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# The Duke's Devil and Doctor Lambe's Darling: A Case Study of the Male Witch in Early Modern England<sup>1</sup>

Karin Amundsen

## Introduction

The witch-hunt in early modern England has been the subject of much scholarly research in the last several decades. While much of this research focuses on the political, religious, economic, and social aspects of the witch-hunts, the role of gender in the trials has recently come under more scrutiny, though much of it focuses on women. Although the role of women in the witch-hunts is unquestionably important given that accusations primarily targeted them, historians should not ignore male witches or simply dismiss them as spouses or relatives of female witches.<sup>2</sup> Compounding the exclusion of male witches from historical consideration is the dearth of research into notions of masculinity in the early modern period.

In 2003, Lara Apps and Andrew Gow tentatively addressed the male witch in *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe*. Though Apps and Gow demonstrate that male witches were not simply byproducts of witch-hunting and were recognized by demonologists as legitimate witches, their research merely accentuates the male witch's absence from scholarly consideration. Indeed, the result of Apps and Gow's investigation is to demand that historians include the male witch in their examinations of the relationship between gender and the witch-hunts. In some small way, this article attempts to accept that challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a portion of a larger study, "Gender Transgressions: The Male Witch in Early Modern England" (thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2003)

<sup>2</sup> For a complete historiography of gender and the witch-hunts refer to Elspeth Whitney, "The Witch 'She' / the Historian 'He,'" *Journal of Women's History*, 7 (Fall 1995): 77-101.

During the early modern period in England changing economic patterns, religious reforms, and social relationships altered gender roles. While the role of women in English society has been well documented by scholars of the early modern period, there are few substantial studies of masculinity for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In many ways, the dearth of information about masculinity inverts the exclusion of women from traditional history. Masculinity has often been seen as a static element within a monolithic patriarchy. Recently, however, gender studies have begun to acknowledge that as definitions of femininity change, definitions of masculinity must, by needs, also change. Since gender is a relational category, historians cannot understand women's status in society without considering men's status, or vice versa. Another factor in discussions about masculinity is how men defined each other and how these definitions imposed constraints on male identity. Men in early modern England understood that their masculinity was not only determined by their relationship to women, but also by their reputation among other men, and so should modern historians.

The purpose of this article is twofold. First, I will demonstrate that the male witch was not an accident of woman-hunting, as Anne Llewellyn Barstow asserted in *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (1994). Although Barstow represents the extreme in studies about gender and witchcraft, the belief that male witches were somehow not 'real' witches is prevalent in witchcraft studies. Most historians never question the axiomatic 'woman as witch' equation, even when studying regions where men represented a majority of the accused. In this article, I will show that the men were not merely the subjects of secondary charges of witchcraft, but that they were often the primary targets. In early modern England, although most people accepted that most witches were women, they would not have said that men were not legitimate witches.

Secondly, I will argue that pamphleteers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used the male witch to articulate appropriate gender behavior. In *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (1995) Anthony Fletcher argued that the Tudor and Stuart periods were a time of anxiety about maintaining patriarchal ideals. Although incomplete in his argument about gender, Fletcher illustrates that there was a high degree of concern about maintaining appropriate gender behavior.<sup>3</sup> A significant component of this anxiety was the growing disparity between the ideals of the aristocracy and gentry. From the early-Stuart period onward, the gentry increasingly diverged from aristocratic conceptions of masculinity and developed their own distinct gender ideology by the latter half of the seventeenth century. Fears about gender coincided with the proliferation of prescriptive literature.

Witchcraft pamphlets have rarely been read for information about gender, but in using the male witch as an interpretive lens, we can see how the pamphleteer used him to reshape and reinforce specific ideas about gender. An emphasis on explicitly articulating gender roles is one way that we can sense a crisis in masculinity during the late-Tudor and early-Stuart period. To give a modern example, after World War II many American writers believed that there was a crisis of gender roles caused by women's entry into the workforce during the war years. In the late-1940s and 1950s there was an explosion of advice literature that sought to reinforce proper gender roles by explicitly detailing what constituted masculinity and femininity. In witchcraft literature, the authors often made either explicit references to the accused's failure to adhere to normative gender values or implicit, but recognizable, indications of their gender transgression.

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<sup>3</sup> I am referring to the fact that Fletcher does not recognize the gentry and aristocracy as two distinct categories within the upper classes. Fletcher ignores the political and economic changes that occurred from 1500 to 1660 to produce a clearly defined class of gentry, thus providing no historical context for the change in gender ideology. Part of this failure is because Fletcher only recognizes an amorphous upper class that he calls the gentry and this inability to recognize the divisions in the upper class does not allow his study of sources to differentiate between the masculine ideals of the aristocracy and the increasingly divergent masculine ideals of the gentry; instead, he merely sees the changes in terms of a shift.

By studying how the male witch was portrayed in pamphlet literature from 1566 to 1648 we can understand one of the ways in which both the elite and the common people negotiated and redefined gender in the early modern period. Using the pamphlets published during the witch-hunts, a composite of the male witch can be derived and analyzed to reveal how English society perceived him, but also show how masculinity was constructed in an age when a penis did not guarantee the assignment of a masculine gender identity. In this article, I will utilize a case study of John Lambe to understand how the male witch functioned as a site for debates about normative gender behavior and how he was portrayed in contrast to the female witch. First, however, we need to consider the general characteristics of the male witch that emerges from the pamphlets and illustrate why pamphlets are a legitimate source of information.

### **Representations of the Male Witch**

The male witch in England is a little understood player in the witchcraft trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Generally, historians have not known how to categorize the male witch, nor can they explain his comparative invisibility in contemporary witchcraft narratives. Most historians, especially those who argue for the gender-specificity of the trials, usually dismiss male witches either as spouses, children or confederates of female witches, implying an almost accidental presence in witch-hunting.<sup>4</sup> There were, however, many men tried for witchcraft that were neither married

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<sup>4</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner, 1971), and Alan MacFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), limited their discussion of the male witch to categorizing him as spouses or relations of a female witch. Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch-Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), virtually ignores the male witch altogether. Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch-Hunts* (San Francisco: Pandora, 1994), who otherwise ignored the male witch, claimed that male witches were a side effect of witch-hunting. Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), in a refutation of Barstow's work, indicated that the male witch was more numerous in many areas than female witches, but rather than address the reason he asserted that since conceptions of gender were

to, parents of, nor were they tried with a female witch. When compared to their female counterparts, male witches seem insignificant, but when we consider that about 200-400<sup>5</sup> men were tried as witches between 1563 and 1736 they suddenly seem less invisible. A gendered view of the witch-hunts must address the presence of these anomalous witches, as well as address why only some husbands and some children were accused.

In this section, we will examine the general portrait of the male witch that emerges from the pamphlet literature and compare this figure with what historians know about witches in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although statistics based on pamphlet literature are not the most rigorous criteria to determine social reality, what this sample indicates is that pamphleteers portrayed male witches as people commonly perceived them and, hence, they were not unusual male witches. This small statistical group justifies itself precisely because these men seem to broadly represent male witches as a whole. In my sample there are twenty-two male witches, all tried between 1566 and 1645.<sup>6</sup>

The first statistical category in Table 1 is the marital status of the male witch. Since a common assumption among historians is that the male witch was usually the spouse of an accused female witch it is necessary that we determine if in fact the evidence supports this conclusion. Of those male witches whose marital status can be reasonably ascertained, a slight majority (8 out of 14) was unmarried at the time of their trials. Obviously, this statistic

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different than they are today, gender was not likely to be a direct motivating factor in the witch-hunts. Malcolm Gaskill, "Devil in the Shape of a Man: Witchcraft, Conflict and Belief in Jacobean England," *Historical Research*, 71, 175 (June 1998), was the first scholar to specifically address the male witch, but he does so in order to prove that gender was not at the heart of the witch-hunts by stating that witches had more in common with each other, regardless of gender, than with the rest of society.

<sup>5</sup> MacFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 62; MacFarlane approximates that 2000 trials were held in England, and that 10-20 percent were men. In the southeastern counties men were about 10 percent of the accused, and in the other counties about 20 percent.

<sup>6</sup> There is an important caveat about the sample: the majority of these male witches were tried in Essex County. Since Essex County has the most complete records from the trials themselves and the greatest number of extant pamphlets about those trials it is inevitable that witches from Essex would be over-represented. This is not simply a flaw in my sources or data, but is evident in most of the secondary sources for witchcraft in England.

indicates that unmarried men had a slightly greater chance of being accused than married men. This evidence parallels the data for female witches.

In England, unmarried women (including widows) accounted for the majority of accused witches.<sup>7</sup> Several historians have suggested that unmarried women who were not under some form of male authority presented a unique problem in a patriarchal society and that they provoked fear among their neighbors.<sup>8</sup> So how does the male witch fit in? In England, as in many other parts of Northern Europe, unmarried adults frequently aroused suspicion and were believed to cause much social disorder.<sup>9</sup> For men, full social adulthood was impossible without courting, marrying and heading a household, and male adolescence was deemed a liminal period filled with passion, vigor and the follies of youth.<sup>10</sup> Hence, unmarried men, like unmarried women, also presented the potential for disorder in a society where the family was the basic unit of social, economic, and political organization. From this data, we can conclude that the pamphlet literature both reflects the reality that unmarried persons were more commonly accused of witchcraft and also reflects social anxiety about unmarried adults in the early modern period.

In order to fully contest the image of the male witch as a subsidiary of the female witch, we must now consider the proportion of men who were tried that were directly associated with a female witch. There are three classifications for this category: 1) those men tried who were married to an accused witch; 2) those men tried who were related to a female witch; and 3) those

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<sup>7</sup> Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London & New York: Longman, 1995), 146.

<sup>8</sup> MacFarlane, pg. 164; Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 147; James Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Harlow, England & New York: Longman, 2001), 44.

<sup>9</sup> In Denmark, there were laws that forced single persons to register with the government and unmarried women were forced to swear that they were 'honorable'. In France, an ordinance was passed in 1665 that prevented unmarried women from living with their mothers. In other cities, unmarried women were banned unless they worked in domestic service. Monica Chojnacka and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Ages of Woman, Ages of Man: Sources in European Social History, 1400-1750* (London & New York: Longman, 2002), 50-53; Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 77.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995), 211.

men tried who were not linked by either marriage or affinal ties to a female witch. Some of the men in the third category were tried at the same assizes as female witches, but this alone is not sufficient to conclude that men were usually confederates of female witches.

In the sample of male witches in Table 1, five men were married to female witches and five were related to female witches; ten were tried alone. This finding corresponds closely with Alan MacFarlane's statistics from Essex County. In Essex, MacFarlane found that of the twenty-three men tried for witchcraft only eleven were married to or jointly named with a female witch.<sup>11</sup> Based on the evidence from the pamphlet literature and MacFarlane's evidence, we can now safely conclude that the

## **Table 1**

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<sup>11</sup> MacFarlane, 160.



<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Relationship with female witch<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Length of reputation<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>Fate</b>
<u>Unmarried</u> 8	<u>Tried with</u> 5	<u>Young-young adult</u> 6	<u>0-5 years</u> 7	<u>Executed</u> 8
<u>Married</u> 6	<u>Associated with</u> 5	<u>Middle age</u> 5	<u>6-10 years</u> 2	<u>Acquitted</u> 2
<u>Unknown</u> 8	<u>Tried alone</u> 10 <sup>14</sup>	<u>Elderly</u> 2	<u>11 or more years</u> 6	<u>Other</u> 5 <sup>15</sup>
	<u>Unknown</u> 1	<u>Unknown</u> 9 <sup>16</sup>	<u>Unknown</u> 7	<u>Unknown</u> 7

<sup>12</sup> There are only twenty-one witches in this category because Christopher Hargreaves alias Jackes, although accused with his wife in 1612, was never brought to trial.

<sup>13</sup> The length of reputation was based either on how long they confessed to being witches or how long prior to trial their accusers believed them to be witches.

<sup>14</sup> Nicholas Hempstead, Cherrie, John Scarfe, and John Wynnich were all included in this category even though the pamphlet did not specifically say they were not tried or associated with female witches. The reason I included them in this category is because John Stearne usually indicated whether there was a relationship with a female witch and also because he gave enough details about each case that I think it is likely he would have indicated a relationship to a female witch if there had been one.

<sup>15</sup> Three died in jail, one was stoned to death by an angry mob, and one was never indicted.

<sup>16</sup> Of the nine, four are probably middle age or older, while two are either young adults or middle age.

male witch was not merely a side effect of witch-hunting, but was tried for a variety of reasons independent of female witches. Some of those reasons will be addressed in the subsequent case study of John Lambe.

The age of male witches and the length of their reputations are closely correlated categories, so we will consider them together. I used several criteria to determine the ages. In several cases the ages of the witches were specified in some way. In many others ages had to be determined by factors such as marital status and length of reputation, thus the predominance of unknowns. For the young-young adult category, three were specified as being young; the other three, James Device, Arthur Bill and John Bulcock, were all the unmarried children of other accused witches. In England, the age of marriage for both men and women tended to be in their mid- or late-twenties when they could afford to maintain an independent household.<sup>17</sup> Thus, we can extrapolate that since these three men were not deemed young but were still unmarried they were probably young adults. Following from this, if the accused was married they were likely to be middle age or older.

In Table 1, the figures are somewhat misleading because many of the nine men whose precise ages are unknown were at least middle age or older. Taken together with the data for middle age and elderly, we can see that most male witches tended to be at least middle age. The figures for male witches are more heavily weighted toward middle age, which is a slight contrast to the common stereotype of the elderly witch. In part, the emphasis on middle-aged male witches was due to the shorter duration of their reputations as compared to female witches. For those male witches whose reputations can be ascertained, the majority either confessed to or was accused of being a witch for less than ten years. James Sharpe and Brian Levack both correlate the length of the witch's reputation with the age of the accused, stating that the reason witches

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<sup>17</sup> Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 71.

tended to be elderly was because it took a great deal of time for suspicions to result in accusation.<sup>18</sup> This trend seems limited to the majority of female witches rather than male witches.

In many witchcraft pamphlets, female witches were often described as the subject of suspicion for considerable lengths of time. Several of the Chelmsford witches tried in 1645 confessed to being witches for well over a decade and two were suspected for thirty years.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, the majority of male witches in this sample had comparatively brief careers as witches. John Walsh, tried in 1566, confessed to practicing his ‘art’ for seven years before his presentment at an ecclesiastical court. William Godfrey, whose 1617 case was studied in depth by Malcolm Gaskill, only managed to acquire a reputation stretching back to 1609. Jennet Device accused her brother, James Device, the grandson of Elizabeth Southernns, alias Old Demdike, of being a witch for only three years.<sup>20</sup> Although some male witches, such as Parson Lowis, were able to achieve significant reputations for witchcraft, the majority did not.<sup>21</sup>

There are no simple explanations for why the reputations of male witches and female witches differed so greatly, especially if one subscribes to the belief that women predominated among accused witches because patriarchy was more threatened by transgressive women. If the ‘woman as witch’ axiom were accurate, one would expect to find that women had shorter

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<sup>18</sup> Brian Levack, 142; Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Early Modern England*, 44.

<sup>19</sup> *A true and exact relation of the severall informations, examinations, and confessions of the late witches, arraigned and executed in the County of Essex. Who were arraigned and condemned at the late sessions, holden at Chelmsford before Rt. Hon. Robert, earle of Warwick, and severall of His Majesties justices of the peace, the 29 of July, 1645...* (London: Printed by M.S. for H. Overton, 1645); Anne Leech and Mary Greenleif had reputations for 30 years (pg. 8, 15), Rebecca Jones had a reputation for 24 or 25 years (pg. 32), Anne Cate had a reputation for 22 years (pg. 34), Rose Hallybread had a reputation for 15 or 16 years (pg. 29), and Joyce Boanes had a reputation for 13 years (pg. 30).

<sup>20</sup> “The Examination of John Walsh (1566),” in *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*, edited by Marion Gibson, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 28; Gaskill, *Historical Research*, 153; Thomas Potts, “The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches (1612),” in *Early Modern Witches*, 209.

<sup>21</sup> My study is confirmed by Joseph Klaitis’ assessment of the witch trials in Scotland and Germany. The fact that men had much shorter reputations for witchcraft was important enough that it was one of the few times Klaitis even mentions male witches (p. 101).

reputations, but the reverse is true. Some might suggest that the reason for the relatively brief reputations for male witches was because of their relationship to female witches who were the real targets of accusations. But the data from the sample indicate that the length of a male witch's reputation did not correlate with the relationship of a male witch to a female witch; a male witch with no affiliation to a female witch was just as likely to develop a long reputation, or have a short reputation, as a male witch connected to a female witch.

So how can we explain this anomaly? I would like to suggest that the reason for the brevity of the male witch's reputation was due to his comparative rarity in witchcraft trials. Although there was no ideological impediment to the notion of male witches among demonologists, they accepted as self-evident that most witches were women.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, when men were suspected of witchcraft it might have been more obvious and more disturbing to neighbors than a female witch. Since, theoretically, her husband could still rein in a married female witch, she may have, at times, posed a less significant threat than a male witch. This may account for why many widows developed their reputations as married women, but were not tried until after their husband died.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England was a gerontocracy and much legislation was focused on controlling young men.<sup>23</sup> Adult men were expected to be self-disciplined and in accord with the state, but the male witch (who was usually an adult) stood in defiance- morally, socially, and legally. In the case of a male witch, the legal system provided one of the only ways to enforce either his compliance with patriarchal order or his execution. Anxiety about men who failed to adhere to normative patriarchal values must have heightened fears about maintaining appropriate gender roles as well as (male) social order. Apparently, in

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<sup>22</sup> Sharpe, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Michael J. Braddick and John Walter eds., *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy, and Subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, U.K. & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 22.

some cases it was possible for the threat of disorder by men to be deemed greater than the threat of disorder by women.

The final category in Table 1 regards the fate of male witches. If we use the data alone, it would suggest an extremely high proportion of male witches were either executed or died in jail (a total of 55%), whereas most execution estimates indicate that roughly 15% of those tried for witchcraft were executed.<sup>24</sup> These figures merely reflect the tendency by pamphleteers to focus on those trials that resulted in conviction and execution. If the fate of female witches in the pamphlet literature was calculated, it would probably also show a distinct bias toward those who were convicted and executed. Since many of the authors used their pamphlets to encourage greater efforts to try and convict witches by showing their danger to society, they needed to focus on trials where the witch's guilt was 'proved'. To use the average witch who was either acquitted or given a light sentence would have undermined their rhetoric. I used this category to illustrate the ways in which pamphlet authors attempted to materialize a specific social reality and to engage in the process of ideology formation. This facet of the pamphlet literature is important for understanding how the authors used witchcraft trials to express masculine anxieties and to articulate and reinforce appropriate gender behavior.

From the data in Table 1, we can see that the pamphlet literature does present a fairly accurate picture of the male witch, at least to the degree to which historians have studied him. What clearly emerges from the data is that the male witch cannot be dismissed as a spouse, child, or confederate of a female witch, especially since the majority was tried individually. We can also see that, contrary to Malcolm Gaskill's assertion that gender was of minimal impact on the trials,<sup>25</sup> there were differences between male and female witches. Female witches tended to be

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<sup>24</sup> MacFarlane, 62.

<sup>25</sup> Gaskill, 170.

older and have more extensive reputations than their male counterparts when they were tried, suggesting that masculine anxieties were sometimes provoked more by male witches than female witches. In the remainder of this article I will use the case study of John Lambe to illustrate how the male witch could be used by pamphlet authors to write proscriptively about appropriate gender behavior and also show that male witches were often specific, rather than accidental, players in the witch-hunts.

### **The Duke's Devil and Doctor Lambe's Darling: A Case Study**

One of the best ways to illustrate how the witch articulated gender roles is through a case study that examines both the similarities and differences in how pamphleteers portrayed male and female witches. For this case study I have chosen two accused witches who were tried individually, but were not unconnected. I chose Doctor John Lambe because he was tried alone, with no imputation that he was ever associated with a female witch. This challenges the prevailing assumption that men were either related to or confederates of women if they were accused of witchcraft. Anne Bodenham is the natural comparison because she was formerly Doctor Lambe's servant, showing that men could also transmit witchcraft to others. The cases of Doctor Lambe and Anne Bodenham show that both men and women could be targeted as witches when they were perceived to deviate from their prescribed gender roles.

Both John Lambe and Anne Bodenham were cunning folk, so it is necessary to explain the role of cunning folk in early modern England. After the Protestant Reformation the role of cunning folk became much more important to the local people. One of the vital functions that the Catholic Church had provided for the people were the sacraments and the idea of guardian spirits and saints. Keith Thomas has asserted that the religious changes of the sixteenth century

eliminated ecclesiastical magic as a legitimate way for the people to protect themselves from *maleficium* (harmful magic). When the Anglican Church replaced the Catholic Church, the clergy did not perform the same rituals that the Catholic clergy had, thus jeopardizing their prestige among the common people.<sup>26</sup> The common people had no other recourse to supernatural assistance except through the aid of local cunning folk. Even though the Anglican Church did not perform ecclesiastical magic, they still denied people access to the relief cunning folk could provide, terming all magic demonic in origin.

Despite the ban on consulting cunning folk for charms, amulets or counter-magic, cunning folk represented an integral part of village life and they commanded a degree of authority granted outside of the patriarchal order. The English elite tended to view cunning folk with contempt because they used their moderate education and literacy to make money. The learned viewed cunning men, like Lambe, as base and fraudulent, an insult to those, like John Dee, who practiced learned magic. Indeed, the witchcraft statute passed in 1603 to replace the Act of 1563, made the ‘white’ magic of cunning folk a felony punishable by one year’s imprisonment and four appearances in the pillory.<sup>27</sup>

The trial and death of John Lambe in 1628 shows how the male witch could be construed as a literal threat to masculine norms and also as a threat to class and political hierarchies, which were all enmeshed during the early modern period. The rise of the gentry during the Tudor-Stuart period signaled the emergence of competing masculine ideals, which would reach its critical intensity during the Civil War and Interregnum.<sup>28</sup> The gentry began to depart from

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<sup>26</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 490-498.

<sup>27</sup> Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England From 1558-1718* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 104.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony Fletcher argues that the Restoration marked the emergence of a new gentry identity, and cites 1660 as the crucial date in changes masculine ideology (pg. 283). Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*,

aristocratic masculine ideology, which emphasized hunting, dueling and physical exercises that proved to themselves and other men that theirs was the superior gender. Instead, by the 1620s the gentry began to emphasize manners and refinement, terming the noble ideal brutish.<sup>29</sup>

Debates about masculinity contained class conflict within them. The true expression of these class conflicts were seen in Parliamentary politics, and at the beginning of King Charles I's reign Doctor Lambe provided a discursive tool for the pamphleteer to define concepts of masculinity, to legitimize the distribution of privilege based on class, and also, retrospectively, to justify the murders of both Lambe and (implicitly) the Duke of Buckingham. Before we consider the anonymous pamphlet, *A Briefe Description of the Notorious life of Iohn Lambe*, we need to understand the historical context that produced such fear about Lambe as a threat to the order of the state, class, and masculinity.

John Lambe became infamous in London as the astrologer and necromancer for George Villiers, the favorite to both James I and Charles I. George Villiers was the second son of a poor genteel county family and after his arrival at court in 1614 he quickly grew in stature, becoming first the Earl of Buckingham and later Duke.<sup>30</sup> Villiers solidified his new status in the Stuart court by marrying the daughter of the Earl of Rutland, one of the most prominent Catholic families in England.<sup>31</sup> By 1620, Villiers controlled the dispensation of the king's patronage and granted lucrative monopolies to his relatives. In 1621, Parliament began an investigation of these abuses and Villiers protected himself by condemning members of his family. Villiers continued to gain more political foes throughout the 1620s for his often-zealous championship of

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*Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, England & New York: Longman, 2001), also believes that the emergence of 'politeness,' the gentry's masculine ideology, began in the Restoration (pg. 23).

<sup>29</sup> Fletcher, 322-346; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Lacy Baldwin Smith, *This Realm of England 1399-1688* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 258.

<sup>31</sup> Between the 1530s and 1560s Catholicism became linked with magic, specifically black magic. Norman Jones, "Defining Superstitions: Treasonous Catholics and the Act Against Witchcraft of 1563," Charles Carlton and others eds., *State, Sovereigns & Society in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of A.J. Slavin*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 188.



questionable military and political campaigns and for his role in arranging the marriage of Charles to the Catholic Henrietta Maria. Publicly, Villiers was blamed for the failure of England to recapture the Palatinate for Frederick the Winter King and Parliament attempted to impeach him in 1626.

Lambe came into the service of Villiers sometime before 1625 to advise him about his insane brother, John Villiers, who was rumored to be the victim of sorcery.<sup>32</sup> Already known as a cunning man, Lambe was perceived by Villiers' political peers and Londoners to exert an unnatural influence over Villiers, blaming Lambe alternatively for Villiers' sexual seductions and military failures.<sup>33</sup> One can also imagine the temptation for Villiers' opponents to view his meteoric rise in stature from a threadbare gentleman to the most powerful peer of the realm as being the work of sorcery.<sup>34</sup>

Lambe became a convenient target for Villiers' enemies to focus upon as the indirect source of troubles between Charles and Parliament, believing that if both Lambe and Villiers were dispatched Charles would become more amenable to Parliament. Within the context of belief in the Great Chain of Being, members of the Commons were loathe to view their king as misguided, yet they distrusted royal authority and were annoyed at Charles' attempts at absolutism.<sup>35</sup> Instead, the Commons focused upon Villiers as the cause of troubles between Charles and Parliament. Lambe became a casualty of the animosity that Parliament felt for Villiers.

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<sup>32</sup> James Holston, "'God Bless Thee, Little David!': John Felton and His Allies," *ELH*, 59, 3 (Autumn, 1992), 521. [database online]; available from JSTOR, 15 February 2003.

<sup>33</sup> *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition (2001), s.v. "Buckingham, George Villiers, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of." [Internet online]; available from <<http://www.bartelby.com/65/bu/BuckinghGV1d.html>>, 15 February 2003.

<sup>34</sup> This was not an unusual belief among the aristocracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Keith Thomas said that both Thomas Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell were thought to possess magical rings that gained them Henry VIII's favor (p. 233).

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *This Realm of England*, 272.

In the Bill of Impeachment drafted by Parliament, Villiers was accused of using extortion to sell titles and of murdering King James with poison, a rumor that had circulated through London since James' death in 1625.<sup>36</sup> One can presume that Lambe was the supposed source of this poison, if not the inspiration for the murder. Nonetheless, it was the military failure at Cadiz that supplied the impetus to remove Villiers, but Parliament was thwarted in their attempts at impeachment when Charles intervened on Villiers' behalf and dissolved Parliament before they could vote. An apocryphal story circulated London that prior to the impeachment attempt several omens plagued London and Lambe was considered the source.

Beginning in May 1626 a series of events that were identified as omens began to afflict London. In June 1626 a whirlwind on the Thames not only unearthed corpses and coffins in the churchyards, but also battered the walls of Whitehall and York House, the residence of Villiers. "It was 'saide that there was a spirit at the same time seen upon the waters' and that arcane shapes had been discerned in the peculiar mist which hung over the river."<sup>37</sup> Londoners called the day 'terrible Monday' and linked the omens with the dissolution of Parliament later that week. Lambe was blamed for the omens and some interpreted this as a disruption of the political will of Villiers' peers through sorcery. In essence, Lambe used his sorcery to manipulate Villiers, who in turn manipulated Charles I, thus exerting political influence that by right he did not have. Lambe evoked masculine anxiety by threatening to subvert the hierarchical distribution of male prerogative as determined by the Great Chain of Being.

Shortly after Lambe was murdered an anonymous author penned *A Briefe Description of the Notorious life of Iohn Lambe* (1628) to describe Lambe's trials and his death. The pamphlet

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<sup>36</sup> Holston, *ELH*, 519; Lawrence Stone, *Crisis of Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 114.

<sup>37</sup> Alexandra Walsham, "Vox Piscis: The Book-Fish: Providence and the Uses of the Reformation Past in Caroline Cambridge (\*). (Critical Essay)," *English Historical Review* (June 1999), 7. [database online]; Available from Find Articles, 15 February 2003.

allows the historian a window into how contemporaries perceived Lambe and also how the pamphleteer conceived of proper gender and class roles. In the pamphlet, Lambe was portrayed as an effeminate, irreligious, ignorant, and sexually deviant man. Nevertheless, Lambe was also depicted as having great powers to disrupt patriarchal order and herein lay his threat to masculinity.

In *A Briefe Description*, the author described charges against Lambe that were fairly typical of witchcraft trials. According to the author:

He began within short time after he professed Physick in the Country, to fall to other mysteries, as telling of Fortunes, helping of diuerse to lost goods, shewing to young people the faces of their Husbans or Wiues, that should be, in a Christall glasse: reuealing to wiues the escapes and faults of their Husbans, and to husbands of their wiues.<sup>38</sup>

From these charges, it becomes clear that Lambe was a cunning man, a person for whom the author had little respect. Along with fortune telling, crystal gazing and locating lost or stolen goods, the author later writes that Lambe could also tell whether or not someone was a witch and that he could discern disease in persons whom he had never met.<sup>39</sup>

In the first indictment at Worcester, Lambe was charged with:

certaine euill Diabolicall and execrable arts called Witchcrafts, Enchantments, Charmers and Sorcerers, in and upon the right Honorable *Th: Lo. W.* Deuelishly, Maliciously, and Feloniously, did use, practise, and exercise, to the intent by the same euill, deuilish, and execrable Arts, to disable, make infirme, and consume the body and strength of the said *Th: Lo. W.*<sup>40</sup>

Lambe pleaded innocent to the charge of bewitching Thomas, Lord Windsor but was found guilty. According to the author, however, judgment was suspended. The pamphleteer seemed particularly upset that after Lambe's first indictment his reputation actually improved, comparing

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<sup>38</sup> *A Briefe Description of the Notorious life of Iohn Lambe, otherwise called Doctor Lambe, together with his ignominious death* (Amsterdam, 1628), 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Notorious life of Iohn Lambe*, 8-9.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, 4

Lambe to authors of “unlearned and foolish Bookes” who have earned money and praise from the ignorant people that bought their books after the government censored them.<sup>41</sup> Lambe was, therefore, believed by the pamphleteer to be taking advantage of the ignorant for his own profit.

Lambe was indicted a second time for invoking and entertaining evil spirits in order to use them maliciously in both the present and future. Mr. Wayneman testified that one afternoon, he met Lambe and “entring into some discourse with him” Lambe told him that he could discern all the secret marks on Wayneman’s body, what acts he had committed in his life, and could likewise do the same with others. Wayneman also testified that Lambe tried to draw him into the “Deuilish Art of Coniuration” by showing him how he could invoke spirits to do his bidding. According to Mr. Wayneman, Lambe used a crystal glass to invoke the spirits by saying “I adore thee (*Benias*),” proving his disloyalty to God and causing Wayneman to flee in fright. On a separate occasion, Lambe told Wayneman- who was apparently not terribly upset by Lambe’s use of spirits- that he could “intoxicate, poison, and bewitch any man so as they should be disabled from begetting of children.”<sup>42</sup> For his unchristian activities, Lambe was again found guilty, but the judgment was stayed.

The author of *A Briefe Description* also relates a number of stories about Lambe’s infamous exploits in order to illustrate his dishonorable practices. One of the most important stories was from the County of York, where Lambe showed tricks to the household of the Earl of Mulgrave. Seeing Lady Fairfax, the daughter of Mulgrave, laughing gaily, Lambe told her that shortly she would be struck with sadness “by occasion and accident of water;” within three days all three of the Earl’s sons drowned and Lambe claimed that it was his knowledge of astrology

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, 3

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, 6-7

that allowed him to foretell their deaths.<sup>43</sup> There is no evidence that he was ever accused by Mulgrave of witchcraft so it can only be considered a rumor designed to vilify Lambe even further.

Although convicted on both indictments, Lambe was not executed because within a fortnight of his arraignment “the High Sheriffe, the Foreman of the Iury, and diuers other of the Iustices, Gentlemen there present, and of the same Iury, to the number of forty dyed,”<sup>44</sup> prompting his transfer from Worcester Castle to the King’s Bench in London. One might find that a more likely explanation of Lambe’s transfer to London was that King Charles requested it as a favor to Villiers. Nevertheless, the tales of Lambe’s evil deeds and multiple murders by bewitchment all suited the author’s purposes of showing the male witch as a literal threat to social order.

After Lambe was transferred he was indicted for and convicted of raping eleven-year old Joan Seager. In the testimony of Mabel Swinnerton, Lambe, when confronted with the evidence of this rape, blamed Thomas Windsor, his supposed victim of sorcery, obviously convinced that the rape charge was politically motivated. Swinnerton testified: “With that he rail’d uppon my Lord of *Winszor* grieuously, with many base words, and said, hee did more good deedes in a weeke, then my Lord of *Winszor* did in a yeare.”<sup>45</sup> Although Lambe was sentenced to death for the rape, Charles reprieved him and Lambe was released from prison sometime in 1627 and found residence in a home near Parliament in London.<sup>46</sup> In June 1628, Lambe was beset by a mob of apprentices for his wicked deeds and chased through London. Amid taunts that he was

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, 7; the veracity of this story is difficult to determine since he was not accused of bewitching the Earl’s family. It should be noted, however, that when the Earl of Mulgrave died in 1646 his grandson inherited the title indicating that the sons were dead.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, 14

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, 16, 19

<sup>46</sup> This seems to be a not so subtle reminder to both Londoners and Parliament of his presence; this is possibly the author’s intent to show that Lambe was still a threat to social order thus justifying the anger of the mob that killed him.

the ‘duke’s Devil’ Lambe was beaten and stoned to death.<sup>47</sup> In this last indictment, Lambe was proved to be the worst sort of deviant because he violated the chastity of a young girl, thus bringing shame and dishonor to another man.

The conventional nature of most of the charges against Lambe is misleading; the author of the pamphlet was systematically building a character profile of Lambe that stripped him of his masculinity. We know from the pamphlet that Lambe was at least moderately educated, since he taught reading and writing to the children of several “Gentlemen” and studied the “Science of Physicke”.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the pamphleteer showed his contempt for Lambe’s intellect when he said that other “honest and able men” judged Lambe as “altogether unlearned, and silly of discourse, or else to affect that way of speaking as a colour of his mischeuous practices.”<sup>49</sup>

This opinion may reflect the Royal College president’s remarks to the bishop of Durham in December 1627. When Villiers attempted to secure Lambe a medical license from the Royal College, the president replied: “By the sentence of the College...Mr. Lambe stands convict and guilty of all manner of insufficiency and ignorance in this faculty.”<sup>50</sup> Lambe, unable to prove his proficiency in astrology, showed himself to be nothing more than a sorcerer with pretensions to high magic.<sup>51</sup> The Royal College was both protective of their licensing (they did not extend licenses to those deemed frauds, like cunning men) and politically aligned with Parliament, who

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<sup>47</sup> Holston, 521.

<sup>48</sup> *Notorious life of Iohn Lambe*, 1; physicke was the learned practice of both medical doctors and cunning men.

<sup>49</sup> *Notorious Life of Iohn Lambe*, 2

<sup>50</sup> Charles C. Gillespie, “Physicke and Philosophy: A Study of the Influence of the College of Physicians of London upon the Foundation of the Royal Society,” *Journal of Modern History*, 19, 3 (Sep. 1947), 212, and footnote. [database online]; Available from JSTOR, 15 February 2003.

<sup>51</sup> High magic included alchemy, physicke, and divination such as astrology, and was considered akin to religion, philosophy, and science in its speculative quality. Since high magic necessitated at least some education, it was deemed to be masculine, the product of the rational (male) mind. Unlike low magic, high magic was generally considered to be free of superstition, and indeed, at its best it sought union with the divine. Low magic frequently involved simple spells and charms for immediate results, and was most often associated with *maleficium*, or harmful magic. The simplicity of low magic led to its frequent association with women and it was deemed the feminized counterpart to masculine high magic. Thus low magic was a less perfect and less potent form of magic. Sorcery fell in between, combining divination with mechanistic magic. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 5, 7-9.

was hostile to Villiers and Lambe. The author's contempt for Lambe is further illustrated by his description of Lambe's work as a cunning man. Together with impugning his intellect, the charge of dishonesty was a challenge to Lambe's honor and thus his masculinity.

Anthony Fletcher states that in the early modern period masculinity was not solely based on a man's ability to control his household. Honest labor, fair dealing, and respect and decency for the community were all critical to a man's reputation.<sup>52</sup> In Lambe's case, he was represented as breaching every one these ideals. First and foremost, Lambe was an unmarried man of middle age in a society that did not grant full social adulthood to men unless they courted, married and maintained a household. The household was considered the foundation of a well-ordered society and those outside this microcosmic patriarchy were believed to undermine the social fabric.

Secondly, given the influence of demonologists and the Anglican Church in equating all magic with diabolism, Lambe could not claim to engage in honest labor since he was invoking demons to assist him. Neither could he claim to deal fairly since fortune telling, crystal gazing, and locating lost items were all considered by the learned to be fraudulent and exploitative of people's ignorance. The pamphleteer also shows that Lambe did not respect his community since he encouraged marital discord by revealing the affairs of spouses, thus undermining the basic unit of social order by interfering in the marital relationship.<sup>53</sup>

Probably the greatest threat that Lambe posed, both in terms of masculinity and class/political hierarchy was in his assaults upon the aristocracy. As mentioned above, Lambe was found guilty of bewitching Thomas Windsor and was accused by the pamphleteer of fatally bewitching the three sons of the Earl of Mulgrave. These attacks can be interpreted as attempts to destroy the government of England, since the aristocracy was the main governing body for the

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<sup>52</sup> Fletcher, 104-105.

<sup>53</sup>*Notorious life of Iohn Lambe*, 2.

monarchy. By showing Lambe as a literal threat to state order, the author of *A Briefe Description* expressed anxiety about the ways in which the aristocracy's power had been undermined both by the encroachment of the gentry, but more specifically by the degradation of honor through the sale of titles during the 1620s. By targeting Lambe, the author could indirectly accuse Villiers, himself the product of title inflation, of endangering the state and justify Parliament's attempts to impeach him.

Just after Lambe's death the Privy Council, probably at Charles' behest, launched an investigation of the murder. Given the dislike for Lambe in Parliament and London it should be no surprise that nobody was ever arrested for his murder. Indeed, shortly after the murder two foreboding poems appeared in London:

Who rules the Kingdom? The King.  
 Who rules the King? The Duke.  
 Who rules the Duke? The Devil!  
 Let the duke look to it; for they intend shortly to use him worse  
 than they did the doctor; and if things be not shortly reformed,  
 they will work a reformation themselves.

Let Charles and George do what they can,  
 the duke shall die like Doctor Lambe.<sup>54</sup>

In these verses, we can see a clear expression of masculine anxiety about Lambe and his influence upon Villiers. In the first poem, it is clear that Londoners believed that Lambe ('The Devil') used magic to manipulate Villiers and, in turn, King Charles. These poems were certainly a warning to both Villiers and Charles that changes, namely the disposal of Villiers, were necessary. In August 1628 a disgruntled naval officer who was influenced by the politics of John Eliot, the leader of the impeachment movement against Villiers in the Commons, murdered the

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<sup>54</sup> Holston, 521-522; the first was apparently penned by Martin Parker and was attached to a post on Coleman Street in London. The couplet was written anonymously.



duke.<sup>55</sup> Apparently, Lambe's death emboldened at least one man to carry out the threats evident in the two verses because Villiers no longer had the protection of Lambe's magic to guarantee his safety.

### *The Trial of Anne Bodenham*

In 1653 Anne Bodenham, a former servant of John Lambe, was indicted, convicted and executed for witchcraft. By the time of her trial, England had a more stable political order than in the previous decade of the civil war and Oliver Cromwell acted as Lord Protector in a de facto monarchy. Under Cromwell, there was more religious toleration than previously, with religious extremists accepted as long as they did not engage in antisocial behavior. Even Catholics were tolerated to a point, although authors like Edmond Bower still expressed strong prejudices toward Catholicism. Under Cromwell's rule many of the anxieties that marked the late-1620s to 1640s disappeared from the pamphlet literature. In many ways, the Cromwellian monarchy and restoration of the House of Lords and Commons signaled that social order in the tradition of the Great Chain of Being remained intact.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, Edmond Bower still expressed masculine anxiety about women who did not adhere to proper gender roles. In the pamphlet, *Dr. Lambe revived* (1653), Bower contrasts Anne Bodenham with the young maid she was accused of bewitching, showing the difference between women who sin out of ignorance and women who sin out of willfulness.

Like Dr. Lambe, Bodenham was a cunning woman and apparently learned her 'art' from him. According to Edmond Bower, "an eye and ear Witness of her Examination and

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<sup>55</sup> Smith, 272, 274.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, 313-314.

Confession,"<sup>57</sup> Bodenham originally met Lambe through a former employer who frequently sent her to consult him. Bodenham told Bower:

that she had been a Servant to Dr. Lambe, and the occasion she came to live with him, she said was, that she lived with a Lady in London, who was a Patient many times to him, and sent her often in businesse to him, and in particular, she went to know what death King James should die; and the Doctor told her what death, and withal said that none of his Children should come to a natural death; and she said she then saw so many curious sights, and pleasant things, that she had a minde to be his Servant; and she reading in some of his Books, with his help learnt her Art...<sup>58</sup>

In this apocryphal story, Bower portrayed Bodenham as treasonous and intent upon undermining social order.

By inquiring into the nature of a monarch's death, Bodenham engaged in treason, even if she was only doing so at the bidding of her mistress. We can also see that Bodenham willingly took upon herself to learn what Lambe could teach her, and, given Lambe's reputation, this would be enough to horrify many readers and convince them of her guilt. We must remember that this pamphlet was written after the execution of King Charles and that Villiers was widely rumored to have murdered King James. Lambe's foreknowledge of James' death implicates him in James' murder. Bower utilized the well-established reputation of Lambe not only to taint Bodenham in the eyes of his readers, but also to further elaborate retrospectively on the threat of Lambe to patriarchal order.

After Lambe was murdered, Bodenham apparently worked as a cunning woman and developed a reputation as such over several decades. This illustrates that female witches frequently developed much greater reputations than their male counterparts. The circumstances

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<sup>57</sup> Edmund Bower, *Doctor Lambe revived; or, Witchcraft condemn'd in Anne Bodenham, a servant of his, who was arraigned and executed the Lent assizes last at Salisbury, before...Baron Wild, judge of the assise. Wherein is set forth her strange and wonderful diabolical usage of a maid, servant to Mr. Goddard, as also her attempt against his daughters...* (London, Printed by T.W. for R. Best and J. Place, 1653), cover

<sup>58</sup> Bower, *Doctor Lambe revived*, 26-27.

of Bodenham's trial were a result of her work as a cunning woman and her reputation for helping people harm their enemies. Bodenham claimed that she could "cure Diseases by Charms and Spels, and had prayers that would do so likewise," and that "she could discover stolen goods, and shew any one the Theef that had them, in a glasse," and that "she could raise Spirits by reading in her Books."<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Bower claimed that Bodenham "would often tell those, that had converse with her of lucky and unlucky days, which she would have them observe in their employments."<sup>60</sup>

It was in her capacity as a cunning woman that Anne Styles, servant of Richard Goddard, was sent to Bodenham to discover the whereabouts of a silver spoon. Bodenham told Styles that she could not help her, but said she would soon return on a greater matter. Bodenham then proceeded to charge Styles twelve pence and a jug of beer for the consultation, a signal of how she profited from the ignorance of others although she did nothing to earn it.<sup>61</sup>

Shortly after this, Anne Styles visited Bodenham on behalf of Thomas Mason, Goddard's son-in-law, regarding lost money. Again, Bodenham could not help; however, using her crystal ball she showed Styles what everyone at the Goddard house was doing.

after the Witch had looked over the book, she brought a round green glass, which glass she layd down on one of the books, upon some picture therein, and rubbed the glass, and then took up the book with the glass upon it, and held it up against the Sun, and bid the Maid come and see who they were, that she could shew in that glass, and the Maid looking in the glass saw the shape of many persons, and what they were doing of in her Masters house.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Bower, 25-26.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid*, 1

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, 1-2

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, 2-3

This passage was designed to illustrate Bodenham's attempts to enchant Styles with her access to power and also to show how easily the ignorant might be led astray. Although she offered no assistance to Styles, again Bodenham charged her for the visit.

On a third visit, Mistress Goddard sent Styles to Bodenham because she believed that her daughters-in-law, Sarah and Anne Goddard, were trying to poison her. In an even greater show of power than on the previous two visits, Bodenham, according to Styles, sent a black dog to lead Styles to her home. When Styles reached Bodenham's home "the doors flew open without her knocking, and the Witch met her at the second door, and told her, she knew wherefore she came, and that it was about poisoning."<sup>63</sup> Bodenham promised that she would prevent Mistress Goddard from being poisoned, but again did nothing on that occasion.

On the next visit, Bodenham drew Styles even further into the Devil's snare by showing her how spirits could be invoked. Styles stated:

and so calling Belzebub, Tormentor, Satan, and Lucifer appear, there suddainly arose a very high wind, which made the house shake, and presently the back Door of the house flying open, there came five spirits...in the likeness of ragged Boys, some bigger than others, and ran about the house.<sup>64</sup>

The invocation of spirits apparently did not disturb Styles, for she continued to return to Bodenham on behalf of Mistress Roswell in order to inquire about lovers and marriage proposals.

After several visits and an apparent attempt by Anne and Sarah Goddard to poison Mistress Goddard, Styles testified that she returned to Bodenham to procure poison to be used against them. Bodenham supplied Styles with vervain and dill. Anne and Sarah Goddard discovered the suspicions against them and the plot to poison them, resulting in Styles' dismissal

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid*, 3

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, 5

from the Goddard home. Styles found refuge with Bodenham, who tried to initiate her into diabolism. Styles refused, but despite this, Bodenham forced Styles to sign her name in blood in a ‘great Book.’ Bodenham swore Styles to secrecy and told her that she would “vex the Gentlewoman [Mistress Goddard] well enough.”<sup>65</sup> Bodenham sent Styles away to London, but Styles was apprehended for the attempted poisoning of Anne and Sarah Goddard and promptly gave Bodenham away. According to Bowers, upon breaking her vow of secrecy, Styles became bewitched and Bodenham was arrested.<sup>66</sup>

In Edmund Bowers’ pamphlet, Bodenham was represented as the ultimate degenerate witch- the antithesis of feminine virtue. As mentioned above, Bodenham was portrayed as engaging in treasonous activity and she was also cast as dishonest and exploitative of the ignorant people that visited her. In *Dr. Lambe revived* Bowers depicted Bodenham as taking advantage of Styles’ ignorance and trying to convince Styles to sell her soul to the Devil. Bowers claimed that it was little wonder that Bodenham tempted Styles because she was “so poorly principled” and “was altogether ignorant of the Fundamentall grounds of Religion.” In spite of this, Bowers used Styles to represent an appropriate model of femininity.

At the end of the pamphlet, Bowers remarked that Styles confessed her own guilt in allowing Bodenham to entice her with magic. Nonetheless, Styles proclaimed that she hoped somebody could prevail upon the court to reprieve Bodenham from her execution. Bowers presented Styles as humble and charitable, two qualities that were highly prized in women. According to Bower, Styles said:

I am not yet too old to learn, I will learn to read, sure, if God will be pleased that I shall...and I will, if I possibly can, get into some good Ministers house or service, because I would not have

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, 10

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, 2,3, 7-8, 9-12; C. L’Estrange Ewen, “The Trial of Anne Bodenham,” *Witchcraft and Demonianism (1933)*, 324-326. [Internet online] Available from <<http://www.eclipse.co.uk/exeshul/personal/bod/bodenham.htm>>, 15 February 2003.

any let from living a holy life: I will learn the knowledge of Religion, that I may serve God, since I have done so much to his dishonour.<sup>67</sup>

For those who championed the education of women during the seventeenth century, Styles provided an example of what female education was designed for: it was supposed to reinforce women's religiosity and thus their chastity. Indeed, with her education Styles planned to remain in service, a natural female role in a patriarchy. Bodenham, on the other hand, used education to gain power, not only for profit, but also because the Devil promised her that she would be "no Inferiors to the greatest in the World."<sup>68</sup>

Further, it would seem from the pamphlet that Bodenham's husband was unable to control her because he feared contradicting her and becoming victimized by her witchcraft. In fact, when her execution was near, Bodenham said her husband would respect her will because "If he doe not, the Devill shall never let him be quiet" and in a letter to her husband she wrote that he would never live in his house again after her death.<sup>69</sup> Bodenham's last statements to Bowers indicated that her marital relationship was strained and one can imply that Bowers intended to show that disobedient women caused marital discord. The question remains, why was the effeminacy of Mr. Bodenham accepted when other men were accused of witchcraft with their disobedient wives? The answer may lie in Mr. Bodenham's ability to abrogate his masculine responsibility to control his household because his wife actively threatened him with bewitchment and because there was no suggestion that he ever assisted her with her diabolic magic.

In summary, the cases of John Lambe and Anne Bodenham show that both men and women could be targeted as witches when they were perceived to deviate from their prescribed

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid*, 40

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*, 37

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, 34

gender roles. In John Lambe's case, he was suspect as an unmarried man in a society centered upon the male-headed household. Beyond his marital status, Lambe represented a threat to class hierarchy, which was tied to masculine ideals in the early modern period. In England, only certain men by virtue of birth, wealth, and education had the necessary masculine qualities to command political power. The cunning man, with his locally granted authority, circumvented the patriarchal distribution of power, while exploiting the ignorance of others for personal gain. The cunning man was feared by the elite because he could use his sorcery to exert influence that he did not have by right. In Lambe's case, he was using unnatural influence on the most powerful peer of the realm.

Anne Bodenham was also accused of transgressing gender boundaries. In an age where few women were educated, Bodenham used her education to engage in diabolism, proving the argument against female education, which held that education impaired feminine virtue.<sup>70</sup> Bodenham was also explicitly defined as a threat to orthodox religion with her adherence to Catholicism. Moreover, like Lambe, Bodenham used fraudulent magic to generate personal wealth. Most damning was Bodenham's relationship with her husband; her disorderliness caused marital discord and emasculated her husband.

What is most interesting in the two pamphlets I have reviewed are the similarities between the portrayal of male and female witches. While some scholars, such as Malcolm Gaskill, have used these similarities to claim that gender was not a significant aspect of witchcraft accusations and in fact proves that people were tried because they behaved like witches, what this actually illuminates is how pamphleteers used the witch to define gender norms. By representing Lambe and Bodenham as the antithesis of appropriate gender behavior,

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<sup>70</sup> Weisner, 155. Like Lambe, Bodenham also taught reading and writing, and since she used books to practice magic she must have been semi-literate.

the authors used their discursive power for proscriptive purposes, reminding people of the threat of effeminacy and the lack of appropriate femininity to patriarchal order. In this way, the masculine anxiety expressed in these pamphlets about gender transgressors could actually be used positively to legitimize and reinforce the social hierarchy by showing that deviance from gender norms can only result in disaster, both for the witch and for society.

## **Conclusion**

In the preceding article, I have explored how the male witch functioned as a site for debates about gender, class, and political order during the early modern period. In this study my main purposes were twofold. First, I have illustrated that the male witch was not a by-product of witchcraft accusations intended for women. In at least half of the cases the male witch was accused independently of a woman, although there are certainly numerous cases where men were the secondary targets. However, in order for historians to fully understand the relationship between gender and the witch-hunts the male witch must be acknowledged as a legitimate source of historical inquiry. What I hope to provide is the impetus for historians to examine the male witch within his regional context so that we can better understand the dynamics that produced a majority of male witches in places such as Normandy or Iceland and a minority in places such as England.

The second purpose of this study is to read the witchcraft pamphlet as a source for information about how gender norms were articulated through the figure of the witch, primarily the male witch. Between 1563 and 1648 there was a growing sense of masculine anxiety about normative gender behavior, appropriate class behavior, and access to political power. In the trial of John Lambe in 1628 we see a coalescence of anxieties about class, political, and domestic



order. From the 1620s onward, the gentry often found themselves in direct opposition to the Stuart monarchy and they tried to assert their role in the government by attempting to impeach the Duke of Buckingham in order to make Charles more amenable to the influence of Parliament. Also during this period the gentry began to challenge aristocratic codes of honor, preferring more civilized forms of sport and dispute resolution.

In the pamphlet about John Lambe, the author uses his discursive power to define normative masculine behavior by showing Lambe as its antithesis. The case of Anne Bodenham is an interesting comparison because it illustrates how pamphleteers used the female witch as a way to construct normative feminine behavior. Far from proving that gender was of little import to the witch trials, the cases of John Lambe and Anne Bodenham show that transgression of gender boundaries made an accused witch's guilt manifest.

In conclusion, the relationship between changing gender ideals and the witch trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is greatly assisted by analyzing the role of the male witch in England. As a subject of historical inquiry the male witch has been virtually ignored, although the literary sources indicate that he was not insignificant or incidental. Just as I have made an argument for how the male witch could be used for proscriptive purposes by pamphleteers, an equally compelling argument could be made for the portrayal of the female witch in popular literature. Further, the representation of gender in witchcraft literature allows historians to better understand how, in the face of biological ambiguity, gender roles were negotiated and redefined before the eighteenth century and the emergence of the two-sex model, which allowed gender to be conferred by an anatomically guaranteed sex.