to terminate an unwanted one, or to facilitate childbirth, for instance. Effie McCalyan sought the help of an infamous witch, Agnes Sampson, to reduce her labour pains. Starting ten days before McCalyan gave birth, Samspon sprinkled a powder made of the pulverized joints from corpses, or 'mwildis' under the expecting woman's bed.[116] This use of dead remains to provide for life may be perceived as yet another instance of inversion. If these instances of witchcraft acts may be considered as ultimately harmless and done with good intentions, they remained nonetheless illegal and needed to be punished as the doing of the Devil. Yet, witches did not only have a positive influence over such matters: in the preface to *Daemonologie,* James VI deplores their ability to "[weaken] the nature of some men to make them unable for women", that is to say make physical intercourses impossible.[117] This emphasis on male impotency was especially strong in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, as Donald Tyson shows it:

> The *Malleus Maleficarum* lists five ways that a man may be rendered unable to copulate by the Devil, enumerated by Peter of Palude: first, by physically preventing a man from approaching a woman; second, by freezing his desire with 'secret things of which he best knows the power;' third, by making the woman appear loathsome; fourth, by directly preventing erection of the penis; fifth, by preventing the emission of semen ([Heinrich, Kramer and James, Sprenger. *The Malleus Maleficarum* [1486]. Montague Summers (ed.), New York: Dover Publications, 1971, p.55]). Witches were also supposed to have the power to take away the male genitals entirely so that only a smooth patch of skin remained between the legs, though it is argued in the *Malleus Maleficarum* that this is only a type of glamour (ibid., page 58).[118]

To sum up, there are multiples reasons related to sexuality for which witches were prosecuted: laying with the Devil, adultery, fornication, sexual diseases, as well as practicing midwifery

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[115] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, University Park: Penn State University Press on behalf of the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PMLA), 2010, p.59.
[116] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.132-133.
[117] *Ibid*, p.46.
[118] *Ibid*, p.50.

or *maleficia* directly aimed at preventing sexual intercourses and/or procreation, as they could also 'bewitch' members of their community to "increase of diminish sexual passion and marital affection, or to cause sexual dysfunction, sterility or abortion".[119]

When it comes to the gender of the persons prosecuted for sexual crimes, it appears that in Scotland, justices could be considered as "gender-blind": men and women alike could be prosecuted for adultery or fornication, as both could fall for the Devil's temptations and their inherent sinfulness, so that "the gender of the accused does not appear to have substantially influenced the punishment received".[120] However, it can also be argued that the general opinion that was held of women regarding sexuality and temptation, as indeed, they were considered inherent temptresses since Eve's encounter with Satan, may have directed the blame first and foremost towards the female part of the population. Levack coined this reaction as a "deep male fear of the sexually experienced, sexually independent woman".[121] He argues that up to the eighteenth century, "the image of women as the more carnal and sexually indulgent members of the species was pervasive in medieval and Early Modern culture", when these representations changed for a more passive role.[122] Broedel corroborates this claim, and adds that witchcraft can in fact be considered as the "expression of female sexuality": women being more carnal than men, if their sexual needs were not met, they might turn to the Devil and witchcraft as a way to palliate to their sexual dissatisfaction.[123] This entails another form of inversion: by acting on their lust and sexual urges and bringing men and women to commit sexual crimes (adultery, fornication, homosexuality), they were threatening the set order of society, as "such men then allowed themselves to be dominated by women" when indulging in those carnal relations.[124] Unbridled female sexuality thus became a very real threat against the 'natural' order dictated by God, and the fight against witchcraft a way to control those urges and suppress female sexual independence:

> In this new conceptual field, disordered sexuality is identified with the devil, inverted gender roles and sexual dysfunction with witchcraft, and defective social and political hierarchies with women and women's sins. None of this, however, is possible without the use of witches and

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[119] Hans Peter Broedel. *The* Malleus Maleficarum *and the Construction of Witchcraft*, p.173.
[120] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.135, 148. Here, Brock cites Michael Graham, "Women and the Church Courts in Reformation-Era Scotland", in *Women in Scotland, c.1100-c.1700*, E. Ewan and M.Meikle (eds.), East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999, p.195-196.
[121] Brian Levack. *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (3rd ed), Harlow : Pearson Longman, 2006, p.152.
[122] *Ibid*, p.145.
[123] Hans Peter Broedel. *The* Malleus Maleficarum *and the Construction of Witchcraft*, p.177-179.
[124] *Ibid*, p.178.

witchcraft as an ordering term; witchcraft, as it were, provides the conceptual grid which binds this cognitive map together.[125]

It is useful to now consider the apocalyptic thought that was on the rise at the times. Scots believed that the growing influence of the Devil and urgent and ongoing fight against sinfulness could only result of the "coming of the End Times".[126] Apocalyptic thought was spread all over Europe, and Knox adhered to these ideas and for him "the Apocalypse was nigh, and the cosmic struggle between God's servants, and those of Satan was coming to a head, fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament".[127] In this context of apocalyptic thought, the prevalence of sexual deviance is bound to have reminded some of Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities that were obliterated in fire for sexual crimes.[128] Thus, female sexuality that did not abide by the general rule was perceived as inherently wrong, rebellious, and a sin which may bring about tempests of fire and divine wrath on Earth as a punishment which would strike without differentiating between sinners or godly.

This chapter has thus been concerned with inversions and how they structured the beliefs surrounding the Devil and witchcraft. The cosmogony of the times was tackled first, cosmogony according to which Satan was the direct opposite of God, in a system where inversions were admitted, and at times indulged (for instance in the events of carnivals). The Devil belonged within a *mundus inversus*, or world upside-down. This core inversion can be felt in the ways in which witches interacted with the Devil, for instance during sabbaths, when common practices were reversed to cater to the Devil.

The Reformation brought about many changes in the way faith was practiced, and even greater changes in the way the Devil and sin were perceived. It placed a strong emphasis on the Devil's threatening and insidious nature: sin was internal and inherent to human condition, and people had to fight against it, control their urges, thoughts and temptations, as to not give into the Devil and provoke the End of Times. The struggle was thus both cosmic (the Devil trying to overturn God's plans) and deeply domestic, as it was everyone's responsibility to create a godly society and fight for their election and place by God's side.

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[125] *Ibid*, p.179.
[126] Michelle Brock. *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland*, p.40.
[127] *Ibid*, p.41.
[128] The Biblical account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah can be found on Genesis (18-19). The cities were destroyed because their inhabitants took part in homosexual relations and attempted to force themselves on two men under the protection of Lot's roof, unawares that they were in fact angels. Later, Jude:7 declares that: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

This domestic fight may have found its stronger expression in witchcraft whose threat spread all over Europe and had drastic consequences in Scotland. The domestic quality of witchcraft resulted in waves of accusations and prosecutions which targeted women more strongly than it did men. There are multiple explanations to this: women were considered as naturally inferior and barbarians, thus closer to the Devil and unable to fight off temptations as efficiently as men did. Other explanations can be given for the high ratio of convicted female witches: on the one hand, biology may explain irritability and aggressiveness, while, on the other hand, socioeconomic reasons can justify how some women resorted to devious means such as poison or curses to defend themselves in places where physical and legal retaliation were not within their reach. Witchcraft was thus deeply set in a context of inversions: those inherent to the Devil, as well as those brought about by female rebellion against an order in which they were secluded.

These inversions manifested themselves in the necessary demonic pact to become a full-fledged witch approved of by Satan, as well as in sabbaths for instance. Witches brought chaos within the community, using *maleficia* to take revenge on their neighbours or earn more riches. Their misdeeds included direct physical aggression and curses aimed at a specific person, as well as cursing a whole household and bring about economic distress. Folk healers who were previously held in respect then became victims of witch-hunts, when their knowledge could then only be explained by the Devil's doing.

Female sexuality was also considered as deeply problematic and sexual deviance became the apanage of witches: they revelled in lust and enjoyed intercourses with the Devil, could control attraction, fertility and male impotency. This emphasis on female sexuality can be tied to a fear of gender inversion, in which, women who took control of their sexuality took in turn control of men, thus inversing the hierarchy. In a context where apocalyptic thought became more prevalent, the impact of witchcraft, its link to the Devil and deviant sexuality, witches and unbridled sexuality needed to be repressed and fought against, to prevent the Devil from overturning the world order. Witchcraft and women were thus faced with a "rod of correction" which aimed at correcting their wrong and assert the natural order of domination, as shall be seen in the following chapter.

Part II: "The Rod of Correction": Representations and Domination

As outlined in the introduction to this research project, the image of the rod carries multiple meanings and nuances. When combined to the idea of "correction", the rod evokes a certain violence, reminding of the stick used in beatings and punishments when one disobeyed, for instance. Disobedience, the corruption of the natural order and hierarchy was a source of concern for the authorities: rebellions must be crushed, and corruption eradicated for one to be able to rule. Witchcraft, as has been demonstrated, was considered as the embodiment of chaos, disobedience and rebellious intents. Correcting witchcraft was a way of ensuring public order by weeding out rebels and trouble-makers. However, the corrective intent behind this crusade against the Devil and witches may have been directed to a bigger public than just the witches, and it may be perceived as a way for a king to establish his royal authority over a whole kingdom.

Yet, justice and legal means were not the only ways in which correction and judgement were passed, and as emphasized by James VI himself, the power of the word was stronger than one might expect.[129] In a context where one's reputation could directly lead to the scaffold, stories and narratives held more and more power. These pieces of writing were not simple opinions either. The scholars and writers who took up the pen crafted meticulously their arguments to make them as sound as possible, using evidence considered as "authoritative" by all to ensure the acceptance of their messages, especially given the strength of censorship at the times.

However, as witches were mainly women, this desire of correction appears as aimed especially towards this gender. When looking at the literary context of the times, some argue that these events and writings belong within an anti-feminine and misogynistic tradition, which depicted women as an inherently evil being, and one that could not be trusted. This question of misogyny composes one of the bone of contention of witchcraft studies, some arguing that it was a clear "woman-hunt", whereas others argue that misogynistic traditions

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[129] The Reformation laid a strong emphasis on the Scriptures and base dits preachings on a close reading of the Bible. The "Word of God" thus became the absolute authority, as opposed to the Catholic religious hierarchy and customs.

are the *result* of those events and writings without having been its purpose. We shall therefore attempt to answer this question and make out whether these representations of women as evil witches came from a distinct fear of women, or if it can be explained by the context in which these events took place.

1. Establishing Royal Authority

The idea of a "rod of correction" was important to James VI in his struggle against the Devil and witchcraft. A firm believer in God's justice, he considered himself as being the "white knight of God", ruler by divine right and therefore, the Devil's ultimate enemy, an idea which will only be confirmed during the North Berwick trials.[130] Indeed, the events which preceded this trial marked a turning point in witchcraft prosecutions. Feeling that his and his bride's lives were threatened because of their royal status deeply shook the King and influenced him into reinforcing the persecutions and prosecutions of witches.

The political context in which these hunts were set was tense. James VI was crowned in 1567, when he was only 13 months old. His mother, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots had been deposed and civil wars broke out in the country between multiple factions fighting for religion and power as nobles rebelled against their King, challenging royal power and authority.[131] James VI thus came to power in a difficult context: religious upheavals between Catholics and Protestants subsided from his mother's times and nobles from each faction tried to tip the scale on their side of the conflict. Moreover, James VI's reputation was not one of a strong leader. Physically, he suffered from "weak legs, shambling walk, and slobbering tongue" (which might explain why he cultivated with passion his intellect).[132] His character was also painted in a bad light, as he was known for cowardice:

> in 1582 he was kidnapped by a faction of Scottish nobles during the Raid of Ruthven. Although he was then old enough to shave, he was so terrified of his captors that he cried like a child. Sir Thomas Lyon, one of the men keeping him hostage, gruffly told the young king it were better "bairns [children] should greet [cry] than bearded men."[133]

The King who desired to be recognized as king by divine right had thus to face direct challenges to his authority. The Presbyterian Church tried to break away from royal authority,

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[130] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.21.
[131] Julian Goodare. "James VI" in Michael Lynch (ed.) *Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p.354-355.
[132] *Ibid*, p.355.
[133] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.2.

claiming "they only answered to God, not any secular ruler".[134] This was not well received by James VI, and the ensuing "Black Acts" (1584) crystallized his intentions of universal rule and attempts to establish absolute authority, even over those who did not consider him their ruler.

In this religious and political context, it can be argued that fighting against the Devil provided him a great opportunity to reunite everyone under the same banner: the banner of the King, riding a white horse and leading God's sacred crusade. The white horse may also remind of the Stuarts' own heraldry: the white unicorn, symbol of purity and of God's love. When Agnes Sampson declared him Satan's natural enemy, the King's authority improved greatly: religious feuds had to stop and rally under the same commander, which had directly been appointed by God as his emissary. *Daemonoelogie* and witch-hunts can thus be perceived as the embodiment of James VI's budding regal authority, a formidable tool which granted him absolute power, "not because [he is] James Stuard and can comaunde so many thousands of men, but because God hath made [him] a King and judge to judge righteous judgement".[135]

As a ruler, it was the King's responsibility to ensure the sustainability of the kingdom and to control and regulate the population to preserve order and stability – the basis of long reigns and successful dynasties. Witchcraft and its inherent chaos and disorder threatened to disturb the already unstable balance in Scotland and inverse hierarchies of gender, religion and authority. His vision of a universal authority extended to every realm of the kingdom, even those over which he traditionally had no say on the matter:

> Yet, when witches practice their art within the realm of the domestic household they are the most dangerous, as this is the space traditionally associated with feminine power and authority. In an attempt perhaps to claim all human realms for masculine power, James I wrote that the household is like the state, and that there must be a strong male leader. James as head-of-state mirrors the father as head-of-household, denying women their traditional role as domestic authority. This desire could have been fuelled by depictions of women witches using their domestic authority in a dangerous way.[136]

Even though there is no doubt that the threat was perceived as a real danger, the representations of the Devil, witches, and especially female witches, gave him the opportunity to strengthen his authority, providing him with the legal means to apply full control over the

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[134] Timo Ryynänen. "Scotland and its Religious Situation at the End of the 16th Century", *James VI: the Demonologist King – Demonic Descriptions and their Context in James VI's Daemonologie*, p.3

[135] James I of England. *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, 1547-1603, x. 1589-93*, William K. Boyd, Henry W. Meikle (eds.). Edinburgh, 1936, p.524.

[136] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.62.

kingdom and wipe out any possible threat to his political, religious and male authority and ensure his prosperity by repressing all forms of rebellion and systemic inversion, while gaining support as God's emissary and trusted leader who took active measures to prevent witchcraft and the Devil from corrupting bodies and morals.

When he assumed the English throne in 1603, one of his first measures was to revoke the 1563 witchcraft statute enforced by Elizabeth and replace it by a harsher one. Whereas under Elizabeth witches were punished for major crimes, such as murder or causing injuries, James declared all forms of witchcraft unlawful and needed to be punished by hanging and the subsequent burning of the body of the witch. The trials looked hard for evidence of witchcraft and confessions were forced through torture until the prosecuted witch gave a satisfying answer. However, it seems fitting to note here, that the prosecutions in England were relatively tame compared to those in Scotland, as there were only fifty executions even though many were tried and punished for their crimes.[137]

Thus, the prosecution of witchcraft and struggle against the Devil granted James VI the opportunity to repress rebellions and enforce his vision of regal authority over his kingdom: one of absolute rule, as decided by God. Having a common enemy and facing the threat of the incoming Apocalypse enabled him to dim religious and political upheavals. By singling out behaviours and associating them to the Devil's doing and witchcraft allowed him to tweak the general opinion and apply some form of social domination which respected a certain traditional hierarchy. Yet, the "rod of correction" did not only take the form of physical and legal repression as it happened in the prosecutions leading to trials and the ensuing executions. In fact, James VI laid all his hopes in the power of the word, *i.e.* logical arguments and uncontested authoritative evidence.

2. The Power of the Word

Representations and reputations played an important role in the prosecution of witchcraft. To be prosecuted, a witch had first to be denunciated, usually by the neighbours or by a convicted witch who named other alleged witches, often under torture. As emphasized by Normand:

> Writing and narrative have particular significance in witchcraft studies, but especially so in this witch hunt. Accusations of witchcraft appear generally in the form of stories – of disagreements,

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[137] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.6-10.

suspicions, magical healing or harm, divination, and malefice. A person accused of witchcraft is arraigned on the basis of a series of stories that hostile or frightened neighbours have reported to the authorities.[138]

Gossips, accusations, negative representations of member of the community could be translated in reputations of witches and witchcraft. After having been represented and depicted as a witch, prosecutions would look for evidence supporting this reputation, such as looking for witch's marks or obtaining the witch's confession.

However, pieces of evidence were also crucial in texts, especially when it came to prove the existence of witchcraft. Sidney Anglo argues that it is crucial to pay attention to the evidence given by "educated men who actually took the trouble to argue their case to posterity (…) and to study evidence which is clearly written on, rather than between, the lines".[139] The production of logical argument backed up by enough authoritative evidence came to be a real concern for demonologists, and James VI shared this feeling. If we may turn once more to the Biblical passage James VI identified most with, Revelation (19:11-16), the importance of written arguments grows clearer:

> And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
> His eyes were as a flame on fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.
> And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.
> And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
> And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of the Almighty God.
> And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

The warrior on the white horse who would bring down the Devil thus had a "sharp sword" in his mouth, representing the absoluteness of his judgement and the authority of his words which were enough to strike whole nations. James VI inspired himself from the Bible and followed many of its lessons. If one focuses on the influence of narratives and writing, it appears that James's "rod of correction" also happened to take the form of a pen put to paper. His involvement in the conflict began in the redaction of *Daemonologie* and legal statutes. By his royal condition, he naturally had the power and authority to write laws to be enforced.

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[138] Lawrence Normand. *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's* Demonology *and the North Berwick Witches*, p.3.
[139] Sidney Anglo. *The Damned Arts: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, p.2.

However, *Daemonologie* had no such authority: as a literary form constructed around a dialogue, it can essentially be considered a "work of fiction" and thus far from having the same impact as the statutes.[140] Even though he was considered God's emissary and the Devil's enemy, his words were not God's and he needed to back his claims in order to produce a logical and sound argument.

This is where authoritative evidence come into play. When studying authoritative evidence in texts such as the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Sidney Anglo noticed the following trend: "the more authorities one could cite, the greater their names, and the more ancient they were deemed, the more cogent seemed one's argument".[141] Logical arguments thus were based on what were considered authorities, and the final one, the one which had more impact and power than any other was undeniably the Bible, the Word of God himself. References to the Scriptures are multiple in *Daemonologie*, and its first chapter is concerned with the evidence clearly laid out in the Bible. Philomathes and Epistemon begin by arguing over the relevance of the verses concerned with the witch of Endor (I Samuel 28), which was known in classical studies as the oracle of Gaia at Delphi. She was a priestess of Apollo, known for her prophetic trances. In this passage of the Bible, Saul consults the Pythoness and demands that she bring Samuel back from the dead. As Philomathes refutes the relevance of the verses, Epistemon (James' spokesperson in *Daemonologie*) produces other evidence from the Scriptures: Exodus 22, Exodus 7-8, I Samuel 15, Acts 8 and finally Acts 16:16.[142] Exodus 22:18 can probably be considered as the strongest evidence against witchcraft found in the Bible as it reads "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live". As evoked by Tyson, there have been copious debates regarding the translation of the word "witch" in King James Bible:

> In the Knox translation of the Bible, which is considered to be one of the most accurate, the verse reads "Sorcerers must not be allowed to live." However, Knox has added the footnote, "In the Hebrew the word is feminine, 'witch.'" The Hebrew word in question is MKShPH, a feminine form of the word MKShP, which Gesenius translates as "enchanter" or "magician". The Hebrew word is based upon KShP, "to use enchantment" – to use magical songs, to mutter. Hence the best translation would seem to be "enchantress".[143]

Through these multiple references to the Bible, James VI proved logically the existence of witches and witchcraft, given that the Scriptures cannot be contested within a Christian society.

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[140] Lawrence Normand. *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's* Demonology *and the North Berwick Witches*, p.6.
[141] Sidney Anglo. *The Damned Arts: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, p.6.
[142] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I*, p.58.
[143] *Ibid*., p.59-60.

However, authoritative evidence were not only used in the production of an argument aimed at persuading others, they can also be found in poems and artistic creations. These authorities were not used as evidence of the writer's claims but can instead be perceived as the illustration of the writer's sentiment. By using documents and references known by all, the message conveyed by a poem may have been more readily relatable by the public. For instance, the poem "Ballatis Aganis Evill Wemen", presumably written by Dunbar, that can be found in the *Bannatyne Manuscript*, includes two authorities which could not be contested: the Scriptures and antique mythologies and literature. It mentions God ("That settis at nocht god Nor ma*n*is blame"), Cupid ("their god cupeid") and other recognized and respected figures from ancient times such as Salomon, Aristotle, Sampson, Hector and Achilles:

> And possible war in till ane cumly corſs
> Wyiſs salamons wit and his hie sapience
> Arristotillis clergy / Sampsonis streth and forſs
> Hectoris proves and achillis excellence
> Ʒit wemen sowld with wylie Influence
> Cawiſs all thir vertewis to be of non avail
> With their sle serpent wrinkis and fals taill.[144]

In a poem concerned with evil women, the mention of men recognized for their beauty ("cumly corſs"), wisdom ("sapience"), strength ("streth and forſs"), and overall "excellence" only makes the comparison stronger, these men being everything those evil women can't ever be.[145] Moreover, the poet picked very specific evidence: several of the men mentioned here had been deceived and manipulated by women who led them to their fall by using their charms.

The story of Samson and Delilah can be found in the Book of Judges 16. Delilah was persuaded by the Philistines to seduce Samson and find out where his great strength came from: "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver." (Judges 16:5). After having tricked him several times, Delilah finally manages to learn where Samson's formidable strength comes from: his hair, which, should it be shaved, would make him as weak as any other man (Judges 16:17).

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[144] George Bannatyne. *The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest 1568 by George Bannatyne, vol.4*, Richie W. Tod (ed.), Edinburgh ; London : William Blackwood and Sons LTD, 1930, p.33.
[145] *Dictionary of the Scots Language: Dictionar o the Scots Leid*. Scottish Language Dictionaries and the Scottish Government at Glasgow University, www.dsl.ac.uk/, last accessed 10 May 2017.

Delilah after having pretended to love him proceeds in shaving his head and delivered him to the Philistines to satisfy her greed.

Both Hector and Achilles belong in Greek and Roman mythologies and are known for the roles they played in the Trojan War. That war was waged against the Greek after Paris of Troy took off with Helen, wife of the King of Sparta, Menelaus. At the beginning of this conflict there was a dispute between three Greek goddesses: Hera, Athena and Aphrodite argued over which one of them was the fairest. Paris was asked to decide and picked Aphrodite. To thank him, the goddess made Helen fall in love with him, and the war ensued as both countries fought for her. Achilles killed Hector and was later killed by Paris who shot an arrow in his heel.

These three strong and gallant men, who might have been considered at the times as the epitome of masculinity, thus died in conflicts that can be attributed to women, a parallel the poet draws avidly. The Devil, here referred to as "wylie", which stands for Walliman (a name for the Devil in Old Scot), has the power to influence women to bring men to their fall. Women are here represented as being able to manipulate even the strongest and wisest man, once they set their minds to it, by abusing their feminine charms and deceiving their oblivious victims.

Authorities were therefore used as ultimate evidence to back up arguments and opinions. The texts thus finely crafted and logically produced carried an important weight and were a strong means of correction. The Scriptures could not be contested in the same way laws could be discussed. Once something was proved by the Bible, it became an undeniable reality. However, these authorities were not only involved in the production of logical arguments: poets also used them as illustrations of their points of view, or as inspiration for their narratives.

3. "Evill Wemen" and Misogynistic Traditions

The poem, "Ballatis Aganis Evill Wemen", used authoritative evidence to depict women as being inherently evil and ready to deceive, betray and bring men to their ends. It has been argued that the poems present in the Bannatyne's section on evil women belong within a "long misogynistic tradition" portraying women in "negative, reductive, or stereotypic ways, calling attention to women's perceived or created 'deviations', and denigrating qualities,

attributes, and values typically considered female".[146] Given the similarities between those depictions and the one made of female witches, the representations found in the *Bannatyne Manuscript* may give the insight necessary in the literary context of the times to tackle an important question when it comes to gendered studies of witchcraft: were witch-hunts focusing on women out of a misogynistic sentiment or can it be ascribed to other reasons? In order to tackle this delicate topic, the *Bannatyne Manuscript* will first be studied by focusing closely on the representations of women as evil beings, before turning to witchcraft and questioning this same sentiment.

3.1 Case Study: *The Bannatyne Manuscript*

During the latter years of the 1560's, George Bannatyne, an Edinburgh burgess who worked as a literary scribe undertook the project of compiling over four hundred items of Scottish verse, ranging from Dunbar, Henryson and Lindsay, to many anonymous poets. This broad scope elevated the *Bannatyne Manuscript* to being considered as "the most comprehensive and therefore quintessential poetic anthology in manuscript."[147] By nature, this anthology, by compiling multiple poems from different authors, regions and times, represents an open door to Old Scots literary tradition. Moreover, multiple scholars such as Alasdair MacDonald or Bawcutt argued that Bannatyne was not a genius, but "a man of his time" deeply set within the literary traditions and urban culture of the times.[148]

Even though George Bannatyne did write original pieces, he is mainly known for the massive editorial work he put in the production of his manuscript. Indeed, this manuscript is remarkable in two different ways: on the one hand, the sheer number of items collected and copied differentiates the *Bannatyne* from other manuscripts; and on the other hand, Bannatyne's categorization of the anthology into different parts, the careful organization and addition of titles to those chapters make this anthology "unique", as argued by Sebastian Verweij.[149]

Bannatyne's editorial input is not to be overlooked. His categories are not concerned with the authors, the time or the place of the produced items, but instead by topics: theology,

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[146] Evelyn S. Newlin. "Luve, Lichery and Evill Women: The Satiric Tradition in the Bannatyne Manuscript". *Studies in Scottish Literature, vol.26, iss. 1.* Available at: http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol26/iss1/23, p.288, 285.
[147] Sebastian Verweij. *The Literary Culture of Early Modern Scotland: Manuscript Production and Transmission, 1560-1625*, p.135.
[148] *Ibid.*, p.137.
[149] *Ibid.*, p.136.

wisdom and morale, happiness, love, and finally Aesop's fables. This suggests that Bannatyne's purpose was not to compile those items for the sake of archives but instead attempted to create a form of narrative in which those items are connected following a certain moral, religious and even politic compass. Our focus here will especially lay on one section of the fourth chapter: "Ballatis Aganis Evill Wemen" which can be found within the "Ballatis of luve". Indeed, the Devil is mentioned several times in the poems of this section. The women in question here are depicted as "evil" for multiple reasons which are very similar to the motifs of witchcraft accusations. The fact that those poems were written by multiple authors and yet share the same characteristics when it comes to depicting women suggests that these views were shared and can perhaps be interpreted as being part of a special literary and social tradition. As they appear within a clearly denominated section, it suggests that George Bannatyne selected them for those specific characteristics and aimed at highlighting those behaviours by singling them out.

Newlin recognized in this section on evil women a significant satiric form, as defined by Nichols in his *Insinuation: The Tactics of English Satire* as: "the systematic exploitation, with aggressive intent, of what are, or made to seem, deviations from the norm within a context".[150] Newlyn proceeds on adding that historically, women have often been deemed as deviating from men, as indeed, Eve was made directly from Adam's rib. According to her, all those poems actively take part in an anti-feminine tradition where women are represented as being inherently evil and untrustworthy.

This sentiment is expressed in multiple ways in the different poems of the section. One might first begin to note the use of plurals instead of singulars, which generalizes the remarks to every woman, not just the one in question in the poem. This happens for instance in the first poem of the section which deals directly with "wemen kynd":

> The beistly lust the furius appetyt
> The haisty wo The verry grit defame
> The blind discretioun the hatrent & dispyte
> Of wemen kind that dreidis for no schame[151]

These generalizations are a form of exaggeration which extends one's failings to a whole group. However, even though those attacks are aimed at women in general, some female

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[150] James W. Nichols, *Insinuation: The Tactics of English Satire*, The Hague: Mouton de Gruyter, 1971, p.27 *in* Evelyn S. Newlin. "Luve, Lichery and Evill Women: The Satiric Tradition in the Bannatyne Manuscript". *Studies in Scottish Literature, vol.26, iss. 1.*, p.284.

[151] George Bannatyne. "The Beistly lust the furius appetyt". *The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest 1568 by George Bannatyne, vol.4*, p.32.

figures appear as more prevalent than others: Eve and Delilah can be considered emblematic figures of such poems, and references to their presence or legends a motif of misogynistic literature. In a poem attributed to Chaucer, female lust, which had been recognized as wrong and a source of dangers is equated to Eve's desire to eat the fruit of knowledge:

> Grit was the lust that thow had for to fang
> The fruct vetite throw þi ill counsaling
> Thow gart mankind consent to do þat wrang
> Displeifs his god and brek his hie bidding
> As haly writ beiris from the Ioy of paradyce
> And thy offspring was baneist for þat vyce[152]

Eve's decision to eat the fruit of knowledge resulted in her, Adam's and their offspring's banishment from paradise, which is commonly known as "Fall of Man". In this poem, sexual lust and Eve's fault are made to be one and the same, which necessarily implies that female sexual lust can also bring men to their fall. Any woman thus becomes as potentially threatening as Eve. From this ensues the same argument that can be found in the *Malleus Maleficarum*: it is in women's nature to act in these ways, to be more easily prone to temptation, sin, lust and greed.

This impression is furthered in the three ballads of impossibilities which can be found in this section. These poems share the same construction: the authors enumerate a list of "impossibilities", or event which cannot ever happen, and add that some events will not take place before those impossibilities. Each stanza is composed of a sequence of impossibilities and ends upon the real impossibility. There is a certain comic relief in those poems, which partake in the satirical intent of the section: criticism is conveyed through mockery. In one of these poems, a man goes to consult a pimp and asks for his guidance regarding women and their lust. He asks more especially "quhen ladeis to thair luvaris salbe leill", which can be translated as "when will women be faithful to their lovers?". The pimp then proceeds on explaining at length how impossible this is:

> Quhen firn flurichis and beiris gude frute
> And gud reid wyne growis On the roddyne treis
> And on the hadder growis the hassill nvte
> Hony and walx ar maid but werk of beis
> And the falcoun can fang no fowle bot fleis
> And quhen the thieves thinkis schame to steill
> Than ladyis to thair luvaris salbe leill

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[152] George Bannatyne. "Devyce/ proves/ and eik humilitie". *The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest 1568 by George Bannatyne, vol.4*, p.35.

> *When firs flourish and bear good fruits,*
> *And when red wine grows on rowan trees,*
> *And when hazelnuts grow on heather*
> *Honey and wax are made but by the work of the bees*
> *And the falcon can catch no bird and only wool*
> *And when the thieves think it a shame to steal*
> *Then, faithful to their lovers, women will be.*[153]

This pattern of impossibilities was often used in conjunction with women's unbridled sexuality, as it happens in another poem: "quhen the reid rose of natur becumis blew / scho quhome I luve sall steadfast be and trew".[154] Warning-poems are also used as a tool of satire. Women are represented as threatening, causing pain and turning men in their victims. One directly compares marriage and the gallows: "for sickerly thair is no difference / betwuix the gallowis and the spowsing claith".[155]

The poems that can be found in this section of the *Bannatyne Manuscript* can thus be perceived as belonging within a literary tradition in which the multiple authors partook and the editor of the manuscript. This tradition involves several motifs depicting women in a negative way and is based on several assumptions that are commonly found in this type of portrayal: women are depicted as inferior and deviant, temptresses enslaved to their lusts and greed, unfaithful and ready to hurt their lovers and men in general at any chance they get. Ground in the attitudinal matrix of the times, these collective representations perpetuated misogynist traditions and institutions. Indeed, if women are commonly represented as inherently evil in literature, in the streets and even from the pulpit as it was the case during the witch-crazes, this abundance of negative perceptions is bound to influence the minds of some of its public. As emphasized by Newlin, "multi-layered with cultural tenets and social dicta, such poems subtly but vigorously reproduce and thus enforce the dominant value system".[156]

3.2 Witch-Hunt or Woman-Hunt?

Given the important number of women convicted for witchcraft and the apparently misogynistic literary context these events were set in, it seems plausible that witch-hunts were in fact a war waged on women. It can be argued that these hunts focused on women who did

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[153] George Bannatyne. "ffurth ouer the mold at morrow as I ment". *The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest 1568 by George Bannatyne, vol.4*, p.42. My translation.

[154] George Bannatyne. "Ane vþir ballat of vnpossibilities compaird to the trewth of wemen in luve". *The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest 1568 by George Bannatyne, vol.4*, p.43.

[155] George Bannatyne. "Aganis mariage of evill wyvis". *The Bannatyne Manuscript Writtin in Tyme of Pest 1568 by George Bannatyne, vol.4*, p.37.

[156] Evelyn S. Newlin. "Luve, Lichery and Evill Women: The Satiric Tradition in the Bannatyne Manuscript". *Studies in Scottish Literature, vol.26, iss. 1.*, p.288.

not fit in the patriarchal structure of the times and that witchcraft accusations were used as a way to enforce this traditional dynamic. Some may argue that *because* they were women, they were evil and repressing them was a necessity. This vision stemmed from a long Western European tradition based on multiple authoritative evidence which purported disparaging views of women and femininity in general as can be seen in the texts studied in this research project: the Scriptures, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1480), Bannatyne's anthology (1560) and *Daemonologie* (1591). In her historiographical study of European witch persecutions, Anne Llewellyn Barstow shows the different trends in witchcraft studies, where the debate kept going back and forth between a war on women and a war on evil. She argues strongly in favour of this first hypothesis, *i.e.* witch-hunting being the result of misogynistic feelings and patriarchal designs:

> A lack of understanding of patriarchy as a historical category and of how it functions in society is another weak point in most of the works cited here. Without this understanding one doesn't see that women were accused primarily by men, tried by male juries, searched by male prickers, sentenced by male judges, tortured by male jailers, burned to death by male executioners – while being prayed over by male pastors. The patriarchal system also explains why many women accused other females: if a woman displeased or threatened the men of her community, she would also be seen as dangerous by the women who depended on or identified with those men. The internalization of "who is not acceptable" goes even deeper than that: women – and other oppressed groups – sometimes try to outdo their oppressors in scorning persons perceived as outsiders, in hope of being accepted, or tolerated, themselves. In the witchcraft trials, the poor attacked those even poorer; and poor women attacked those women even further out of power than they.[157]

These feelings and the traditions in which these events were set certainly had an influence over the people of the times. However, it seems slightly unsatisfactory to raise misogyny and patriarchy as the sole cause of witchcraft. The fact that men and women alike participated in witch-hunts, either as the victims or as the prosecutors have often been used as an argument against misogyny being the source of these accusations. Some, such as Barstow, argue that women participated in the prosecutions out of a conscious or unconscious desire to protect patriarchy. Others, such as Diane Purkiss, remind their readers that the people who stepped forward to lay a deposition were most often illiterate, and that their words were tweaked by the (male) scribes so that we can only have access to an "altered deposition".[158] However,

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[157] Anne Llewellyn Barstow. "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History: A Historiography of the European Witch Persecutions". *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol.4, no.2, Indiana University Press, 1988, p.17-18.

[158] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.55.

these depositions were usually read back to their original authors who would then have to sign them, thus ensuring that they did agree with the words written down.

I would argue that witchcraft prosecutions went beyond gender and sex-related issues. It seems to me that one must not forget the context in which those events were set: one of political, religious and economic turmoil which deeply unsettled any form of stability. This instability may have revived many fears which in turn were expressed through witchcraft. The spread of Apocalyptic thought rendered the Devil much more tangible and fearsome as their own lives and souls were endangered. This fear shaped Reformation movements and came to be central to religious thinking: fear of God, of the Devil, of sin and temptation, of themselves and what they may accomplish, as well as of others. The King feared for his authority as rebellions broke out, and an unsettled political context is bound to further feelings of insecurity as people opposed each other and risked their lives. Economically, families had been devastated by plagues and wars. The witch who had enough power to drastically influence a household could easily bring whole families to their ruin.

It might thus be interesting to see witchcraft not as a war on women, but as the crystallization of ambient, deep-rooted and real fears. The prosecutions came not as a way to repress and dominate women because they were women, but instead, as an attempt to restore any form of stability and ensure the safety of the whole community. This endeavour thus turned the perpetrators to what had been recognized as 'good' and 'right' in the past. In order to eradicate the Devil's penchant for inversions, they had to enforce the traditional system under threat. It is only because these traditions carried certain misogynistic and patriarchal characteristics that witch-hunts came to share these values. It may be more accurate to consider the singling out of women as the source of evil as a consequence, rather than the end-goal of witch-hunting.

What does it imply for women and their representations? It seems that they could easily fit within a cycle: when some looked for answers regarding who was the most threatening, they found women depicted as being evil. Once those representations were admitted and internalized, women were effectively considered as such, not just represented. This was translated in institutions such as witchcraft, which in turn led to more representations of women, now turned into evil and despicable witches, whose only presence catalysed any fear and threat felt by the community. These representations only grew stronger through exaggeration, satire, generalization, quantity of representations… and resulted in a clearly hostile tradition which was perpetuated for centuries. Women who did not want to risk their lives followed certain protective measures that were then transmitted from a generation

to the next, and that can still be felt nowadays, for instance in the way female sexuality is perceived by some members of the society.

This section thus focused on the way representations were used by different authors from our corpus. Indeed, it appears that the prosecution of witchcraft belonged in a broader scheme and may have, in fact, been used as a tool. Representations of witchcraft were manipulated to suit political needs. Witchcraft, a strong expression of rebellion provided the context necessary to wipe out political rebellions from unhappy nobles. The coming of the Apocalypse and the Devil's growing presence and direct threat provided James VI the opportunity to erase religious dissent and elevate himself to a status which could not be contested: monarch by divine right, the Devil's ultimate enemy on Earth and by extension, God's anointed knight to counter this invasion. This does not, however, imply that James VI orchestrated witch-hunts to better his condition, both on a political and religious level. He, instead, managed to take advantage of the hardships he was faced with and use them to his benefit, as it often occurs in politics.

A tool used for this endeavour was writing, and the second part of this chapter focus on the "power of the word", or how writings were used and how repression and domination were transmitted from a document to another. The importance of writing and narratives is even more salient in witchcraft studies, where stories were the basis of accusations. Thus, based on stories, one might wonder how scholars and educated person attempted to justify the existence of witches and the ways in which they were portrayed. Previous writings, and mainly the Scriptures, came to be the most important evidence needed to any argument, and deprecative representations of women and witchcraft were abundant in such documents. This led to the perpetuation and strengthening of some institutions.

In such a context, it thus becomes relevant to wonder whether these events were the fruit of misogynistic traditions, given that some representations were clearly anti-feminine. It would be even more correct to emphasize the existence of a global anti-feminine literary tradition, as testifies the *Bannatyne Manuscript*. Satiric in intent, many poems of the manuscript focused exclusively on the failings, flaws, and sins of women. Depicted as inherently wrong and evil, women in the *Bannatyne Manuscript* share many "deviances" with witches: uncontrollable lust, greed, deceitful characters with evil tongues responsible for men's misery. This may be used to show how attacks on witches were in fact, attacks on women. However, and this is a contentious point in witchcraft studies, it can be argued that witch-hunts were not originally aimed towards women, but it could be considered one of its

dramatic consequences. In an unstable political, religious and economic context, it is possible that witches came to embody multiple fears, and it was that fear that was targeted, not the women who symbolized it. Crusade against witchcraft was concerned with restoring the order and banishing the chaos brought by the Devil. As they turned to previous documents, misogynistic traditions and contents appeared as "right" and they thus tried to enforce them, as a way to save themselves and their community, in which women belonged as did any member of the society.

There is, however, a growing trend in witchcraft studies in which witches do not appear as the victims of their prosecutions, but instead as active participants. Opposing statements of misogyny, some scholars thought that witchcraft was, in fact, a mean of empowerment for the women involved.

Part III: "Unsex me here": Witchcraft and Feminine Power

Whereas the previous chapters focused on the ways in which witchcraft was considered pervasive and wrong, and thus represented a threat that had to be controlled and corrected, this final section aims at taking the opposing view and consider witchcraft, not as a plague, but as a form of empowerment.

In *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (1.4.39-46), Lady Macbeth questions and repudiates her femininity, searching for other values:

> Come, you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
> Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood,
> Stop up th'access and passage to remorse,
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
> Th'effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take the milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,[159]

By asking the spirits to "unsex" her, she decides to abandon the traditional feminine role she had played until then. Kindness is to be replaced by cruelty, thick blood implies a lack of change in humours and determination. She asks them to impeach change of heart and remorse and that her nurturing milk should be transformed in acid gall. This invocation testifies of a desire to abandon her traditional role of nurturing mother and gain access other institutions. Witchcraft and its process, from accusations, prosecutions to the trials and executions has been associated by some scholars to this very desire. This process will be tackled first, and it shall be attempted to show how these repressive measures may have in fact offered women new possibilities and roles to play in the society than what they originally had.

Then, in a second phase, the figure of the witch will be scrutinized in order to find forms of empowerment in the practice of witchcraft and in the association with the Devil. This motif appears in several pieces of literature which will first be studied before extending

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[159] William Shakespeare. "The Tragedy of Macbeth", *The Complete Works: Compact Edition*, p.980

this vision to women and see what forms of freedom they were granted access by way of witchcraft.

1. Witchcraft and Legal Power

In order to study the process of witchcraft as a whole, it might be useful to first reiterate the traditional roles and gender expectations women held at the times, and thus turn back to McGavin's notions of theatricality. Long traditions and teachings had engrained the idea that women were subordinate to men. This hierarchy was justified by several reasons: given that God had created Adam in his image and that Eve derived from Adam, as she was made of one of his ribs, she stood one step further from God and was not equal to her human companion. Moreover, women's physical strength being weaker than most men led to them depending on men for their survival, especially in hunter-gatherer communities, which was then perpetuated. Women being the ones carrying children for nine months, they were also their primary caretakers. This position of nurturing mothers has for a long time been considered a core characteristic and feminine value, as emphasized by Linda Mc Dowell:

> Whereas men were the idealized rational, civilized Enlightenment subject, full participants as workers and citizens in the public arena of the economy and politics, women were dependants, to be protected and kept close. They were to provide sustenance and nurture to their menfolk and children through the construction of a place of leisured and domestic calm. If men's role was in the public sphere, the women's was to be in the private arena.[160]

Therefore, women were deeply connected to the domestic realm, and became responsible for the upkeeping of the household, while men thrived in the public sphere and had access to politics, could hold a public occupation and work for sustenance.

However, because of witchcraft, ways began to change. Women who were previously forbidden from entering the courtroom, considered the equivalent of children or of convicted felons, as shown by Lawrence Normand, [161] were finally allowed to leave their domestic setting and step into the public realm of the courtroom. Witchcraft and its complete process of accusations, prosecutions and trials "gave many women an entry into the legal system".[162]

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[160] Linda Mc Dowell. "Place and Space" in Mary Eagleton (ed.) *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, p.12.
[161] Lawrence Normand. *Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's* Demonology *and the North Berwick Witches*, p.60.
[162] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.55.

Women thus became able to participate more readily in the trials and prosecutions, and Holmes shows that their involvement grew from 38% under Elizabeth to 53% during the Restoration.[163] Indeed, if women were obviously involved in trials as convicted witches, there were other possible roles to be held as well and they may be divided into three main categories: witnesses, experts and accused.

1.1   Witnesses

Gender, it will be recalled, had no influence on the people who accused members of their community of witchcraft. Barstow argued that women denounced other women when they felt that the male power and authority upon which they depended and identified to were under threat.[164] However, other explanations can be given. Witchcraft was not only seen in treatises and theological documents, it was experienced by multiple members of a community. The reality of witches' magical powers and demonic invasion is not relevant – the fact that people believed their lives and safety were endangered, is sufficient. Given that these considerations impacted Early Modern everyday life, paying attention to the everyday life of those communities might provide some answers as to how becoming witness of witchcraft actually helped and improved the lives of those who wished to do so.

In his study on "the making of the female witch", Willem de Blécourt reminds his readers of the importance of 'community' in early modern Europe:

> Provisionally this society can be characterised as dependent on communal values and neighbourly assistance but also one which recognised individual households and gendered lineage. Religion helped to justify witchcraft discourse and keep it operative. It was the social organisations and the ideas about community, however, that provided the necessary conditions. On account of having to raise children and manage households women were more attentive to interpersonal behaviour and neighbourly conflict and thus more involved in witchcraft accusations.[165]

Thus, women who mainly had access to the domestic and feminine space witnessed more instances of interpersonal conflicts. When those behaviours came to be associated to witchcraft, and the doors of the courtroom opened to those who knew of witches, "women's

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[163] Clive Holmes. "Women: Witnesses and Witches", *Past and Present*, no.140, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.47.
[164] Anne Llewellyn Barstow. "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History: A Historiography of the European Witch Persecutions". *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol.4, no.2, p.17-18.
[165] Willem de Blécourt. "The Making of the Female Witch: Reflections on Witchcraft and Gender in the Early Modern Period". *Gender & History*, vol.12, no.2, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p.303.

issues and domestic complaints were given an attentive ear".[166] Witchcraft prosecutions allowed women to voice their concerns and fears and to obtain reparation for their slights.

Indeed, this notion of justice, or revenge depending on the cases, was crucial in the process of accusation of witches. There is, however, one main issue in the cases where a woman accused another one of witchcraft, and it had to do with motherhood and especially the death of infants. In order to understand this, it might be useful to consider first early modern views on motherhood. Chamberlain argued that the early modern conception of motherhood was a great source of anxiety as they had full control over patrilineage and could easily decide to disrupt lines of succession, through infidelity, infanticide or employing a wet-nurse.[167] If the first two reasons have a direct link and influence over patrilineage, the third one can be further developed. It stems from "the overriding assumption (…) that only a mother, and a virtuous one at that, could adequately care for her child".[168] Therefore, if something were to happen to their children, women would carry the responsibility and blame: they had failed as mothers.

However, the blame could easily be deflected. If the child had died of an unknown disease, folk-healers and midwives could be accused of having intentionally harmed the infant, by way of *maleficia*. Many folk-healers and midwives thus became scapegoats as it provided at the same time an explanation for the tragical events, an alleviation of guilt, and the possibility "to place blame in a legal and official setting" and thus enacting a form of revenge.[169] What Levack calls "tensions in female circles" could then, by way of witchcraft prosecutions, appear in an official setting.[170] These feelings were thus validated and legitimized and all the while the trials empowered those who came forth and provided them with new means of actions which had a direct influence over the community, its laws and its politics. Doing the *right* thing, that is to say denunciating a dangerous witch which had hurt them and threatened the community may have appeared as a form of catharsis and empowered those who took direct part in the conflict against the Devil.

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[166] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.56.
[167] Stephanie Chamberlain. "Fantasizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England", *College Literature,* vol.32, no.3, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
[168] *Ibid*, p.75.
[169] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.56.
[170] Brian Levack. *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (3rd ed), p.148.

1.2 Experts

However, witnessing was not the only role women could play in the courtroom. Indeed, they were often requested to attend trials and provide their expertise. Once the witness had aired out his grievances, the prosecutions could begin, and women played a crucial role in the process of the trial. Their mission was first to search the accused witch's body for the witch's mark. Given the sexual character of the mark and the need to observe the accused's genitalia, women were asked to deal with these proceedings:

> The credentials needed by women searchers were those resulting from good characters rather than technical expertise. Some other cases, however, suggested that women with some type of knowledge might be favoured. Midwives were, of course, uniquely qualified to comment on irregularities in the female genitals.[171]

Midwives, known as well as "knowing women" thus had the responsibility of finding the evidence which would condemn any witch. They were listened for their advices and expertise and were valued for this knowledge. Considering the number of women prosecuted for witchcraft, knowing women played an important role in the prosecutions and it represented a "dramatic reversal of their generally powerless rôles as petitioners, witnesses or parties to litigation".[172]

Female experts were also called to examine witches when they declared to be pregnant – and thus could not be executed. In 1591, Barbara Napier managed to escape the gallows when her friends claimed that she was with child. A month later, another presumed witch, Effie McCalyan attempted to have her execution delayed by claiming pregnancy. However, "she could not have been very convincing since she was executed of June 25, only a week after making her plea".[173]

Female specific knowledge and rules of decency thus provided some women with great power in the courtroom. Even though they were not the ones to pass judgements, there would be no execution and punishment without their input and thus were granted the final "authority to save or condemn a suspected witch".[174] This shows that even though the public

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[171] Jim Sharpe. "Women, Witchcraft and the Legal Process" in Jennifer Kermode ; Garthine Walker (eds.) *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, London: Routledge, 1994, p.116.
Even though this book is mainly concerned with England, the legal situations in England and Scotland were similar in some aspects after James VI was crowned in England. The presence of "knowing women" in trials is one of them.
[172] *Ibid*, p.119.
[173] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I: Includes the Original Text of Daemonologie and News from Scotland*, p.19.
[174] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.57.

and legal spheres were mainly dominated by men, witchcraft and its prosecutions enabled women to carve a role for themselves, to step out from their feminine and domestic sphere and exert their power and authority, all the while increasing the value of their knowledge and experience. Midwives and knowing-women thus danced on a slim rope: they could either be accused of witchcraft, or they could be the ones to condemn them. Their reputation within their community could drastically influence their experiences of witchcraft, and a midwife with an ill reputation was more likely to face accusations than one who got on well with her neighbours. Yet, neighbours' accusations were not the only way in which a witch could be identified as such, and some decided to denunciate themselves and publicly appear as a witch.

1.3 Witches

Even though witches were in an awkward and dangerous position, being a witch implied holding a position of power. On the one hand, witches were considered to have magical powers and the ability to influence greatly their environment and the other members of the community. The recourse to magical herbs and general sorcery has generally been recognized by scholars as a means of compensation for women's weaker physical and political strength: "women, who generally had none of men's physical and political power, were believed to be able to use sorcery as an instrument of protection and revenge".[175]

Moreover, witchcraft could be quite lucrative for the women who practiced it. Indeed, in rural areas, witches and folk-healers were often relied on by the community in which they belonged. People could consult them when they had fallen ill, or to request magical enhancers for their lives. They were often prosecuted only when they did not manage to cure one of their patients' disease or when a pregnancy resulted in a stillborn. Spoto introduces as an example the witches of Knaresbourgh Forest (England) who were "so powerful that their rich, non-magical neighbors would bring them unrequested gifts and dared not refuse them anything", before concluding that "such stories of women with power were doubtless appealing to other women who were poverty-stricken, looking for a means to better their situation".[176] Witches were able to operate independently in whatever ways they judged best. Their power resulted directly from the fear they provoked within their community: they were feared because they were powerful women, full of resources, and this fear rendered them even more powerful.

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[175] Brian Levack. *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (3rd ed), p.148.
[176] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.67.

In the same way that witnesses and knowing-women found an entry in the legal system and thus the public space, witches were equally able to voice their thoughts and concerns. They were given the possibility to defend themselves and justify their actions. If many witches were found guilty, some were still released once they had managed to prove their innocence. Witnesses were questioned just as harshly as the witches, and "witnesses, male and female alike, were often browbeaten or ridiculed by the judiciary".[177] Tyson mentions two cases in which the accused were exonerated from the charges they faced: Anne Gunter, who had accused three women of her community of witchcraft finally confessed after having been questioned that these were false accusations ; John Smith, a twelve year old boy, accused fifteen women of having bewitched him and made him convulse, and while nine of them had already been executed, the six remaining women were finally freed.[178] Once alleged witches had proven their innocence, they even had the possibility of suing those who had accused them for defamation and false accusations.

Therefore, the prosecution of witchcraft offered women an entry in the legal system at each step of the process: as accusers and witnesses, as legal experts involved in the prosecutions and judgements, as witches, culprits and in retaliation when they were found innocent. Sharpe concluded that:

> Even though contemporary attitudes to gender probably made those experiences [allegations of witchcraft] different for the women involved, they nonetheless establish women as active participants in the legal system. Like all of us, these women found themselves in a real world that imposed constraints upon them. Yet within those constraints and limitations, in the legal process and before the courts as elsewhere, they were historical actors.[179]

2. Witchcraft as an Expression of Feminine Power

Having observed how witchcraft trials had an influence and empowered women, as it gave them access to the legal field, it is now possible to turn to a more sociological reading of the process and show how witchcraft could fundamentally be perceived not as a threat but as a form of empowerment for the witches concerned. That is to say, observing the situation from

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[177] Jim Sharpe. "Women, Witchcraft and the Legal Process". *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, p.120.
[178] James Donald Tyson and James Carmichael. *The Demonology of King James I: Includes the Original Text of Daemonologie and News from Scotland*, p.9.
[179] Jim Sharpe. "Women, Witchcraft and the Legal Process". *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, p.127.

the point of view of witches themselves, as actors of witchcraft, instead of paying attention to the reception of witchcraft from those who did not partake in it.

As was seen when tackling the threat of witchcraft (chapter 1), witches threatened to disrupt the prevalent gender hierarchies. To put it in other words, women were willingly deviating from their own gender expectations to adopt more masculine behaviours. This is the process of "unsex[ing]" sought by Lady Macbeth.[180] Chamberlain argued that more than denying her gender expectations, Lady Macbeth "attempt[ed] to seize a masculine power to further Macbeth's political goals".[181] This expresses a certain dissatisfaction in their condition of feminine inferiority and a desire to obtain more power than they had. This motif is frequent in the representation of evil women: witches as will be seen, Lady Macbeth and Milton's Eve share these preoccupations. Lady Macbeth is deemed evil as she can be considered the catalyst of the play: she is the one who persuaded Macbeth to proceed in the regicide to become Queen and Macbeth King. Even though Eve's condition as a fallen woman has been tackled over the course of this research paper, it is interesting to see how closely Milton associated her and Satan in *Paradise Lost*. They both share the same aspiration of gaining more power and authority, yet it is not framed as a threat against the prevailing order but as a cry for freedom and equality. Two main instances of these feelings can be noted, in which Eve and Satan's pleas mirror each other. In the first book of *Paradise Lost*, Satan is expelled from Heaven to Hell, along with many other demons. Far from expressing disarray, he seems to rejoice in his new-found freedom and political power:

> Here at least
> We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
> Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
> Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
> To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
> Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n. (I, 258-263)[182]

Satan, as a figure of resistance and opposition appears as a rebel who rose against the oppression felt in Heaven when they had to follow God's will and orders. He expresses clear disapproval of what was felt as inferiority and servitude: in Heaven, they were oppressed and controlled, but in Hell, they can be free, rule and act as they wished. Whereas God's rule was

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[180] This process of "unsex[ing]" also reveals a certain blurring of genders in the figure of the witch: one might think of the bearded witches, as they can be found in *Macbeth*, purporting both female and male characteristics.
[181] Stéphanie Chamberlain. "Fantasizing Infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the Murdering Mother in Early Modern England", *College Literature,* vol.32, no.3, p.72.
[182] John Milton. *Paradise Lost*, John Leonard (ed.), London: Penguin Classics, 2003, p.9.

a form of absolute rule and despotism, Satan is open to discussion and the political ideals expressed in Hell resemble more democracy than the tyranny one might expect from the Devil.[183] Later in *Paradise Lost*, Eve expresses similar ideas:

> But to Adam in what sort
> Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
> As yet my change, and give him to partake
> Full happiness with me, or rather not,
> But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
> Without copartner? so to add what wants
> In female sex, the more to draw his love,
> And render me more equal, and perhaps,
> A thing not undesirable, sometime
> Superior; for inferior who is free? (IX, 816-825)[184]

In this extract, Eve reflects on what actions she should take now that she ate from the Fruit of Knowledge: either share it with Adam, or hide from him that she disobeyed God and is no longer so ignorant. This rebellion against God, orchestrated by Satan, appears as a means to obtain more power and free herself from her condition of inferiority. Here, deviation from God does not aim at completely overturn the global hierarchy but as a way to obtain more equity and freedom. Women, represented by Eve, thus seem to share the same concern as Milton's Satan: freedom, democracy and equality instead of oppression and inferiority.

This same thought pattern might be taken out from the realm of literary characters and can be applied to living women who found in such "deviations" the possibility to fight their status of inferiority and advocate for their own rights, freedom and independence. Two main issues of witchcraft can be considered gender-specific: sexuality and motherhood. The traditional female gender role of the times was the one of housewife and mother: she was to provide nutrition and nurture her children, to raise a healthy and virtuous household. The witch's identity is the diametrically opposed to these gender expectations and Diane Purkiss defined them as "the dark other of the early modern woman, expressing and acting on desires the other women must repress to construct their identities as mothers".[185] The practice of witchcraft thus gave some women a formidable outlet for their fears and fantasies, as well as the freedom to act out on those desires if they wished to. Becoming a witch had the effect of transcending and freeing them from their traditional gender expectations and emancipate

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[183] "Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate; who can advise, may speak." (II, 41-42)
Ibid., p.25.
[184] *Ibid*, pp.206-207.
[185] Diane Purkiss. *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth Century Representations*, London: Routledge, 1996, p.100.

themselves from their neighbours' opinions. Indeed, witches went radically against the society in which they evolved. Identifying as one implied that they had knowingly decided to appear as such, and thus took control of their own image and representations. Professing one's identity as a witch empowered them: by abandoning the values expected of women and assuming those of witches, they found new and more extended types of agency.

Therefore, identifying with a witch granted women more agency in different realms of their lives: it gave them the possibility to hold a function and earn their wages, sometimes to wealth and to earn more respect and consideration among their neighbours, as they feared them and at times needed their services. Their magical powers and medical knowledge enabled them to stand up for themselves at times where their legal and political options were extremely limited, as well as compensated for their physical weaknesses. Sexually independent, they also could keep full control over motherhood, a role which was usually forced on them. To borrow Spoto's phrasing, witchcraft "lur[ed] many women into rediscovering, or reinventing, themselves as those very figures that seemed to promise so much power and influence".[186] By exploiting the ambient fears of the society in which they evolved, witches managed to emancipate themselves and obtain more power in their homes and neighbourhoods. Expressing both the anxieties of the times concerning their conditions as women and as evil being. Even though the figures of evil women and witches suffered over the centuries of negative representations in literature and visual arts, and even though many witches perished at the stake, it may not be accurate to picture them as the weak victims of witchcraft prosecutions: the status of witch was also one of power and empowerment.

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[186] Stephanie Irene Spoto. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power", *Pacific Coast Philology*, vol.45, p.68.

General Conclusion

The study of witchcraft is far from being a purely esoteric topic. The events which took place in Western Europe from 1550 to 1700 testify of the troubled times they were set in: religious changes, political instability and economic stress shaped societies and generated global anxiety in day to day life. With the idea that 'everything must happen for a reason', people had to find a logical explanation for their hardships. Their Christian culture and background led the people to turn to religion and the Scriptures, and there they found the figure responsible for all human misery: the Devil.

Embodying their deepest fears, Satan represented everything they abhorred and was blamed for this general feeling of insecurity. The Devil's aim was to overturn God's hierarchy and rule, to bring misery, pain and chaos. The Devil became much more preponderant in the Early Modern period, as religious Reformations emphasized the prevalence of sin and the necessity of self-reflection: humans are flawed and can easily be seduced and subverted by the Devil who promised to grant their desires of sex, wealth and revenge. Sin became interiorized and inherent to human condition and it was their duty, as they belonged within a religious community aiming to become a godly society, to resist the Devil's temptations and their natural urges and failings of character. Those who did not were charged with Satanic affiliations and relations.

The figure of the witch is the strongest representation of the Devil and were considered to have renounced God and faith and submitted to Satan and its viles. They were fallen beings who were believed to actively participate in the coming of Satan by harming godly members of the society. The witch's actions endangered their neighbours' health through injuries and diseases, their economy as they could easily cause financial blows by harming cattle or destroying properties and shops, as well as the community's politics and hierarchies. In a way, the existence of witches and witchcraft was the physical and social manifestations of the societies' various anxieties.

This research project focuses on the ways in which these witches were represented, depicted and characterized by those who had to face them. These descriptions were thoroughly negative, and they were introduced as deeply deviant and subversive. However, this research project concentrates especially on one part of the Scottish population which was

heavily affected by witchcraft accusations: women. They composed indeed the bulk of the prosecuted and the witch's representations came to be closely associated to women's representations. The scholars of the times turned to the Scriptures and authoritative evidence in order to explain the existence, identities and actions of witches. It can be argued that the literature, religion and society of the times sustained a certain anti-feminine tradition, in which women were naturally inferior to men, prompt to sin and submit to temptation because of their weaknesses of character and faith. By allying with the Devil, women were empowered in many ways: they could voice their thoughts and opinions, be respected, and were granted new means of actions. In a setting where women were economically, politically and physically dependant on men, witchcraft enabled some women to defend themselves and be more independent.

It seems that this is precisely the issue which led to these waves of prosecutions and executions. As anxiety already thrived in Early Modern Scotland, women devoting themselves to witchcraft enhanced those anxieties: women were first and foremost considered as mothers, their role was in the household and nursery. This nurturing and controlled figure, through witchcraft, endangered the society right at its core — home. The myth of the sexually independent and infanticidal witch threatened gender hierarchies and the global structure of the society as it questioned the very basis on which it was set.

This prevalent danger needed to be corrected and political measures were taken. However, if some argue that witch-hunts were essentially woman-hunts, other interpretations can still be made. I argue that the justiciars, authors and king's aim was not so much to destroy women as it was to restore the only balance and stability that had been known, *even though* they laid upon misogynistic precepts. The perpetuation of misogyny thus appears as a sad consequence rather than as the end goal of witch repression. Women were considered as being more inclined towards evil and ill wishes. As the Devil became more noticeable, the women who took up the opportunity to empower themselves and gain more agency and authority were repressed because of this very association. Since it was the Devil's doing, it was wrong and needed to be corrected in order to restore harmony and safety. This need to reassert the dominant's authority fits perfectly within political agendas, such as James VI's. Indeed, the king managed to establish his authority by way of witchcraft repression: since he was the Devil's direct enemy, the King was God's envoy and represent on earth, designated to fight this holy crusade, religious upheavals had to cease. Father of the kingdom and master of the nation-house, he held absolute authority over his kingdom and political turmoil had to cease in front of the coming of the Apocalypse.

Therefore, what can be gathered from the representations of women, witches and of the Devil is that witchcraft can be considered as a struggle for power and authority: the dominants tried to enforce and save their authority which they felt was slipping within their grasp, whereas the dominees strived to obtain more agency and equality, as did Eve and Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In order to do so, they both manipulated the representations of women and witches. On the one hand, they were evil and dangerous and threatened to upset the whole cosmogony. On the other, by self-identifying as a witch, they were able to tweak their reputations and from weak and poor women they were able to become powerful and influential figures of independence.

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