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DEALS WITH THE DEVIL: POSSESSION AND EXORCISM IN JACOBAN DRAMA

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DEALS WITH THE DEVIL: POSSESSION AND EXORCISM IN JACOBAN DRAMA

A Master's Thesis

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DEALS WITH THE DEVIL: POSSESSION AND EXORCISM IN
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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

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ABSTRACT

DEALS WITH THE DEVIL: POSSESSION AND EXORCISM IN JACOBAN DRAMA

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This thesis investigates the relationship between Jacobean audiences and Jacobean plays that have dealt with demonic possessions and exorcisms that included earthly gains. The study uses historical and textual analysis by looking at archival records such as real life demoniac and non-demoniac cases, crime cases and documents on and by historical figures and four drama plays, *The Witch of Edmonton*, *King Lear*, *Ignoramus* and *The Devil's Charter*. This comparative analysis shows what was on the minds of Jacobean audiences when they watched these plays that have dealt with the demonic possessions.

Keywords: Demonic Possessions, Exorcism, Religious Controversy, Jacobean England, Early Modern Drama.

ÖZET

ŞEYTANLA ANLAŞMALAR: JAKOBEN DRAMASINDA ŞEYTAN ÇARPMASI VE ŞEYTAN ÇIKARMA

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Bu tez, dünyevi kazançlarla ilişkili şeytan çarpmalarını ve şeytan çıkarmalarını konu edinen Jakoben oyunları ile Jakoben izleyicileri arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmaktadır. Çalışmada gerçek hayattaki şeytani ve şeytani olmayan vakalar, suç vakaları ve tarihi şahsiyetler tarafından ve hakkında yazılmış belgeler ile *The Witch of Edmonton*, *King Lear*, *Ignoramus* ve *The Devil's Charter* adlı dört drama oyununa bakılarak tarihsel ve metinsel analiz kullanılmıştır. Bu karşılaştırmalı analiz, Jakoben izleyici kitlesinin şeytani çarpmaları konu alan bu oyunları izlerken aklından neler geçtiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şeytan Çarpması, Şeytan Çıkarması, Dini Tartışmalar, Jakoben İngilteresi, Erken Modern Drama.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

—William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 2.7.139-143¹

The idea of demonic possession and interaction with the devil was a huge part of the Jacobean era including both real life and theatre. There was not only a frenzy of interest involving the general public but also the King James I of England himself was interested in the study of demons: demonology. Before he became king of England, when he was James VI of Scotland, he wrote a book called *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue, diuided into three bookes* in 1597.² His interest was shared by many of his time. Moreover, alongside the witches of the witchcraft trials, there were demoniacs that were allegedly possessed by the devil. James I of England interacted with both of these phenomena and condemned both of them. Further practices developed around

¹ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Alan Brissenden (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2008), 150-151.

² This book was also reprinted in England when James I came to the throne.

King James I and VI, *Daemonologie, in Forme of a Dialogue Diuided into Three Bookes / Written by the High and Mightie Prince, Iames by the Grace of God King of England ...*, *Early English Books Online* (London: Printed for William Cotton, and Will, 1603),

<https://www.proquest.com/books/daemonologie-forme-dialogue-diuided-into-three/docview/2248537658>;

King James VI, *Daemonologie in Forme of a Dialogue, Diuided into Three Bookes*, *Early English Books Online* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Walde-graue printer to the Kings Majestie, 1597), <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04243.0001.001>.

them and there arose much discussion of these too. John Darrell, a cleric, practiced exorcism during the reign of Elizabeth I. He was later accused for these exorcisms and served time in prison until 1599.³ His prosecutor, Samuel Harsnett, wrote a book on Darrell's exorcisms in 1599⁴ and Darrell responded in 1600 in his own defense.⁵ In 1603, the year James I came to the English throne, Harsnett wrote a book called,

*A declaration of egregious popish impostures to with-draw the harts of her Maiesties subiects from their allegiance, and from the truth of Christian religion professed in England, vnder the pretence of casting out deuils. Practised by Edmunds, alias Weston a Iesuit, and diuers Romish priestes his wicked associates. Where-vnto are annexed the copies of the confessions, and examinations of the parties themselues, which were pretended to be possessed, and dispossessed, taken vpon oath before her Maiesties commissioners, for causes ecclesiasticall.*⁶

This book, which included cases of demonic possession and condemned them, was very popular and served as an inspiration for many of the Jacobean theatre playwrights. Just like many other things in this society, this interest in demons and witches reflected on theatre as well. By no means did the accession of James I start the elements of possession in the English theatre, as there were already real-life cases and plays in the Elizabethan era. The most notable example of a demonic play, a play involving demons, in the Elizabethan era that continued its influence beyond the Jacobean stage even until this day was *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1588-9)⁷ by Christopher Marlowe, and the

³ Brendan C. Walsh, "The High Commission," article, in *The English Exorcist: John Darrell and the Shaping of Early Modern English Protestant Demonology* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 156.

⁴ Ibid., 160.

⁵ Ibid., 161.

⁶ From now on will be referred to as *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*... for short in the writing.

Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures to With-Draw the Harts of Her Maiesties Subiects from Their Allegiance, and from the Truth of Christian Religion Professed in England, Vnder the Pretence of Casting out Deuils. Practised by Edmunds, Alias Weston a Iesuit, and Diuers Romish Priestes His Wicked Associates. Where-Vnto Are Annexed the Copies of the Confessions, and Examinations of the Parties Themselues, Which Were Pretended to Be Possessed, and Dispossessed, Taken Vpon Oath before Her Maiesties Commissioners, for Causes Ecclesiasticall.*, *Early English Books Online* (London: James Roberts, 1603), [://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A02750.0001.001](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A02750.0001.001).

⁷ Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David M. Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

previously mentioned John Darrell practiced during the Elizabethan period. However, there was a noticeable rise in the frequency of elements concerning possession and witchcraft on the Jacobean stage with the famous examples of *The Devil Is an Ass* (1616)⁸ by Ben Jonson, *The Witch* (1619)⁹ by Thomas Middleton, and *Macbeth* (1623)¹⁰ by William Shakespeare. However, these are only three examples of phenomena shared by lots of plays. Moreover, in many plays, the idea of demons and possession played a small part even where the plays centered around many other things. One of the common topics that came alongside possession in the Jacobean stage was power and money. This is not surprising as money was also a huge topic on the Jacobean stage. Some of the most famous works that dealt with the question of monetary gain were *Volpone* (1606)¹¹ by Ben Jonson, *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608)¹² by Thomas Middleton, and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612)¹³ by John Webster. However, some playwrights combined earthly possession with devilish possession in their plays examples of which will be discussed in this thesis. The main aim of this thesis is to understand from the perspective of the Jacobean audience the plays that involved the influence of the devil and the demons.

1.1. The Audience

The audience and the audience's relationship with the plays will be an important factor in our discussions going forward. For playwrights, there could be a ban coming from

⁸ Ben Jonson, *The Devil Is An Ass*, *Internet Archive* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1905), <https://archive.org/details/devilisanass00jonsuoft>.

⁹ Thomas Middleton, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford, NY: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 2010, 1129-1164.

¹⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, ed. Nicholas Brooke (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹¹ Ben Jonson, *Volpone, or, the Fox ; Epicene, or, the Silent Woman, the Alchemist, Bartholomew Fair*, ed. Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹² Thomas Middleton, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 377-413.

¹³ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *Internet Archive* (London: John Tallis and Company, 1850), <https://archive.org/details/1850duchess-of-malfi>.

the authorities for what they wrote in their plays. The censorship has almost always been a part of history, not unique to the Jacobean period, however, things could be less restricted. In the article “Greater Themes for Insurrection's Arguing': Political Censorship of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Stage”, Janet Clare mentions that,

Relative details of Elizabethan and Jacobean censorship suggest that in early Jacobean period there was some relaxation of censorship as well as a shift in its concerns. James seemed initially uncertain of the powers of the Revels Office accrued during the previous reign: the patent issued to the King's Men in 1603 omits the proviso included in earlier patents that their plays must be licensed by the Master of the Revels and the Elizabethan system of censorship was temporarily decentralized when Samuel Daniel was appointed licenser of plays performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels.¹⁴

This is a very important point for us that we will discuss further in the next chapters but just because the House of the monarchy has changed, did not mean drastic changes happened in the drama world. There were still bans and censorship but it was not as bad as Elizabethan drama. However, Jacobean audiences in general were also demanding. In the article Jacobean Playwrights and "Judicious" Spectators, Leo Salinger discusses this and gives us examples of how much playwrights were under scrutiny for their writings.¹⁵ The playwrights could have a certain freedom from their production companies, as long as they did not introduce anything that would offend the government, when the companies were not demanding on whatever they could write¹⁶. This does not mean they were going to be liked. More interest meant more audience and more audience meant more money. Jacobean theatre was about

¹⁴ Janet Clare, “Greater Themes for Insurrection's Arguing': Political Censorship of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Stage,” *The Review of English Studies* 38, no. 150 (1987): 169–183, <https://doi.org/10.1093/res/xxxviii.150.169>.

¹⁵ Leo Salinger, “Jacobean Playwrights and “Judicious 'Spectators,” *Renaissance Drama* 22 (January 1991): 209–234, <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.22.41917278>.

¹⁶ Alwin Thaler, “The Elizabethan Dramatic Companies,” *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 35, no. 1 (1920): 123–159, <https://doi.org/10.2307/457244>.

economics just like anything else. Many playwrights barely made money and many of them came from affluent backgrounds in the first place. The audience were always on their minds. Moreover, in both Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, morality played a big role.¹⁷ Almost all plays had some sort of a message for the audiences. However, this was not only relevant to drama as Humanism, with its ethical concerns, was a big part of the English Renaissance, and the Renaissance as a whole.¹⁸ We will discuss further in this thesis on how both audiences, playwrights and their environments influenced each other on this through the prism of devilish elements in the drama.

1.2. Demoniac, Witch, Possessed and Exorcism

In this thesis, the words of demoniac, witch and possessed will be used interchangeably when it comes to real life cases unless there is a clarification made within the case. The reasoning for this is the lack of clarification from the period itself. Magic-like practices in the Jacobean era and Elizabethan era were not uncommon. Famously, John Dee who used to serve as astronomer and advisor for Elizabeth I¹⁹, practiced a type of magic that was considered as occultist.²⁰ Astronomy, which often included astrology, was also very common and heavily believed by the monarchs, including Elizabeth I and James I, although James did not believe in astrology, the way stars could predict

¹⁷ Gül Kurtuluş, “Jacobean Morality and Moral Performativity in *Volpone* and *Women Beware Women*,” *IDEAS: Journal of English Literary Studies* 1, no. 1 (2021): 20-34.; John Wasson, “The Morality Play: Ancestor of Elizabethan Drama?,” *Comparative Drama* 13, no. 3 (1979): 210–221, <https://doi.org/10.1353/cdr.1979.0024>; Anthony Raspa, *Shakespeare the Renaissance Humanist: Moral Philosophy and His Plays* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹⁸ Katherine C. Little, “Humanism and the Morality Play,” *Humanism and Good Books in Sixteenth-Century England*, March 16, 2023: 37–67, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192883193.003.0003>; John Sellars, “Renaissance Humanism and Philosophy as a Way of Life,” *Metaphilosophy* 51, no. 2–3 (April 2020): 226–243, <https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12409>.

¹⁹ Richard Deacon, *John Dee: Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I*, (London: Frederick Müller, 1968), <https://archive.org/details/johndeescientistgeographerastrologerandsecretagenttoelizabethibyricharddeacon/>.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

György E. Szönyi, “John Dee and Early Modern Occult Philosophy,” *Literature Compass* 1, no. 1 (December 15, 2005): 1-12, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2004.00110.x>.

our future.²¹ Regardless, both Elizabethan and Jacobean eras had figures who got involved in occultism like previously mentioned Dee, Robert Fludd²², and Simon Forman²³, who later was deemed as the devil after his name got associated with the death of Thomas Overbury.²⁴ However, the problem that came with witches was that they were accused of using magic for harmful practices and that the power of their magic also came from dubious circumstances. These malicious behaviors and acts separated them from occultists who practiced magic for good. Occultism was seen by many as a part of natural science or philosophy. During James's reign, as long as occultists did not use their practices for bad, against God's wishes, it was not deemed a very serious problem. We will discuss James I's objections to occultism and astrology further at the end of Chapter III. The problem with the wording is, when it comes to the malicious practices of magic, the umbrella term witch or witchcraft was used more. In the introduction to *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, John Newton discusses the words associated with witchcraft further under the Significations of Witchcraft subtitle and claims that there were exceptions to these as; "Other epithets were used in different localities, such as 'blessers' or 'cunning folk', and this may reflect a desire to avoid any potential connotation of witchcraft, or even a separation in terms of classification between this class of practitioners and those who used *maleficium*".²⁵ However, one important thing about this is that when it came to categorization of accusations, they still fell under the witchcraft name. Furthermore

²¹ King James I and VI, "Basilicon Doron," book, in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 44.

²² J. B. Craven, *Doctor Robert Fludd (Robertus de Fluctibus) : The English Rosicrucian: Life and Writings*, Internet Archive (Kirkwall: William Peace & Son, 1902), <https://archive.org/details/b28034612>, 12.

²³ Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician*, Oxford Academic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199279050.001.0001>, 10.

²⁴ Ibid., 170.

²⁵ Jo Bath and John Newton, *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 7.

the witchcraft acts did not help to signify what was an act of witch and what was not.²⁶ Demoniacs and those possessed could also be called witches and vice versa even if they were not actively doing magical practices. However, in the plays which will be discussed in this thesis, the clarification will be made clear within the analysis of the plays. In the discussions, the first play will center around a witch, the second play someone possessed, the third will be about a demoniac, and the fourth play will deal with someone selling their soul to the Devil.

1.3. Personal Gain

In all the plays that will be considered in this thesis, power and financial gain are a big part of the story. In the first play that is considered there is a desire for financial gain, the second play involves a restoration of a stolen inheritance and status, the third one concerns a financial restoration after exorcism and the fourth involves all kinds of earthly gains, mainly power and money, which results in regret. From the perspective of the Jacobean audience, the malicious practices of magic result in the wish for punishment of the one doing the magic.²⁷ This belief was very common in the genre of tragedy, a very popular genre in the Jacobean theatre, especially with the idea of the “fallen heroes”, which Aristotle described in his *Poetics*, and was very popular in English Renaissance tragedies.²⁸ In her article, “How to Make a Tragic Hero: Early Modern Theories of Hamartia”, Giulia Fiore mentions that Aristotle’s *Poetics* became

²⁶ Ibid., 9.

²⁷ This has to do with their ideas of religion and morality. For further discussions Robert Ornstein’s *The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy* and Irving Ribner’s *Jacobean Tragedy: The Quest for Moral Order*, Taylor & Francis serve as good start.

Robert Ornstein, *The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy*. Robert Ornstein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965); Irving Ribner, *Jacobean Tragedy: The Quest for Moral Order*, Taylor & Francis (London: Routledge, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315302157>.

²⁸ Aristotle, “7.2 First Deduction,” chapter, in *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (New York: Penguin Classics, 1997), 20–21.

an important discussion point during mid-sixteenth century and later in Europe,²⁹ and adds that:

Hence, the ideal tragic character is neither the wicked man passing from prosperity to misfortune, nor the virtuous who falls from prosperity to misfortune, because in the latter case the spectators' feelings would be of moral disgust (μιαρόν), not pity or fear.³⁰

It is important for tragic heroes to face the consequences of their bad actions, yet, not in a way that would make the audience hate them and fail to understand their story. The plays can serve as moral stories for the audience, so the punishment is necessary for the end of the story.³¹ The audience needed to watch carefully the actions of the fallen heroes so that they would not face the same consequences. Therefore, when the bad characters do not achieve the financial gain that they want, this is heavily approved by the audience. The plays that will be considered in this thesis have other elements and characters that impact their gains of power and money. These will be mentioned and discussed and form one of the main reasons why these plays were considered.

1.4. Male and Female Dynamics

In this thesis, only one female and four male characters are considered. In the first play that will be discussed, there will be an opportunity to analyse how both a female and a male character are treated, but the reason for choosing mostly male characters is that there have been fewer studies of possessed men. In the Jacobean period most of those accused of making deals with the devil were women. The main reason for this was the gendered roles given to women. In her article called "Work, Gender and Witchcraft in

²⁹ Giulia Fiore, "How to Make a Tragic Hero: Early Modern Theories of Hamartia," *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristotle's Poetics*, December 6, 2024, 311–341, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004695719_014, 312.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 314.

³¹ Robert Ornstein, *The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy*. Robert Ornstein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).

Early Modern England”, Philippa Carter surveys the labor performed by women, such as dairying, household management, food services, healthcare, childcare, and more and this gives us clues on why women had more potential to be accused.³² As women had more access to products and caring of others, they had more potential of being blamed when things go wrong. However, there were plenty of men who were accused of this crime of devil worshipping too, and we know this mainly thanks to Harsnett’s work.³³ There is a good amount of research on possessed women, especially witches, a study not limited to England.³⁴ However, male demoniacs or male witch cases, without the involvement of women, are less studied. This is mainly because the early seventeenth-century authorities focused more on possessed women than men, which results in a lack of known cases and documents. When it comes to theatre, while the idea of female witches was prominent, we can see many more cases of male characters falling into the devil’s trap. What is interesting is that while some of these characters are possessed by female witches or seduced by women, there are plenty of plays that involve men tricked by the devil himself without any female intervention. There are also famous cases such as *Macbeth* where there are three female witches, yet the main temptation comes from Lady Macbeth who is neither a witch nor possessed. This is a very interesting point, as we see the playwrights of the time being more open minded to the idea of men falling into the traps of the devil than emerges from real-life cases.

³² Philippa Carter, “Work, Gender and Witchcraft in Early Modern England,” *Gender & History* 37, no. 1 (July 5, 2023): 91–108, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12717>, 93-103.

³³ Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures to With-Draw the Harts of Her Maiesties Subiects from Their Allegiance, and from the Truth of Christian Religion Professed in England, Vnder the Pretence of Casting out Devils. Practised by Edmunds, Alias Weston a Iesuit, and Diuers Romish Priestes His Wicked Associates. Where-Vnto Are Annexed the Copies of the Confessions, and Examinations of the Parties Themselues, Which Were Pretended to Be Possessed, and Dispossessed, Taken Vpon Oath before Her Maiesties Commissioners, for Causes Ecclesiasticall.*, *Early English Books Online* (London: James Roberts, 1603), <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A02750.0001.001>.

³⁴ Clarke Garrett, “Women and Witches: Patterns of Analysis,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 3, no. 2 (December 1977): 461–470, <https://doi.org/10.1086/493477>; Brian P. Levack, *Gender and Witchcraft New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic, and Demonology*, Taylor & Francis (New York: Routledge, 2001), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203055830>.

In many of the cases of accusations of interaction with the devil, such as those concerning William Sommers, and Thomas Darling, we see the temptation of witches.

³⁵ Although there are cases of direct interaction with the devil from men which will be explored in this thesis further, generally men were considered to be victims of female witches, rather than being faulty themselves. Meanwhile women were usually in direct contact with the devil and were considered more vulnerable to temptation.

1.5. Religious Aspect

Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences were primarily Protestant or were expected to be so. However, while open and public practise of the Catholic faith was increasingly impossible, that did not mean that there were no Catholic-inclined people. This resulted in secret meetings that took place in various households. The Denham household of Sir George Peckham became famous for its involvement in the Denham exorcisms that took place in 1585-1586, which were recorded by Samuel Harsnett in his previously mentioned work *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures...* in 1603.³⁶ One example of these exorcisms will be discussed more in Chapter III below. However, it is important to note that, the Jacobean audience, when they were watching these plays, had the mindset of the religious division in society. The references they got from the plays in religious approach could make them react in various ways that

³⁵ Both of these cases were related to exorcist John Darrell. Their tales were discussed greatly in Philip C. Almond's book, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England*. Almond's book served as a great source for this thesis which will be referred in the future again.

Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England Contemporary Texts and Their Cultural Contexts*, Cambridge Core (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³⁶ Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures to With-Draw the Harts of Her Maiesties Subiects from Their Allegiance, and from the Truth of Christian Religion Professed in England, Vnder the Pretence of Casting out Devils. Practised by Edmunds, Alias Weston a Iesuit, and Diuers Romish Priestes His Wicked Associates. Where-Vnto Are Annexed the Copies of the Confessions, and Examinations of the Parties Themselves, Which Were Pretended to Be Possessed, and Disposessed, Taken Vpon Oath before Her Maiesties Commissioners, for Causes Ecclesiasticall.*, *Early English Books Online* (London: James Roberts, 1603), <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A02750.0001.001>.

will be discussed throughout this thesis. Moreover, the idea of possessions differed from Catholicism to Protestantism. Catholicism allowed exorcism on the possessed, with the Church even releasing a manual on it in 1614.³⁷ Meanwhile in Protestantism, exorcism was not seen as an option as it focused more on the personal faith. Protestants could exercise praying and fasting to cast out the devil but in 1604, Canon LXXII permitted the fasting without the permission of the authority.³⁸ The ideas of witchcraft and possession certainly existed in Protestantism, but the lack of any fully accepted religious remedy for these problems, made them if anything more frightening and sometimes resulted in the many deadly consequences like the witch trials.

1.6 Main Structure of This Thesis

In this thesis, as stated earlier, the main aim is to see the Jacobean plays that involved devilish elements from the perspective of the audience. When necessary, there will be analysis of the plays. However, the plays mainly will serve as a tool to grasp the mindset of the Jacobean audience. In order to achieve this, there will be explanations of the historical background of the plays. Moreover, in each chapter, there will be comparisons from real life cases. There are four plays that will be considered, each having their own chapter. Two of the plays directly were inspired by real-life while two of them were not. Still, these were the products of their time. Each play and each chapter serves a different purpose. There will be multiple discussions on various topics in each chapter.

³⁷ Francis Young, *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity*, Springer Nature Link (Cham: Springer International Publishing : Imprint : Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29112-3>, 116.

³⁸ 1604 Canons, c. LXXII, in Ministers, their Ordination, Function and Charge, in *Constitutions and Canons ECCLESIASTICAL Of the Church of ENGLAND*, 1604. <https://www.anglican.net/doctrines/1604-canon-law/#p1-3>.

Second chapter, and the first study of a play of this thesis considers *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621)³⁹ by William Rowley, Thomas Dekker and John Ford. The person who wrote this play is still debatable but the common agreement is on these three playwrights. I will be using the 1658 copy of it published on Early English Books Online.⁴⁰ The reasoning of this play being chosen comes from the real life case of Elizabeth Sawyer. The main topics that will be considered in this chapter will be its difference on how possessed females and males were treated, the idea of the “familiar” and the plot of the play and the real-life case being a part of a devilish scheme. All three of these topics serve unique purposes in understanding the Jacobean mindset of demonic possession and witches. Moreover, we will see whether real life or the fictional work has been more cruel.

The third chapter, and second study of a play considers *The History of King Lear* (1606) by William Shakespeare. It is usually referred to as just as *King Lear*. The copy of this play that I will be using is The Oxford Shakespeare edition of it.⁴¹ It is based on the first Quarto of 1608 but the changes were made from different editions when it was necessary.⁴² Edgar in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* serves a very familiar idea yet unfamiliar discussion to the non-Jacobean audience of the play in terms of demonic possessions. In this chapter, there will be discussions of the validity of Edgar’s role as a madman, and as a possessed man with examples from real life, and whether his brother Edmund could be considered as the devil from the perspective of a Jacobean audience. This chapter will serve as an understanding of Jacobean thinking of the link between madness and possession.

³⁹ William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton a Known True Story / Composed into a Tragi-Comedy by Divers Well-Esteemed Poets, William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, John Ford, &c.*, Early English Books Online (London: J. Cottrel for Edward Blackmore, 1658)

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁴² Ibid., 7-9.

The fourth chapter, and the third study of a play considers *Ignoramus* by George Ruggle. The play was originally written in Latin⁴³ but I have decided to use the English translation made by R. C. in 1662.⁴⁴ I have cross-checked it with the Latin version and while it is not a perfect translation, it is quite reasonable. This play, as an academic play, will serve the purpose of understanding the academically educated mindset of plays with devilish elements. The first section will discuss the fear of the unknown and how this effects cases of possession, by looking at educated versus uneducated characters. The second section will provide more understanding of religious divisions concerning the exorcism scene. The third section will examine a real-life case that shows this exorcism scene served an opposite idea of an usual demonic possession.

The fifth chapter, and final study of a play considers *The Devil's Charter* by Barnabe Barnes. The version I am using is the Routledge edition of it.⁴⁵ Serving as a Faustian play, the discussion will be about perceptions of the papacy, and of the Gunpowder Plot seen as a devilish act, as well as the influence of *Doctor Faustus* and Machiavelli in Jacobean plays and audience. This play almost serves as a perfect combination of demonic possessions and English Renaissance drama. This is why it will be the final discussion to portray the beliefs of the Jacobean audience and James I himself.

And, of course, the sixth and final chapter will be the conclusion where I will be discussing this thesis, problems I have encountered, the cases that got my attention which could be researched further and my plans for the future of my research.

⁴³ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus Comædia Coram Regia Maiestate Iacobi Regis Angliæ. &c.*, Early English Books Online (London: Thomas Purfoot, 1630), <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A11179.0001.001>.

⁴⁴ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus a Comedy as It Was Several Times Acted with Extraordinary Applause before the Majesty of King James : With a Supplement Which, out of Respect to the Students of the Common Law, Was Hitherto Wanting / Written in Latine by R. Ruggles ... ; and Translated into English by R. C. ...*, trans. R. C., *Early English Books Online* (London: W. Gilbertson, 1662), <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A57850.0001.001>.

⁴⁵ Barnabe Barnes, *The Devil's Charter* (Routledge, 2013).

CHAPTER II

WITCH AS A SCAPEGOAT:

ELIZABETH SAWYER IN *THE WITCH OF EDMONTON* BY WILLIAM ROWLEY, THOMAS DEKKER AND JOHN FORD

Dog.

Not, if you love me. Dogs love where they are beloved; cherish me, and
I'll do anything for thee.

—William Rowley, Thomas Dekker and John Ford, *The Witch of
Edmonton*, 3.1⁴⁶

In 1621, a play named *The Witch of Edmonton*, written by William Rowley, Thomas Dekker and John Ford, was acted by Prince Charles's Men at the Cockpit Theatre.⁴⁷ The play is inspired by an actual case of a woman named Elizabeth Sawyer, who was found guilty of witchcraft and hanged the same year as the play. The story takes inspiration from the real-life case but, as the record for her trial did not survive, we cannot confirm all of its factuality. However, the play and what is known of the real-life case from a pamphlet written by Henry Goodcole gives us a glimpse of the ideas of the Jacobean playwrights and the audience.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Rowley, Dekker, and Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, 28.

⁴⁷ Ibid.; Rowland Wymer, "A Performance History of The Witch of Edmonton," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 17, no. 2 (2014): 1-23.,
<https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/article/view/232.html>.

⁴⁸ This pamphlet was found in *English Historical Documents Volume V(B) c.1603-1660*, edited by David Charles Douglas, which will be considered again at the last section of this chapter. Henry Goodcole, "50. The Accusation, Trial, Conviction and Condemnation of a Witch in Edmonton, Middlesex, 1621," pamphlet, in *English Historical Documents Volume V(B) c.1603-1660*, ed. David Charles Douglas, 2. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 106–108.

Although the inspiration comes from Elizabeth Sawyer, the play's central character is not her. The play gives us two plots connected by the character, Tom. To summarize the play briefly, it starts with Elizabeth, a poor, old, cunning lady, meeting a familiar dog named Tom. With the help of Tom, Elizabeth manages to turn one of her neighbors mad and commit suicide. Later in the play, we meet the character Frank Thorney, whose story takes up quite a large amount of space in the play. Thorney secretly marries Winifred, who is pregnant with his child, but he publicly marries Susan at his father's wish, as Susan has a good amount of dowry. After marriage, Frank tries to escape with Winifred, but when Susan follows them, he kills her. When he is killing Susan, on stage, we see Elizabeth's dog, Tom, a point which we will discuss in this chapter later on. Frank also harms himself to pretend that someone else did the attack. However, his plot is revealed later, and he is executed. At the same time, Elizabeth also gets accused of being a witch and is executed as well. The dog is still alive by the end of the play and is implied to be continuing its mischief.

The main difference of Elizabeth's actual story and the play centers around the role of the character Frank Thorney in the play, which was not how Elizabeth was accused in real life. In real life, she was suspected of being a witch for a long time and was accused of the death of Agnes Ratcliffe.⁴⁹ In the play, Frank Thorney kills his second wife Susan, while still being married to his first wife, Winifred, and Winifred is still alive. Later, Frank tries to escape with Susan's dowry. What is interesting about this plot-line is that Frank's killing of Susan is does not happen because of Elizabeth's temptation of him as a witch, but with her dog, Tom's influence, or at least that is what the audience supposed to think. Earlier in the play, Elizabeth is portrayed as a lonely, poor woman who turns to witchcraft after being accused falsely of it and befriends a

⁴⁹ Ibid., 107.

“familiar” named Tom, who shows up as a dog. Similar to real life, in the play Elizabeth argues with her neighbor called Anne Ratcliffe who is Agnes Ratcliffe in the real events. However, in actuality Agnes, on her deathbed, accuses Elizabeth of being responsible for her death, while in the play Anne is clearly attacked by the dog Tom at Elizabeth’s direction and is driven insane which later results in her death. As it can be seen from both of these cases, in real life Elizabeth is just being accused with no clear guilt of being a witch.

2.1. Gender of the Witch

There will be more discussion regarding male demoniacs in the second and third chapters of this thesis. However, it is worth noting that female and male demoniacs were not treated equally. Male demoniacs were rarer, while any sort of woman from any sort of background could be accused of being a demoniac. This also had to do with the economical background of the time, as women did not have the same rights as men when it came to the ownership of property. Even if they owned a property, it was easier for them to have it taken away from them. In 1526, William Tyndale published his translation of the New Testament in which he translated Peter 3:7 as;

Lyke wyse ye men dwell with them accordinge to knowledge gevinge honoure vnto the wyfe as vnto the weaker vessell and as vnto them that are heyres also of the grace of lyfe that youre prayers be not let.⁵⁰

King James Bible also relied on this translation for huge amount.⁵¹ The idea of “weaker vessel” also meant that women were more likely to get influenced by devil than men. Unlike men who were seen as more rational and strict in their beliefs, women were seen as prone to any sort of trickery because of their nature. Moreover, early

⁵⁰ Peter 3:7 (TYN)

⁵¹ Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

modern science also believed that women were weaker from men in every sense including having weaker body, smaller head and eventually smaller and weaker brain.⁵² The idea of women being weaker than men did not come from Tyndale, however, the phrase was heavily used in early modern sermons and books too.⁵³ In 1617, Rachel Speght, a poet and polemicist wrote a tract titled *A Mouzell for Melastomus*. The tract involved ideas that were going against the arguments of *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women* (1615) by Joseph Swetnam, a pamphleteer. After *The Arraignment of Lewd...* Swetnam became known as a women hater, and even became the face of it. According to Oxford English Dictionary, the first use of misogynist as a women hater in the English language was recorded in the play *Swetnam the Woman-Hater* (1620).⁵⁴ In her refutation for the first argument of Swetnam, in *A Mouzell for Melastomus*, Speght claims;

To the first of these objections I answered; that Sathan first assailed the woman, because where the hedge is lowest, most easie it is to get over, and she being the weaker vessell was with more facility to be seduced: Like as a Cristall glasse sooner receives a cracke then a strong stone pot. Yet we shall finde the offence of Adam and Eve almost to paralell: For as an ambitious desire of being made like unto God, was the motive which caused her to eate, so likewise was it his; as may plainely appeare by that Ironica, Behold, man is become as one of us: Not that hee was so indeed; but heereby his desire to attaine a greater perfection then God had given him, was reproved.⁵⁵

Elizabeth and Frank are not a couple like Adam and Eve so we cannot put the agency of a “husband” in the same term. However, we can still draw parallels to Speght’s idea of a weaker vessel and the understanding of women’s role in the Jacobean age. Just because the idea of weaker vessel existed in Jacobean age, did not meant there were

⁵² Beth Allison Barr, *The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2021), 162.

⁵³ Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 60-82, 293.

⁵⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*, “misogynist (n.),” March 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8283760555>.

⁵⁵ Rachel Speght, “A Mouzell for Melastomus,” tract, in *Defences of Women: Jane Anger, Rachel Speght, Ester Sowernam and Constantia Munda*, ed. Susan Gushee O’Malley (New York: Routledge, 1996), 57.

not women like Speght who were uncomfortable with it being used for their mistreatment.⁵⁶ Moreover, if we apply the weaker vessel idea, since Elizabeth is not married, we are left with the idea of whom is she being weaker to in comparison. Weaker vessel did not only become an issue for married women for their husbands. It was for every woman as every woman were potential wives, mothers and sisters to men but nothing on their own. Elizabeth did not have anyone to protect her and her existence without a husband meant she was even weaker without the protection. This mindset was even worse for less fortunate women as the richer, well-connected women had some protection from men around them, while poor women like Elizabeth Sawyer were blamed more easily for anything. This idea continued throughout the reign of James I. Women could fall into the devil's trap. This was reason for them to be so frequently accused as demoniacs, mostly in the shape of witches. This idea of witches mostly being women continued for centuries. Today witches are seen by some as feminist symbols for what they endured⁵⁷, even if some of the accused were actually not good people and there were male witches as well. Regardless, we see it clearly that the gender dynamics of the time were less favorable for women. This was true even for women who were not seen as possessed. In the play, the character Susan is only

⁵⁶ In the book *Defences of Women: Jane Anger, Rachel Speght, Ester Sowernam and Constantia Munda* where I read Speght's *A Mouzell for Melastomus* from, the other criticisms to Swetnam's work can be found. *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition* edited by Hilda L. Smith and *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Women's Writing in English, 1540-1700* edited by Danielle Clarke, Sarah C. E. Ross, Elizabeth Scott-Baumann are also good discussion starters for Early Modern British women writers for anyone interested.; Jane Anger et al., *Defences of Women: Jane Anger, Rachel Speght, Ester Sowernam and Constantia Munda*, ed. Susan Gushee O'Malley (New York: Routledge, 1996); Hilda L. Smith, ed., *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Danielle Clarke, Sarah C. E. Ross, and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Women's Writing in English, 1540-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

⁵⁷ Kim Kelly, "Are Witches the Ultimate Feminists?," *The Guardian*, July 5, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jul/05/witches-feminism-books-kristin-j-sollee>; Olivia Wilson, "Feminist Witches Movement Aims to Destigmatize the Craft," *NBC News*, April 11, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/feminist-witches-movement-aims-destigmatize-craft-rcna23495>; Senay Boztas, "Dutch Feminists Campaign for National Monument to 'Witches,'" *The Guardian*, October 4, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/04/dutch-feminists-campaign-for-national-monument-to-witches>.

used as a tool by Frank to gain more money with their marriage. Later, on she is killed by him and Frank tries to run away with her dowry. She is just a tool for Frank to get more money. In the play, Frank Thorney is executed just as Elizabeth is, as they both are found guilty, Frank for murder and Elizabeth for witchcraft. However, Frank is forgiven for his crime but Elizabeth is not forgiven or forgotten.⁵⁸ It is important to note that Frank repents for his crime but Elizabeth does not. In Jacobean audience perspective who is looking for moral story, they may like this ending. However, it is still very unfair to Elizabeth. In the play, Elizabeth is represented as a poor, elderly woman who turns to witchcraft and befriends a “familiar”, because she is lonely, while Frank, a sly man is considered to have been tricked by the Devil from audience’s perspective. Gender does not play a fair game with a moral story. The interesting part of the story is that, from audience’s perspective the main culprit is neither of them, but instead the dog, spawn of the Devil.

2.2. The Familiar

The familiar in this text, Tom, the black dog, plays a pivotal role in the play. The familiar was a concept that involved various animals and, rarely in witch trials, supernatural creatures that could not be defined as specific animals, but were accepted as having appeared because they were mentioned by the accused. This was my observation from looking at various Jacobean cases involving witches, but James Sharpe, in his article “The Witch’s Familiar in Elizabethan England”, goes on to detail what kind of creatures these familiars could be seen as.⁵⁹ The familiars in the various cases were mainly cats, with toads and birds, along with dogs in a small minority of

⁵⁸ Rowley, Dekker, and Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, 59.

⁵⁹ Sharpe, James. “The Witch’s Familiar in Elizabethan England.” in *Authority and Consent in Tudor England: Essays Presented to C.S.L. Davies*, edited by George Bernard and Steven Gunn. London: Routledge, 2002: 219-232.

cases. It is important to note that M. A. Murray's article, "Witches' Familiars in England" served as a great introduction for many years on what kind of familiars existed, but being written in 1918, some of it became outdated as historians discovered more cases of witch trials. It is still a worth reading but Sharpe's aforementioned article helps more.⁶⁰ The Jacobean audience were familiar with familiars both on and off stage. In the play Tom and Elizabeth are both cunning as Elizabeth is already interested in witchcraft before Tom. However, Tom brings the most out of her. In 1566, one of the first witch executions occurred as the outcome of Agnes Waterhouse being accused of being a witch alongside Elizabeth Francis and Joan Waterhouse.⁶¹ Agnes admitted being a witch and also having a cat named Sathan (or Satan) who was a familiar. Agnes was also accused of turning Sathan into other kinds of creatures. The most important, and the one that was used against her, was the case of the familiar with her neighbor Agnes Brown. Brown accused Agnes (Waterhouse) of owning a demonic black dog that was trying to attack her and when Brown asked the dog whom he belonged to he looked at Agnes's house.⁶² As we can see from the play and this case, a similar pattern occurs, a black dog. The idea of a black dog being scary was not something new to this period. It has been a part of English folklore for an unknown amount of time.⁶³ As it was seen as a frightening creature, it was easily deemed a familiar.

⁶⁰ Ibid.; M. A. Murray, "Witches' Familiars in England", *Man*, 61 (July, 1918): 101-4, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2787283>.

⁶¹ *The Examination and Confession of Certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the Countie of Essex: Before the Quenes Maiesties Judges, the Xxvi Daye of July, Anno 1566, at the Assise Holden There as Then, and One of Them Put to Death for the Same Offence, as Their Examination Declareth More at Large.*, *Early English Books Online* (London: By Willyam Powell for Wyllyam Pickeringe dwelling at Sainte Magnus corner and are there for to be soulede, 1566), <https://name.umd.umich.edu/A09586.0001.001>.

⁶² Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination*, Taylor & Francis (London: Routledge, 1992), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203409275>, 170-171.

⁶³ Edwin Sidney Hartland, "SPECTRE-DOGS.," essay, in *English Fairy and Other Folk Tales* (London: W. Scott, 1906), 234-237

In the play Tom is generally black, except he can turn into a white dog as well. Towards the end of the play in Act 5, Scene 1, after Elizabeth gets accused of being a witch, Tom shows up as white and talks with Elizabeth as;

“Sawy. Why dost thou thus appear to me in white, as if thou wert the Ghost of my dear love?

Dog. I am dogged, list not to tell thee, yet to torment thee: my whiteness puts thee in minde of thy winding Sweet.

Sawy. Am I near death?

Dog. Yes, if the Dog of Hell be near thee. When the Devil comes to thee as a Lamb, have at thy Throat.

Sawy. Off, Cur.

Dog. He has the back of a Sheep, but the belly of an Otter: devours by Sea and Land. Why am I in white? didst thou not pray to me?

Sawy. Yes, thou dissembling Hell-hound: why now in white more then at other times?

Dog. Be blasted with the News; whiteness is days Foot-boy, a forerunner to light, which shews thy old rivel'd face: Villaines are strip't naked, the Witch must be beaten out of her Cock-pit”.

—William Rowley, Thomas Dekker and John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, 5.1⁶⁴

As the black dog is often associated with death and feels like a ghostly figure, the choice of Elizabeth calling the white dog as ghostly is quite interesting. However, the most important part of this text is where we see the change in Tom’s color, when we understand the end of Elizabeth will be near. Tom does not stay faithful to Elizabeth throughout the play but at the end will leave her to her end and continue to spread evil somewhere else. In a sense, to Elizabeth, the familiar becomes unfamiliar. The audience can understand this trickery and evilness easily by the imagery of the dog. In the play, *The Witch of Edmonton*, we have a case of an actual familiar that is speaking on stage. However, in reality, the familiar could be anything that people used to accuse as person to be a witch and using the familiar as a tool or the familiar could be helping the soon to be witch. Although not related to Jacobean period, one of the most famous cases of a white dog as a familiar came from The English Civil War period with James

⁶⁴ Rowley, Dekker, and Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, 53.

I's grandson Prince Rupert of the Rhine, who had a white poodle named Boye.⁶⁵ As he accompanied him throughout his battles, rumors spread that Boye was a familiar and had supernatural powers. However, later on Boye died in the battlefield.⁶⁶ Regardless, this shows us that the fascination with familiars continued even after Jacobean period.

2.3. Murder at the Temptation of the Devil

In *The Witch of Edmonton*, Elizabeth Sawyer's alleged involvement with the death of her neighbor and Frank's murder of his wife shows us two temptations of devil. Although it is unclear in the play whether Tom directly encourages Frank to murder, he stays on the stage to show us that murder was a devilish act. For this thesis, many plays related to witchcraft were eliminated for various reasons. One of them was *The Yorkshire Tragedy* by Thomas Middleton, which was falsely attributed to Shakespeare.⁶⁷ The play focuses on a real-life domestic tragedy with the case of Walter Calverley, a squire from Yorkshire, set in 1605.⁶⁸ Calverley, who for a long time suspected that his children were not actually his but from someone else, had a breakdown after losing money and went on a murder spree of killing his wife and his two sons, William and Walter, and was caught when he was on his way to murder his infant son Henry who was with a wet nurse. *The Yorkshire Tragedy* does not call Calverley or anyone else by their own names but just uses words like "Husband" and

⁶⁵ Charles Spencer, *Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* (London: Phoenix, 2008), 127.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 128.

⁶⁷ Thomas Middleton, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 452.

⁶⁸ *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers the One by Maister Cauerley, a Yorkeshire Gentleman, Practised Vpon His Wife, and Committed Vppon His Two Children, the Three and Twentie of Aprill 1605. The Other, by Mistris Browne, and Her Seruant Peter, Vpon Her Husband, Who Were Executed in Lent Last Past at Bury in Suffolke. 1605.*, *Early English Books Online* (London: By V. S[immes] for Nathanael Butter dwelling in Paules churchyard neere Saint Austens gate, 1605), <https://www.proquest.com/eebo/books/two-most-vnnaturall-bloodie-murthers-one-maister/docview/2240897121/>.

“Wife”. However, it is clear to the audience that the play was heavily inspired by the actual case. Although Thomas Middleton himself wrote another play about witchcraft, *The Witch* (1616),⁶⁹ and may have been involved with *The Witch of Edmonton* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, he did not center *The Yorkshire Tragedy* around any devilish temptations. However, the 1605 pamphlet about the Walter Calverley case, as well as another case, has an image of Calverley’s murderous spree with evil appearing to the left of his back (fig.1).

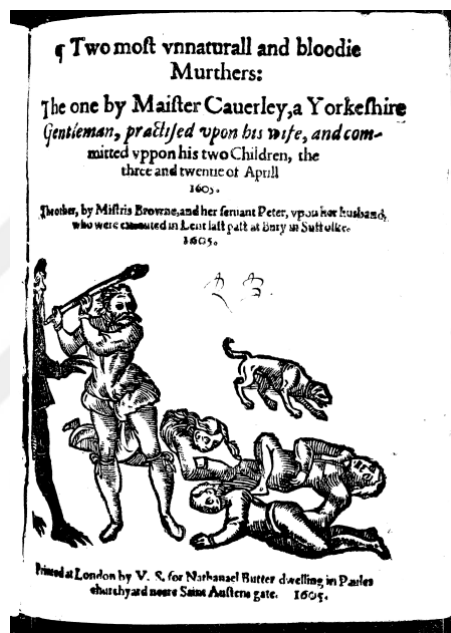


Figure 1: *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers the One by Maister Cauerley, a Yorkeshire Gentleman, Practised Vpon His Wife, and Committed Vppon His Two Children, the Three and Twentie of Aprill 1605. The Other, by Mistris Browne, and Her Seruant Peter, Vpon Her Husband, Who Were Executed in Lent Last Past at Bury in Suffolke. 1605.*⁷⁰

The idea is that evil in the form of the devil tempts Calverley to murder. This is an interesting point, as Calverley already had malicious ideas about his children and he

⁶⁹ Thomas Middleton, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 1129-1164.

⁷⁰ *Two Most Vnnaturall and Bloodie Murthers the One by Maister Cauerley, a Yorkeshire Gentleman, Practised Vpon His Wife, and Committed Vppon His Two Children, the Three and Twentie of Aprill 1605. The Other, by Mistris Browne, and Her Seruant Peter, Vpon Her Husband, Who Were Executed in Lent Last Past at Bury in Suffolke. 1605.*, *Early English Books Online* (London: By V. S[immes] for Nathanael Butter dwelling in Paules churchyard neere Saint Austens gate, 1605), <https://www.proquest.com/eebo/books/two-most-vnnaturall-bloodie-murthers-one-maister/docview/2240897121/>.

did not show much remorse for them. As we saw with Elizabeth Sawyer, the devil chooses the fragile and lonely, but the devil can also tempt one to isolate themselves from others to achieve their final goal. Calverley, however, is not the only one who is depicted in such a way. In a 1614 pamphlet called “A Horrible Creuel and bloody Murther” the murder of Edward Hall, a wealthy miller, is depicted (fig.2).

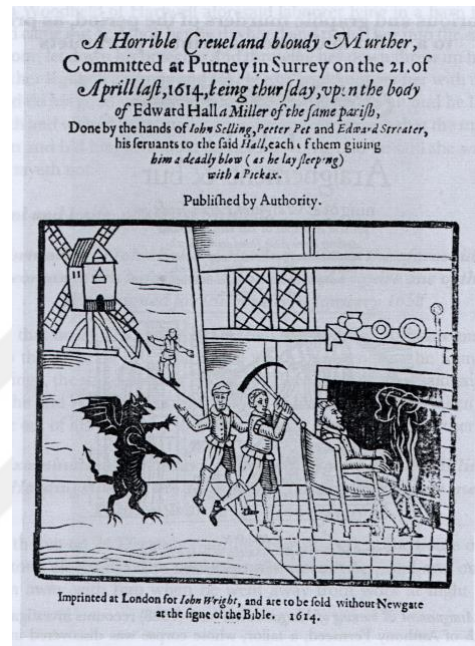


Figure 2: A horrible creuel and bloody murther committed at Putney in Surrey on the 21. of Aprill last, 1614, being thursday, vpon the body of Edward Hall a Miller of the same parish, Done by the hands of Iohn Selling, Peeter Pet and Edward Streater, his seruants to the said Hall, each of them giuing him a deadly blow (as he lay sleeping) with a Pickax. Published by authority.⁷¹

Hall was killed by his servants who, after they were caught, portrayed him as selfish and miserly. The case became very famous at the time. One thing that is interesting from the pamphlet is that once again devil stands behind the murderers to motivate them to do the killing. This idea resembles the way the dog, Tom, was used as a tool

⁷¹ *A horrible creuel and bloody murther committed at Putney in Surrey on the 21. of Aprill last, 1614, being thursday, vpon the body of Edward Hall a Miller of the same parish, Done by the hands of Iohn Selling, Peeter Pet and Edward Streater, his seruants to the said Hall, each of them giuing him a deadly blow (as he lay sleeping) with a Pickax. Published by authority, pamphlet, in English Historical Documents Volume V(B) c.1603-1660, ed. David Charles Douglas, 2. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 102.*

to show the Jacobean audience that the idea of murder is an idea that originates from the devil as Tom also appeared on stage when Frank killed his wife, Susan.⁷² Whether it is on a pamphlet or on stage, Jacobean audiences saw that murdering someone meant that the murderer had been tricked or otherwise influenced by the devil against God's wishes.

In the main play considered in this chapter, *The Witch of Edmonton*, we can see many different topics that would be on a Jacobean audience's mind when it comes to witchcraft and demonic possession. The mindset of blaming women more than men for same situations is very misogynistic from today's perspective. However, in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, the religious and social context meant that women deemed vulnerable to the devil. Familiars are a very interesting topic as they could be friends to lonely, poor people but could also trick them into doing bad things. There is a clear understanding in both today's and the Jacobean audience's perspective when it comes to media that animals can take on supernatural roles. It does seem that, concerning the murder, the Jacobean audience could easily think of it as something prompted by the devil, as pamphlets about real-life cases did not shy away from using imagery that suggested this.

We have discussed Tom the dog in this chapter, and in the next chapter, it is time to discuss Tom o' Bedlam.

⁷² Rowley, Dekker, and Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, 33.

CHAPTER III

POSSESSION OF EDGAR IN SHAKESPEARE'S *KING LEAR*

Edgar

...“Poor Turlygod! Poor Tom!”

That's something yet. Edgar I nothing am.

—William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 2,3,21⁷³

William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1606) includes many characters that can be considered faulty, including the character the play takes its name from, King Lear. As *King Lear* is a tragedy, it is not uncommon to expect characters that can be considered “fallen”⁷⁴. However, one character that is very tragic that separates itself from others is Edgar. Edgar is the legitimate son of the Earl of Gloucester, who is loyal to Lear. Edgar is noted as legitimate son as he also has a half-brother, Edmund, the illegitimate son of the Earl of Gloucester. Lear and the Earl of Gloucester draw parallels to each other in the play as how they listen to their children that trick them and not their actual, faithful children. In the case of Lear, it is Cordelia and in the case of Gloucester, it is Edgar that are the faithful children unlike their siblings who tricked the each parent. Both of their other children want their fathers' lands.

In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Edgar is not one of the main characters; however, his storyline and characterization are very remarkable for the play's audience. The main story of *King Lear* starts with Lear dividing his lands between his three

⁷³ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁷⁴ Aristotle, “7.2 First Deduction,” chapter, in *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (New York: Penguin Classics, 1997), 20–21.

daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia, according to how they prove their love for him. Unlike her sisters, Cordelia refuses to lie about her love for Lear, which results in her being disinherited and marrying the King of France at her father's wish. Around the same time, the Earl of Gloucester is being tricked by his illegitimate younger son, Edmund, who claims that the elder, legitimate son, Edgar, had tried to usurp Gloucester's estate. Both Lear and Gloucester are tricked by their sly children. Edgar, after his father was tricked by his brother and he was kicked out of his house, wanders around and becomes Tom o' Bedlam. Lear, not being accepted by two of his daughters in their houses after receiving their lands, calls them out and wanders out in the storm with his supporter, the Earl of Kent, and his fool. Around the same time, the Duke of Albany, Goneril's husband, and the Duke of Cornwall, Regan's husband, are at war, in which the King of France, Cordelia's husband, becomes embroiled as well. Edmund uses this chance to report his father to Cornwall that Gloucester knows of the French invasion, which results in Gloucester having his eyes gouged out and wandering out too. While going around, Gloucester meets Edgar but does not recognize him as Tom o' Bedlam. To sum up the rest briefly, the two sisters betray their husbands too, and both flirt with Edmund to use him as a tool to kill their husbands. Albany learns about the plot and manages to stay alive. In the end, everyone dies except Albany, Kent, and Edgar. Albany suggests ruling the kingdom as a trio, but Kent refuses. The play ends without knowing whether Edgar accepted it, but it is assumed he did.

As we can see, Edgar chooses a very different and unexpected path as he gets kicked out of his house, earlier in the play. Edgar decides to play the role of Tom o' Bedlam. Tom o' Bedlam is a poem that dates back to the time of Shakespeare in which Tom is a beggar from Bedlam.⁷⁵ Bedlam, standing for Bethlem Royal Hospital, was a

⁷⁵ Harold Bloom, *How to Read and Why* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 79-80

hospital for “mad” people during the time of Shakespeare. However, its history was complicated. In his book *This Way Madness Lies*, Mike Jay explains the history of the hospital with the story of an alderman who went to crusades, got lost and a star guided him to Bethlehem;

It begins in the 13th century, when it was founded by a London alderman named Simon FitzMary...

...On his return to London, he gave thanks for his salvation by founding a priory on his land at St Botolph without Bishopsgate - more or less the area now occupied by Liverpool Street station - dedicated to St Mary of Bethlehem. The main function of the priory was to collect alms, but by 1400 it was also serving as a hospital, in the medieval sense of the word preserved in 'hospitality': a refuge for strangers in need, with no medical care implied. It housed a small number of charitable cases, including the old and infirm, but gradually began to specialize in those referred to as 'distracted', 'madde' or 'lunaticke'. These terms are difficult to translate, as our modern diagnoses probably will be for historians of the future.⁷⁶

These people became associated with Bedlam and created a reputation for “mad people” as “Bedlams”. As Jay points out the terms are hard to grasp. Today madness is not a term that is used generally in a malicious way but for the time, madness was not how people should have behaved. It was abnormal and could be dangerous. Bedlams usually were outcasts and even if they were not mad, they often slowly became mad. Moreover, there was no cure for this “madness”. The treatment and control of madness was a domestic idea rather than an institution.⁷⁷ The hospital was not really a hospital but more so a place to stay for poor people who had nobody and could be considered danger to society.

When we consider Bedlam’s history, we have to question the idea of Edgar taking up the role of a madman or using this character of Tom as a cover for something else. Was he mad or was he possessed or was he pretending to be either or both? In his

⁷⁶ Mike Jay, *This Way Madness Lies* (NY: Thames & Hudson, 2016), 20.

⁷⁷ Katharine Hodgkin, *Madness in Seventeenth-Century Autobiography* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 40-41.

article, “Exorcism Into Art”, Stephen Greenblatt talks about the words that Edgar uses as Tom and makes a claim that;

Unjustly accused of treason, Gloucester's good son Edgar saves his life by disguising himself as the mad and possessed beggar, Tom of Bedlam. "Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once: as Obidicut, of lust; Hoberdiance, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing." The devils' names are taken directly from Harsnett, who cites them as typical examples of the theatrical mumbo jumbo that fraudulent demoniacs use, names that strain to conjure up a nonexistent supernatural realm.⁷⁸

Shakespeare's use of these words are quite interesting as initially Edgar represents himself to us as a mad man, rather than a possessed one. The idea of madness and possession actually go hand in hand together in the Jacobean era.⁷⁹ In some cases the distinction is made according to the economic status of the person in question, which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, it is worth noting that both Stephen Greenblatt in the aforementioned article and F. W. Brownlow in his book, *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham*,⁸⁰ argues for Edgar's alleged possession and gives examples from the time. Before we discuss Edgar as a possessed man, we have to consider Edgar's mad role in depth and the importance of it for the Jacobean audience.

3.1. About Bedlam and Edgar's Mad Role

Unfortunately we cannot access the Bedlam patient records before 1683, and most likely they never existed. While there are documents for other material related to the hospital, the patient cases are not known. However, we know from the other records

⁷⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, “Exorcism Into Art,” *Representations* 12 (1985): 15–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3043774>, 22.

⁷⁹ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 117.

⁸⁰ F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham* (Newark, London: University of Delaware Press ; Associated University Presses, 1993).

of the time how many and what kind of patients were treated there. According to Petteri Pietikäinen in his book, *Madness: A History*,

For a long time, the number of patients at Bethlem remained low: at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the asylum housed six patients, and by the end of the sixteenth century the number had grown only to about 20. Small and squalid, it remained the only mental asylum in England until the mid-seventeenth century. When the asylum was burned down by fire, it was relocated and rebuilt in 1677, and then it was a much bigger, almost palace-like building that housed 100 patients. Bethlem continued as a mental hospital in the City of London until 1948.⁸¹

It can be estimated that by the time Shakespeare wrote *King Lear*, the number of patients could be somewhere from six to twenty. While the hospital was not a big one, as Pietikäinen mentions, it was the only mental asylum in England. This is what gave it its reputation. There were no other “Bedlams”. The reason why Edgar chooses the role of Tom and does not continue as Edgar is the reason for how Bedlam patients were seen by the public. Many Bedlam patients were poor or outcasts and did not have any sort of economic freedom or income or estate that waited for them.⁸² Edgar, as the son of an earl, was used to having many things to inherit, including the title, even if now he was left on his own. If the audience saw Edgar as an actual pauper and mad man, and not as someone portraying himself as a poor man, this would create problems for the end of the play, as Edgar ends up being offered the crown and the land by Albany to rule with him, alongside Kent, though Kent refuses. Edgar tries to look poor as he is “now” poor. However, he does not just act as poor, but fully embraces the role of Tom. This sort of acceptance resembles the way demoniacs are possessed as they also accept their roles as possessed regardless if they really believed they were or faking it. In the Early Modern period, differentiating madness and possession was

⁸¹ Petteri Pietikäinen, *Madness: A History* (London: Routledge, 2015), 85.

⁸² Mike Jay, *This Way Madness Lies* (NY: Thames & Hudson, 2016), 20.

really hard and melancholy was thrown into the mix too.⁸³ Any sort of unfamiliar behavior was seen as either of those depending on the situation. This can explain all the theatrics that Edgar performs and what he says as Tom, as he is actually possessed, either by demons or his own mind. Possession might be seen as bad or dangerous for a real pauper, but as the audience sees this son of an earl that was betrayed by his own brother and lost everything, they can feel sympathy for him.

3.2. Edgar as Possessed

If we follow the ideas of Greenblatt and Brownlow, and consider Edgar as someone possessed, we can have some more understanding of his condition. There are not as many cases concerning real-life male demoniacs as there are of female demoniacs. In his book *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West*, Brian P. Levack mentions that many cases of male demoniacs are usually of rich people, aristocrats or the well-educated.⁸⁴ This contradicts the idea of poor Tom of Bedlam, but fits the idea of Edgar himself more. However, there are some cases of other male demoniacs recorded, mainly by John Darrell, the exorcist, and by Samuel Harsnett. Both Greenblatt and Brownlow consider some of these cases, which we will look into now.

Greenblatt in his article mentions the case of William Sommers,⁸⁵ the last case of John Darrell, while Brownlow mentions several cases from Harsnett's book.⁸⁶ It is worth noting that neither make any claim for these cases being an actual inspiration

⁸³ Katharine Hodgkin, "Reasoning with Unreason: Visions, Witchcraft, and Madness in Early Modern England," *Languages of Witchcraft*, 2001: 217-236, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-333-98529-8_12, 218.

⁸⁴ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 181.

⁸⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, "Exorcism Into Art," *Representations* 12 (1985): 15–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3043774>

⁸⁶ F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham* (Newark, London: University of Delaware Press ; Associated University Presses, 1993).

for Edgar, but rather just examples of demonic possessions. Sommers was a young man from Nottingham who showed symptoms of self-harm and demonic speeches.⁸⁷ The way he behaved resembles the way Edgar behaved when he turned into Tom, as Edgar too slightly harms himself to look very poor. The demonic speeches Sommers gave were also pointed out by Greenblatt earlier. However, Sommers was just a trainee musician.⁸⁸ Moreover, his case involved him accusing another person of being a witch. This person, Alice Freeman, was a cousin of a high-ranking official and she was cleared of the charge.⁸⁹ This resulted in the whole case being regarded as a hoax. Sommers' story was not one which a Jacobean audience would feel sorry about.

When it comes to Brownlow's book, one case that stands out is the case of Richard Mainy, one of the Denham exorcisms.⁹⁰ He was a part of a well-known family in Kent and was involved with many of the people within the Denham household, including Anthony Babington.⁹¹ Mainy's main argument of his demonic behaviour was the "fit of a Mother".⁹² In the article, "His Belly, Her Seed: Gender and Medicine in Early Modern Demonic Possession", Boyd Brogan discusses this idea of "fit of a mother" and explains that what it means is hysteria, which could also work for Edgar.⁹³ However, the sexual desires demonstrated by Mainy do not fit Edgar.⁹⁴ Yet, the demons he talks about⁹⁵ are the same as the demons of Edgar that were pointed out by Greenblatt. It is clear that Shakespeare drew inspiration from Mainy for Edgar.

⁸⁷ Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England Contemporary Texts and Their Cultural Contexts*, Cambridge Core (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 257.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 240.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 241.

⁹⁰ F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham*, 22.

⁹¹ Ibid., 24.

⁹² Ibid., 399, 402-403, 408.

⁹³ Boyd Brogan, "His Belly, Her Seed: Gender and Medicine in Early Modern Demonic Possession," *Representations* 147, no. 1 (2019): 1-25, <https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2019.147.1.1>.

⁹⁴ Ibid.; F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham*, 113.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 402.

However, this inspiration goes no further. Once again, we see an example of an “unexpected behavior” from the demoniac, that is similar to Edgar’s case. However, just like the case of Sommers, this case, including other Denham exorcisms, turned out to be regarded as a hoax. Mainy may have served as an example of a demoniac with demonic speeches, and the informed Jacobean audience, who had become familiar with the demons of Mainy, either by reading about them or hearing from others, may have used that information to interpret the possession of Edgar. However, Mainy’s story does not have much common with Edgar apart from the behavior which is common with many demoniacs.

One other case that can be looked into is the case of Alexander Nyndge and his brother Edward. In January 1573, Alexander starts showing various symptoms that results in him being considered mad.⁹⁶ It is interesting that the case was considered mental rather than physical, as many of these symptoms, especially swellings, showed something wrong with the body.⁹⁷ However, his brother Edward took the whole case to another point and claimed that Alexander was not mad but rather possessed by a demon, which Alexander also accepted.⁹⁸ Later, Alexander started showing more symptoms that could be seen as results of possession. The symptoms included refusal to eat, banging his head on surfaces, and disfiguration on his body, including several lumps. This turns into an obsession for Edward and he practices exorcism on Alexander and even speaks to the demon through Alexander.⁹⁹ The story was published twice, once in the 1570s and later in 1615.¹⁰⁰ Whether Shakespeare was

⁹⁶ Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England Contemporary Texts and Their Cultural Contexts*, Cambridge Core (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 43.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

familiar with the first publication, we cannot be sure. However, this case is remarkable for showing how “madness” and possession could be considered similar to one another. The previous cases of Sommers and Mainy also show the symptoms of behavior that could be considered “mad”. In fact, in Alexander’s case, if the story was not a hoax, it is even more likely that he was suffering from a physical illness that affected his mind, rather than an actual underlying mental issue.

Edgar is usually considered as just “mad”. However, as can be seen, for the Jacobean audience the understanding could be different. Edgar could be mad, possessed or even both. The important part of his story is that he serves as an example of someone who does not fall into the trap of becoming a malicious person. He regains his self-control towards the end of the play and becomes Edgar once again. In a way, just like he is either mad or possessed, he gets cured or feels like he gets exorcised, even though there is no actual exorcism in the play. At the end of the play, justice is served and he gets revenge on his brother, proving himself to his father and being offered the chance to rule alongside Albany. This justice was something most likely that the Jacobean audience would have liked to see.

3.3. Edmund as the Devil

Although Edmund, the illegitimate half-brother of Edgar, is not referred to with signs of the Devil or demons, for the Jacobean audience he could certainly be seen as a portrayal of evil. His story draws few parallels with the story of Lucifer.¹⁰¹ Although the name Lucifer is not used much by newest Bible editions in our day like New International Version, English Standard Version or New Living Translation, in Isaiah 14:12 in King James Bible, he is referred to as such. Similar to Lucifer, Edmund is not

¹⁰¹ Isaiah 14:12-17 (KJV)

happy with what he has and wants to achieve more. He, just like Lucifer, is rebellious and prideful. Moreover, just as Lucifer rises against his creator God, Edmund rises against his father. Although we see that Edmund wins over his father, at the end he falls just like Lucifer and but unlike Lucifer, Edmund is also killed by Edgar. If we consider Edgar as an allegorical representative of humanity and how humans should behave, this gives the play another moral story of wanting and needing to get rid of devil. Moreover, Edmund is very good at using rhetoric. The devil, in Early Modern belief, uses rhetoric to influence humans.¹⁰² Aristotelean ideas became a huge part of Renaissance intellectuality.¹⁰³ We already discussed Aristotle's place in tragedy earlier but he was influential overall. Aristotle was already famous in Medieval English philosophy with names like John of Salisbury¹⁰⁴ and Thomas Aquinas¹⁰⁵ whose works were translated and Aristotle was taught in Oxford.¹⁰⁶ Aristotle believed that rhetoric could be used fairly and morally as it depended on the speaker's character (ethos), but he also knew it could be used to justify the evil means.¹⁰⁷ Edmund uses his speeches to influence others, mainly his father to convince Edgar is after his estates and will betray him. In the eyes of Jacobean audience, whether educated or uneducated, Edmund serves a role that is falling to the trickery of the Devil. However, Edmund's allegory does not end here.

¹⁰² David Parry, "As an Angel of Light: Satanic Rhetoric in Early Modern Literature and Theology," article, in *The Hermeneutics of Hell: Visions and Representations of the Devil in World Literature*, ed. Gregor Thuswaldner and Daniel Russ Russ (Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2017): 47-71, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52198-5_4.

¹⁰³ Angus Gowland, "Ancient and Renaissance Rhetoric and the History of Concepts," *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 67–83, <https://doi.org/10.7227/r.6.1.5>, 71.

¹⁰⁴ Cary J Nederman and J Brückmann, "Aristotelianism in John of Salisbury's Policraticus," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 21, no. 2 (April 1983): 203–229, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.1983.0044>; Cary J. Nederman, "The Aristotelian Doctrine of the Mean and John of Salisbury's 'Concept of Liberty,'" *Vivarium* 24, no. 2 (1986): 128–42, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853486x00077>.

¹⁰⁵ R. A. Markus, "THE IMPACT OF ARISTOTLE ON MEDIEVAL THOUGHT," *Blackfriars* 42, no. 490 (March 1961): 96–102, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1961.tb06861.x>.

¹⁰⁶ John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy An Historical and Philosophical Introduction*, Taylor & Francis (London: Routledge, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203968765>, 224.

¹⁰⁷ Christof Rapp, "Aristotle's Rhetoric," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2023, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/#ArisRhetMisu>

One thing that separated James I and the Jacobean audience when it came to magic were their views on natural magic¹⁰⁸, also sometimes called white magic.¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth I had of course been against witchcraft, but she had, it seems, some appreciation of natural magic, including astrology and its predictive value to the point that even her coronation date was set by Dee based on astrological calculations.¹¹⁰ However, John Dee, the former astronomer/astrologer of Elizabeth I, was rejected by James I when he came to throne and Dee later died in poverty.¹¹¹ James I's ideas on astrology and occultism were very clear in his book *Daemonologie* which he had written before he became king of England. According to James, astrology could not be accepted as it was a judiciary practice which meant that it was going against God's plans.¹¹² James believed in science and supported it throughout his life, but he was very clear in drawing the line between science and magic, which is more common understanding today than in the seventeenth century. However, this did not mean the Jacobean audience, regular folk, shared the same beliefs as the king. Occultism, alongside cunning folk, although they could sometimes be seen as witches, and astrology continued to be practices throughout James I's reign and later.¹¹³ James I

¹⁰⁸ Stuart Clark, "Natural Magic," article, in *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 214-232, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198208082.003.0014>.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Deacon, *John Dee: Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I*, Internet Archive (London: Frederick Müller, 1968), <https://archive.org/details/johndeescientistgeographerastrologerandsecretagenttoelizabethibyricharddeacon/>, 20.

¹¹⁰ William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 7.

¹¹¹ Richard Deacon, *John Dee: Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I*, Internet Archive (London: Frederick Müller, 1968), <https://archive.org/details/johndeescientistgeographerastrologerandsecretagenttoelizabethibyricharddeacon/>, 268.

¹¹² King James VI, *Daemonologie in Forme of a Dialogue, Diuided into Three Bookes*, Early English Books Online (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Walde-graue printer to the Kings Majestie, 1597), <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04243.0001.001>, 10,14

¹¹³ Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician*, Oxford Academic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199279050.001.0001>; Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning-Folk in English History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2007).

himself was clear to draw the line, but he was also very careful to not offend too many people. We see the dilemma of James I when it came to magic because he tried to be rational about it, but this was also one of the reasons why he was so concerned about witches. In 1589, the then James VI of Scotland was waiting for his new bride Anne to arrive in Scotland from Denmark. However, issues with the weather caused several problems to Anne's journey, including a delay of her arrival. In Denmark, witches were blamed for this failed journey, an explanation James also accepted and this stimulated the development of his ideas about witches.¹¹⁴ One of the main reasons of James I's obsession with practices of magic came not only because he thought they were irrational and went against God, but also because he was fearful of them. Even if he did not approve any sort of believe that will go against God's plans, in his Scottish court there were many patrons of astrologers.¹¹⁵ In England, he did not meddle with the patronage of occultists and astrologers, and they continued to practice in some towns. However, he did not want them anywhere close to him. The only occultist person he ever supported was Robert Fludd and even with him, he was pretty hesitant and did not endorse his occultist works.¹¹⁶

The difference of James I and the Jacobean audience could perhaps be illustrated by the example of Edmund in *King Lear*. Similar to James, Edmund was also not a believer of astrology. Harry Rusche in his article, "Edmund's Conception and Nativity in *King Lear*", states:

In *King Lear* (I. ii), Edmund mocks Gloucester by giving a few details of his own conception and nativity:

My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous.

¹¹⁴ Gareth Russell, *Queen James: A New History About the Life and Loves of Britain's First King, James Stuart* (London: Williams Collins, 2025), 151.

¹¹⁵ Stephen Pumfrey and Frances Dawbarn, "Science and Patronage in England, 1570-1625: A Preliminary Study," *History of Science* 42, no. 2 (June 2004): 137-188, <https://doi.org/10.1177/007327530404200201>, 117.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Fut! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.¹¹⁷

Rusche's point shows us one another thing. Edmund was not only mocking astrology but he was also mocking his father, the earl of Gloucester. Later on in the play both fathers Lear and the earl of Gloucester continue to express their belief in the stars and other elements in the sky.¹¹⁸ We can use this as a reflection of the transition from Elizabethan to Jacobean. The old, the father, believed in magic, while the young, Edmund, rejected astrology. However, Edmund's personality comes into play with this mindset. The Jacobean audience could see this as an example of the new replacing the old, but Edmund is not a character that the Jacobean audience could approve of. Moreover, both King Lear and the earl of Gloucester are seen as characters that were tricked by their children. They are suffering the consequences and from the realization of this throughout the play, though by the end they have the audience's sympathies. We cannot say that William Shakespeare did not like James I and showed the Jacobean audience that James was not one of them. Nothing suggests this. James I enjoyed theatre his whole life, including the plays of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare was also part of King's Men, which James I was patron of.¹¹⁹ However, Shakespeare did love and respect Elizabeth I. Many of Shakespeare's plays included Tudor propaganda, especially his histories, three parts *Henry VI*, *Richard III* (1597) and *King Henry VIII, or, All Is True* (1613). The play *King Henry VIII, or, All Is True* is not about his life but his involvement with Anne Boleyn and the birth of Elizabeth I which is celebrated in the play. And, of course, unlike the title's claim, all is not even true. Shakespeare

¹¹⁷ Harry Rusche, "Edmund's Conception and Nativity in King Lear," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1969): 161-164, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2869002>.

¹¹⁸ Phebe Jensen, "Causes in Nature: Popular Astrology in King Lear," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 205-227, <https://doi.org/10.1353/shq.2018.0027>.

¹¹⁹ James J. Marino, *Owning William Shakespeare: The King's Men and Their Intellectual Property* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

only lived thirteen years after James I's accession to the throne. The plays he wrote in the time that followed,¹²⁰ *Measure for Measure* (1604), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1606), *Macbeth* (1606), *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1606/1608), *Timon of Athens* (1607), *Coriolanus* (1608), *Pericles* (1608), *Cymbeline* (1609), *The Winter's Tale* (1611), *The Tempest* (1611) and *King Henry VIII, or, All Is True* (1613). Only three of these were comedies, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. In fact, the authorship of *Measure for Measure*, *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles* are still debatable and *The Tempest* could be regarded as a tragedy as well, as it had some of the most grotesque writings that Shakespeare had. Shakespeare's most grotesque work *Titus Andronicus*¹²¹ was written during the period of Elizabeth I. However, we can see it clearly that some of the most famous and darkest Shakespeare plays came during the period of James I. Four of these works had the idea of temptation and betrayal, *Othello*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* with the latter two having devilish elements. It seems Shakespeare was heavily inspired by the ongoing events at the time.

In this chapter, we can see it clearly that Jacobean news, whether written in pamphlets or spoken, the audience and Jacobean playwrights worked together to influence each other. Not only them but James I himself had a hand in it too with his own beliefs inspiring many others. Moreover, we can see with the Bedlam story that madness comes into play, along with possession. The differences between madness and possession would be hard to detect at the time. However, both were seen as bad things and could result in danger of one's own or to society which can be reflected in possession claims or Bedlam Hospital. On top of this, we have seen that James I was quite critical of some of the ideas that were used in this play, *King Lear*. Whether the

¹²⁰ The dates of all these plays are dubious, I have just given the general consensus in the parenthesis.

¹²¹ The time period for writing of the play is debatable but clearly it is at least late sixteenth century.

Jacobean audience of the regular folk read all of James I's writings is unknown, but in the next chapter we will be discussing a very educated audience.



CHAPTER IV

ACCUSATION AND EXORCISM OF IGNORAMUS IN GEORGE RUGGLE'S *IGNORAMUS*

Ign.

I see yet I am blind; I freeze, and yet I burn in love; I live not, but I die; I live to love, to love to live, and live not but in loving; nay, I can sing and speak songs and sonnets with the best of them.

Anto.

Sir, This is the possessed man you heard of.

—George Ruggle, *Ignoramus*, 4. 9¹²²

One kind of play that is not very well known by people that are not deeply interested in theatre is the academic play. Academic drama, known as such because it was written by academics at certain universities like Oxford and Cambridge, was performed by students and to an academic audience. These plays, not all the time but mostly, contained references that would be understood by academically educated people. One of the well-known, if not the most well-known, examples of this genre came from a Cambridge academic named George Ruggle. On 8 March 1614, James I watched a play called *Ignoramus* that was written in Latin by Ruggle, which James liked so much that he also attended the 6 May 1615 staging of it.

¹²² George Ruggle, *Ignoramus a Comedy as It Was Several Times Acted with Extraordinary Applause before the Majesty of King James : With a Supplement Which, out of Respect to the Students of the Common Law, Was Hitherto Wanting / Written in Latine by R. Ruggles ... ; and Translated into English by R. C. ...*, trans. R. C., *Early English Books Online* (London: W. Gilbertson, 1662), <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A57850.0001.001>.

The play took its name from its main character, a fictional English Lawyer named Ignoramus. However, the plot's main line develops around Theodorus and his family, who have had to flee to Bordeaux, where the play occurs. *Ignoramus* is a play that is hard to grasp and summarize. The biggest problem with the play is that it is in Latin and is was therefore originally addressed to an academic audience familiar with some of the subjects we have to research. However, the play itself is also quite hard to understand with its plot and character names. To sum up very briefly what is relevant here, Ignoramus wants to marry a girl named Rosabella. Rosabella's actual name is Isabella; she has a sister named Katherine, and they are the daughters of Dorothea's first husband (by a previous marriage), who leaves them in her care when he dies. Dorothea later marries Theodorus, and they have two twin sons named Anthonio and Anthonine. They are separated due to a war, and Katherine and Anthonine stay with their mother in London while Anthonio goes to Bordeaux with his father. Isabella gets kidnapped by a Moor who is working for a Portuguese man named Torcol, and Torcol introduces Isabella as Rosabella, his niece, to everyone. Torcol agrees to marry Rosabella to Ignoramus, an English lawyer no one likes. Later on in the play, when Rosabella escapes as she loves Anthonio instead of Ignoramus, they try to trick Ignoramus into thinking the woman they brought to him is Rosabella, but he refuses to believe. They claim the Devil possesses Ignoramus and do an exorcism on him. Ignoramus later escapes from the monastery where they take him. At the end of the play, the family members meet, Rosabella's true identity is clarified, and Theodorus pays Ignoramus the money he gave to Torcol for marriage, so his son and Rosabella can marry. Ignoramus is banished to London.

Ignoramus's main involvement in this story stems from the fact that he wants to marry the girl, Rosabella, who loves Theodorus's son Anthonio. The play is a great

example of an English Renaissance farce, containing much absurdity and confusion of identity, especially regarding twins, a common device in Shakespeare's plays¹²³ like *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*. However, one aspect of the play that won it its reputation was its attack on lawyers. Sir Edward Coke, the Lord Chief Justice, despised the play and the play caused a lot of argument between academics and lawyers.¹²⁴ Ignoramus was seen as, hence the name, ignorant, and an unlikeable character that used his knowledge wrongly. As understandable as this reaction of the lawyers is, later on in the play, he gets exorcised, not because he was really wrong, but because he was understood wrongly. The exorcism is mainly done by two characters Cola and Cupes, and it done because they were not able to trick Ignoramus. Rosabella, the girl Ignoramus supposed to marry after giving money to her supposed uncle Torcol¹²⁵, runs away to be with her lover, Anthonio. Cupes tries to trick Ignoramus with his own wife, Polla. However, Ignoramus does not believe in this scheme and this results him in being accused of demonic possession and needing to be exorcised. However, as we can see Ignoramus is actually not the wrong or a dumb one, he was just seen as one because they never understand him in the first place.

4.1 Fear of the Unknown

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Latin words were used a lot by demoniacs in the Jacobean era. Many demoniacs of the time claimed to speak Latin, although we do not know how many of them actually did so. Latin was not the only language that was

¹²³ Daisy Murray, *Twins in Early Modern English Drama and Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

¹²⁴ William Renwick Riddell, "IGNORAMUS 'OR THE WAR OF THE GOWNS," *American Bar Association Journal* 7, no. 3 (March 1921): 109-112, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25700798>; E. F. Tucker, "Ruggle's Ignoramus and Humanistic Criticism of the Language of the Common Law," *Renaissance Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1977): 341-350, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2860050>.

used by demoniacs; Greek was also a language that showed up but Latin was the most common claim of demonic language. That being said, only people who knew those languages could validate those claims. To those who knew no or little Latin or Greek, someone claiming to speak those languages might as well be speaking gibberish, which perhaps they were.¹²⁶ In *Ignoramus*, during the exorcism in Act 4, scene 11, we witness a funny scene of Cupes, a rascal and bookseller, Cola, who is supposed to be a friar/monk, and Ignoramus, exchanging lines and Cupes and Cola are continuously confused by the words of Ignoramus. An example of few lines where Ignoramus is calling his clerk, Dullman, to come, while Cupes and Cola try to exorcise Ignoramus:

“Igno. O Dullman, Dullman; you said to day, you would fight like a Divel for me, Where are you Dullman now?

Col. I do exorcize thee Dullman; Be gone thou cursed Dullman.

Igno. He hath been gone once to day already; but if he comes now—

Col. He invokes Dullman; certainly his Name is Dullman.

Igno. With a plague t'ye; my Name is Ignoramus.

Cup. Be gone Ignoramus— praesto.”¹²⁷

As it can be seen from these lines that there is a certain confusion from Cupes and Cola over which demons torment Ignoramus, as they even think Ignoramus's own name refers to a demon. Ruggle does this to give his play a comedic effect, but we can draw parallels between the play and real life, as many accused demoniacs had those accusations made against them because of the panic around demonic possessions. Many times demoniacs fit the situations that we discussed in earlier chapters like after death of someone else or loss of money and reputation. Many times, whatever the behaviour, these so called demoniacs portrayed were portrayed as performing acts inappropriate or unusual to them or they were in a vulnerable position as Ignoramus was, this being after he lost Rosabella. After these lines Ignoramus mentions the words

¹²⁶ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 11-12

¹²⁷ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus*, trans. R. C., <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A57850.0001.001>.

Riota and *Rowta* and if Rosabella married with him, he would have given her *Francum Bancum* after his death. In 1787, an antiquarian named John Sidney Hawkins published his copy of *Ignoramus* with his annotations that gave the work most of its understanding for today¹²⁸. His deep research provided many information that we need to be grateful for as Ruggle's comedy is not only academic that was shaped by its surroundings, it was also written in Latin and many of its implications could be lost in time. However, Hawkins's explanation to this part of the play focuses on a book called "Fustis daemonum..."¹²⁹ by Hieronymus Mengus and does not give explanation to these words. In the book, nothing tells us anything related to these words.¹³⁰ These words are neither names of characters of the play or no other source, including Mengus, has these words as demonic words. In the book *Exorcism and Its Texts*, Hillaire Kallendorf examines this part of the play and claims; "From these snippets of the exorcism scene, we can see that the main butts of the play's satire are the Jesuits conducting exorcisms and the lawyers babbling legalese jargon".¹³¹ The only time Jesuits are mentioned in the play outright is when Cupes, one of the people involved with exorcism, says he has learned that from the books of Jesuits after being called out for lying good in Act 3, scene 4. Although Kallendorf does not give clear examples for *Riota* and *Rowta*, if we follow this logic, there is a high chance *riota* stands for riot while *rowta* stands for rout. In *Nomo-lexikon : a law dictionary, interpreting such difficult and obscure words and terms, as are found either in our common or statute,*

¹²⁸ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus, Comoedia / Scriptore Georgio Ruggle, Nunc Denuo in Lucem Edita Cum Notis Historicis et Criticis: Quibus Insuper Praeponitur Vita Auctoris, et Subjecitur Glossarium Vocabula Forensia Dilucide Exponens: Accurante Johanne Sidneio Hawkins.*, ed. John Sidney Hawkins (Londini: apud T. Paine et filium, 1787).

¹²⁹ Hawkins mentions the work as *Fustis Demonum* but we can find it as a part of a bigger work by Mengus.

Hieronymus Mengus, *Flagellum Daemonum, Exorcismos Terribiles, Potentissimos, et Efficaces ... Complectens: Acc. Pars II Quae Fustis Daemonum Inscibitur* (Typ. Guerraea, 1593).

¹³⁰ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus*, ed. John Sidney Hawkins, 200-202.

¹³¹ Hillaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 28-29.

ancient or modern lawes..., Thomas Blount explains the meaning of the word riot as “Signifies the forcible doing an unlawful act, by three or more persons assembled together for that purpose” and rout as “Which signifies an Assembly of three persons or more, going forcibly to commit an unlawful ac, though they do it not; and is the same which the Germans yet call ROT, meaning a Band or great company of Men gathered together, and going to execute, or are executing indeed any Riot, or unlawful act”¹³². In these examples we can see it clearly that something that is not understood by Cupes and Cola become scary to them when it is just Ignoramus talking in legal terminology. However, the words that he chooses are not just thrown out as it is true with the way he is getting cornered and done unlawful act by group of people. The phrase, *Francum Bancum*, however, feels a bit different. It is still a legal phrase explained by Blount in his book again as “Free Bench (*Franc-bank, Francus Bancus, i. Sedes Libera*) Signifies that estate in Copihold Lands which the Wife, being espoused a Virgin, hath, after the death of her Husband, for her Dower, according to the custom of the Mannor”.¹³³ It certainly is an actual legal term, not gibberish, and fits the theme perfectly. Money is a huge issue throughout the play and Ignoramus continue to claim Rosabella should be his lover because he already made payment to her uncle. One interesting detail is that while Ruggle used this phrase to attack on lawyers once again, the term sounds very close to Francis Bacon who served as Attorney General and Lord Chancellor of England during the reign of James I or even to Francis Brackyn whom the play was considered to be an attack on.¹³⁴ It is

¹³² Thomas Blount, *Nomo-Lexikon: A Law-Dictionary. Interpreting Such Difficult and Obscure Words and Terms, as Are Found Either in Our Common or Statute, Ancient or Modern Lawes. with References to the Several Statutes, Records, Registers, Lawbooks, Charters, Ancient Deeds, and Manuscripts, Wherein the Words Are Used: And Etymologies, Where They Properly Occur.* by Tho. Blount, *Internet Archive* (London In the Savoy: Tho. Newcomb, for John Martin and Henry Herringman, 1670), https://archive.org/details/nomolexikona_blou_1670_00.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ E. F. Tucker, “Ruggle’s Ignoramus and Humanistic Criticism of the Language of the Common Law,” 341–350.

curious if Ruggle used this word to give it a double meaning. While Cupes and Cola may not understand Ignoramus, the audience in the academic sphere would understand that Ignoramus is still trying to act as a lawyer in a situation where he cannot defend himself with law.

4.2. Exorcism at the Monastery

The exorcism of Ignoramus takes place in the monastery. Good thing for James I is that the play takes place in Bordeaux, not England, as this idea alone would cause James I to dislike the play. James I despised ideas of demonic possessions and exorcism but also despised Catholics, including Jesuits. As we have mentioned earlier, there is only one time Jesuits are outright mentioned in the play. However, if we take this exorcism as a Jesuit one, we can encounter few interesting things. In 1603, the year James I came to throne, *An Act for the due execution of the Statutes against Jesuits, seminary Priests and recusants* was passed which was based on *An act against Jesuits, seminary priests, and such other like disobedient persons* of 1584 during the reign of Elizabeth I. Jesuits are group of Catholics who are members of Society of Jesus. Throughout history, especially in Early Modern period, Jesuits had many achievements as much as controversies.¹³⁵ Denham exorcisms were also conducted by Jesuit priest, William Weston. Interestingly one of the common Jesuit representation today comes from exorcism movies with 1973 movie *The Exorcist* which was based

¹³⁵ Marco Rochini, "Jesuits in the Early Modern Period (1540–1773)," *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, 2020: 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02848-4_231-1; Andrew McKenzie-McHarg, "Early Modern Variations on the Theme of Complicity: How Jesuits Came to Be Linked with Regicide," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 10, no. 1 (January 9, 2023): 63–82, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-10010006>; Thomas F. Banchoff and José Casanova, *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2016).

on a book that was based on an actual Jesuit priest named William S. Bowdern¹³⁶, serving as staple for future exorcism movies. However, this was not how they were seen mainly in the Jacobean period as any Catholic priest can conduct exorcism, same as today. Although Kallendorf claims the plays main satire comes from Jesuit priests vs legal word sprouting Ignoramus,¹³⁷ exorcism of Ignoramus does not have much implications regarding to Jesuits but rather is just any Catholic exorcism that is mocked by Ruggle. However, if we put importance on Jesuits, we can look at two important events that included Jesuit paranoia that could be in James I's mind as he watched the play. The main one was about him. The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 is very famous and we will be discussing it further in next chapter. However, there was a Jesuit part in the plot with one of the leading figures of Jesuits in England, Henry Garnet.¹³⁸ Although not one of the conspirators, it was claimed that Garnet had prior knowledge of the plot which resulted in him being found guilty of treason and he was hanged, drawn and quartered.¹³⁹ Five years after the plot and five years before the play was staged, another event occurred. In the beginning of the play, Theodorus speaks the lines of;

Six years afterwards returning hither into my own Countrey I took you along with me, and left Anthonine with his Mother at London. Since that time full fifteen years are expired; for as we travelled hither through France, the War being very hot betwixt the French and English, we were taken by the Enemy, and but six months are passed since a peace being on both sides concluded we were permitted to have our liberty; no sooner was I a free Man.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Maya Yang, "Boy Whose Case Inspired The Exorcist Is Named by US Magazine," *The Guardian*, December 20, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/dec/20/the-exorcist-boy-named-magazine>.

¹³⁷ Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 28-29.

¹³⁸ Thomas Preston, *The Tryal and Execution of Father Henry Garnet, Superior Provincial of the Jesuits in England for the Powder-Treason Collected by Roger Widdrington, a Roman Catholick, and by Him Addressed unto Pope Paul the Fifth, Printed in Latin 1616 in His Appendix to His Humble Supplication, p. 124, and Thence Translated. Now Published to Make It Further Evident, That It Is No New Thing for Jesuits to Curse and Ban, to Justifie a Lie.*, *Early English Books Online* (London: Printed for Johnathan Robinson, 1679), <https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A65974.0001.001>.

¹³⁹ Philip Caraman, *Henry Garnet, 1555-1606, and the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1964), 420.

¹⁴⁰ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus*, trans. R. C., <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A57850.0001.001>.

Although when the play takes place in is complicated to understand, unlike the place of it, this is the closest idea that we get. In his explanations of the play Hawkins mentions this part and states; “The treaty of peace between France and England here alluded to, is supposed to be one which occurs in the fifteenth volume of Rymer’s *Foedera*, p.694, and bears the date the 19th Aug. 1610”.¹⁴¹ This peace treaty must have been made with Louis XIII because Henri IV of France, main contemporary of James I’s reign, was assassinated by the Catholic François Ravaillac in 14 May of that year. This was not the first attempt to end his life as in 1594 a Jesuit man named Jean Châtel attempted to do the same and resulted in Jesuit order to be banned in France for a short amount of time.¹⁴² Ravaillac had no known connections to Jesuits for this crime but he previously tried to become a Jesuit and failed.¹⁴³ However, the assassination still brought anti-Jesuit elements to it and they were once again blamed for any kind of suspicious acts. Therefore, as clear as Ignoramus is the bad guy in this play, Ruggle would not want to offend the king by leaving the idea of performers of exorcism done by dubious religious figures. This could be the reason for why Jesuits were used as an example of exorcists as James I did not trust them with previous cases and they were accused of multiple plots against two kings already, with one being assassinated. Plots against James I was one of his biggest fears that he used for his religious preaches.

4.3. The story of Robert Brigges

Ignoramus serves as an interesting case of a lawyer being accused of being possessed by demons as it is not a common case. As is seen in previous chapters, usually

¹⁴¹ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus*, ed. John Sidney Hawkins, 38-39.

¹⁴² Pietro Daniel Omodeo, “‘Jesuit Science’ and Cultural Hegemony: A Political-Historiographical Critique,” *Cultural Hegemony in a Scientific World*, December 3, 2020, 115–155, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004443778_007, 148.

¹⁴³ John Patrick Donnelly, *Jesuit Writings of the Early Modern Period, 1540-1640* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co, 2006), 211.

demoniacs are either poor, or had lost a lot. Ignoramus was tricked out of money by Rosabella's uncle and later on, when Rosabella escaped, Cola and Cupes wasted his time with exorcism. In the end Theodorus returns Ignoramus's money to him. Just like other demoniacs, he also loses. His loss mainly comes from his reputation being tarnished and him losing Rosabella. In the epilogue he mentions that he is banished to London but is unsure whether he will make it there without the protection of the king so he prays to the king, who was in the audience.

In the Jacobean period, it is hard to find a case of a lawyer accused of being a demoniac. However, one case from the Elizabethan period comes to mind. In her book *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England*, Kathleen R. Sands analyses a case of a man, that she has found to be overlooked in historical researches, called Robert Brigges, a wealthy man who was a barrister¹⁴⁴. In 1573, Brigges started to have demonic experiences after attending a theology course. These experiences continued for a long time and he even interacted with John Foxe, the theologian, to try to get rid of this demonic influence.¹⁴⁵ One interesting detail from his case is mentioned by Sands:

The next day, Monday, April 26, Satan launched a devastating new temptation to Brigges' lust and pride. A beautiful female demon, the queen of hell herself, approached Brigges and offered him her love, her maidenhead, her hand in marriage, and a dower of great riches. This apparition of delight presented herself as sick with love for Brigges, singing and dancing enticingly. Initially, Brigges was so struck by her beauty and charm that his behavior was gentlemanly and deferential. He addressed her as "gentlewoman" and advised her against further association with Satan. Admiring the great attractions of this "goodly creature," Brigges exclaimed, "Jesus, Jesus, I never saw a fairer skin and breast," observing that all other women looked like "bagwash" (dirty laundry?) compared to her.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Kathleen R. Sands, *Demon Possession in Elizabethan England* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2004), 58.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

After debating with the supposed demon, at the end Briggs refuses to fall for devil's tricks¹⁴⁷ and after a few days he is completely cured¹⁴⁸. In many demoniac cases, a woman, was a temptation for the men. As we saw from previous chapters, not every time was it a romantic or sexual interaction. In the case of Ignoramus, he was obsessed with Rosabella and wanted her to marry him and even pays to her uncle so that she would marry him and no-one else. In Act 3 Scene 8, Polla, Cupes' wife acts as Rosabella to Ignoramus when Rosabella runs away. However, Ignoramus does not believe in this. He keeps calling Polla ugly unlike Rosebella and calls her a witch. This results in Polla accusing Ignoramus of being possessed which later on results in him to be exorcised. Unlike many real-life cases and plays of the time, we have this sort of a reverse possession of Ignoramus. He does not believe in the game that is played against him and refuses to participate in it as he sees Polla as who she is, which is unlike the cases of possessions where one sees things and people differently. This does not make much of a difference as Ignoramus gets tricked anyway as he gets accused of being a demoniac. In the end, others get what they want, leaving Ignoramus to his own misery.

In the case of *Ignoramus*, we see that demonic influences were not just an interest that was shared by Jacobean playwrights who write for general audiences but was also an interest of an academic who writes for an academic audience. *Ignoramus* serves as an interesting case as actually there did not even have to be an exorcism scene. This scene could easily have been replaced or omitted. Ruggle's interest came from the environment that he lived in, as demonic influences were a huge topic at the time. Moreover, he had a chance to showcase this to a king who was not fond of anything demoniac related, and considered cases of demonic possessions to be very bad

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 72.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 74.

especially if they plan on working with the devil themselves. Also, there was the antagonism towards lawyers that was shared by Ruggle and James I. Religious matters may or may not serve an important idea for the play. However, we can certainly say that if they did, the audience would understand this easily. Religion was not the only matter of this play, but as will be seen in the next chapter, the matter of religion will deepen further.



CHAPTER V

SELLING ONE'S SOUL FOR EARTHLY POWER: ALEXANDER VI IN *THE DEVIL'S CHARTER* BY BARNABE BARNES

Devil

And what of that? Thou therein hast no part.

I do confess thy soul was first ordain'd

To good: but by free will, to sin thou, slave,

Hast sold that soul from happiness to hell.

—Barnabe Barnes, *The Devil's Charter*, 5.5¹⁴⁹

On 2 February, Candlemas, 1607, James I saw a play named *The Devil's Charter* by Barnabe Barnes.¹⁵⁰ The play is about Rodrigo Borgia's time as Alexander VI. The main importance of the play is how Rodrigo Borgia becomes the pope. In the first act of the play, Rodrigo Borgia gets offered a charter by the devil. He accepts this charter in order to become the pope and trades his soul to the devil. Throughout the play Rodrigo and his family are involved in various acts of corruption including political corruption, murders and incest. This mindset of the Borgias is not surprising. Throughout his rule as Alexander VI, Rodrigo, did indeed in various kinds of corruption, which was not surprising at the time.¹⁵¹ In the article "Angels, Demons and Political Action in Two Early Jacobean History Plays", Astrid Stilma claims that

¹⁴⁹ Barnabe Barnes, *The Devil's Charter* (Routledge, 2013).

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vii.

¹⁵¹ Arnold Harris Mathew, *The Life and Times of Rodrigo Borgia, Pope Alexander VI* (New York: Brentano, 1912), 8.

this is something Catholic and Protestant historians argue about, something that I also agree.¹⁵² Regardless, Alexander VI's rule was definitely of a kind unlike that expected from a Pope. Furthermore, his son Cesare's reputation contributed to this image of him and his family. However, as corrupt as they were, the truth of this reputation is still something of a mystery. The book *The Borgia Family: Rumor and Representation*¹⁵³ edited by Jennifer Mara DeSilva gives us some clues on how much it is fabricated and Katharine Fellows's article called "Depictions of Pope Alexander VI as the Devil"¹⁵⁴ in the same book considers many representations of Alexander VI as a devilish figure including this play, *The Devil's Charter*. Regardless of the facts of their reputation, the papacy in general was not welcome in Jacobean Britain. Henry VIII's separation from the papacy and Mary I's reign as a Catholic monarch brought much division to England, Scotland and Ireland. This division resulted in various rebellions and chaos within the society. This chaos also showed up on the stage. *The Devil's Charter* is a great example of a product of this chaos that involved multiple religious beliefs and attempts to gain power. We will discuss this by looking at the papacy as a whole, and the possible influences for the play to be staged at 1607.

5.1 The Papacy

In the Elizabethan period many Protestant writers had freedom and the chance to write about their anti-Catholic sentiments.¹⁵⁵ The most famous of these works came from

¹⁵² Astrid Stilma, "Angels, Demons and Political Action in Two Early Jacobean History Plays," *Critical Survey* 23, no. 2 (January 1, 2011): 9-25, <https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2011.230202>.

¹⁵³ Jennifer Mara DeSilva, ed., *The Borgia Family: Rumor and Representation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

¹⁵⁴ Katharine Fellows and Jennifer Mara DeSilva, "Depictions of Pope Alexander VI as the Devil," article, in *The Borgia Family: Rumor and Representation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020): 125-144.

¹⁵⁵ Isabelle Fernandes, "'The Deformed Imp of the Devil': John Foxe and the Protestant Fashioning of the Catholic Enemy," *Angles* 10 (2020): 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.4000/angles.299>.

John Foxe, with his work *The Actes and Monuments*.¹⁵⁶ The work was published multiple times during his life with new additions from him. In the main work, Foxe highlighted many Protestants that died during the reign of Mary I. In the 1570 edition, he gave examples of how papacy and Turks were antichrist.¹⁵⁷ James I himself did not like the idea of papacy especially when it tried to deal with kings. On 27 May 1606, parliament passed an Oath of Allegiance which rejected the pope's claim to be able to overthrow any monarch. According to Johann P. Sommerville in his introduction to *King James VI and I Political Writings*,

Though Triplici Nodo came out anonymously, its royal authorship was widely known and it soon drew replies from Bellarmine and from the leading English Jesuit Robert Parsons. The king now prepared an answer to these two works, entitling it a Premonition of his Maiesties, to all most Mightie Monarches, Kings, free Princes and States of Christendom. In April 1609 this new book was issued along with a revised version of Triplici Nodo - of which the king now acknowledged authorship. The Premonition dealt not only with the papal deposing power but also with more narrowly religious matters, and it included a profession of faith by James and a section in which he attempted to prove from Scripture that the pope is Antichrist.¹⁵⁸

That the “pope is the antichrist” idea was something that many Protestants argued, especially when it came to defending themselves, as we see from the case of James I. He was an avid reader and writer especially when it came to the subjects of rulership and religion. He ruled as an absolute monarch and did not enjoy the idea of anyone

¹⁵⁶ John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of These Latter and Perillous Dayes Touching Matters of the Church, Wherein Ar Comprahended and Decribed the Great Persecutions [and] Horrible Troubles, That Haue Bene Wrought and Practised by the Romishe Prelates, Speciallye in This Realme of England and Scotlande, from the Yeare of Our Lorde a Thousande, Vnto the Tyme Nowe Present. Gathered and Collected According to the True Copies [and] Wrytinges Certificatorie, as Wel of the Parties Them Selues That Suffered, as Also out of the Bishops Registers, Which Wer the Doers Therof, by Iohn Foxe.*, ProQuest (London: Iohn Day, dwellyng ouer Aldersgate, 1563), <https://www.proquest.com/books/actes-monuments-these-latter-perillous-dayes/docview/2240906137>.

¹⁵⁷ Isabelle Fernandes, “‘The Deformed Imp of the Devil’: John Foxe and the Protestant Fashioning of the Catholic Enemy,” *Angles* 10 (2020): 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.4000/angles.299>; Stephan Schmuck, “The ‘Turk’ as Antichrist in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1570),” *Reformation* 10, no. 1 (January 2005): 21–44, https://doi.org/10.1179/ref_2005_10_1_003.

¹⁵⁸ Johann P. Sommerville, “Introduction,” article, in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, xxi.

dealing with his beliefs. For him, the papacy was a corrupt constitution that could threaten to limit his power.

Although the idea of papal corruption was commonly spoken about at the time, the direct references to Alexander VI in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods were minimal. One of the only references to him came from John Bale, in his work, *The Pageant of Popes* (1574), where, in the first sentences of his introduction to Alexander VI section, he claims, “Alexander the sixth was a Spaniard borne in Valentia, called first Rodericus Borgia, succeeded Innocentius: his deedes were so opprobrious and wicked, as hath beene sildome heard. He was a very royotous tyraūt & in league with the deuil to obtaine the Papacye”¹⁵⁹ which is parallel to how *The Devil’s Charter* also starts. We can see the anti-papal and Catholic views very clearly from the works of the time, and considering the political views of James I who was in the audience, he would have approved. In *Basilikon Doron* (1599), James I also states;

But as this seuere Iustice of yours vpon all offences would bee but for a time, (as I haue alreadie said) so is there some horrible crimes that yee are bound in conscience neuer to forgiue: such as Witchcraft, wilfull murder, Incest, (especially within the degrees of consanguinitie) Sodomie, poisoning, and false coine. As for offences against your owne person and authoritie, since the fault concerneth your selfe, I remit to your owne choise to punish or pardon therein, as your heart serueth you, and according to the circumstances of the turne, and the qualitie of the committer.¹⁶⁰

James I wrote *Basilikon Doron* before watching this play, even before becoming King of England. But in short, he would believe everything Alexander VI does in this play

¹⁵⁹ John Bale, *The Pageant of Popes Contayninge the Lyues of All the Bishops of Rome, from the Beginning of Them to the Yeare of Grace 1555. Deuided into Iii. Sortes Bishops, Archbishops, and Popes, Vvhereof the Two First Are Contayned in Two Bookes, and the Third Sort in Fiue. In the Vvchich Is Manifestlye Shevved the Beginning of Antichriste and Increasing to His Fulnesse, and Also the Vvayning of His Povver Againe, Accordinge to the Prophecye of Iohn in the Apocalips. ... Written in Latin by Maister Bale, and Now Englished with Sondrye Additions by I.S., Early English Books Online* (London: In Fleetestrete neare vnto S. Dunstones Church by Thomas Marshe, 1574), <https://name.umd.umich.edu/A02895.0001.001>.

¹⁶⁰ King James I and VI, “Basilicon Doron,” book, in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 23.

is unforgivable. Moreover, it is important to note that this play was staged one year after rejecting papal involvement in the “disposal of monarchs” and two years after James I’s biggest religious threat.

5.2. Gunpowder Plot as a Devilish Scheme

On 5 November 1605, a plot to blow up the Parliament was discovered by the authorities. The plot involved thirteen conspirators although few names became famous for the plot.¹⁶¹ Thanks to him being caught with barrels and of course, the centuries of famous Guy Fawkes Night on every 5th of November, Guy Fawkes became the face of the plot in today’s world. However, the main conspirator and the leader of the group was Robert Catesby. Catesby and Fawkes had some differences between them. It is a bit doubtful if Catesby was that much of a Catholic. He married a Protestant and baptised his son at the Protestant Church¹⁶², although there were no other legal option of baptism as there were no legal Catholic Churches. Regardless, he was also involved in Essex's Rebellion that was started by Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex against Elizabeth I in 1601, two years before James I became King of England.¹⁶³ Therefore, it is unsure whether Catesby’s main motive was to overthrow the king for the Catholic faith or he wished for other gains, as he was already captured, named and fined for the Essex Rebellion.¹⁶⁴ Guy Fawkes on the other hand was an extreme Catholic. He even went to the lengths of fighting for Catholic Spain during the Eighty Years War and took the name Guido Fawkes.¹⁶⁵ This name was also used

¹⁶¹ Antonia Fraser, *The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605* (United Kingdom: Arrow, 1997), 97.

¹⁶² Fraser, *The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605*, 92.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁶⁵ James Sharpe, *Remember, Remember the Fifth of November: Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005), 49-51.

after his capture during his examination and how he signed his name¹⁶⁶ instead of using his English name. The motives of Fawkes were clearer than Catesby's. This Catholic plot resulted in more anti-Catholic antagonism from the public. The influence of the devil in these affairs soon became a question.

On 5 November 1606, exactly one year after the plot, the bishop of Chichester, Lancelot Andrewes, gave a sermon where he stated:

“The day (we all know) was meant to be the day of all our deaths; and we, and many were appointed, as sheepe to the slaughter; nay, worse then so. There was a thing doing on it, if it had been done, we all had beene undone. And, the very same day (we all know) the day, wherein that appointment was disappointed by God, and we all saved, that we might not die but live, and declare the praise of the Lord: the Lord, of whose doing, that mervailous Deed was; of whose making, this joyfull Day is, that we celebrate”.¹⁶⁷

“...by whom, whose doing? Truely, not mans doing this; it was the Lord's. A factum est illud, or fictum est illud. It was the Devill's doing, or devising A Domino factum est hoc, This was God's doing (the deliverance.) The blow Devill's: The ward was God's. Not man, but the Devill, devised it: Not man, defeated it”.¹⁶⁸

According to Andrewes, the plot was “devised” and done by the devil. It was the devil's work against God, and men merely were the actors of it. The Devil tempted humans once again and this resulted in them rising against the king, but also against God. When we consider James I's rejection of papal involvement in his rule, it is no surprise that he would enjoy this sermon. Once again we have the idea of the Devil wanting to corrupt the actual Christian, Protestants, not the papacy, to offend God. We also see that the ones who follow God will be protected by him. This is an idea shared by *The Devil's Charter* as well. At the end of the play, Rodrigo regrets his pact with

¹⁶⁶ The National Archive, London, SP 14/216, *Declaration of Guy Fawkes, with his signature*, 17 November 1605, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/explore-the-collection/explore-by-topic/crime-courts-and-justice/treason/>.

¹⁶⁷ Lancelot Andrewes, *XCVI. Sermons by the Right Honorable and Reverend Father in God, Lancelot Andrevves, Late Lord Bishop of Winchester. Published by His Majesties Speciall Command, Early English Books Online* (London: Printed by George Miller, for Richard Badger, 1629), <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A19625.0001.001>, 890.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 895.

the devil. However, it is too late for him. Once again this play serves as a moral story to encourage the audience to follow their God, and not to be tempted by earthly gains like a pope who made deals with the Devil. However, this idea is not limited to this play and the Jacobean audience would be familiar with this story of selling your soul to the Devil. The play's plot seems very familiar to the influential Elizabethan play, *Doctor Faustus*.

5.3. Influence of *Doctor Faustus*

*Doctor Faustus*¹⁶⁹ served as an example for many Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights on writing about devilish themes for the stage. The origins of Faustus comes from an older tale, but Marlowe was the one who brought it to the Elizabethan stage.¹⁷⁰ This story later on was adapted once again by the romantic writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and that is as famous as Marlowe's work.¹⁷¹ Marlowe's text survived in two copies known as Text A and Text B. Text A was printed by V. Simmes in 1604¹⁷² while Text B was printed by John Wright in 1616¹⁷³ and adds more text to the play and later on was republished for several years. From this information we can gather that *Doctor Faustus* still kept its popularity throughout the Jacobean period by being published and staged multiple times. The story of Faustus is captivating as it shows the magician Faustus making a pact with the Devil, Lucifer, with the help of a

¹⁶⁹ Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David M. Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., xii; Paul H. Kocher, "The English Faust Book and the Date of Marlowe's Faustus," *Modern Language Notes* 55, no. 2 (February 1940): 95-101, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2910133>.

¹⁷¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, ed. David Luke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁷² Christopher Marlowe, *The TRAGICALL History of D. Faustus: As It Hath Bene Acted by the Right Honorable the Earle of Nottingham His Seruants. Written by Ch. Marl*, *Early English Books Online* (London: Printed by V. Simmes for Thomas Bushell, 1604), <https://name.umd.umich.edu/a07009.0001.001>.

¹⁷³ Christopher Marlowe, *The TRAGICALL History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus. Written by Ch. Marklin*, *Early English Books Online* (London: Printed for Iohn Wright, and are to be sold at his shop without Newgate, at the signe of the Bible, 1616), <https://name.umd.umich.edu/A07013.0001.001>.

demon, Mephistopheles, in order to gain more knowledge as a scholar and to be able to talk to the dead. Its similarity with *The Devil's Charter* shows us that this play served as a good source for Barnabe Barnes in his work. Although there is no clear claim of influence by Barnes, it is likely that Barnes saw the opportunity of the anti-Catholic climate and wrote his play. Jacobean events influenced Jacobean playwrights to use political or religious elements for their gain, which we have seen in the previous chapter.

5.4. Machiavellian Schemes

One of the most famous figures that was attached to Borgias was Niccolò Machiavelli. In his book *The Prince*, Machiavelli used Cesare, son of Alexander VI, as an example of a cruel leader, who contributed a lot to Borgia myth.¹⁷⁴ This idea of cruelty also created Machiavelli's reputation and associated his own name with cruelty even though he was not a leader. His name became a symbol of cruelty rather than the many figures he mentioned in his book, although they had their reputations in the first place. In his book, *Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama*, Edward Meyer mentions that he found "no less than 395 references to Machiavelli in Elizabethan literature".¹⁷⁵ Machiavellian ideas served various purposes, mainly to show the cruelty of one character. One of the famous examples of this is play *Henry the Sixth, Part III* by William Shakespeare in which future Richard III referenced himself using Machiavelli to show his cruelty with "And set the murderous Machevil to school" (3.2)¹⁷⁶ implying he will be worse than what Machiavelli says in his book. *The Prince* was published in

¹⁷⁴ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Norton Critical Editions), ed. Robert M. Adams (New York: Norton, 1992), 11.

¹⁷⁵ Edward Stockton Meyer, *Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama* (Weimar: E. Felber, 1897), 395.

¹⁷⁶ William Shakespeare, *Henry VI: Parts I, II, and III*, ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (New York: Modern Library Classics, 2012), 290.

1532 while Richard III died 47 years earlier in 1485. However, this reference was not for the story, the playwrights did not care about historical accuracy at all. This reference to Machiavelli was made for the audience, to show them how dangerous Richard III was, and he knew it himself. When it comes to a Jacobean audience, although with less mentions, Machiavelli still continued to be referenced during the Jacobean period. In fact, we see a reference to Machiavellians and the devil in Middleton's play *A Game at Chess* where the White Knight refers to the Black Knight as "Room for the mightiest machiavel politician That e'er the devil hatched of a nun's egg"¹⁷⁷ as he puts him in a bag after winning against the Black House at the end of the play. *A Game at Chess* is an incredible play about politics, using chess as an analogy, the White House representing James I and his side and the Black House representing Philip IV of Spain and his side. Catholic Spain is seen as devilish and cunning, while Protestant England is seen as heroic. This mindset concerning Machiavelli was mainly used against foreigners, especially the ones from Catholic countries. Therefore, it is not a surprise that Alexander VI was a good choice for this kind of play and whether Alexander VI was on the audience's mind as a corrupt Pope or not, knowing even small details about him would make the audience understand the ideas of corruption, and devilish schemes that could actually happen in real life from Protestant point of view. Machiavellian schemes were not liked and neither was anyone who was "admired" by Machiavelli.

What we can see from this discussion is that, in the Jacobean mindset, the Catholics, especially the Pope, were corrupt. Catholics could not only fall for devilish schemes more, but they would be willing to make pacts with the Devil. This is very interesting. As we discussed earlier in this thesis, Catholics actually had a solution for

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Middleton, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 1883.

the devil, exorcism. Meanwhile Protestants did not, which resulted in more fear concerning the alleged possessed. As we stated earlier, they could do fasting and praying but by 1604, they needed to get permission from the bishops. Moreover, these were not like Catholic exorcisms. It still depended on one's strength with their fasting and praying. What is more important is the idea of corruption in the Catholic Church. This was an idea shared by James I, and as he was in the audience, he would enjoy this play, *The Devil's Charter*, as an example of anti-Catholic sentiments. This work was not as famous as many other Jacobean plays, but it is not surprising, as we have seen the more famous and influential *Doctor Faustus* shared similar themes was still staged. However, it still served as a good example of devilish elements that were to be avoided in the Jacobean mindset, just like every other play discussed in this thesis.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

On the Life of Man

What is our life? A play of passion;
Our mirth, the music of division,
Our mother's wombs the tiring houses be,
Where we are drest for this short Comedy,
Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is,
That sits and marks still who doth act amiss.
Our graves that hide us from the searching sun,
Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.
Thus march we playing to our latest rest;
Only we die in earnest. That's no jest.
—Raleigh, "On the Life of Man".¹⁷⁸

Both in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, plays with devilish elements received attention from the public. In the Jacobean period, thanks to King James I's own interest in denouncing witchcraft, both public and playwrights constantly had demonic elements in their mind. Demonic influence was not just the king's interest but it was a common interest to find these demoniacs and banish the Devil or demons.

¹⁷⁸ As I started each chapter with a quote, I wanted to finish with a quote too. This poem written by Raleigh during his imprisonment is one of my favorites of him and I think it matched with this thesis and my chosen quote for my introduction to end this thesis.
Walter Raleigh, *Sir Walter Raleigh: Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed. Agnes M.C. Latham (London: Athlone Press, 1965), 56.

This, however, as we have seen from previous chapters, resulted in paranoia, and false accusations. Jacobean playwrights, who were heavily inspired by their surroundings, used this paranoia in their plays. In this thesis, the example plays given all focused on different aspects of Jacobean life, but they all had one thing in common, that demonic possessions were used for personal gain. It was either used by the demoniacs themselves as in the case of Elizabeth Sawyer in *The Witch of Edmonton* to gain more power as a lonely, old, poor woman, Edgar in *King Lear* to survive, and Pope Alexander VI in *The Devil's Charter* to access all kinds of earthly gain, or they were used against them yet did not result in losses financially, as in the case of Ignoramus in *Ignoramus*. We saw how all these moral endings of the plays came to be with what happened in the plays that could provoke audience's attention.

In *The Witch of Edmonton*, we witnessed differences between female and male criminals. Although, neither of them were good people and deserved their demise, the play only treats one as less faulty. While Frank repents, Elizabeth does not start her journey with the same chances of Frank in the first place. Moreover, in the play we see that the killing of Elizabeth is done by her dog, Tom. Although Elizabeth is the instigator, the ideas of familiars as a concept was already pretty devilish. Even acting as just a helper to Elizabeth, if the dog was accused of being a demonic tool, she would be seen a witch anyway. The real life case of Elizabeth Sawyer did not occur the same way as the play, but we had a chance to look at a real life familiar case in which just a dog scaring, as we know dogs cannot actually talk and demand something we can only guess Brown was just scared and made the rest up, and looking at someone's house could be seen as enough to accuse them. However, familiars were not the only devilish helpers as we saw the Devil was also represented in pamphlets with real life cases. The Devil standing behind and possibly whispering the murderers to do their acts shows us

that Jacobean audience was familiar with the idea of these things being done with the temptation of the Devil rather than one's own thoughts. This play showcased us the gender discussion, the familiars and the actual crime cases where the Devil was part of.

In *King Lear*, our discussion shifted from one a dog named Tom to a fake persona named Tom. Edgar in *King Lear* showed us that madness and possession in Jacobean age was quite hard to differentiate from each other. Bedlam Hospital and its history provided us context about how the patients were treated, or more so were just kept in there so they or the public would not be in danger. The madness and possessions were both pretty bad and scary. We saw that Shakespeare also mixed those two together with his character Edgar. He was acting like a mad but also a possessed one. Using Greenblatt and Brownlow's theories and findings of demonic cases, we were able to analyse Edgar's potential possession as well. However, by also looking at the case of Alexander Nyndge, we witnessed that assumptions of madness and possession were quite close to each other and resembled Edgar's behavior. Moreover, we had a chance to look at one more character with Edmund to discuss whether he could be a devilish figure. Jacobean audiences would not only understand devilish figures as possessions but also as bad characters. Edmund could be a Lucifer like character where rebellion and standing up against his creator would be in his blood. Or, he could be an allegory of the changes in Jacobean age where the old was replaced with new with the refusal of not just the devilish elements but anything that would go against God's plan. Whether Shakespeare's own intention was, *King Lear* served us a great discussion to understand Jacobean audience with their understanding of Bedlam and madness, comparison of Edgar with the real life cases, and Edmund as a potential different kind of devilish figure.

In *Ignoramus*, we faced with a new kind of audience. While our audiences previously focused on regular folk, this time we had an academical audience. Moreover, the play's first staging and a later one also had James I in the audience. The play being written and staged in Latin in the first place showed us different kind of understanding as previously our association with Latin was that if it was spoken by a regular person it could be seen as a demonic speech. However, as much as the audience was educated, our play still dealt with this idea. The characters were not able to understand the legal words of Ignoramus even if he actually completely made sense. This was in tune with the ideas of Jacobean demonic accusations. Moreover, the play also made fun of Catholic exorcisms, especially a potential Jesuit one, to showcase how ridiculous things could be. It is unsure how much of a Jesuit the exorcism was, however, Ruggle could easily use this idea to boost his place in James I's eyes and gain his liking. James I did not like any kind of Catholics including Jesuits. They could be culprits to anything, especially events that would be threatening James I's throne. The exorcism scene was needed to discuss religious matters alongside making fun of lawyers. Moreover, we had a chance to examine an actual demoniac case associated with someone in law sphere. This case also provided us an example of a demoniac meeting with a female demon. It proved us that the way Ignoramus behaved towards Polla, was quite normal and the people who met with an actual female demon behaved differently. However, Ignoramus' pride and his lack of understanding his environment to let his jargon loose took him to his downfall. In this play, we had a chance to look at demonic speeches being confused with real words, the possible Jesuit connections and drew parallels with a real life case.

In *The Devil's Charter*, we did not just observe a real life case but a real life myth. Alexander VI became quite notorious in his time and not only him but also was

his family. A guy like him being the Pope, would only provide more dislike from Protestant audience who already despised the papacy. Alexander VI was not incredibly popular as an example of a corrupt Pope but Barnes saw the opportunity and took it. Considering the ideas of the public and James I, the play was an example of its time. We also saw that the Protestant views of Catholics after the Gunpowder Plot was all time high. The event was seen as an example of Catholics, the believers of the Devil, were against the true Christians, Protestants in their views. Therefore, papacy as the home of the Catholics were also at its least popularity. However, they were not the only influences of the play. *Doctor Faustus* and Machiavelli could also provide more understanding of the play and how it should be perceived. *Doctor Faustus* was already popular as a play that involved making deals with the Devil. Barnes' ideas were not entirely new. He just found the right time. Machiavelli provides us more context on how bad and cruel Borgias could be seen. Machiavelli himself was the face of cruelty. In which case the audience understood the play, it was obvious the play's ending of Alexander VI not being saved served them as a congratulatory ending and as a moral story. We learned a lot from the discussion of this play regarding the ideas of how papacy was seen from Jacobean perspective, the possible influences of real life events and the fictional works.

The audience wanted to watch what they could understand, what they could relate to, and what would justify their beliefs in certain things. They wanted to watch the plays and their characters and feel sad or feel happy for them. The theatre served as an engagement between the audience's reality and the plays that they watched. In order to understand many of these plays, we need to understand the audience.

6.1. Issues that Were Encountered During Research

The main problem with the historical aspect of these demoniac cases is that unlike many witch trials, and even their records are not that good, the records of them are hard to find, especially from outside Britain. Still, with or without that issue, the lack of a clear categorization of them creates problems for any historian. This is something I discussed in my introduction and throughout my thesis as witchcraft, demoniacs, possessions and madness can easily shade one into another. This is something that is harder to dissect from today's perspective. Moreover, some of the records themselves did not survive. In some cases, like Elizabeth Sawyer's, I had to rely on secondary accounts from the time, which could be problematic. Things could have been exaggerated to get the public's interest. Yet, we historians have no choice but to rely on these documents. It is important to remember that many of the witch trials, and demoniac cases were written by the people who believed in those accusations. It is rarer that we have cases like Alexander Nydge, discussed in Chapter III, whose brother told the story of it, yet even that is not credible as he was heavily focused on the exorcisms when his brother could be suffering from some other things. In so many cases, we do not have the testimony of the accused. We have to keep this in our minds.

6.2. My Future Plans

As I was doing my research, I became familiar with certain cases that intrigued me. One of them was that of the Denham exorcisms. Although these exorcisms are pretty well known, many of the people involved had interesting backgrounds such as Anthony Babington of the infamous Babington Plot. Another less known involvement that has started to gain attention is Denham's possible connection to the Gunpowder Plot. The Denham Community History Project on their website discussed this possible

connection under the name “Breaking News: Denham's Connections to the Gunpowder Plot?”¹⁷⁹. The evidence is not quite there, but with more research there could be something that will come from there as many of these people, William Weston, John Gerard, Henry Garnet and Robert Catesby seem to be connected. This website also shows us that we, as historians, need to look more into local histories. Social History is quite popular, especially in recent years, but we need to go further. Not only a project like the Denham Community History Project, which focused on the documents, but also local stories and tales that have been told for generations, can give us details on how certain things played out. This can be hard for the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, but it is important to note that, just like how we saw with the story of black dogs in Chapter II, certain folk tales get carried on by generations. Black dogs are a common myth, but we can discover less known myths and tales from these communities that can be used as a path to discover some more documents that have been looked upon, which would actually tell us more stories. Folklore collections of the nineteenth century might be a place to look, though perhaps not easy to use judiciously. There may however be a lot to discover.

Another topic was George Ruggle’s involvement with Nicholas Ferrar and the Virginia Company. Ferrar read the eulogy on Ruggle after his death and called him the “Brother of the Company”, as Ruggle worked for them in his last years and left money in his will for education of Christianity in Virginia.¹⁸⁰ One of my first interests in history was espionage by explorers which resulted in my interest in the Tudor navy

¹⁷⁹ DCHP, “Breaking News: Denham’s Connections to the Gunpowder Plot?,” *Denham History*, December 1, 2020, <https://www.denhamhistory.online/post/breaking-news-denham-s-connections-to-the-gunpowder-plot>.

¹⁸⁰ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus, Comoedia / Scriptore Georgio Ruggle, Nunc Denuo in Lucem Edita Cum Notis Historicis et Criticis: Quibus Insuper Praeponitur Vita Auctoris, et Subjecitur Glossarium Vocabula Forensia Dilucide Exponens: Accurante Johanne Sidneio Hawkins.*, ed. John Sidney Hawkins (Londini: apud T. Paine et filium, 1787), xciv.

and in expeditions to the Americas. I did not go on to further research on this matter as I now focus on crime cases resulted by religious and political elements during the early Stuart period, mainly pre-and post-Civil War. However, this could be a great research topic for one to find out how many academics have been involved with the Virginia Company one way or another. This furthermore can show more details of the networks of these people as academics have more connections in their country than the explorers themselves.

The last interest that I had, which I plan on examining further to discover more connections, was the case of a French woman, Marthe Brossier. Brossier claimed to be a demoniac and the case grew so famous that King Henri IV of France intervened. Brossier was used for anti-Huguenot propaganda and was even taken to the Pope.¹⁸¹ One of my biggest interests, as can be seen in this thesis at certain points, is crime. Anti-Huguenot ideas were seen as the reason for Ravallac to murder Henri IV, as Ravallac claimed to see visions of him persuading Henri IV to make Huguenots convert to Catholicism. Ravallac's case was discussed very well in the article "Mind of an Assassin: Ravallac and the Murder of Henry IV of France" by Anita M. Walker and Edmund H. Dickerman where they have researched Ravallac's background and mindset.¹⁸² My plan is not to work on Ravallac but to work on lesser known criminal cases that caused confusion as to why they occurred when there is more to them via connections with religion and politics and with the aspect of espionage.

¹⁸¹ Brian P. Levack, "The Possession of Marthe Brossier, 1599," *The Witchcraft Sourcebook*, June 9, 2015, 312–317, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315715292-65>.

¹⁸² Anita M. Walker and Edmund H. Dickerman, "Mind of an Assassin: Ravallac and the Murder of Henry IV of France," *Canadian Journal of History* 30, no. 2 (August 1995): 201–229, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjh.30.2.201>.

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