WITCHES AND BAWDS AS ELDERLY WOMEN IN ENGLAND, 1680-1730

A Thesis Submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

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Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
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History M.A. Graduate Program
January 2016
Abstract

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Many print sources from 1680 to 1730 depicted bawds and witches as figures of transgressive elderly femininity. They were often described as having roughly the same anti-social behaviour, age, and gender. Both witches and bawds were seen as seducing innocents into a life of sin, associating with the devil, and acting lustful and unmotherly. Furthermore, they were connected with Catholicism and were thought to unite sinners against English Protestant society. The physical descriptions of the witch and procuress also bore significant patterns in presenting deformity, disfigurement, smelliness, rottenness, and death, traits generally connected with elderly women. Though historians have recognized the tendency of the witch or bawd to be characterized as an old woman, none have conducted a systematic comparison of the two stereotypes. Such an analysis can offer insight about the social anxieties around aging femininity in this period.

Keywords: witch, witchcraft, bawd, old age, elderly women, early modern England, women, transgression, cheap print.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Jennine Hurl-Eamon for her assistance and her patience as I wrote this thesis. Her guidance, support, and knowledge made this thesis possible from refining my initial idea through researching, writing, and editing.

I would also like to thank Prof. Kevin Siena for his quick, thorough commentary. I would also like to thank him for highlighting a large body of primary sources I had not made use of in my initial drafts. I would also like to extend thanks to Prof. Fiona Harris-Stoertz for her extensive commentary and assistance leading up to defence.

Further thanks go out to Victor Russon, Carlisle Mackie, and Hannah Howey who provided invaluable support from the first year of coursework through to the writing, editing, and defence. I couldn’t have done it without you.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my parents and grandparents for the many forms of assistance they provided throughout this long process.
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Introduction: Representing Transgression

This study seeks to examine the ways print depictions of witches and bawds represented gendered beliefs about elderly women in England between 1680 and 1730. Witches and bawds were ubiquitous in early modern print sources, both popular and learned, and figured significantly in legal precedent and practice. The period 1680-1730 has been chosen for this study because it saw growing literacy rates and the loosening of governmental censorship of printing presses. As subsequent paragraphs will show, the decades at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries were distinguished by heightened anxiety about the particular forms of transgression represented by witchcraft and bawdry. The beginnings of a cultural shift toward a sympathetic view of prostitutes as desperate, naïve young women can also be discerned at this time. However, the procuress was only further vilified by this growth in pity for prostitutes. It was also a time where old women were the most likely suspects of witchcraft. While legal statistics indicate that not all witches and bawds were elderly women, print sources frequently depicted them as such and sometimes even directly connected witchcraft to bawdry. These stereotypes reflected cultural understandings of what it meant to be a bawd or a witch, but also what it meant to be an elderly woman. Elderliness strongly affected people’s day-to-day experiences and how they were perceived by their neighbours and relatives. While recent scholarship on bawds and particularly witches has identified connections with advanced age, it has not emphasized the linkages between them. The extent to which early modern writers used epithets associated with bawdry and witchcraft jointly to cast aspersions on transgressive elderly women has not yet been studied in detail. This thesis argues that witches and bawds are fairly unique examples of transgressive female figures in having age as a significant factor of their identity. Together, bawds and witches constituted a particular kind of criticised figure, reflecting the marginalisation which accompanied old age for women, although they were also part of a broader spectrum of outcast women and unacceptable femininity. Print sources focused on both behaviours
and physical traits when describing witches and bawds, reflecting anxieties about old women’s decaying bodies and unchristian activities.

The following chapters will examine perceptions of witches and bawds presented in the print culture of the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, and connect them to the wider literature on the history of the elderly, witchcraft, and prostitution. Scholars of old age, such as Katharine Kittredge, Susannah Ottaway, and Aki C.L. Beam, have demonstrated that the elderly in the early modern period were depicted with ambivalence, if not outright hostility.¹ This thesis will argue that this hostility is underlined by the early modern association of advanced age with both witchcraft and bawdry noted by recent scholars. Both Lyndal Roper and Alan Macfarlane assert that older women were disproportionately likely to be considered witches, although Alison Rowland in “Stereotypes and Statistics: Old Women and Accusations of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe” notes a disparity between the number of elderly women actually charged with witchcraft and the prevalence of the stereotype in popular culture.² Laura Deal connects the belief that elderly women were witches with cultural anxieties about misfit women and the financial stresses the elderly posed to their community.³ Less work has been done regarding the cultural stereotypes of bawds as elderly women. While scholars like Mario DiGangi and Laura J. Rosenthal recognise the connection between bawds and age, there is less of


a sense that age was inherently connected to their bawdry, as their focus lies more on behaviour. Aging, then, is a key element of this thesis, with witches and bawds being filters through which to consider understandings of transgressive elderly women. The implications of the cultural stereotypes of witches and bawds being of advanced age for the history of early modern old age and aging have not been studied in great depth, and this thesis seeks to remedy this disparity.

Historians of early modern old age and aging have identified three aspects of old age—chronological old age, functional old age, and cultural old age. Briefly, chronological old age refers to the specific age at which a person was considered old, functional old age speaks to the point at which a person became unable to support or care for themselves, and cultural old age is a combination not only of functional and chronological old age but any number of other aspects that may have led society to consider a person old. Many who study age and aging agree on this framework, but it leaves room for varied opinion on the age at which society regarded women as elderly. While many scholars assert that old age for women began at sixty, others point out that evidence from early modern sources does not always support this conclusion. A poem printed 7 April 1705, for example, implied a much earlier beginning: “Celia, be Wise, and so comply/ Forty and five are coming on: / Then every Youth, as well as


I, Will Cease adoring, and be gone./ When furrow’d Age deforms that Brow,/ All will deride your
wither’d Case;/ Nay, that same Glass that Courts you now,/ Will cry, **Old Woman**, to your face.”

In this case appearance was of key importance to the poet. Lynn Botelho suggests that changes the body
underwent during menopause may have disproportionately affected poor women and how they were
viewed by their neighbours. As this argument demonstrates, a discussion solely based on chronological
age ignores the importance of functional old age, which may have been a more important consideration.

I have thus chosen to identify women as ‘old’ when they are described as such in the source material,
rather than prescribe a specific age to indicate “old”.

The most consistent belief about bawds and witches between 1680 and 1730 was that they
were elderly women. So strong was this connection that these terms were routinely used to defame old
women who probably were not bawds or witches. This feature appears frequently in the source
material. Unsavoury or unpleasant women were referred to as “old bawds” or “old witches.” A comic
description of how to find a woman who “is either fit to make a Witch or a Bawd” required that one first
“chuse an old Woman.”

Other examples of this tendency do point to some differences between the
ways bawds and witches were discussed in relation to age. A 1604 play included the comments of a
misogynist who had reportedly said that “at foure women were fooles, at fourteene Drabbes, at fortie
Bawdes, at fourscore witches, and a hundredth Cats.” Though bawds are represented here as
somewhat younger than they tended to be depicted by 1680-1730, it nonetheless suggests a continuum
between bawds and witches as examples of aging femininity.

Age had a great effect on how suspected witches were perceived, as is demonstrated by
Richard Boulton’s 1715 or 1716 analysis of the Witches of Warboys and Alice Samuel more specifically.
Boulton generally depicted Alice, an “old Woman,” as the leader of her family coven, even though he

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7 *Diverting Post*, 7 April 1705, emphasis original and mine.
provided evidence to indicate a scenario where the older woman was less powerful than her co-accused. A victim accused Agnes Samuel—the daughter—of being a worse witch than her mother.\textsuperscript{10} Boulton also presented testimony that John and Agnes beat and otherwise mistreated Alice, suggesting an alternative interpretation where Alice was coerced to participate.\textsuperscript{11} It seems likely that Alice Samuel’s status as an elderly woman was key to Boulton’s depiction of her as the coven leader; her gender and age best fit her for the stereotype of the witch. Lynn Botelho, examining the stereotypical depiction of old women as witches in seventeenth-century ballads and other cheap print, suggests that this demonstrated not only concern for the possibility that elderly women were witches, but an underlying contempt for aging femininity more generally.\textsuperscript{12}

Bawds were also frequently described as old. Bawds appeared in trial accounts, newspapers, and art. While not all sources about bawds refer to them as old, the majority do. Furthermore, this labelling is often only incidental to the rest of the story, indicating its centrality to an imagined notion of bawdry. This tendency is demonstrated in a 1695 story in \textit{Intelligence Domestick and Foreign}. This paper reported the attempted rape of a “Young Maid” perpetrated around the same time that a “Notorious Old Bawd” was pilloried for aiding a similar attempt.\textsuperscript{13} Since this report was really about the attempted rape, this nameless bawd’s inclusion is peripheral to the tale itself. The aged procuress was perhaps mentioned as a rhetorical strategy. In providing a foil against the virginal innocence of the victim, the perverse elderly female emphasised the vile nature of the crime. The concept of bawds as old women was well-established by 1680. Mario DiGangi discusses sources from the sixteenth to mid-


\textsuperscript{11} Boulton, \textit{A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft}, 50, 122, 95-96, 82-84, 89.

\textsuperscript{12} L.A. Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print: Women, Witches, and the Poisonous Female Body,” in \textit{Power and Poverty: Old Age in the Pre-Industrial Past}, eds. Susannah R. Ottaway, L.A. Botelho, and Katharine Kittredge (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 229, 231. It is important to note that the focus on witches as old women was ideological or theoretical and was not always necessarily indicative of the legal record in terms of who was tried for witchcraft. Rowlands, “Stereotypes and Statistics,” 170-172, 177.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Intelligence Domestick and Foreign}, Tuesday 28 May 1695.
seventeenth centuries in his work on theatrical depictions of bawds. The term had broad applicability, and could refer to “any woman who facilitate[d] another women’s entry into illicit sexual relationship,” regardless of whether this title referred to “a professional brothel keeper” or any other woman in a close relationship with the seduced party.\textsuperscript{14} Significantly, DiGangi contends that many of the more famous theatrical bawds were depicted as old.\textsuperscript{15}

The association of bawds and witches with old women has resulted in somewhat similar depictions of the two figures, though there are differences as well. The similarities are especially visible in primary sources that conflated bawds and witches. Though these are not the most frequently connected figures in print, witches and bawds are directly connected or compared in enough primary sources throughout the period between 1680 and 1730 to make this a pattern worthy of historians’ notice.

The Pairing of Bawds and Witches in Early Modern Print

The most obvious connection between bawdry and witchcraft lies in their criminal association. Both were considered illegal behaviour, though the former offence was only indictable at common law when combined with another peace-breaking offence such as running a brothel.\textsuperscript{16} This subtle legal distinction appears to have been lost on contemporaries, who used epithets associated with bawdry and witchcraft jointly to cast aspersion on female foes. Since defamation against women tended to focus on sexual immorality, it is perhaps unsurprising that older women would be derided as procuresses, but

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\textsuperscript{15} DiGangi, \textit{Sexual Types}, 161-165.

witchcraft had sexual associations as well. Texts from around 1680-1730 demonstrate the use of “witch” and “bawd” in combination as insults. While many of the texts discussed below can be considered fictional, similar behaviours were not without real-world consequences; a legal manual from 1709 warned laypeople that saying “Thou art a Bawd, and hast bewitch’d me” could leave the name-caller vulnerable to defamation prosecution. Their pairing with appellations such as “hag” or the label “old” suggests that elderly victims were more inclined to attract these specific defamations. In John Dunton’s 1712 *High-Church: or a Vindication of the Reverend Mr. William Richardson*, for example, Dunton says that “Mr. Richardson fell to calling his Mother, *Old Jezabel, Old Witch, Old Devil, old Bawd.*”

Even when not associated with old age, the pairing of bawd and witch in insults could be used to indicate disruptive femininity. A 1689 allegory of the warming pan conspiracy included an account of a man who recited a long string of insults against another character when he was unable to consummate a tryst: “Oh that Spightful, Confounded Witch, Hag, Sorceress, Beast, Bawd, Strumpet.” Another such example comes from 1680, in a pamphlet that detailed the dangers faced by Eve Cohan (Elizabeth Verboon) from her family after converting to Protestantism from Judaism and fleeing to England from the Netherlands. One of the indignities Cohan supposedly faced was “the calling of her *Witch, Bawd,* and other such base Names.” Nathaniel Lee’s *The Princess of Cleve* includes a character who falsely

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believed he was cuckolded and exclaimed “What is this thing call’d Woman? she is worse/Than all Ingredients ram’d into a Curse./Were she a Witch, a Bawd, and Noseless Whore,/I cou’d forgive her, so she were no more: But she’s far worse...” That the epithets were not exclusively aimed at old women, however, shows that the connection between sorceress and procuress could, in the context of insult, transcend age. Though “whore” is an apt response to an assumed cuckolding, “bawd” and “witch” are less obvious insults. Their appearance alongside the ubiquitous “whore” shows their general association with disruptive femininity. Laura Gowing observes the “dangerous overlap between whoredom and witchcraft” in popular insult, arguing that both were a danger to legitimate sexuality and procreation in the minds of contemporaries because both could be associated with disrupting legitimate pregnancies. “Most defamations directed their complaints at... the effects of fornication, adultery, and bawdry upon household order,” she observed, and the bawd and witch figured alongside the whore in this imagery of disruption.23

It is thus unsurprising that other sources that conflate or associate bawds and witches do so when referring to the depraved behavioural traits common to both figures. The Articles of the Charge of the Wardmote Inquest (1689), published by the Corporation of the City of London, detailed measures to keep peace within the wards of London. Article 9 instructed officials to inquire “If any Bawd, common Strumpet, common Adulterer, Witch or common Scold be dwelling within this Ward.”24 Bawds were accorded the most importance in these articles, likely because the sex trade had a greater day-to-day impact in London; however, that witches were seen to have the same disruptive capabilities is significant. Similar ideas appear in popular poetry such as in a 1680 poem that describes a cacophonous parade which includes “(in stead of Drums, and Tabors)/Twelve Strumpets in abortive Labors”

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accompanied by “a shrill Grand Jury/ Of Fish-wives fill’d with Ale and fury,/Whose every close doth sweetly roare/With Witch, and Bitch, and Bawd, and Whore...”25 Another comic poem describing the devil needing a purgative for ingesting too many souls listed bawds and witches as some of the necessary medicinal ingredients. The verse specifically mentioned that the devil’s medicine required the “Gall of a Witch” along with “nine bawds who... nine Times had been flux’d for the Pox.”26 These poems are similar to the Wardmote Inquest in that these women’s ability to disrupt appeared more central than other commonly understood aspects of these figures: the use of malefic magic or the co-ordination of prostitution. Similarly, a 1691 story in the Athenian Gazette published affidavits reporting that an accused witch “was a very Lewd Liver, and kept a Brothel House.”27 Another suspected witch was also said to frequent a “baudy” house and supply brothels with food.28 More overtly fictional accounts, including a collection of comic stories under the heading Round About our Coal-Fire: or Christmas Entertainments (1730) depicted a witch earning money by providing customers sexual access to her young apprentices and offering potions to help wives cuckold their husbands. This text was addressed to provincial readers and presented prostitution and bawdry as forms of London witchcraft.29 The exoticism of the witch-bawd was even more apparent in Man Unmask’d: Being a Wonderful Discovery Lately Made in the Island of Japan. In this story, a demon named the Spirit of Contradiction took the narrator on a tour of a supposedly Japanese city showcasing the vice contained therein. His observations included the sight of “an old Bawd and Witch labouring, hard to solder a crack’d Maiden-head, that is to pass to morrow (sic.) upon a Rich Country Squire.”30 The falsification of hymens was an

27 Athenian Gazette, Sunday 29 November 1691.
29 Anonymous, Round About Our Coal-Fire, 18-21.
act often ascribed to bawds in order to extort more money from their clients, but rare occasions such as this attribute the skill to witches as well.\textsuperscript{31} This represents yet another example of bawds and witches being mentioned as partners in lewdness, deception and disruption.

Sorcery and bawdry made a nightmarish combination in readers’ imaginations. The \textit{Review of the State of the British Nation} expounded on the concept of \textit{Rumour} surrounding the 1688 Revolution. \textit{Rumour} was personified as a woman replete with all manner of vices:

one of \textit{Fame’s} Bastards, as was long ago put to Nurse to an old Tattling Bawd, call’d \textit{Whisper}, where she staid till she was a great Wench, and then she was put to School to one \textit{Clamour}, where she learn’d to talk aloud, scold, cry, and be very noisie. It chanc’d that there came an old Witch that way, and finding her very fit for the Devil’s Service, she took her into his Pay, gave her a great Pair of Wings to fly with, and by him she has been entertain’d ever since, and abundance of Service she does him.\textsuperscript{32}

The witch appeared here as the later stage in a succession of immoral female influences that began with the bawd. Similarly, Edward Phillips’ \textit{The Beau’s Academy} (1699) and \textit{The Mysteries of Love & Eloquence, Or, the Arts of Wooing and Complementing} (1685) both asserted that “\textit{W}here the \textit{Whore} ends, the Bawd begins; and the corruption of a Bawd is the generation of a Witch.”\textsuperscript{33} Bawds and witches were thus considered inextricably linked to one another. Witchcraft appeared at the end of a continuum of depravity that began with prostitution. Though not fictional, Phillips’ text provides a series of commonplace associations and wisdoms meant for frivolity’s sake. This assertion is not different from the rest of Phillips’ information; it addressed not only the common belief that bawds

\textsuperscript{31} The discussion of Dipsas, below, provides another example of a witch counterfeiting a hymen. Chapter One’s treatment of Elizabeth Cellier under the head “Popish Associate” provides a more detail on the falsification of hymens.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Review of the State of the British Nation}, Thursday 29 September 1709.

\textsuperscript{33} Edward Phillips, \textit{The Beau’s Academy} (London: O.B., 1699), 68; Edward Phillips, \textit{The Mysteries of Love & Eloquence, Or, the Arts of Wooing and Complementing} (London: James Rawlins for Obadiah Blagrove, 1685), 68, irregular pagination.
were former prostitutes but also the connections people made between the sex trade and witchcraft. This association of both witches and bawds with evil also came through in a newspaper account of Anne Turner’s trial for assisting in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in 1615. The 1720 account of the case dwelt upon deponents’ testimony that she had used poison and conjured devils to torment men, both activities characteristic of witches. It claimed the Lord Chief Justice told Turner “that she had the seven deadly Sins, viz. Whore, Baud, Sorcerer, Witch, Papist, Felon, and Murderer.”  

Such examples make it abundantly clear that witchcraft and bawdry in combination were perceived as an especially sinister variety of femininity.

The connection between bawds and witches was also influenced by classical ideas. The sorceress and procuress were also united in Dipsas (or Dypsas), a figure from antiquity. She was prominent in Ovid’s Amores, though similar motifs were common throughout a number of works. She appeared prominently in Ovid’s Elegy 1.8, He Curses a Bawd, For Going About to Debauch his Mistress. Dipsas was an elderly attendant of his mistress and was frequently described as a bawd and a witch. Ovid’s great cultural influence in the early modern period makes Dypsas significant for this study. Sir Charles Sidley’s translation of this elegy was printed across a number of texts including Miscellany Poems Containing A New Translation of Virgils Eclogues (1684) and Ovid’s Epistles: and His Amours (1725). The elegy introduced Dypsas before providing a description of her seductive technique. Sidley’s translation introduced her as prominent among bawds:

Dypsas, who first taught Love-Sick Maids the Way/ To cheat the Bridegroom on the Wedding

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34 *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, Saturday 26 November 1720.
35 The novelty of Ovid’s Dipsas is under some debate. While many see similarities between Dipsas and similar figures in Propertius and other Hellenic sources, scholar Daniel Walin disagrees. Rather, he sees Ovid’s Amores as an influence on authors like Propertius and Celsus. Furthermore, the name *Dipsas* is a pun more on her alcoholism than the “thirsty thorn” suggested by other scholars. Walin asserts that later authors began interpreting the Greek as “thirsty serpent,” and most likely influenced the later naming of the genus of snakes. Daniel Walin, “Cynthia Serpens: A Reading of Propertius 4.8,” *The Classical Journal* 105 no. 2 (2009): 144-146.

Day,/ And then a hundred subtle Tricks devis’d./ Wherewith the Am’rous Theft might be
disguis’d;/ Of Pigeon’s-Blood, squeež’d from the panting Heart,/ With Surfeit-Water, to contract
the Part,/ She knows the Use: whilst the good Man betray’d,/ With eager Arms hugs the false
bleeding Maid./ Of Herbs and Spells she tries the Guilty Force,/ The Poyson of a Mare that goes
to Horse./ Cleaving the Midnight Air upon a Switch,/ Some for a Bawd, most take her for a
Witch.\textsuperscript{37}

Unlike many of the conflations discussed above, which tended to favour characteristics of either bawds
or witches, Dypsas embodied aspects of both. Like the Japanese Spirit of Contradiction’s witch-bawd,
she counterfeited maidenheads; however, she was also skilled with poisons and flew about on
broomsticks, actions associated with witches. Other sources used Dipsas in more novel forms. One
such text is Sir Thomas Burnet’s \textit{A Second Tale of a Tub}, supposedly the life story of a Mr. Powel. Powel
had a number of adventures throughout Britain and on the Continent. Though nominally the
protagonist, Powel’s interactions involved the ruin of others and his own enrichment. While on the
Continent, Powel made a league with Dipsas:

\begin{quote}
[s]he being both Bawd and Witch, serv’d him and VENERIO in a double Capacity--- Not only
assisted them with Girls, and Strength to supply their Vicious Inclinations, but also help’d them
in their Ambitions and Politick Designs: for she sent about the City, Enchantments (made with
Black Gall, and Diabolical Venom dawb’d on Paper) on which whosoever look’d, whose Brains
were not well stor’d with Sense, the Poyson crept into him thro’ his Eyelids; and from that time
forwards, bereft of common Understanding, he commenced a wretched Tool of Mr. POWEL’s\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

Though Burnet used Dipsas in an original work, her behaviour was still reflective of bawdry and
witchcraft. There was a real sense that she used her witchcraft in a similar fashion to her bawdry: while

\textsuperscript{37} Virgil, \textit{Miscellany Poems Containing a New Translation of Virgills Eclogues} (London: Jacob Tonson, 1684), 116-117;
witches in the source material act at the behest of the devil or their own malicious inclinations, in this
text she performed witchcraft for hire. There are other characters similar to Dipsas in the primary
source material. One such features in an apocalyptic poem written in the early seventeenth century but
not published until the eighteenth century. One section of this poem referred to the Whore of
Babylon. While the Whore of Babylon was “[t]he Devil’s chief Bawd,” she was also quite skilled with
poisons: “... and to the World made known,/By mingling Poisons with her pleasant Bowls.” Though
Dipsas and the Whore of Babylon had apparently different origins and biographical details, they bore
remarkable similarities in their focus on bawdry and talents with poison. Both personified the tendency
to link the traits of procuring and malefic magic.

The following chapters move beyond these examples that explicitly connect bawds and witches
within the same publication to explore common traits ascribed to both bawd bawds and witches when
they were treated in isolation. The thesis argues that, together, bawds and witches constitute a
particular kind of criticised figure. The spectrum of marginalisation is broad. Laura Rosenthal and Mita
Choudhury state that people could be judged upon “gendered, racial, sexual, ethnic, class, biological,
internal, geographical” characteristics depending on the circumstances in which they were displayed.
Bawds and witches can be seen as denigrated figures; elements of their identities, such as their gender,
sexual behaviour, class, and—most significantly for this thesis—age, all helped to contribute to a sense
of these women as marginalised. The next section explores the concept of transgressive femininity.

**Early Modern Women and Transgression**

Informed by the work of literary historian Sander L. Gilman, Frédérique Fouassier-Tate asserts

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39 Though the material is not explicit, the reference to “Th’effronted Whore prophetically shown/ By Holy John in his
mysterious Scrowls” most likely refers to John of Patmos due to the association with the “mysterious Scrowls.” Sir
William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, *Doom’s Day: or, the Last Judgement* (London: for E. Curll, 1720), 43.
40 The Whore of Babylon has a rather unpleasant end. Alexander, *Doom’s Day*, 43.
41 Laura J. Rosenthal and Mita Choudhury, “Introduction,” in *Monstrous Dreams of Reason: Body, Self, and Other in
that “stereotypes constitute a way to make sense of a disordered universe, to impose order, to define oneself and to give an identifiable shape to one’s fears.”\textsuperscript{42} Figures of transgression thus reveal much about the society that creates them. Fouassier-Tate further asserts that the prostitute “constitutes a cohesive medium for... the representatives of official discourses. Although they define her as an abominable Other who should remain outside respectable society, she is in fact at the very heart of the system and is crucial to its existence.”\textsuperscript{43} Print sources like plays and pamphlets thus helped create and strengthen people’s conceptions of prostitutes, though these accounts were often fictionalised.\textsuperscript{44} Kristen Saxton has made similar observations of homicidal women in this period and the Western tendency to dichotomise female behaviour: a woman could be “virgin or whore, Mary or Eve, nurturer or devourer.”\textsuperscript{45} Homicidal women prove similar. While they certainly existed, the threat they posed was largely imaginary. These women were interesting to the public because they presented an “anti-exemplar” of female behaviour, which in turn supported proper, passive femininity.\textsuperscript{46} It can be difficult to separate the constructed figure from the real-life examples, yet exploration of these depictions illuminates broader social attitudes. Beliefs about these figures, though subject to change or new interpretation, were neither universal nor value-neutral, but spoke to specific cultural norms. The positioning of witches and bawds as transgressive examples of elderly femininity reveals integral beliefs about not only women but the elderly as well.

The themes discussed in the paragraph above fit well with Stuart Clark’s discussion of inversion


\textsuperscript{43} Fouassier-Tate, “Fact versus Fiction,” 72.

\textsuperscript{44} Fouassier-Tate, “Fact versus Fiction,” 73, 84, 87.


and witches, a concept that centralises order and disorder. In many ways this framework was political; early modern discourses on the devil, hell, and witchcraft ritual were highly concerned with misrule and were sometimes used as a shorthand to discuss and reject cosmic and worldly disorder.\(^{47}\) The demonic was viewed as inseparable from rebellion and bad rule, concepts in direct opposition to the idealised forms of governmental and familial rule.\(^{48}\) Much like bawdry, petty treason, infanticide, and scolding, witchcraft was demonically-inspired behaviour which hit at the centre of the household and its proper running.\(^{49}\) Clark places witches—alongside shrews, Amazons, scolds, gossips, “women preachers,” whores, seductresses, and “viragos”—as threats to normalised social order; these women, through the use of diabolical inversion, inverted crucial gender polarities. These binaries included such traits as good/evil, order/disorder, and male/female.\(^{50}\)

The old sorceress and procuress were thus part of a wider spectrum of dangerous femininity that included the scold, petty traitor, and the infanticide. The norms witches, bawds, infanticides, and petty traitors circumvented were idealised conceptions which did not represent reality or even what individual family groups might have seen as desirable; however, they were still quite powerful. Contemporaries considered these women, like many other criminal or violent women, monstrous, unwomanly, and “scarce deserv[ing] the name of woman at all.”\(^{51}\) Petty traitors struck at the heart of the household and by extension, public order.\(^{52}\) Martin Wiener characterises early modern mariticide as lead figures in “nightmares of intimate violence” that pervaded the popular imagination and generated severe reprisals to the relatively few women who came before the courts of the seventeenth

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\(^{48}\) Clark, “Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft,” 118.

\(^{49}\) Clark, “Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft,” 120.


and early eighteenth century. Women’s scolding was also often seen as an act of violence by contemporaries and was brought to the courts when it involved “indiscriminate slander, tale-bearing, the stirring up of strife, the deliberate sowing of discord between neighbours, and sometimes also the pursuit of quarrels through needless lawsuits and legal chicanery.” Scolds were “the rotten core of the disordered household and hence of the dissolute community and state.” Infanticide, too, was problematic to the early modern community. Published accounts of infanticide generally focused on more exceptional cases, like that of “a mother who slaughtered countless infants in order to continue in sexual incontinency,” identifying a number of immoral traits and practices, though perhaps none so severe as the act of infanticide. Though outside the scope of average infanticide cases, such extreme examples fit into a discourse concerned with female transgression. Furthermore, Marisha Caswell contends that infanticide trials were utilised to expose the woman’s sexual transgressions and were especially concerned with women who “barbarously killed their newborn infants or who did not appear penitent,” a focus which would have only heightened societal concern with these women.

This thesis argues that witches and bawds are fairly unique examples of transgressive female figures in having age as a significant factor of their identity. There are historical and literary examples of witches and bawds who were not elderly or even women; however, as earlier pages show, early modern discourse frequently depicted these figures as aging women. Age is not significant in depictions of petty

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56 Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, 133.

treason, which tend to highlight the shrewdly deceptive and “pleasure-seeking” qualities of the
murderesses. Dolan asserts likewise; the petty traitor was sometimes shown to usurp her husband’s
authority through adultery or physically mistreating him. Neither is age often highlighted in
representations of scolds, which tend to emphasise their tendency to be “sexually voracious,
economically perverse, and physically violent.” As new mothers, most infanticides fell into the
opposite category from post-menopausal bawds and witches. These latter stereotypes are unique
figures of marginalisation in having their advanced age as an integral part of their identity. By focusing
on descriptions of this particular category of feminine transgression, it is possible to unearth the most
pervasive negative qualities associated with the denigration of older women.

Cheap Print and Its Readers, 1680-1730

The collective consciousness within which this sense of marginalisation was defined arguably
existed in an “imagined community” created through the production and consumption of print. The
term was coined by Benedict Anderson, to explore the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century, but
it has proved fertile for early modern histories as well. By 1600, some scholars estimate that between
150 million and 200 million volumes had been produced throughout Europe. Though the period
between 1680 and 1730 occurred at a relatively early stage in the expansion of newspapers, the
nationwide relay of news stories does point to the power that forms of cheap print could have in
successfully relaying information and ideologies as well as a sense of England as a community. Well

59 Dolan, Dangerous Familiars, 36, 38-41, 45-48
60 Walker, Crime, Gender and Social Order, 101.
115, highlights the centrality of unwed mothers in allegations of infanticide.
62 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 2006), 4. For early modernists’ use of the concept
see Peter Burke, Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
2004), 6 and Brendan Maurice Dooley, The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early
Modern Europe (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 2.
63 Anderson, Imagined Communities, 33-34.
before 1680, print had become important to European communities. English newspapers were initially located in London, though by 1701 a number of papers were produced provincially. Historians have labelled newspapers, pamphlets, and ballads as “cheap print” because of their shorter length relative to other printed works. These items were cheaper because paper could comprise as much as seventy-five per cent of an item’s cost. Published alongside newspapers were types of publications called periodicals, which provided “detached philosophical discourse” among other material. The Spectator and the Tatler are two prominent examples of this genre. Tessa Watt cautions that the term “cheap print” should be used neutrally and that its price is not necessarily indicative of a specific audience. It is also important to remember that the ways in which early modern people read texts could differ from authors’ expectations. Tim Hitchcock observes that anatomical and midwifery texts, for example, were read for the purposes of arousal in addition to the medical information purpose for which they had been written. Medical texts were not alone in this tendency either. Peter Lake asserts that some crime pamphlets did not only educate or moralise, but also could “shock, titillate and engender that frisson of horror laced with disapproval which allows both pleasure and excitement.” Lake describes this tendency as “pornographic,” and there can be little doubt that some accounts of bawds and witches produced a similar effect on readers. These titillating accounts of bawds and witches can be found in a significant time period in the history of print. The period 1690-1720 has been identified as a point where “wholly new forms of literary production and thoroughly hybridised literary kinds emerged.”

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65 Tessa Watt, Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1, 4-5; Discussions of cheap print as sources can be found in Dolan, Dangerous Familiars, 6-12; Mary E. Fissell, Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1-13, esp. 7-9.


Additionally, newspapers and other pre-existing forms of written work became more important to public life during these decades.\textsuperscript{68} The pre-existing licensing and censoring laws also lapsed in 1695 which allowed for a broader scope of publication.\textsuperscript{69} This change did not necessarily open the market up entirely, but it did result in greater dissemination of news items in this period. Forms of writing that had been well-regarded, such as polemic, became less important after the Restoration.\textsuperscript{70} While the role of polemic in the Civil War demonstrates how incorrect an assertion that written works were unimportant before these decades would be, that some authors have identified a nascent mass market emerging in a period overlapping the 1680-1730 time period indicates a greater ability for the sources examined to reach and influence readers. A number of new genres did emerge in this period, including the \textit{Old Bailey Sessions Papers} or \textit{Accounts} of the Ordinary of Newgate, which, though non-polemical, did have a specific political and moral slant.\textsuperscript{71} Crime and criminality—notably that of women—was reflected in these forms of print.\textsuperscript{72}

In reflecting broad social norms, these print sources need to be seen as part of a complex process of production and reception. Harold Love describes old forms of communication being


\textsuperscript{72} A good discussion of this tendency can be found in Shoemaker, “Print and the Female Voice,” 75-91. Likewise, Garthine Walker finds that the manifestly negative depictions of women in early modern murder pamphlets reflect a world order in which women “were an obvious symbol for both the definition of and the transgression of social, political, and religious boundaries.” Garthine Walker, “‘Demons in Female Form’: Representations of Women and Gender in Murder Pamphlets in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,” in \textit{Writing and the English Renaissance}, eds. William Zunder and Suzanne Trill (London: Longman, 1996), 124. A greater focus on murderous women in these pamphlets than on murderous men is representative of this belief. Matthew Lockwood, “From Treason to Homicide: Changing Conceptions of the Law of Petty Treason in Early Modern England,” \textit{The Journal of Legal History} 34 no. 1 (2013): 47.
“overlaid, but not replaced” by “newer habits of literacy.” Furthermore, while consuming written sources could lead to “authorship” of new ones, there was also “reconstitution” where “the fruits of reading are digested and reformulated in personal and group experience prior to their being employed in new acts of writing.” Though ideals were asserted for people to consume and consider through such sources as pamphlets, newspapers, or ballads, these written sources were not outside the spectrum of pre-existing beliefs. Indeed, Frances Dolan believes that print sources such as pamphlets, ballads, and plays are valuable as both “evidence of the processes of cultural formation and transformation” and “representations that conform to conventions.”

David Cressy has asserted that pamphlets and broadsides “should be understood as interventions in popular culture, or contributions to popular culture, as well as reflections of popular beliefs and attitudes,” mediated by a desire to proselytise and to make money, often with specific audiences in mind. As such, Love’s compelling model cannot be taken to indicate that every reader would have agreed with all they consumed, nor would all readers necessarily have understood texts or their implications the same way. Scholar Joad Raymond notes that seventeenth-century authors sometimes derided the readers of news sources like pamphlets or newspapers. While such publishers were likely appealing to preconceived notions to boost sales, it is Raymond’s assertion that they were not necessarily incorrect.

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Cheap print was accessible to people from varying social and educational backgrounds.\(^78\) Literacy was increasing in the years 1680-1730, with as many as half of all British men and a third of British women being literate by the eighteenth century, though estimates vary between scholars.\(^79\) For example, Margaret Spufford says that between 1580 and 1700, “11 percent of women, [and] 15 percent of labourers,” could be considered literate. She further demonstrates that “21 per cent of husbandmen could sign their names, against 56 per cent of tradesmen and craftsmen, and 65 per cent of yeomen.”\(^80\) Adam Fox asserts that by 1700, at least half of the adult population could read print.\(^81\) Literacy varied between classes, genders, and occupations. David Cressy, who sees literacy and illiteracy as a part of a spectrum rather than as a dichotomy, also demonstrates that literacy varied between area of residence; people in London were more likely to be literate than people elsewhere in the country.\(^82\) Keith Thomas asserts somewhat similarly, that there was “an elaborate hierarchy” of skills surrounding literacy in early modern England, ranging from the ability to read black letter writing in print or script, to being capable of writing. As such he is ambivalent about the standard historical methodology of determining literacy—the use of a signature versus a mark—and ultimately disagrees with Cressy’s estimation of

\(^78\) Lynn Botelho has devoted analysis to the gendered nature of ballads and other forms of cheap print. While people from all social strata consumed forms of cheap print, a fair bit of Botelho’s analysis focuses on the poor. L.A. Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print: Women, Witches, and the Poisonous Female Body,” in Power and Poverty: Old Age in the Pre-Industrial Past, eds. Susannah Ottaway, L.A. Botelho, and Katharine Kittredge (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 226-229 Cheap print also makes an appearance in the work of Anne Kugler. Though the major primary source material in her article about the life of Lady Sarah Cowper is Cowper’s own diary, this article makes reference to her having regularly read works like the Spectator and the Tatler to inform her own opinion of the proper comportment of elderly women. Cowper, unlike the poor who Botelho suggests sometimes consumed the prints as wallpapering or in outhouses, was of the social elite. She was well-educated and both her sons rose high into the political hierarchy of England. Anne Kugler, “‘I Feel Myself Decay Apace’: Old Age in the Diary of Lady Sarah Cowper (1640-1720),” in Women and Ageing in British Society Since 1500, eds. Pat Thane and Lynn Botelho (London: Routledge, 2014), 80-81.

\(^79\) Fissell, Vernacular Bodies, 7-8.


literacy rates, believing them to have been higher.\textsuperscript{83} Beyond the ability to read and write it appears people sometimes consumed written documents differently.\textsuperscript{84} Mary E. Fissell has pointed out that works were often read aloud and ballads were meant to be sung, which would allow further dissemination of the material. Cheap print is thus a profitable field of analysis.\textsuperscript{85}

This thesis has utilised a broad scope of cheap print material. Newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets have been the most widely-cited types of documents. Though certain publications—such as the Athenian Gazette, Observator, and Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer—feature more prominently, more than thirty newspapers and periodicals mentioning witches, bawds, and elderly women have been used.\textsuperscript{86} With some notable lengthy exceptions, newspapers most commonly printed multiple short stories or blurbs alongside one another. Regardless, these short articles can be important. When similar assertions—or even full reproductions of articles—were repeated across multiple documents, newspapers can be seen to demonstrate Love’s model of reconstitution discussed above. The pamphlets examined expressed similar concepts to those presented in the newspapers, though they were (generally) longer in length and tended to focus on a single topic or event.\textsuperscript{87} Ballads and the Ordinary’s Accounts also fall into this category of cheap print examined for this thesis. Both types of sources have been used here less frequently than either newspapers or pamphlets, though the information they presented tended to reflect similar stereotypes of bawds and witches. Their lesser use


\textsuperscript{85} Fissell, Vernacular Bodies, 7-8.

\textsuperscript{86} The publications have been cited as named and dated in the Burney Collection of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Newspapers database.

\textsuperscript{87} Joad Raymond asserts that the size of pamphlets could vary as much as one sheet to twelve sheets of paper (or eight pages to ninety-six pages) depending on how many times the paper was folded and the prominence of the publication. Joad Raymond, Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.
should not be taken as an indication of the lesser importance of these types of sources. Ballads, due to their dual written and oral distribution, were uniquely positioned to reach many levels of British society. Because of the difficulty in dating these printed song sheets however, it has been necessary to exclude many extant ballads if they could not be determined as falling in the years between 1680 and 1730.  

There were few witches and bawds in the *Ordinary’s Accounts* because women were always in the minority of the condemned who figured on its pages, and murderesses and thieves dominated this already smaller group. This thesis is far from the first work to recognize the importance and value of using a wide variety of print sources to write the history of aging femininity and it draws inspiration from these earlier approaches.

Though various types of cheap print constitute much of the primary source focus of this thesis, they are not the only genres examined. Book-length treatises and novels have been used in addition to periodicals. Their length and the cost incurred in production make these materials unlikely to have been consumed by those low on the social spectrum, but even newspapers were likely intended for a...

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90 Both Anne Kugler and Katharine Kittredge demonstrate that a variety of print sources can reach and influence beliefs among the upper echelons of society. Kittredge’s use of a variety of sources aptly demonstrates the extent to which the ideas she analyses were disseminated. Kugler, “‘I Feel Myself Decay Apace,’” 80-81; Kittredge, “The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d,” *passim* 247-263, 248-249. Sophie Carter’s analysis of prostitution and bawdry is shored up by her use of popular media. Carter provides extended analysis of Hogarth’s *A Harlot’s Progress* though she also uses written treatises, dictionaries, and other publications to gain insight into the ways in which people viewed such a pressing social issue. Fissell (*Vernacular Bodies*), Laura Gowing (*Common Bodies*), and Laura J. Rosenthal (*Infamous Commerce*) likewise use a variety of genres of print material to present a more complete representation of their respective discourses. Lynn Botelho uses print sources differently in her article ‘Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print,’ in that she examines a wide selection of “cheap print” images which accompanied ballads in order to discuss the repeated tropes surrounding representation of female old age. Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print,” 226-234.
middles audience despite being priced to make them more broadly accessible. Though authorial intention did not necessarily preclude other readers, novels and other books likely had a more limited audience than the other types of sources examined for this thesis. The same is true of medical texts, which are brought into the discussion in Chapter Two. This medical literature varied from texts focused on midwifery and anatomy, to treatises that discussed general medical ailments or issues related to aging. The intended audience of medical texts likewise was generally more limited than that of cheap print. Some of these texts provided information with a specifically middle class, male audience in mind. Medical theory was also in flux at this time period, resulting in a number of different systems represented across the texts in use. While ancient ideas and past practice still had a fair deal of influence they were no longer the only opinions offered. Sara Read argues that little changed medically for most people in this period, though the older systems of medical thought did adjust to new discoveries and theories. Jacques Bos has gone so far as to describe the seventeenth century as the beginning of a paradigm shift in medical theory. Among these new theories were iatromechanism and iatrochemistry, informed by newer scientific models and Paracelsian and Helmontian chemistries.

This thesis thus explores depictions of bawds and witches in a variety of early modern publications with an eye for patterns that reveal a shared notion of marginalisation. Most texts were identified through keyword searches of the following databases: the Burney Collection of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Newspapers, London Lives (which includes the Old Bailey Online), Early English Books Online (EEBO), and Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO). A number of search queries

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were employed in each database, the most common being “witch” and “bawd,” and variants thereof.96

Proximity searches were also used to identify sources that conflated bawds and witches.97

**Witchcraft and Bawdry, 1680-1730**

While the years between 1680 and 1730 are a fruitful time in which to explore cheap print, they also fall within a promising time period to examine perceptions of witches and bawds. At first glance, 1680 may seem a late date to begin a discussion of witchcraft, since the 1680s represent the tail end of prosecutions before the 1736 repeal of the witchcraft act and end of legal prosecutions. Regardless, there are a number of reasons to address witchcraft in this period. The historiography of the later period of witchcraft beliefs tends to focus on their decline. This is not unreasonable; the discussion is important, as it demonstrates the beginning of change in the mentality of early modern Europeans.98

However, as Malcolm Gaskill has observed, shifts in the perception of witchcraft depended upon a variety of factors, such as “custom, jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, fashion,” factors that did not

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96 These include “bawd,” “witchcraft,” “sorcery,” “sorceresses,” and “bawdry.” Other searches included related terms such as “Needham,” “goose,” and “brothel.” As this thesis focuses on these women as examples of transgressive elderly femininity, “old woman,” “crone,” and “widow” were included among these queries. Later, search terms like “physic” (with alternate spellings), “stages of life,” and “medicine” were used to locate some of the medical texts examined in the second chapter. Finally, occasional searches were made for primary evidence specifically by title. Some examples of these documents include Hogarth’s *A Harlot’s Progress*, *Moll Flanders*, and George Cheyne’s *An Essay of Health and Long Life*. Other sources were located by searching for people’s names. This was done in the case of Rose Cullender, Temperance Floyd (and Lloyd), Jane Wenham, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Aphra Behn, (Mother) Elizabeth Needham (and aliases), and Jane Freeman (and aliases).

97 ECCO, EEBO, and the Burney Collection search queries included: “bawd near.9 witch,” “bawd near.9 witch,” “bawd fby.9 witch,” “witch fby.9 bawd,” “panderess near.9 witch,” “pander fby.9 witch,” “witch fby.9 pandress,” “witch fby.9 panderess,” “witch fby.9 pander,” “bawd near.9 bewitch,” “bawd near.9 sorcery,” “witch near.9 brothel,” “witch near.9 disorderly house,” “sorceress near.9 brothel,” “sorceress near.9 bawdry house,” “sorceress near.9 disorderly house,” “witch near.9 lewd,” “witch near.9 lewd liver,” “bawd near.9 conjurer,” “bawd near.9 conjurer,” “conjurer near.9 brothel,” “witch near.9 goose,” “witch near.9 goose,” “witch near.9 Convent Garden,” “witch near.9 Saint James,” “witch near.9 Great Pulteney,” “witch near.9 Bridewell,” “witch near.9 Gatehouse,” “witch near.9 Newgate,” “witch near.9 pillory,” “bawd and witch,” “bawd and witch,” “procuress and witch,” “procuress and sorceress,” “pander and witch,” “pandress and witch,” “bawd and sorceress,” “bawd and magic,” “bawd and magic,” “bawd and magic,” “bawd and conjurer,” “bawd and sorcery,” “bawd and sorcery,” “brothel and witch,” “bawdy house and witch,” “disorderly house and witch,” “bawdy house and witch,” “bawd and conjurer,” “bawd and conjurer,” “bawd and bewitch,” “bawd and bewitch,” “pillory and witch,” “Bridewell and witch,” “Newgate and witch.”

necessarily have points of commonality, and cannot be simplified into a linear trajectory. The primary source record indicates that many people still adhered to witchcraft beliefs in the early eighteenth century. Changes in the ways evidence was accepted in the later seventeenth century and the ways in which judges enforced adherence to legal reality played a part in the waning of successful prosecutions even though Satanic practices remained plausible for prosecutors and the courts. Many also felt that a judge’s personal beliefs should have no bearing on his duties towards the law, which until 1736 included trying witches. While some essential assumptions held by early modern English people—such as humans’ place in the world vis-à-vis animals—changed over the course of the early modern period, these changes did not occur without debate. A lot of these debates occurred in the popular press. Many elites continued to publically assert their belief in witches during the first two decades of the eighteenth century. In fact, historians such as Stuart Clark, Michael Hunter, and Ian Bostridge assert that denying the existence of witches could be politically troublesome. Continued allegiance to witchcraft beliefs was associated with mainstream state power and Anglicanism, they argue, while denial tended to align with nonconformity and rebellion. Bostridge and Clark both separately argue that witchcraft and demonological beliefs continued, though altered, among the elite and educated into the early eighteenth century. The witchcraft sources examined for this paper were produced within this framework of public debate. Owen Davies and James Sharpe similarly, yet also separately, assert

104 Clark, Thinking With Demons, 300-304; Bostridge, Witchcraft and Its Transformations, 54, 64-65, 70.
that witchcraft beliefs continued among the lower classes, even those in London, well into the
nineteenth century, indicating the continued importance of this topic well after 1680.105

This later period is also particularly important for this thesis because more conventional ideas of
the witch as elderly were particularly visible in texts published at this time. While a small number of
documents satirically presented young witches, most depicted old witches.106 While this focus on the
elderly witch was not entirely new, its scope was. Significantly, Edward Bever asserts that later trials
“seemed more and more to focus on decrepit old women.”107 Though elderly women were always
subjects of suspicion, this increased focus between 1680 and 1730 is worthy of analysis as people did
continue to try to bring witchcraft charges throughout this period.108 Cases, though usually unsuccessful
after 1680, often made it past the grand jury to actual trial.109 Elderly women’s lives hung in the balance
at many of these trials, entrenching the connection between aging femininity and witchcraft.

The years between 1680 and 1730 can also be seen as a significant period in the perception of
bawds. The seventeenth-century notion that prostitutes were more lustful and predatory than their
clients began to slowly shift in favour of a notion that prostitutes were victims of circumstance and
uncontrollable male sexuality.110 As Sophie Carter asserts, this kinder view was not extended to bawds;
rather, bawds were viewed negatively in this period and such depictions only increased as the
eighteenth century continued. Indeed, a reimagining of prostitutes as naïve victims further vilified the

106 For young witches, see Original Weekly Journal, Saturday 9 April 1720; Mists Weekly Journal, Saturday 30 April 1726.
109 Gaskill, Crime and Mentalities, 94.
experienced procuress who lured them to their ruin. The Society for Reformation of Manners movement operated from the 1690s to the 1730s, indicating a greater concern with the sexual conduct and propriety of English people, a fact some historians identify as a moral panic. The Society and the contemporaneous charity schools movement all focused on bettering the lower orders and reflect the significance of this time period in the history of transgression. Though bawds and bawdry were a more central focus of such reform campaigns than witches, all were examples of immorality and transgression and thus drew greater attention in this morally anxious age.

While it would be difficult to see deep penetration of Enlightenment ideals into English society before 1730, living and political conditions were changing. For example, though the Old Poor Law was not repealed, it became more difficult to access relief. Susannah Ottaway convincingly argues that the elderly and society valued the ability to continue caring for themselves, but this unwillingness or inability to provide for those in need would have undoubtedly added stress to the relationship between

114 Bever asserts that many of the changes historians associate with the decline of witchcraft persecutions, such as the “growing prosperity, various forms of insurance, technical development, and the triumph of individualism to explain the defusing of tensions that they argued had generated accusations and sustained prosecutions,” occurred not only before the Enlightenment had become important to the educated elite, but they “occurred well after the prosecutions died down, and popular suspicions continued to be expressed long after the socioeconomic developments that purportedly lessened the tensions generating them took place.” Bever, “Witchcraft Prosecutions and the Decline of Magic,” 264.
the poor and the rest of society.\textsuperscript{116} Many scholars rightfully identify problems with the Macfarlane-Thomas theory that witchcraft accusations centred on issues of charitable aid and guilt; however, some cheap print sources did indeed connect the beggar woman and neighbourly parsimoniousness to witchcraft accusations.\textsuperscript{117} Furthermore, Sophie Carter asserts that poverty and entry into the sex trade are strongly related, making the changing considerations about the poor in this time period important background.\textsuperscript{118} It is therefore likely that 1680-1730 saw a rise in anxieties about transgressive poorer women. This—coupled with a growing suspicion of elderly women as witches, sustained hatred for bawds, the growth of charitable and moral reform campaigns, and the rise of print to broad social prominence charted in previous paragraphs—makes this period a fruitful one in which to examine print depictions of witches and bawds.

**Historiography**

This paper makes use of a number of intersecting historiographies: that of old age, that of witchcraft, that of prostitution and bawdry, and that of gender and women. The history of old age is comparatively small. In 1992, when examining connections between old age and witchcraft, Bever commented that historians had “only begun to approach old age as an independent topic for research, and have just started to look beyond the evolution of learned medical doctrines to the social and cultural realities of old peoples’ lives.”\textsuperscript{119} Furthermore, Ottaway, in her defence of old age as a category of historical analysis, notes that between 1970 and 2001, there were only 22 English-language


\textsuperscript{117} For cheap print examples, see *Spectator*, Saturday 14 July 1711; *Universal Journal*, Wednesday 5 February 1724; Cheap print sources which discusses witches as poor old woman can be found *London Journal*, Saturday 2 June 1722; *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, Saturday 18 June 1726. A secondary discussion of this topic can be found Gaskill, “Witchcraft and Neighbourliness,” 212-214.


monographs and anthologies focusing on old age and aging. While the field has grown since 2004, the field remains sparse in comparison to the historiographies of witchcraft and prostitution.

Gender was a crucial element in how the elderly fit into the world; however, it is a complicated aspect of the historiography of old age. Though male stages of life and descriptions of male aging were strongly represented in the early modern source material, some scholars have commented on a, perhaps unexpected, lack of discussion of aging masculinity in the secondary literature on the topic indicating an imbalance in gender-based analysis. However, though there are books specifically about female old age and aging, such as Women and Ageing in British Society Since 1500, most texts tend to be less gender-specific, either featuring discussions of male and female old age or depicting specifically gendered experiences as universal. Botelho and Pat Thane see the history of old age as similar to early women’s history:

Ironically, within old age studies the battle for gender analysis has had to be fought once again. The history of older women has been neglected despite the fact that since the beginning of reconstructable demographic information... there have always been more old women than old men.

Katharine Kittredge’s article discussing sexualised aging femininity in eighteenth-century Britain asserts that “older” women who followed fashion were ridiculed. Furthermore, the concept of an attractive aging or aged woman was seen as laughable. Like Kittredge, this thesis—while acknowledging the presence of respectable, virtuous elderly women—is more concerned with marginalised, transgressive subsets.

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123 Kittredge, “The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d,” 248-251.
This thesis makes an important contribution to the field of old age history in examining the figure of the bawd, who is little represented in this body of work, and the connections between this figure and that of the witch. Few texts on elderly women discuss the bawd in depth, despite the extent to which primary source material emphasised the bawd’s age. The historiography of bawds does not tend to be a standalone topic. The only book-length study, Fergus Linnane’s Madams, was written by a journalist for a popular market and thus focuses on description over analysis with little attribution to sources. Scholarly analysis of bawdry tends to examine fictional bawds more than flesh-and-blood examples. For example, Mario DiGangi discusses seventeenth-century theatrical bawds in one chapter of his 2011 text Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character From Shakespeare to Shirley. Laura J. Rosenthal continues this trend, combining historical records and novels, in her text Infamous Commerce: Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture (2006). While Rosenthal devotes only a small portion of the text to bawds, Sophie Carter’s book on prostitutes dedicates more space with an entire chapter on “the role and representation of the bawd.”

Some historians problematise study of the bawd. Tim Hitchcock argues that depictions of bawds in newspapers, pamphlets, and other cheap print sources do not necessarily represent actual practices of the early modern sex trade. Furthermore, Paul Griffiths asserts that fictional representations are important “as a guide to contemporary conceptualizations and attitudes,” but must necessarily “adopt a supporting role to the courtbook” and “[w]e cannot reconstruct experienced realities from imagined characters and scenes alone.” These assertions bring into question the appropriateness of literary sources; however, these representations remain important. While the value of courtbooks is inarguable, describing other types of print sources solely as “imagined characters and

“scenes” ignores the recycling and reconstitution of popular beliefs and discourses important to the construction of these texts. While Marisha Caswell acknowledges that the *Ordinary’s Accounts* and the *Old Bailey Papers* are somewhat problematic sources, influenced as they are by “the competing demands of affordability, accuracy, instruction and entertainment,” she nonetheless asserts that “they provide particular insight into the perceptions, treatment and experiences” of the people described within.\(^\text{127}\) Frances Dolan also concludes that though representations “often conform to conventions and may or may not conform to the range of actual experiences,” they still “had material consequences, shaping as well as being shaped by early modern cultural practices,” indicating that they reflect the way people conceived of the world.\(^\text{128}\)

Other scholarship notes that the bawd is represented almost indivisibly from the prostitute.\(^\text{129}\) This raises the question of whether it is viable or reasonable to study the bawd without also studying the prostitute. However, without rejecting the conclusions discussed above, the bawd is a reasonable figure of study, especially in this time period. Though the bawd is best known in the context of leading the sex trade, these representations demonstrate a delimitation of their roles: the bawd is often shown as profiting from prostitution (and sometimes theft) but not actively participating. Furthermore, as Sophie Carter also asserts, the moral reprieve of prostitutes beginning in this era was not extended to bawds, whose depictions worsened as the eighteenth century progressed.\(^\text{130}\) The divergence between the conceptions of these similar figures is worth studying. The differences in the perceived ages of bawds and prostitutes are also important. The prostitute was generally depicted as young, whereas the bawd survived into old age, beyond the point where prostitution was presented as a viable option. Perhaps

\(^{128}\) Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, 3. Dolan’s use of these representations is similar to Harold Love’s model of reconstitution, discussed above.
\(^{129}\) Certain characteristics of the bawd, the witch, and the prostitute were seen to overlap in ways that were not neatly divisible. While the bawd is more neatly connected to the prostitute, the witch and the prostitute were sometimes seen as not dissimilar. Carter, *Purchasing Power*, 112, 118.
one of the most famous eighteenth-century works on prostitution, Hogarth’s *A Harlot’s Progress*, aptly demonstrates this divergence. David Bindman asserts that the contrast between Hogarth’s Moll Hackabout’s “youthful innocence” and the dubious respectability of his older Mother Needham is one of the most important aspects of Hogarth’s first print.\(^{131}\) Furthermore, Moll Hackabout was infected with the venereal disease that killed her before her *Progress* was half through; in contrast, Hogarth’s Needham has endured and aged in her own.\(^{132}\) Laura J. Rosenthal’s analysis touches upon the relative ages of witches and bawds. Rosenthal discusses *The English Rogue* (1665-1671) and the perceived dangers of prostitution; she asserts that the more the girls worked, the less human they became until, through the passage of time, they resembled “rotten slabs of meat.”\(^{133}\) Fanny Hill, from Cleland’s *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748-1749), entered into prostitution as a naïve country girl, not unlike Moll Hackabout. Rosenthal further summarises the conventions of the Libertine prostitution narrative as generally beginning with easily-tempted middle class girls.\(^{134}\) Sophie Carter likewise asserts that prostitutes became bawds when they had reached a certain age and level of venereal infection, a model which inherently excludes the elder woman from prostitution and the younger from bawdry.\(^{135}\) As age had great effect on the way people were expected to act, the opportunities available to them, and how they were received, this difference is not inconsequential.

This thesis will contribute to the historiography of prostitution and bawdry because it focuses largely on the bawd, a figure that receives relatively little consideration in the historiography of the sex trade despite her ubiquity in the early modern discourse on the topic. Furthermore, this analysis of the

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\(^{134}\) Rosenthal, *Infamous Commerce*, 121, 123, 137.

bawd examines the moral connotations of such a figure in a wider scope of concerns than the sex trade alone. Though it would be undesirable to separate the bawd from her proper context, examining how perceptions of the bawds’ age informed popular understanding of bawds’ misbehaviour can help deepen the understanding of this particular figure.

The historiography of witches and witchcraft is the largest of those examined. While witchcraft has been a field of historical study for centuries, it has become more important since the 1970s, with the works of Alan Macfarlane and Keith Thomas being particularly significant, and has increased more since the 1990s. Due to the size of this field of study, virtually every aspect of witchcraft trials has been studied. Gender is prominent in recent scholarship, with women often providing a focal point. As the centuries that saw the bulk of the trials, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries receive the most scholarly attention. There is also a fair bit of scholarship about medieval witchcraft beliefs, due possibly to the perhaps disproportionate attention paid to the *Malleus Maleficarum*. In 1996 James Sharpe concluded *Instruments of Darkness* by discussing the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

He contended that “plebeian witchcraft beliefs were developing and becoming more elaborate at much the same time as the social élite was gradually distancing itself from the idea of witchcraft.” In this instance, Sharpe is largely concerned with how these beliefs influenced those remnants still extant in nineteenth-century rural England, though the assertion has ramifications for this project. Since 1997 there have been a number of books published that are concerned with later period witchcraft beliefs, including Owen Davies’ *Witchcraft, Magic, and Culture, 1736-1951* (1999) and Ian Bostridge’s *Witchcraft and Its Transformations, c. 1650-1750* (1997). The series *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe* also features a 1999 text that also discusses witchcraft in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While many texts focused on the later period tend implicitly to impart a concept of progress, Bostridge and Clark both demonstrate that it is not the most accurate lens through which to examine the state of witchcraft in the years between 1680 and 1730. This thesis emphasizes the pervasiveness of witches in popular belief in this period by focusing on printed representations of witchcraft beliefs rather than upon its changing legal status. As cheap print accounts of witches sometimes vary extensively from legal accounts, this examination is important. Furthermore, this thesis can help situate the prominence of elderly women in later-period witchcraft beliefs within a greater historical context. Though witches have been compared to other transgressive figures, few of these demonstrate the range of commonalities present between the witch and the bawd.

The two chapters that follow have been split into behavioural characterisations and physical or innate characterisations. In other words, the first chapter focuses on commentary relating to bawds’ and witches’ actions or character, and the second focuses on print accounts of their looks and other

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137 Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 278.
138 Clark examines demonology as a scientific venture and attempts to resituate both demonology and witchcraft beliefs within the scientific revolution in his text *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*. He also situates witchcraft beliefs within eighteenth-century politics. Clark, *Thinking With Demons*, 194-312. Bostridge also places the continuing belief in witchcraft—as well as its fall—within the scope of political pragmatism and necessity. Bostridge, *Witchcraft and Its Transformations*, 53-107.
physical qualities. This division is somewhat artificial. To many early modern Europeans, external characteristics reflected people’s natures. Elements of good appearance (e.g. smooth, white skin) could be marred by old age or venereal disease, both of which carried their own associations. Beautiful people were generally considered more moral.\(^{139}\) Notwithstanding the overlap between physical and behavioural attributes in early modern perception, the source material usually makes separate comment on each, making this a reasonable distinction. The characteristics discussed in the first chapter (enticing others to sin, lustfulness, associating with the devil, being bad mothers, or adherence to Catholicism) have little to do with appearance. It is possible that a “bad appearance” could have limited their ability to recruit others to their craft but this does not negate the fact that these accounts describe behaviour, rather than appearance.\(^{140}\) The second chapter notes the way in which witches and bawds were presented as being ugly, hard and dry, and otherwise physically unpleasant. The chapters are thus divided between aspects which can be perceived as choices and aspects which can be perceived as innate.

Witches and bawds are the main focus of this thesis; however, concepts surrounding the perception and representation of aging femininity are also significant. This study explores print depictions of bawds and witches found in newspapers, pamphlets, and books. With the exception of the last, these sources would have been within reach of almost all levels of society to some degree, and they reflect an “imagined community” of readers with certain shared ideals. Their portrayal of bawds and


\(^{140}\) One example of this possibility occurs in The Relapse; or, Virtue in Danger (1708). A character contemplates whether a young or an old bawd is better. He asserts that he’ll “never go to an old [bawd] but when I have occasion for a Witch. Lewdness looks Heavenly to a Women, when an Angel appe[ars] in its Cause; but when a Hag is Advocate, she thinks it comes from the devil. An Old Woman had something so terrible in her Looks, that wh[en] she is persuading your Mistress to forget she has a Soul, she stares H[ell] and Damnation full in her face.” Sir John Vanbrugh, The Relapse; or, Virtue in Danger (London: Wellington, 1708), 56.
witches thus expose broad perceptions of marginalised femininity held by that community, not only at an elite level, but also a popular one. As such, depictions of witches and bawds can be seen to fit along a spectrum of representation of honourable and dishonourable women. Bawds and witches, as discussed between 1680 and 1730, are examples of elderly transgressive femininity.

Femininity and advanced age are integral to the depictions examined. While legal statistics indicate that not all witches and bawds were elderly women, the representations of these figures frequently depict them as such. These stereotypes likely spoke to cultural understandings of what it meant to be a bawd or a witch, but also to what it meant to be an elderly woman. Elderliness strongly affected people’s day-to-day experiences and how they were perceived by their neighbours and relatives. As will be discussed, though the experiences of elderly women and men could be similar, people’s comportment and reception in advanced age was typically gendered.
Chapter One: Perceptions of Bawds' and Witches' Character

Introduction

Personal morality was important in the years between 1680 and 1730. Unfavourable perceptions of people’s behaviour and morality could be held against them in a number of ways, including rejection or punishment by the community. For example, Alan Macfarlane asserts that perceived lewdness or other transgressions in the form of begging, peevishness, maliciousness, or scolding were often regarded by contemporaries as a potential sign of witchcraft.

In other cases, it could problematise or even affect the result of a trial depending on the testimony witnesses felt compelled to give. Bawds and witches were greatly associated with immorality in this time period and were frequently represented as seductresses, overly lustful, anti-mothers, and servants of the devil. They were connected with Catholicism and suspected of forming groups of sinners to work against English Protestant society. This chapter will examine these interior qualities and immoral behaviours to examine these figures as examples of transgressive elderly femininity in greater depth.

The moral and behavioural standards expected from the elderly differed from those expected from the young. Elderly people who married much younger partners were often the targets of popular mockery. The same was true for women who married past the age of menopause, as their marriages were often presumed to be based entirely on sexual desire rather than the more respectable goal of reproduction. While sexual reputation was an important aspect of the perception of personal morality

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1 While criminality does not seem to have always coincided with the suspicion of witchcraft in the samples Macfarlane examined, the fact that contemporaries perceived that they might is important in examining conceptions of witchcraft as popularised in print. Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (2nd edition) (Florence, Kentucky: Routledge, 1999), 158, 159.
in this period and all sexual behaviour was scrutinized, elderly women’s sexuality garnered more negative attention than that of other demographics.³ This was true also for other aspects of elderly behaviour. Helen Yallop, having "identified the aging body as a particular site for self-control," examines the importance of cheerfulness, which, as understood in the eighteenth century, was a concept largely advocated for the elderly.⁴ Unlike modern definitions of cheerfulness that focus on the mental state, eighteenth-century notions emphasised its physical or spiritual dimensions.⁵ Central to Yallop's understanding of cheerfulness is the belief that "the aging body is not just considered as a flesh and blood problem to be solved, but as a site for self-fashioning, and a place for creating modes of socially acceptable behaviour and practice."⁶ Cheerfulness required avoiding negative traits sometimes associated with the elderly, such as "Immoderate Cares and Passions... sorrow... Envy, Ambition, Covetousness, Anger."⁷ In their perceived libidinous excess, sexual immorality, and inherent dishonesty, the witches and bawds discussed in this chapter exhibit the opposite of this “cheerful” ideal of elderly femininity.

Though the condemnation of witches and bawds involved many factors, it was most often informed by religious sentiment. Religious issues and identity affected not only how people acted in society, but also how their behaviour was received by their neighbours. Religion helped to provide the metaphors people used to make sense of the world and formed the basis of people’s moral systems. As such, the roots of the moral condemnation brought against witches and bawds can be found in early modern English religious beliefs. Though Anglican Protestantism was a key aspect of late-seventeenth and eighteenth-century English identity, many other forms of belief also were embraced, causing

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endemic religious tensions. As Patrick Collinson asserts, the notion of a religiously-unified, entirely Protestant England “had always been somewhat specious.” Though Collinson refers here to the period between the Reformation and the Civil War, his assertion remained true for the period after the Restoration. A number of Catholics who attended Anglican services existed both before and after the Civil War, as did groups of recusants, some of whom even continued to claim rights to the use of old churchyards to bury their dead regardless of their excommunication from the reinstated Church of England. Even among otherwise conforming congregations there were sometimes issues between clergy and laity, as was demonstrated in community dissent in Wiltshire in the 1670s. These issues further demonstrate how incomplete assumptions of a religiously unified England are. Furthermore, James II’s repeated attempts to pass and enforce religious tolerance legislation caused issues during his reign, demonstrating not only the plurality of religious beliefs in this period, but the discomfort this fact could create. Anglicans continued to fear the presence of Catholics in their midst. There were a number of events which fuelled fears of Catholic resurgence around 1680; the reign of the Catholic James II (1685-1688), the birth of a Catholic heir (1688), the false Popish Plot (1678), and Meal Tub Plot

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10 Briefly, Nathaniel Aske, the rector of Somerford Magna brought several members of his parish to the Bishop’s consistory court for non-attendance and failure to take communion. His congregation defended themselves by arguing that their lack of adherence was in response to the unacceptable behaviour of their rector and not because of any non-conforming religious beliefs. Donald A. Spaeth, “Common Prayer? Popular Observance of the Anglican Liturgy in Restoration Wiltshire,” in Parish, Church and People: Local Studies in Lay Religion 1350-1750, ed. S.J. Wright (London: Hutchinson, 1988), 125-132.
12 “Catholicism, both real and imagined, dominated debates in government and Church. Images of Catholicism, both positive and negative, flooded the popular culture. Catholics themselves were not only the foil against which much of early modern English history occurred, but were also a vigorous and often divided community who sought to shape both their own destiny and the large course of English history.” Ethan H. Shagan, “Introduction,” in Catholics and the ‘Protestant Nation’: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England, ed. Ethan H. Shagan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 2.
(1680) fuelled Protestant fears that England would once again fall under Catholic control. Later (1688-1740s), the rising issue of Jacobitism—a political movement that aimed to restore James II and his heirs to the throne—and the renewed perception of a fifth column on the island lent new heat to an old issue. By 1680, the Puritans, so prominent during the Civil War and the Interregnum, were no longer a powerful religious or political group. Regardless, the existence of the Puritans and other non-conforming Protestant sects demonstrate that Protestantism was not an indication of confessional similarities. As relations with Quakers—especially itinerant preaching women—demonstrate, this coexistence could be contentious and sometimes violent.\footnote{One text that examines this concept in some detail is Linda Colley's \textit{Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837} (London: Pimlico, 2003). Though Colley's text goes beyond 1730, she argues convincingly for the prominence of Protestantism in forming the British identity from the very Act of Union in 1707 see especially, 11-25, 42, 46-49. On the issue of violence involving minority of dissenting Protestant groups, see, Amanda E. Herbert's "Companions in Preaching and Suffering: Itinerant Female Quakers in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World," \textit{Early American Studies} 9 no. 1 (2011): 78, 87-92, 98-100; Krista J. Kesselring, "Gender, the Hat, and Quaker Universalism in the Wake of the English Revolution," \textit{The Seventeenth Century} 26 no. 2 (2011): 299; Rosemary Kegl, "Women’s Preaching, Absolute Property, and the Cruel Sufferings (For the Truths sake) of Katharine Evans & Sarah Chevers;" \textit{Women’s Studies} 24 (1994): 57-58; Catie Gill, "Evans and Cheever's A Short Relation in Context: Flesh, Spirit, and Authority in Quaker Prison Writings, 1650-1662," \textit{Huntington Library Quarterly} 72 no. 2 (2009): 259.} Political reprisals for Quakerism even increased after the Restoration.\footnote{Kesselring, "Gender, the Hat, and Quaker Universalism, 300, 310.} This period also saw the return of the Jews after their medieval exile, an event that created new fears and tensions.\footnote{While previous groups had re-entered the country on a small scale, the widening of this movement was formalised under the auspices of Oliver Cromwell to no small amount of controversy. Frank Felsenstein states that, though there was eventually a level of tolerance towards the new Jewish communities, acceptance was a different matter. Frank Felsenstein, \textit{Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4, 51, 57.}

The unease caused by this spiritual plurality is visible in the moral attributes accorded to witches and bawds. For example, conceptions of maternity (and the perverse maternity of bawds and witches) were informed by a shift in post-Reformation perceptions of the Virgin Mary, the act of childbirth and the female body itself.\footnote{Mary E. Fissell, \textit{Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 14-52.} Additionally, metaphors used to describe these figures, such as references to Eve and the devil in the context of seduction, place the rationalisation of these behaviours within the
context of fundamental Biblical tales. Though it is likely that each separate religious sect would have had their own specific understandings of these allusions, the sources discussed in this chapter largely seem to come from a viewpoint of conforming Protestantism.\textsuperscript{17} Though Anglicans were a powerful religious and political group, major events during the seventeenth century demonstrate that their position was not unassailable. The anxiety brought about by this perceived weakness can help explain why witchcraft or demonological beliefs were used to support mainstream state power into the eighteenth-century, by equating skepticism in witchcraft with atheism.\textsuperscript{18} This continued anxiety allowed for scrutiny of people’s beliefs and behaviours that can account for some of the concern with figures like witches and bawds.

**Evil Seducresses**

Both witches and bawds were depicted in popular literature as drawing innocent people, particularly young women, into a life of sin. While seduction in a modern context is inherently sexual, this understanding did not necessarily apply in the early modern context of bawds and witches.

Seduction is the term from the source material, so it will be used here, but it should be considered synonymous with the modern meaning of “persuasion.”\textsuperscript{19} Much of the source material makes mention of the seductive technique of bawds to attract young girls and women to the sex trade, but witchcraft was also associated with seduction. Seductions involving witchcraft took two forms: one form saw witches as seducing other people into their evil lifestyle; another form had the devil or demonic

\textsuperscript{17} For example, one source asserts that “no-Countries have been so eminent for Murthering of People as Witches, as those where Popery or Fanaticism prevail; such Executions are common in Popish Countries, and the Frolick run so high once in New England, that if they had not attack’d the Teachers themselves, one half of the People, in all probability, had hang’d the t’other for Witches and Wizards…” *Original Weekly Journal*, Saturday 9 April 1720. This author presents both Catholicism and Puritanism as equally fanatical religious beliefs.


familiars coercing people into committing witchcraft. Because of its interest in popular fears regarding elderly women, this section will focus on the former. In the case of both bawds and witches, popular fears focused especially on elderly women “seducing” younger women into their evil ways.

There were a number of reasons elderly women may have been represented as seducing younger women into immoral lifestyles. In early modern society, younger people were expected to obey their elders, making this depiction one that would reflect what early modern people believed to be the natural order of things. Likewise, older women routinely served as mentors to younger women, creating fears that they might abuse this relationship. The Universal Journal (1724) explored such a case where a vulnerable young woman “was accosted by a venerable Matron, who enquired into the Cause of her extreme Sorrow, and offered her Assistance.” While this woman was initially helpful, the girl “found herself in a Brothel, and her Life threatened unless she comply’d with the Custom of the Place.” Though perhaps an extreme example, it does demonstrate how older women were perceived as likely to prey upon a sense of authority their age provided. Other sources, such as Twelve Ingenious Characters, or, Pleasant Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons and Things, played off the idea that old women were ugly, impure, and undesirable, and suggested that old women acted out of envy. One author claimed that old bawds seduced young girls out of satanic envy and a desire “To have all fair women [look] like her: and because ‘t[is] impossible they should catch it being so young, she hurries them to it by Diseases.” The perceived beauty and physical purity of younger women, then, was the lure for the older, more debauched bawd to lead them to ruin. Furthermore, the text also asserted that “A

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20 For example, see Anonymous, The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches (London: J. Deacon, 1682), 2; especially, Anonymous, the Life and Conversation of Temperance Floyd, Mary Lloyd, and Susannah Edwards (London: J.W., 1687), 2-4; John Bell, The Tryal of Witchcraft; or, Witchcraft Arraign’d and Condemn’d (Greenwich: Henry S. Richardson, 1700), 11, 14-18.
22 Universal Journal, 22 August 1724.
Bawd, is an old Char-cole that hath been burnt her self, and therefore is able to kindle a whole Green Coppice.”

The old bawd, then, was able to seduce young women because she was both inclined to do so and knowledgeable about how best to do it. Other sources suggest that young women were perceived as highly persuadable and easily tempted. This belief reflects early modern medical theory. Many systems that already considered women intellectually and physically weaker than men, considered young women to be particularly prone to misadventure or temptation. Some models believed young women suffered intense lust upon the achievement of menarche. Furthermore, the excess blood in women’s bodies near menarche could gather in the brain, affecting their health and behaviour. Likewise, others asserted that young women were more prone to being affected by their wombs—an organ believed to have the ability to affect the entire body—than older women because their lifestyles were less stable. Youth was, according to the Observator (1703), the time, “when the Devil Tempts most, and when the Immaturity of their Age and Reason renders them Incapable of making a Vigorous Defence of their Chastity.” In other words, teenagers and young women were considered easy targets for those who sought to influence them unduly.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the bawd was the conception that they seduced innocent girls into prostitution. Scholar Sophie Carter locates the demonization of bawds “exclusively within the context of women’s post lapsarian depravity,” an assertion which certainly echoes early modern discussions of bawds. Bawds were considered “true daughter[s] of Eve,” a statement with powerful connotations and highly connected to seduction, due to Eve’s role in the fall of man. Though Eve was herself seduced by the serpent, she also convinced Adam to eat of the fruit. This association is stated

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26 Read, *Genders and Sexualities in History*,
27 Though these ideas originated in Ancient Greece, they were still influential in early modern England. Helen King, *Hippocrates’ Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 36, 222, 230.
28 Observator, 13 March 1703- 17 March 1703. Emphasis original.
explicitly in *The Constables Hue and Cry After Whores & Bawds, &c.* The bawd is “a true Daughter of Eve... having undone herself, never leaves tempting others till they are drawn to the same Distruuction,” a statement which echoes the suggestion of satanic envy discussed in the previous paragraph. 29 Ned Ward also utilised Eve imagery in his text *The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot.* The Harlot referred to herself as Eve before the Fall upon the success of her seduction: “Like our first Mother I was Loth to miss,/ What false Report had render’d such a Bliss.” By the end of the poem, the Harlot cursed “the Female Tongue, that drew [her] in.” Eve’s fall was sometimes connected with speech; not only did Eve initially succumb to the serpent’s words, discourse surrounding the fall of man asserted she then did the same to her husband. 30 Speech was connected with Eve’s sin to the extent that women were, at times, praised for their silence. The reticence of these women was seen as an ability to withstand the “susceptibilities of Eve’s daughters” to immoderate speech, further connecting speech with original sin. 31 The bawd in such literary sources, generally conceptualised as a former prostitute, can also be understood as inherently similar to Eve: she was convinced to compromise herself, and in turn, convinced others to compromise themselves. 32 This bawd’s seduction into prostitution was not represented in any of these documents; however, both the belief regarding the bawd’s former past in the sex trade and the role of speech in these texts connect the bawd’s behaviour to Eve.

The bawd’s seduction was sometimes believed to encompass not only prostitution but also other crimes. This is apparent in the 1727 trial of Sarah Martin and Sarah Mullenux (“a young Whore and an old Bawd”). These women were tried on charges of stealing a watch from Peter Cox, a customer. Cox seemed to infer that the theft occurred at Mullenux’s (the bawd’s) encouragement; just before he noticed his watch missing, Cox noticed Martin “put something into [Sarah Mullenux’s] Hand, which I do

believe was my Watch.” He and his friend strip searched Martin ("my young whore"), but left Mullenux ("that old Bawd") alone “for she’s an old Woman.” Their reluctance to search Mullenux for the watch may have emerged out of respect for her age or out of a distaste for her elderly body. Regardless, it was a significant decision since they had claimed to see Martin place something in her hand before the watch was noticed missing. Both women were acquitted of the crime.33 More seriously, Elizabeth Simmerton—an “old Bawd”—was arrested alongside her daughter and a number of “doxies” for the murder of Peter Anthony Motteux. Reports highlighted the fact that these women were bawds and prostitutes. Furthermore, the Old Bailey Proceedings record of this trial asserted that Simmerton was the mastermind behind both the murder and the attempted cover up.34 As everyone tried for Motteux’s murder was acquitted, it is possible that Simmerton was assigned a role in the events based upon assumptions about the persuasive powers of elderly bawds, and a tendency to assign them culpability for the sex trade as a whole.35 It is likely no coincidence that the elderly woman identified as the bawd was also portrayed as leading the other, younger, women to perpetrate this crime.

Mario DiGangi’s article on theatrical bawds observes the ways in which they were depicted as manipulating close personal relationships to gain their victims’ trust and lure them to their ruin. Significantly, DiGangi also contends that many of the most famous theatrical bawds were depicted as elderly.36 The poem, The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot (1700), described the bawd using “Verbal Witchcraft” and playing upon societal preoccupations in order to fulfill this seduction.37 The

33 Proceedings, LL, t.17270830-40, August 1727, Sarah Martin and Sarah Mullenux.
34 Proceedings, LL, t.17180423-1, April 1718, Edward Williams, Elizabeth Williams, Elizabeth Simmerton, Elizabeth Shepherd, Mary Roberts, and Percival Hutchinson; Weekly Journal or Saturday’s Post, Saturday 8 March 1718; Weekly Journal or Saturday’s Post, Saturday 26 April 1718.
35 Some examples of this tendency can be seen in Observator, 13 March 1703-17 March 1703; Universal Journal, Saturday 22 August 1724.
37 Ward, The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot, 7, emphasis original. Though Ward never specifies the bawd’s age, it seems possible that connecting this woman to a witch was meant to evoke old age. Scholar Emily Cockayne likewise asserts that Ward’s bawd was elderly. Emily Cockayne, Hubbub: Filth, Noise & Stench in England, 1600-1770 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 49.
procuress expounded upon the pleasure of the sex act, though this tactic is rebuffed by the girl who had been previously warned of the inconstancy of men.38 The bawd also had an argument against marriage, despite it being the condition that legitimated sexual behaviour: “Those Bonds are Tiresome which we cannot break: Fear, Jealousie, and Doubt, Improve the Bliss; The Pleasure’s Lost, when Chains have made you his. Our Sex too often has Confest in Tears, Cupid withdraws, when once the Priest appears.”39 Marriage may have been a frightening concept for many young women, as the poem depicted this argument as the successful one. While this document was fictional—the source claimed to have been written by “a Whore at Tunbridge,” though most attribute it to Ned Ward—this line of reasoning must have had some resonance for readers in the late 1680s.40 Though marriage was the expected course of action for women and men alike, women’s social subordination to their husbands, the commonness of spousal violence, and the legal conference of femme couvert status upon marriage may have made wedlock a daunting prospect for young girls. Though Ward may have waxed satirical about marriage here, it seems unlikely that Ward departed too far from societal expectations in his description of the bawd’s behaviour; the bawd, usually as diseased as Ward’s bawd and often elderly, could use commonplace wisdoms in order to coax young women into a life of sin and prostitution. To stretch the bonds of the discussion beyond the beliefs and understandings of the audience would have been to risk alienating them.41 Ward’s bawd fits well with other representations of the sinister procuress, cleverly enticing younger women to their ruin.

The witch in the Athenian Gazette’s account of a bewitched voyage to Virginia was also a dangerous recruiter to sin, although her victims did include a man. Beyond working mischief upon

38 Ward, The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot, 5.
39 Ward, The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot, 6, emphasis Original.
40 Ward, The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot, Title page, Introduction.
everyone onboard, Elizabeth Masters was said to have also tried to seduce several people using similar techniques to Ward’s bawd. Namely, she appealed to people’s fears and desires. Masters approached William Rennols, a passenger, in an attempt to seduce him to witchcraft, reportedly informing him that his mother was a witch. Should he too become a witch, he would “not want for Gold or Money,” and he could continue seeing his mother though he was immigrating to Virginia. Martha Jeffres, another of Masters’ victims, supposedly travelled to London from the ship with a coach and four horses to fetch Rennols’ mother, Mary (who allegedly ran a brothel in “Dog and Bitch yard” and with whom Masters supposedly lived), possibly indicating some level of contemporaneity between the women. Masters had promised Jeffres wealth sufficient to keep a maid if she became a witch. Commentary in this document claimed that Martha Jeffres was, in fact, later burned for witchcraft, perhaps indicating the presentation of a successful seduction. Nothing further was explicitly said about William Rennols. That both seductions involved monetary wealth is interesting, since historians have speculated that poor, elderly women found some economic and social advantage to being associated with witchcraft, as doing so allowed them some power or comfort of which their age and poverty ordinarily deprived them. Like their procuress counterparts, witches were clearly represented in contemporary literature as tempting others to follow their sinful ways.

The case of Temperance Floyd provides another example of the elderly witch’s seduction. Temperance Floyd, Mary Floyd (or Mary Lloyd), and Susanna Edwards were among the last groups to be executed for witchcraft in England, in 1682. This particular case captured the public attention, despite

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42 Athenian Gazette or Casuistical Mercury, Sunday 29 November 1691. This possibility, however, seems unlikely to have been rooted in legal reality as the standard legal punishment for witchcraft was hanging.
44 Anonymous, The Life and Conversation of Temperance Floyd, Mary Lloyd, and Susannah Edwards. The whole pamphlet refers to her as such. The names provided for the three women in these two pamphlets also differ from those given in another, perhaps better documented, pamphlet where they were known as Temperance Lloyd, Mary Trembles, and Susanna Edwards. Jonathan Barry, Witchcraft and Demonology in South-West England, 1640-1789
the relative lateness of the date, and resulted in the publication of multiple pamphlets and a ballad. These documents provide insight into how these witches were viewed by the public. Importantly, Temperance Floyd—“the Old Hag”—was more prominent in the two pamphlets cited in this paper than either Lloyd or Edwards and was repeatedly described as “the eldest of the three.”\textsuperscript{45} Though all three were described as being whole-heartedly involved in witchcraft, Floyd was seen as the most dangerous and most immoral, being “the introducer and cause of the other Two’s overthrow.” In other words, Floyd was the woman who seduced them into rejecting God and taught them how to practice witchcraft.\textsuperscript{46} While she was convicted of practicing witchcraft over the course of decades and was the only one of the women described as having had sexual intercourse with the devil, none of these behaviours were presented as having had the same moral importance as her seduction of her compatriots, perhaps because their transgressions can be attributed to Floyd. Though the other two women “grew to be as dexterious as their Devilish Tutor,” Floyd would have been understood as the cause of their damnation.\textsuperscript{47}

The figure Dipsas, derived from Ovid, is perhaps the most keenly illustrative of witches’ and bawds’ mutual reputation for immoral persuasion. As noted in the introductory chapter, Dipsas was a well-known figure in early modern literature and was a blend of both images of elderly feminine transgression, generally presented as a bawd, but “most take her for a Witch.”\textsuperscript{48} Though her age was never specified, Ovid’s brief description of her indicated that she was elderly. The narrator, angry at

\textsuperscript{45} Anonymous, \textit{The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches}, 2. The pamphlet later describes the other women as “being somewhat younger then the Old Shape of Prince Lucifer,” namely, Floyd. Anonymous, \textit{The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches}, 3.

\textsuperscript{46} Anonymous, \textit{The Life and Conversation of Temperance Floyd, Mary Lloyd, and Susannah Edwards}, 3.

\textsuperscript{47} Anonymous, \textit{The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches}, 4.

Dipsas’ attempt to seduce his lover, “stept from behind the door,/ And scarce my Nails from her thin Cheeks forbore./ Her few Grey Hairs in Rage I vow’d to pull,” leaving the reader with the impression of a woman with a very thin face and sparse, grey hair. Despite this unflattering description, she was highly persuasive: “Her ready tongue ne’er wants a usefull lie,/ Soft moving words, nor Charming flattery.”

Like the bawds discussed above, she appealed to her victims’ fears, referring to their financial woes, and fear of fading beauty. The persuasive powers of the witch and bawd were also blended into one person in John Vanbrugh’s 1708 play, The Relapse; or, Virtue in Danger. One character asserted that he would never “go to an old [bawd] but when I have occasion for a witch.” In other words, the figure of the younger bawd, less frequently represented than elderly bawds, was contrasted with her elder counterpart who was also described as a witch. “An Old Woman has something so terrible in her Looks,” the character explained, “that wh[en] she is persuading your Mistress to forget she has a Soul, she stares H[ell] and Damnation full in her face.”

Though it would be incorrect to say that elderly women were universally respected or reviled, they were often figures of fear and ridicule, a fact which is brought into sharp relief when examining the stereotypes that surrounded witches. While a young bawd and an old bawd posed the same moral and spiritual risk, the depth of stereotypes surrounding aged women may have provided a very different set of associations, apparently lending greater danger to the seductive attempts of older bawds.

Inappropriately Lustful

Both bawds and witches were associated with sex. The former lured young women into a life in the sex trade and were thought to have been prostitutes themselves in their youth; the latter were

49 Ovid, Ovid’s Epistles, 244; Virgil, Miscellany Poems, 121.
50 Ovid, Ovid’s Epistles, 241; Virgil, Miscellany Poems, 117.
51 Ovid, Ovid’s Epistles, 241-244; Virgil, Miscellany Poems, 117-121.
52 Mario DiGangi has asserted that the depiction of bawds as overwhelmingly elderly is likely ideological. DiGangi, Sexual Types, 162.
54 DiGangi, Sexual Types, 161.
often depicted as having copulated with the devil. This association between these aging women and fornication needs to be seen as a part of a larger cultural discourse of the inappropriately lustful old woman, which affected perceptions of women before they were truly elderly. Katherine Kittredge argues that women over the age of thirty were expected to dress more demurely and to deny sexual desire, especially if they had never married. Those women who did not comply with these expectations were considered worthy of mockery or contempt.\textsuperscript{55} It is thus important to note that this stereotype extended beyond witches and bawds and derision might be levelled at a wide range of overly-sexualised elderly women. A ballad from the late seventeenth century, entitled \textit{The Old Woman’s Resolution: or, A Dialogue Betwixt Jack Drumbold and his Old Granny Gregory} depicted a fictional argument between Jack Drumbold and his grandmother who was determined to marry, despite the fact that she “was full fourscore years and ten,/ and had not a Tooth in her Head.”\textsuperscript{56} Marriage was an inappropriate suggestion for Granny Gregory for a number of reasons, but it was especially inappropriate in this particular piece because she was only getting married to have sex.\textsuperscript{57} This fact is betrayed by her response to some of Jack’s stated objections: “What! Would you have me play the Whore?”\textsuperscript{58} Other songs spoke to similar concepts.\textsuperscript{59} Many were about widows, as widows were thought to be particularly sexual, but all implicitly reproved elderly women for having sexual desire.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{55} Lynn Botelho, “Old Age and Menopause in Rural Women of Early Modern Sussex,” in \textit{Women and Ageing in British Society since 1500}, eds. Lynn Botelho and Pat Thane (Harlow, England: Longman, 2001), 49-51; Kittredge, “’The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d,’” 252-255.
\textsuperscript{56} Anonymous, \textit{The Old Woman’s Resolution: or, a Dialogue Betwixt Jack Drumbold and his Old Granny Gregory} (London: P. Brooksy, J. Deacon, J. Bla...., J.Black, 1688-1692), single sheet.
\textsuperscript{57} One such reason that remarriage would have been considered inappropriate is that Granny Gregory was past the age where she may have reasonably been expected to conceive or give birth, and as such would not be expected or encouraged to remarry. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the presence of her eponymous grandson, she had male relatives she could depend upon for protection and possible support which would remove any financial necessity of a late in life marriage. Botelho, “Old Age and Menopause,” 48.
\textsuperscript{58} Anonymous, \textit{The Old Woman’s Resolution} single sheet.
\textsuperscript{59} See also, Anonymous, \textit{A Song. As I Walk’d by an Hospital, I Heard an Old Woman Cry} (London: G.S., 1685); Anonymous, \textit{The Toothless Bride} (London: E. Johnson, 1685), single sheet.
\textsuperscript{60} Kittredge, “’The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d,’” 257-258.
A number of sources discussed the lustfulness of witches. It should not be surprising that elderly women already transgressing perceptions of societal morality were often depicted as sexually voracious. The depiction of Temperance Floyd aptly reflects the tendency to unite contempt for witchcraft with a broader condemnation of aged women engaging in coitus. Floyd was reported to have had voracious sex with the devil over the course of nine consecutive nights. Popular disgust and disapproval at such conduct reverberated in the treatise's physical description of Floyd. The depiction of Floyd having had "Paps about her an Inch long, which the Devil us'd to suck to provoke her Letchery" speaks to the misuse her aging body had undergone over the several decades she was reputed to have been a witch. This particular pamphlet described Floyd as given to satisfying bodily desires; whereas her compatriots were reluctant to go to execution, Floyd “went all the way Eating, and was seemingly unconcerned.” Other sources were more circumspect in their treatment of witches’ lust. When spinster Anne Fullford was arrested in Exeter on the suspicion of witchcraft, the Weekly Journal described her as having “several Times convers’d with the Devil; and by his Instigation and Importunity, did wickedly Torment the Body of Mary, the wife of Richard Beanclif.” Sex was one of the tools in the devil’s arsenal to tempt aging women to commit witchcraft. Another woman was described as an “Old Jade” in one source which discussed the accusations against her. While “jade” was a common term for an old horse, it was also used to describe morally-suspect women.

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61 Anonymous, The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches, title page.
Bawds were also seen as inappropriately desirous, a symbol of vanished sexual appeal. Some of the words provided in conjunction with "Bawd" in Phillips' *Beau's Academy* referred to this conception. Prominent among these terms were "shameless," "alluring," "lustfull," and "goatish."\(^\text{66}\) *The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot* depicted a procuress who apparently used her own aged appearance as part of her strategy to entice young women to prostitution. The unnamed bawd preyed upon the sixteen-year-old girl's fear of aging as part of her strategy. She emphasised the ways in which this opportunity may be gone soon if not seized immediately:

> Consider, Child, what Pity it would be,\!/ That Fruit like yours, should Wither on the Tree:
> Those Rubie Cheeks, that Look so Fresh and Gay,\!/ Will in short time, if not Enjoy'd, Decay.
> That warm Complexion, that preserves the Grace\!/ Of each soft Feature in your Lovely Face,
> Will Sickly grow, and Fade in spight of Art,\!/ Lest the Blind God, soon Bleeds you with his Dart.\(^\text{67}\)

Though Ward condemned a life of prostitution with this poem, he also offered a sense of the dramatic contrast between the desirable sexuality of the young woman and the repugnant lust of the old. The issue for the girl was her practicing of *illegitimate* sexuality, not her depiction as a sexual being. Bawd Jane Freeman was also described as being particularly lusty. Though in 1700 Freeman was supposedly well-past her prostitution days as a result of her extensive venereal disease, she “for several years had been a Hackney Jilt, till her Riders thought her not worth throwing their Legs o’er.” It was after this rejection that she turned to being a bawd, until again “her Carcass became so obnoxious to her Customers, that she was forced to abandon her Pallace” for a Parish pension.\(^\text{68}\) The account dripped with contempt for the lustful aging woman.

The prevalence of the stereotype of the lustful elderly bawd is indicated by its use as an analogy,


\(^{67}\)Ward, *The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot*, 3.

\(^{68}\)Anonymous, *The Devil and the Strumpet, or the Old Bawd Tormented* (London: E.B., 1700), 3.
along with other truisms. In 1709 *British Apollo* posted a political poem about the tensions with France. This tongue-in-cheek account implied that Louis XIV could not be trusted. It began by saying “Great Lewis will no more the World Deceive” and proceeded with a series of examples that could be considered analogous with “when Hell freezes over” in modern parlance. Among these was a scenario where “old flux’d Bawds decline the Scene of Lust.” As these criteria also included “When Lawyers plead your Cause without a Fee” and “And Userers profess relenting Hearts,” the source was implying that bawds were inherently lustful. Though this particular line was only one of many, it does demonstrate the pervasiveness of the stereotype of the lusty, poxed bawd.

This stereotype was also present in sources which conflated bawds and witches. *Round About Our Coal-Fire* is one such source to do so. After this text finished explaining how one would go about creating a witch, it described certain aspects of a witch’s behaviour. After scaring all the men and boys of an area and enticing women and girls to come around for fortunes, the stereotypical witch in the book "begins to talk of an Ointment the Devil has given her to conjure herself into a real Witch, and does not druge to say she can ride many hundred Miles in a few Minutes upon her favourite Broomstick, to meet her beloved Lucifer, and with him to play at Rantum Scantum on a Bed of Nettles." Any woman who behaved in such a manner was "either fit to make a Witch or a Bawd."

Bawds' and witches' reputation for lust, combined with their perception as elderly women, further marked them as examples of transgressive femininity.

**Malevolent Maternity**

Another similarity in depictions of witches and bawds is the theme of bad motherhood. Bawds and witches were depicted as “anti-mothers,” who were not only too old to conceive, but also actively rejected the positive nurturing behaviour expected of mothers. This perhaps reflected new anxieties

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69 *British Apollo*, 17 June 1709-22 June 1709.
about women. Motherhood had potent symbolism throughout the middle ages and early modern period, but in the early modern period new anxieties about mothers developed that brought into question their reliability and good intentions. As Fissell argues, following the Reformation Protestant women were discouraged from identifying with the Virgin Mary, who had provided a positive, if somewhat unreachable, model of maternity and encouraged to identify with Eve, who had brought sin to humanity. While pre-Reformation England was not a place of gender equality, the figure of Eve had powerful connotations and this change in focus can represent a more negative way of viewing women and expecting women to view themselves. Though this decline in the way women were encouraged to perceive themselves probably had wide-reaching consequences, it is perhaps especially illustrative that some women freely confessed to witchcraft because of how they viewed themselves and their propensity towards diabolical temptation.71 Likewise, in this period medical theorists began to view the uterus more sinisterly as the source of many maladies, underlining the fundamental inferiority and unreliability of the female body.72 Furthermore, early modern England saw a rise in concerns over particular bad mothers and bad mothering practice, such as new legislation concerning infanticides or the ways in which witches and bawds were seen to pervert or capitalise on these relationships and ideals. Laura Gowing demonstrates that village society and authorities went to remarkable lengths to discover concealed pregnancies in this period, suggesting considerable suspicion of women and women’s morality.73 Fissell links the infanticide to the figure of the witch, through their compliance to diabolic temptation and their inappropriate maternal leanings, which were considered to be misdirected in witches and absent in infanticides.74 While concerns about infanticide and other typologies of bad

72 Fissell, Vernacular Bodies, 43, 46, 53.
74 Fissell, Vernacular Bodies, 75.
motherhood could affect women of child-bearing age, societal uneasiness with the bodies and activities of post-menopausal and elderly women could add extra weight to these concerns.

This irresponsible nurturing took a variety of forms. For witches, it can largely be seen in their association with suckling. Though the importance of maternal breastfeeding took on added significance with the Enlightenment, suckling was always considered an important emotional, nutritional, and medicinal component of infant care.\(^7\) In the context of witchcraft beliefs, suckling most often referred to the feeding of familiars or the devil. The act of suckling a familiar turned breastfeeding on its head. In the simplest of terms, this suckling was done from another part of the body, often near the genitals. The act was also not used to feed a human baby, but a demonic being suspected of being a weapon used against other people and livestock.\(^7\) This conception has received some attention in the historiography of witchcraft.\(^7\) Diane Purkiss examines the witch in the context of the anti-mother and the anti-housewife—a woman who usurps the authority of the housewife by halting important acts of transformation such as in the dairy and the laundry and tampering with the household economy.\(^7\)

Deborah Willis also associates witchcraft with motherhood, arguing that “[w]itches were women...”

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\(^{77}\) For a brief analysis of some of these secondary sources, see Katharine Hodgkin, “Gender, Mind and Body: Feminism and Psychoanalysis,” in *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, eds. Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies, eds. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 188-195.

because women were mothers.” According to Willis, witchcraft was “misdirected nurture” and this misdirection was most commonly associated with the keeping and nurturing of familiars. The witch as described by Willis is “a nurturing mother to her brood of demonic imps but a malevolent anti-mother to her neighbours and their children.” Though Willis and Purkiss focus on earlier periods, documents from 1680-1730 speak to similar preoccupations.

Age lent an important element to the issue of malefic suckling. Though any woman could be accused of subverting proper motherhood for their witchcraft, advanced age could lend power to this particular trope. Religiously and socially, bearing and raising children was considered one of a woman’s most important social duties. The older a woman was, the less likely she was to perform childcare duties outside of taking up position in a son or daughter’s household. Though the result of a natural process, it seems likely that the end of a woman’s ability to meet societal expectations could result in some personal and interpersonal tensions. Deborah Willis also speaks to the anxiety induced by the post-menopausal body, which was perceived as a rejection of motherly duties. That witches were then believed to suckle and care for demonic familiars and attack the households of their neighbours would help shore up this perception of transgression. Even the blood elderly witches used to feed their familiars can be seen as a perversion of expected behaviour, as breastmilk was sometimes thought to be derived from the woman’s blood. The body of elderly women, then, transgressed against expectations of her natural duties.

Some sources refer to more conventional forms of suckling that nevertheless result in anti-
nurture. A prominent example is found in the case of Amy Duny and Rose Cullender. Though their trial took place in the 1660s, the account was published in the 1680s, indicating continuing interest in this narrative. A neighbour, Dorothy Durent, made some of the most prominent accusations against Duny. Durent, having errands to run, asked Duny to “look to her Child during her absence... but [she] desired the said Amy not to Suckle her Child, and laid a great charge upon her not to do it.” Regardless, “the said Amy did Suckle the Child” who fell into fits later that day.\(^85\) Durent was questioned as to why she would be concerned about Duny suckling the child, “[Duny] being an old Woman and not capable of giving Suck.”\(^86\) Durent, however, was concerned with Duny’s long-standing reputation as a witch, demonstrating the prevalence of the conception of the witch as anti-mother.\(^87\) This idea was potent; contemporaries understood that Duny used a nurturing act for malevolent reasons.\(^88\) Though the witch’s body in the seventeenth century was constituted by its “merciless hardness,” differentiating it from the softer, more nurturing bodies of other mothers, her powers were based in the body and brought about in an intimate fashion.\(^89\) The German lying-in maids that Lyndal Roper studied were often accused of subverting nature in order to harm, by poisoning mothers (and thereby their breast milk) or by “literally reversing the flow of maternal fluids... suckling the infant dry and feeding on it,” somewhat reminiscent of Duny’s actions with Durent’s son.\(^90\) Like many suspected witches, these women were generally past the age of childbearing.\(^91\) Similarly, literary scholar Diane Purkiss studied


\(^{86}\) Anonymous, *A Tryal of Witches, At the Assizes Held at Bury St. Edmunds*, 3.

\(^{87}\) Anonymous, *A Tryal of Witches, At the Assizes held at Bury St. Edmunds*, 4-7.

\(^{88}\) Duny supposedly performed a similar act with another of Durent’s children, Elizabeth. Durent left her ailing daughter briefly to purchase something from the apothecary, but when she returned Duny was there. When questioned as to her presence Duny said “That she came to see [Elizabeth], and to give it some water.” The encounter became nasty shortly thereafter with Duny (correctly) telling Durent “You need not be so angry, for your Child will not live long.” Anonymous, *A Tryal of Witches, At the Assizes Held at Bury St. Edmunds*, 9. Though the actual mechanism for this false nurturing was different—giving an older child water as opposed to suckling an infant—it can still be viewed as utilising a nurturing act to harm.

\(^{89}\) Gowing, *Common Bodies*, 74-75.


\(^{91}\) Roper, “Witchcraft and Fantasy,” 31.
witches who used food to bewitch and harm. Whereas food from a mother was seen to nourish children’s bodies, food from a witch destroyed them.\textsuperscript{92} So, witches like Amy Duny reversed expectations of motherhood by using nurturing actions to harm.

Other sources on witchcraft also depicted perverse acts of maternity. Several women appear to have given their victims an embrace so strong it proved fatal. The elderly Temperance Floyd killed Hannah Thomas when “by pretence of Love,” she squeezed her “till the blood gushed out of her mouth.” Floyd, Lloyd, and Edwards as a group did the same to another two people.\textsuperscript{93} Another document printed about Floyd, Lloyd, and Edwards, the ballad \textit{Witchcraft Discovered and Punished} (1682), spoke to both their age as well as actions that can be viewed through the framework of bad motherhood. Importantly, their age was emphasised in the ballad. All three were initially introduced as “Aged,” though the ballad later imparted that “One of these Wicked Wretches did confess,/She four Score Years of Age was, and no less.”\textsuperscript{94} These lines probably referred to Floyd, who provided the focus for most of these documents. Since their age, outside witchcraft stereotypes, had little direct bearing upon their violent acts against the community, it follows that consumers of this song may have connected Floyd, Lloyd, and Edwards’ advanced ages with a willingness to do such harm. The ballad estimated the witches’ harm as stretching further than the pamphlets though this genre lends itself to less detailed information. One stanza asserted that “One [neighbour] lost a Child, the other lost a kine,/This his brave horses, that his hopeful Swine.” Another claimed “For it appear’d they Children had destroy’d,/Lamed Cattel, and the Aged much annoy’d.”\textsuperscript{95} The focus of these verses was fairly evenly

\textsuperscript{92} Purkiss notes that early modern English and German people were similarly concerned about witches and the maternal body. Purkiss, \textit{The Witch in History}, 107-108, 111.
\textsuperscript{93} Anonymous, \textit{The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches}, 4. Historians of witchcraft cite similar cases where witches confessed to doing harm through violence to children, for example, by hitting them so hard that they died. Other witches, more similarly to Duny, killed through kisses. Bever, “Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community,” 961.
\textsuperscript{94} Anonymous, \textit{Witchcraft Discovered and Punished} (London: 1682), single page.
\textsuperscript{95} Anonymous, \textit{Witchcraft Discovered and Punished}, single page.
split between harm to children and harm to livestock, both presenting different challenges to the household. The assertion that these elderly witches had taken pains to annoy other elderly people is possibly significant. Though both the witches and these particular villagers were aged, there was a clear separation created between the worthy or moral elderly and the transgressive old woman.

The fear that people’s children might be harmed by witchcraft is quite prominently demonstrated in the historical record. This belief had existed for some time; however, as James Sharpe asserts, this consideration did not manifest itself statically over the period of witchcraft prosecutions. While accusations of child harm had always existed, they appeared at different rates. For example, in 1660-1709, years which overlap the 1680-1730 time period, 32% of all accusations involved allegations of child harm; however, between 1560 and 1659, a period which saw more trials, this number did not exceed 20%. This period saw greater concern for children’s involvement in witchcraft, with greater numbers of child witnesses leading, in part, to growing disenchantment with the trial process.

Furthermore, as Mary Fissell asserts, the seventeenth-century saw a greater concern with the sinister power of the womb—a concern which manifested in greater societal concern with not only witchcraft but also infanticide, due to changing conceptions of motherhood and the female body in general.

The ways in which bawds can be seen as bad mothers are less physical, with none of the suckling imagery central to witchcraft discussions. Generally speaking, bawds were depicted as bad mothers more metaphorically. A text about masquerades dedicated to “Mother N—m” asserted that “A Masquerade is so properly yours, and so much your Concern, that if it is not your own Child, ‘tis really

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96 Though losing a cow or a pig could be a devastating hit to the household economy—and perhaps a further attack on female domestic responsibilities—it would not have had the same emotional effect as losing a child. Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History. Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), 94, 96-97.
your Nursery,” thereby placing Needham in the role of mother to both current and future prostitutes. The author later claimed that he “may modestly assure [himself] of [her] motherly Protection,” since masquerades were within Needham’s purview as a bawd, and continuing the motif of bawd as bad mother. More concretely, Sarah Martin, on trial for the alleged theft of a client’s watch, referred to her elderly bawd as “my Mother Mullenux,” though the two women did not appear to be related. However, some procuresses seem to have lured their own daughters or wards into prostitution. For example, Elizabeth Simmerton was arrested alongside “her Daughter, with two of her Doxies and a Foot Soldier.” Similarly, the Observator published a letter written by a woman who was trying to act the bawd to her unknowing, orphaned niece to avoid supporting her financially. Parental bawdry was a concern to moral commentators, possibly reflecting concerns about women and motherhood as well as the moralities of the poor. Parental bawdry, as an act which placed girls and women in direct spiritual and physical danger, was a direct assault on the ideal role of mothers as nurturers and protectors of their children and their household. Morally, bawds were sometimes represented as betrayers of their own sex or betrayers of innocence, a conception which was likely compounded when the traitor in question was a close relative.

The malevolent maternity of bawds was inherently linked to their central function as older women abusing the natural trust placed in them by younger women. Narrative or the Delightful and Melancholy History of Leucippe, published in 1719, focused on the false-mother providing the catalyst

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100 P.W., A Seasonable Apology for Mr. H-g-r. Proving the Usefulness and Antiquity of Masquerading from Scripture, and Prophan History (London: A. Moor, 1724), Dedication, ii.
101 P.W., A Seasonable Apology for Mr. H-g-r, Dedication, ii.
102 Proceedings, Ll, t17270830-40, August 1727, Sarah Martin and Sarah Mullenux, emphasis original.
103 Weekly Journal or Saturday’s Post, 26 April 1718.
104 Observator, 22 January 1705- 25 January 1705.
for entry into a life of prostitution. Briefly, Leucippe, a young woman from the country was seduced by a young man who claimed to be from a well-to-do family. She eventually joined him in London to meet his wealthy mother and get permission to wed. This was played convincingly by all involved, with Leucippe referring to the woman as “my good Mother;” however, the women was actually a bawd. The beau did not marry Leucippe, but abandoned her in a brothel. The bawd, having already established herself in the role of mother, took advantage of Leucippe’s vulnerability and pushed her into prostitution. Leucippe mourned that “The Mother of the Family threaten’d, flatter’d, and as last advis’d me to make the most of my Beauty, for it was now all my Portion.”

Bawds also sometimes pretended to be mothers to their prostitutes in order to gain access to them when they might otherwise not have been able to, such as during treatment for venereal disease. The bawd in The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot set herself up as a counterpoint to the girl’s own mother, offering an opposing and, perhaps more appealing, wisdom. Bawds, then, may have placed themselves in the position of mother in order to work more effectively.

“Mother,” in the early modern period was not always exclusively used to describe a female parent. Rather, elderly women were addressed as “Mother” or “Old-,” titles which were used to denote respect or acknowledge advanced age. The same conventions were directed toward elderly men who were called “Father.” These appellations were used to indicate respectability on the part of the

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107 Narrative or the Delightful and Melancholy History of Leucippe, Thursday 12 November 1719.
109 Spectator, Monday 8 October 1711. Laura Rosenthal highlights similar formats as common to eighteenth-century prostitute narratives: “A girl begins in country innocence; loses her family through death, disease, poverty, ambition, or disgrace; goes to the city and falls victim to material temptations, the cosmopolitan wiles of a land-lady/bawd, or the seduction of a rake.” More specifically, she briefly discusses Nancy from A Spy Upon Mother Midnight, who is tricked by a squire into “a sham Marriage” after which she is left in a bawdy house and forced into prostitution. Rosenthal also identifies the rape scene in Clarissa as occurring in an “apparently safe, welcoming, feminine space that shockingly turns out to be a commercial house of prostitution.” She further asserts that Richardson, in writing Clarissa, was able to explore in part the way prostitution violated domesticity. Though Rosenthal does not assert that the bawd Mrs. Sinclair acted in a motherly fashion, the household was often considered the locus of feminine power within a family, tightly associated with motherhood. Infamous Commerce: Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 110, 138, 129-130.
recipient and, according to Lynn Botelho, can be used to track when a person was considered elderly by their neighbours. Bawds were fairly consistently called “Mother” in the sources examined for this thesis. Mother (Elizabeth) Needham was an infamous example of this tendency, though there were a number of other women referred to as such in the source material. One woman, Mother (Mary) Sylvester, was at the centre of a controversy when she attempted to have Anne Mitchell executed for theft after she escaped the brothel in which Sylvester had kept her since she was eleven. In another example, Mother Needham and a woman referred to as Mother Hodgson were arrested in the same 1723 raid. The same trend was also visible in witchcraft cases, though it seems to have been less common in the primary source record. Alice Samuel was referred to as Mother Samuel in Richard Boulton’s text. Another witch, “Mother” Sarah Griffith, appeared in a 1704 text about her supposed exploits and eventual commitment to Bridewell. Deborah Willis identifies a number of witches also addressed this way: “Mother Grevell, Mother Turner, Mother Dutten, Mother Devell, Mother Stile.”

Finally, bawds and witches were presented as bad mothers to their biological daughters. Some bawds were represented as employing their own daughters, such as in the discussion of the murder of Anthony Motteux. Though the daughter was not explicitly called a prostitute, it is doubtful that she had an unblemished reputation when her mother was a known procuress. Suspicion of witchcraft, too, often increased around young women whose mothers were associated with the crime. Some of the most famous witch trials in English history, such as the Witches of Warboys and the Pendle Witches,

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111 Daily Journal, Tuesday 13 July 1725; London Journal, Saturday 17 July 1725; Proceedings, LL, t17250630-45, June 1725, Mary Sylvester.
113 Richard Boulton, A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft, (London: E. Curll, 1715), 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 68, 69, 74, 75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 100, 107, 137, 147, 148, 149.
114 Greenwel, A Full and True Account of the Discovering, Apprehending and Taking of a Notorious Witch, single page.
115 Willis, Malevolent Maternity, 34.
116 Proceedings, LL, t17180423-1, April 1718, Edward Williams, Elizabeth Williams, Elizabeth Simmerton, Elizabeth Shepherd, Mary Roberts, and Percival Hutchinson.
involved family groups with focus on the mothers and grandmothers. In the Witches of Warboys case, the Throckmorton children claimed that, after Alice Samuel had been arrested, “the Mother had given her Spirits over to the Daughter, who has bewitched them over again, and would handle them worse than ever the Mother did.” This case demonstrates an example of the daughter literally inheriting the mother’s witchcraft. Bawds and witches appear to have been significant examples of malevolent maternity to contemporary readers.

**Diabolic Consort**

The figure of the devil loomed large in the early modern period, perhaps unsurprising given the religious upheaval following the Reformation in England, though its prominence began to wane with the onset of the Enlightenment. As bawds and witches were believed to be set against respectable society, it is no surprise that these women were closely associated with the devil in popular literature. Both groups of women could be described as being highly influenced by the devil or as being his servants, and old women were considered to be especially likely to fall under his influence. While bawds did not wield the same sorts of powers witches were thought to possess, they could also be seen as doing the devil’s work on earth, at times even being referred to as the devil, such as in John Dunton’s *The New Quevedo* where a bawd is referred to as “Old Belzebub in a Petticoat.”

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117 Boulton, *A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft*, 103. Though both these cases took place before the period of this paper, they were still prominent in people’s minds. Boulton’s *A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft* deployed a detailed description of the case of Alice Samuel in its argument for the existence of witchcraft and spectral interference. Interestingly, Boulton, focused on the elderly “Mother” Samuel rather than her daughter Agnes or husband John, who were tried and executed for the same crime. See pages 49-97, 98, 99-101, 137, 147-150, 150-152; 101-142, 142-150.

118 The belief that familiars could be shared among witches was fairly common in the early modern period. See, Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, 76-77.

according to the Observator in 1703 and 1705, an assertion with definite diabolical overtones. Like the devil, bawds actively placed their victim’s souls in danger through their seductive acts. Well before 1680, scholars largely agreed that while the devil could act on the physical plane, his ability to do so was not on par with God’s abilities. This difference came down to the definition of the devil’s work as mira (lesser wonders), which needed to be set apart from the miracula or true miracles that God could bring about. The same was true for witches, whose powers were also seen as malevolent.

It is hard to say how individual readers would have read documents that associated bawds and witches with the devil. Readers in 1700 may have considered the experiences of Jane Freeman, a former bawd viciously attacked by the devil, as being presented satirically or metaphorically. They may also have also seen the Observator’s commentary as adding rhetorical power rather than discussing literal belief in Satan. Many early modern demonological beliefs had become less applicable to daily life by 1680 and even more so by 1700. However, most people agreed on the reality of witchcraft, and demonology remained a reputable field of study until the 1740s. The debate over the existence of witches operated as strongly upon religious and social grounds as they did scientific ones. Lorraine Daston observes that many respectable theologians continued to assert the existence of demonic plots “well into the eighteenth century.” The 1762 Lamb Inn Affair—a possible case of witchcraft and possession in Bristol—can also prove illustrative of this continuity. Though the case was met with a great deal of skepticism, it was also met with belief. Historian Jonathan Barry, in his examination of the

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120 Observator, 13 March 1703-17 March 1703; Observator, 22 January 1705-25 January 1705.
126 James Sharpe asserts that there was a strong connection between bewitchment and possession. Sharpe, Instruments of Darkness, 190-202.
events, was concerned with the interplay between private belief and public discourse, and concludes that a straight dichotomy of skeptics and believers in witchcraft is inadequate.\textsuperscript{127} Ultimately, these assertions help illustrate that while the sources discussed below may be metaphorical, there was still a significant number of people who believed in the active work of the devil, as continued witchcraft trials indicate.

Women in general were considered more susceptible to diabolical temptation and this tendency was intensified when it came to old women. It was a long standing belief that aged women were more likely to succumb to diabolical temptation than younger women, though they were perhaps not the devil’s favoured targets.\textsuperscript{128} As elderly women were also considered especially melancholic and sometimes foolish, they were more liable to give in than younger women.\textsuperscript{129} Furthermore, some literary accounts of witchcraft asserted that the Devil would not seduce anyone toward witchcraft who was not “some way prepar’d either by impenitency and obduredness, distemperedness of passion, prophaness and the like: for he will not readily nor willingly attacque and surprize, where he thinks not to gain ground,” a belief which could not have helped suspicions against elderly women, a subset of society often considered unpleasant.\textsuperscript{130} A number of print documents about witches or witchcraft described the connection between diabolical association and age. A good example of this tendency can be found in the trial of Jane Kent, “A Woman o about 60 years of Age,” who was indicted but ultimately found innocent of witchcraft in 1682. The document which describes the Assize session where she was tried

\textsuperscript{128} Bever, “Old Age and Witchcraft,” 212.
\textsuperscript{130} John Bell, The Tryal of Witchcraft; Or, Witchcraft Arraign’d and Condemn’d (Greenwich: Henry S. Richardson, 1700), 14.
only listed the ages of two people other than Kent, one a twelve year old boy found guilty of theft and Kent’s five year old (alleged) victim.\textsuperscript{131} This discrepancy would seem to suggest that her age held importance for the reader. \textit{The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches} (1682) likewise introduced Temperance Floyd, Mary Lloyd, and Susannah Edwards as “all three being stricken in years,” before introducing that “Man’s Enemy, Souls destroyer, and the Author of Wickedness so prevailed with them that they made an Interchange.”\textsuperscript{132} Later references to Temperance Floyd highlighted that she was the eldest and the most evil of the three.\textsuperscript{133} Again, advanced age was given a correlation to bad behaviour and, by extension, the greatest intrigue with the devil. A final example can be found in the \textit{Athenian Gazette or Casuistical Mercury} (1693) with a list of people who had confessed to witchcraft. One woman “did Confess that she had been a Witch upwards of Fifty Years,” and another asserted that her familiars had been given to her by “an Old Man and his Wife” though the age of the witch in question was not specified.\textsuperscript{134} Though the source took a more skeptical tone than the two discussed above, it demonstrates a similar connection between age and the devil.

One example of a source where a bawd was described as the devil’s tool is the pamphlet \textit{The Devil and the Strumpet, or the Old Bawd Tormented} (1700). Jane Freeman, a former procurress and “old Bawd”, was no longer able to work due to advanced venereal disease. This document described the devil physically beating Freeman and destroying her possessions and lodgings. He abused her in such a fashion because she was physically incapable of continuing to run a brothel and because she cried out to God for help when she first saw him. The devil, “amaz’d at such an Expression, from such a Faithful

\textsuperscript{132}Anonymous, \textit{The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches}, 1.  
\textsuperscript{133}Examples of this tendency can be found Anonymous, \textit{The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches}, 2, 3, 4.  
\textsuperscript{134}\textit{Athenian Gazette or Casuistical Mercury}, Tuesday 28 February 1693.
Servant,” vanished, returning at a later time to mete out further punishment. As bawds were often conceived of as acting similarly to Satan or actively working for the devil, crying out to God could have been seen as a betrayal of her perceived—and longstanding—allegiances. That the author asserted that the elderly Freeman calling upon God was as serious an offence as no longer providing the devil with new souls indicates the depth of this connection. This particular pamphlet is noteworthy in that it described the devil appearing physically to a bawd. Other documents described a connection or similarity between bawds and the devil, albeit a less tangible association. This difference set Freeman apart from other procuresses, and is reminiscent of sources describing witches in which the devil or demons exerted physical influence in the world. The concept of diabolical sex is perhaps one of the best-known aspects of early modern witch belief. Temperance Floyd, the eldest in her group of three witches, was said to have engaged in intercourse with the devil for nine subsequent nights. At other times, witches were described as joining in at assemblies with other conjurers, over which the devil presided “in the shape of a Goat, and whom all those good People kiss under the Tail…” Where the devil tended to assert a physical presence for witches, such as a sexual partner or punisher, for bawds he appears to have been more of an influence on their behaviour.

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135 It is interesting to note here that the author described the possibility that the devil was a guilt-induced hallucination. Regardless, the diabolic associations of bawdry found in this document remain uncontested. Anonymous, *The Devil and the Strumpet*, (London: E.B., 1700), 4.


139 For example, one source described the devil pushing “old Dembdike” (Elizabeth Southern) into a ditch “because she would not go help Chattox another Witch, (whome she could not abide) to make Picturs.” Furthermore, he would sometimes torment Chattox (Anne Whittle) in the shape of a bear. Bell, *The Tryal of Witchcraft*, 18- 19. Temperance Floyd, notorious for sleeping with the devil nine nights in a row, also saw this side of him. In her early years of witchcraft Floyd refused to commit an act the devil ordered her to. Upon her refusal, “the Devil struck her a
In many examples the connection between bawds and the devil was more metaphorical. One more standard depiction came from the *Observator* in 1705. The editor of the paper claimed to see a letter from a woman to a member of the local gentry, attempting to facilitate a sexual liaison between him and her niece. The personified *Observator* found this letter repugnant, especially as it was perpetrated by a close and trusted family member. In addition to displaying bawdry beyond the seductive stranger preying upon the naïve, this piece addressed the author’s supposed motivations.\(^{140}\) The decision was presented as deeply considered: “she has consulted the Devil and her own wicked Heart, how to ruin and destroy the Soul and Body of her near Relation,” presenting her plan to stop supporting her niece as diabolical.\(^{141}\) This interpretation was in line with common beliefs about the devil in post-Reformation England. While the true, corporeal existence of the devil and demons was not denied by Protestant thinkers, it was not thought to be the most common experience. People were more likely to experience the devil by giving into temptation.\(^{142}\) Though this source does not reference age in the way that those discussed above do, it can be seen as a clear example of how people may have more commonly conceived of interactions with diabolical beings.

The same can be seen in texts which conflate bawds and witches. For example, the Lord Chief Justice reportedly called Anne Turner’s father “Devil”—cementing the connections between the devil, witches, and bawds—upon her conviction for aiding the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in 1615. He further said that Anne Turner “had the seven deadly Sins, viz. Whore, Baud, Sorcerer, Witch, Papist, Felon, and Murderer.”\(^{143}\) Similarly, John Dunton’s William Richardson referred to his mother-in-law as slap on the Face, where he left the print of his Fist.” Anonymous, *The Life and Covereation of Temperance Floyd, Mary Lloyd, and Susannah Edwards*, 4.


\(^{141}\) *Observator*, 22 January 1705- 25 January 1705.


\(^{143}\) *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, Saturday 26 November 1720, emphasises mine.
“Old Witch, Old Devil, old Bawd.”¹⁴⁴ Though neither Turner nor Richardson’s mother-in-law were seriously considered to be witches nor bawds, these works demonstrate how the ideas were placed in relation to one another. Richardson’s language, though specifically defamatory rather than literal, is an example of how age could be tied together with the devil, witchcraft and bawdry by contemporaries. Another source described the prerequisites necessary to make a witch. A witch needed to be old, unpleasant, and covetous. She also needed to meet with “her beloved Lucifer,” and fornicate with him.¹⁴⁵ While all these are activities associated with witchcraft, the author asserted that “When you find a Woman thus qualified, she is either fit to make a Witch or a Bawd,” indicating that under certain trains of thought bawds and witches were indistinguishable.¹⁴⁶ Though sexual liaison with the devil was an important act towards becoming a witch (or bawd), age was one of the first requirements a woman had to meet. By extension, in this framework a younger woman was less likely to copulate with the devil than an older woman. Finally, another pamphlet described women who facilitated the sex trade as being “Belle Dame Sorceresses” with “so many black Arts” to keep people within their grasp, continuing the thematic connection between the devil, bawdry and witchcraft. By presenting the facilitation of the sex trade as being witchcraft, this source connected bawdry to the devil as the witch’s power was believed to be diabolical in nature.¹⁴⁷ The work further commented that a bawd “has su’d out her Indentures in the Devil’s Company, and bound herself to deal in no other Commodities, but those that tend directly to propagate his Interest.”¹⁴⁸ Though it was written after 1730, this work demonstrates the on-going power of the connection between witches, bawds, and the devil.

**Popish Associate**

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Witches and bawds were sometimes connected with Catholicism in the popular literature of this time, reflecting the anxieties surrounding Catholicism. While Catholicism and Protestantism shared a common intellectual background for their witchcraft beliefs, the Reformation changed the ways in which they were understood. Many educated Catholics believed that since “magic followed heresy,” Protestantism was to blame for the outbreak of witchcraft. Various Protestant groups believed in the necessity of purging the devil’s servants from the world, and considered witches and Catholics as examples. By 1680, in England, belief in witchcraft often coincided with anti-Catholic sentiments and politics. This tendency can be seen in Boulton’s *A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft*, where a spirit tormented one of the Throckmorton daughters when her family questioned it about “the Gospel,” “the Bible,” or “the Word of God,” but, “Witchcraft,” “Papistry,” and “the Mass” provoked no response. Boulton concluded that “every good thing it disliked; but whatever concerned Popish Idolatry, it was pleased with.” Boulton drew a clear line between moral concepts, which can also be associated with Protestantism, and goodness. Though Catholics, as Christians, could have drawn their own connection to terms such as The Bible and the Gospel, Boulton made it clear that Catholicism was outside the spectrum of good. Rather, Catholicism—or Papistry—was connected with witchcraft, idolatry, and other concepts pleasing to demons and therefore against God-fearing society. Furthermore, concerned Protestant observers considered charms, amulets, and other popular magical techniques employed by cunning men or similar folk practitioners in Tudor and Stuart England to be overly Catholic or blasphemous. While outside the scope of witchcraft itself, even benign magical practices could be viewed as suspect; as such, an association with Catholicism would not have been a

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benefit. Exorcism too, though sometimes practiced by Protestant groups, fell outside of Orthodox English Protestantism and smacked of Popery. In a 1694 article, the Athenian Gazette accused Catholics (along with Jews) of having a “stated Order of Exorcists among them.” This assertion was, of course, a criticism. But it can be used to demonstrate the scope of what might be considered related to witchcraft.

The British Mercury (1704) printed an excerpt from a continuing tale (The Rover) that hinted at further connection perceived between Catholicism and witchcraft. Outside “Sevil” during Lent, the narrator and his companions came across “a perfect Skeleton, a wither’d old Woman, of such dreadful Aspect, as if the Devil had taken that Shape.” Though initially cowed by her threats, the party tried to grab her, though they only found a “Lanthorn, and such a Stench of Brimstone” and “a Figure of a Man made of Wax, about a quarter of a Yard in Length, all over stuck with Pins and Needles... In the Mouth of it was a Bone, the Eyes were two Bits of Coal, and the Body was wound about with Cats-Guts.” While this witch could theoretically be found anywhere in Western Europe due not only to the description of her behaviour but also upon her extremely advanced age, the author went to some length to portray this setting as Spanish and, consequentially, Catholic. Not only did it take place outside Seville, but

153 Athenian Gazette or Casuistical Mercury, Saturday 8 September 1694.
154 British Mercury, 4 August 1714- 11 August 1714. These items would have all been highly associated with witches and witchcraft.
155 Skeptics derided believers as dupes of “Tory ideology,” often analogous with Catholicism. Maxwell-Stuart, “The Contemporary Historical Debate,” 29. There are a number of sources which discuss the phenomenon of the witch-hunts as essentially Catholic. For example, in the case of an Ale-draper who attacked his neighbour, the author asserts that “[i]t is remarkable, that no-Countries have been so eminent for Murthering people as Witches, as those where Popery or Fanaticism prevail... such executions are common in Popish countries.” In this instance, “fanaticism” also referred to the recent trials in Salem, whose Puritanism may have looked like religious zealotry to many in England after the Restoration. Original Weekly Journal, Saturday 9 April 1720. In 1722, the London Journal wrote, “[i]n Popish Countries, there is a Spirit or a Witch in every Parish, in Defiance of Holy Water and constant Pater Nosters.” Cato, the author of this letter, asserted that the prominence of witchcraft beliefs was ranked according to ignorance: the poor believed more than the rich, the uneducated more than the educated. This trend carried to Catholic countries: “they appear oftner in Arbitrary Governments than free states. The King of Spain’s and the Pope’s Dominion have more of them than France and the German Principalities where Priestcraft does not ride so triumphant.” London Journal, Saturday 2 June 1722. For the inaccuracies of such beliefs, particularly the perception that inquisitions were focused on purging witches, see William Monter, “The Mediterranean Inquisitions
the narrator traveled with a man named “Don Francis” and later related their encounter with the witch to a “Commissary of the Inquisition.” Though characters in this tale were also Spanish, which would have carried its own set of associations to English readers, this elderly witch was undoubtedly Catholic. Catholics were also considered to be connected with bawdry and prostitution. In 1721, the *Weekly Journal or Saturday’s Post* wrote about the prevalence of prostitution on the Continent: “[i]n *Strasburg* and other Parts of *Germany*, young Women are encouraged to prostitute themselves... [t]he same is practiced throughout *Biscay*, and in other Parts of *Spain*. In *Italy* and *Holland* licensed Brothels are supported.”\^156 While the inclusion of partially Protestant Germany and the Netherlands indicated Catholicism was not the only factor, it is likely more than a coincidence that mostly Catholic areas were mentioned. In October 1711 the *Spectator* published a missive supposedly written by a prostitute named Rebecca Nettletop contrasting the condition of English prostitutes as compared to those in Continental Catholic countries. She was supposedly informed by a Catholic client that these places had licensed brothels, something English law abolished during the reign of Henry VIII, and hospitals to treat people suffering from venereal disease.\^157 Nettletop further stated that her client had unsuccessfully attempted to convert her to Catholicism. While this piece compared England’s treatment of diseased prostitutes unfavourably with that found in Catholic countries, it still demonstrated anti-Catholic bias. It inferred that Catholic countries were rife with prostitution, which would have sat poorly with the

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\(^{156}\) *Weekly Journal or Saturday’s Post*, Saturday 8 July 1721.

\(^{157}\) *Spectator*, Monday 8 October 1711. These specific facilities did not yet exist in England, which is not to say that there was no available treatment for venereal disease. Treatment could be found at various different facilities before the Lock Hospital was opened in 1747. For example, Anne Mitchell had been salivated multiple times before the brought her case against Mary Sylvester in 1725. Proceedings, *LL*, t17270830-40, August 1727, Sarah Martin and Sarah Mullenux. There were various hospitals which did treat venereal disease and the poor could often arrange for aid through their parishes or through the workhouses that developed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, though this course of action was not without its difficulties. Kevin Siena, *Venereal Disease, Hospitals and the Urban Poor* (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 2-3, 6, 64, 78, 105, 136-138, 161, 258;
growing sense that men should control themselves and not frequent brothels. It would be a sign the
countries were rife with vice. This letter also stated that “[y]ou perhaps won’t believe it; but I know of
one who pretends to be a very good Protestant who lies with a Roman-Catholick,” implying that no good
Protestant woman would engage in intercourse with a Catholic man, and thereby reifying the sex trade
as a site of female deviance.

Ned Ward’s Satyrical Reflection’s on Clubs not only conflated bawds and witches, but also linked
them to Catholicism. Ward described a club of bawds who were presented as a coven of witches. The
leader of this club of bawds was described as both “the Lady-Abbess of the Brothel-Monastry,” and “the
Old Matron,” who oversaw prostitute “Nuns.” These “Convert[s]” were to learn, among other skills,
how to ape being “as Demure as a Holy-Sister upon a Sunday Morning,” further highlighting Ward’s nun
imagery and echoing many of the conceptions featured in the source discussed below.

Each member of this nunnery-coven was “to be Candidly Taught all Arts and Subtilities that properly belong to... the
dark mysteries of Harlotry.” Furthermore, “the Old Diabolical Jezabel” or “Old Succubus,” a reference
to the elderly bawd, was the driving force behind this club, highlighting the responsibility of the elderly
bawd for the misdeeds of others in literary sources. The age of the bawds involved was highlighted
again later in the text. At meetings, the bawds “lay aside that Effeminancy that should be Part of their
Nature, and without Disguise, let loose the Very Devil that, to their Shame, possesses them, till wrinkl’d
Age, a painful Decay, and all the other miserable consequences of a wicked Life... hurry them to
Despair.” The use of language concerning the devil and possession is further reminiscent of witchcraft,

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158 Hurl-Eamon, “Policing Male Heterosexuality,” 1018-1019; Faramerz Dabhoiwala, “Sex, Social Relations and the
Hierarchy, and Subordination in Britain and Ireland, eds. Michael J. Braddick and John Walter (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2001), 93.
159 Spectator, 8 October 1711.
160 Ward, Satyrical Reflections on Clubs vol. 4, 302.
161 Ward, Satyrical Reflections on Clubs vol. 4, 302, 303.
162 Ward, Satyrical Reflections on Clubs vol. 4, 302.
163 Ward, Satyrical Reflections on Clubs vol. 4, 304, 305.
highlighting the connection between these two figures.\textsuperscript{164} In connecting the witch-bawd with the abbess, it simultaneously connected her with the most elderly figure in its repugnant image of Catholicism.

Though not a bawd herself, Elizabeth Cellier, provided a fruitful example of the connection between bawdry and Catholicism.\textsuperscript{165} Cellier was negatively depicted in print and the press. Not only was Cellier represented as “old,” “common,” and “homely,” she was entirely undesirable.\textsuperscript{166} She was a convert to Catholicism and a suspect in the Popish Plot who escaped conviction for treason but was later successfully sued for libel. \textit{A Letter from Lady Creswell to Madam C. the Midwife}, specifically connected Cellier with bawd Elizabeth Cresswell.\textsuperscript{167} The pseudo-Creswell repeatedly called Cellier “daughter” and intimated a close relationship in the past: “Surely I have Known you many years, and I never thought you

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  \item \textsuperscript{164}Ward, \textit{Satyrical Reflections on Clubs} vol. 4, 307.
  \item \textsuperscript{165}To see bawds described as acting similarly to Cellier, see Anonymous, \textit{The Devil and the Strumpet}, 6-7; P.W., \textit{A Seasonable Apology for Mr. H-g-r}, Dedication iv; Spirit of Contradiction, \textit{Man Unmask’d}; \textit{Being a Wonderful Discovery Lately Made in the Island of Japan} (London: J. Nutt, 1706), 18; Anonymous, \textit{The Constables Hue and Cry}, 6-8; Ward, \textit{Satyrical Reflections on Clubs}, 303. Most interesting is Cellier’s perceived “prodigious knack of Counterfeiting.” She used her midwifery experience to fake a pregnancy, which was convincing enough that “an able Physician and several discreet Women” were sent for to search her. They found Cellier “was no more with Bearn than the Town-bull, but only having over-night privately gotten a Bladder of Blood, had used her skill in creating the necessary symptoms; and preparing certain Clotts of it, and put them into her Body, (some of with sort design’d for a fresh supply, were also found elsewhere about her.)” Prance, \textit{Mr. Prance’s Answer to Mrs. Cellier’s Libel} (London: L. Curtis, 1680), 17, 18. Though unsuccessful in keeping her from the pillory, this fake pregnancy is similar to the frequent depictions of bawds falsifying maidenheads to secure more money from their clients. Though different from falsifying a hymen, both actions involved blood and both used familiarity with the female body and its workings in illegitimate ways. Frances Dolan also discusses Prance’s text in her analysis of Cellier; however, Dolan approaches this particular text in regards to how Protestant observers and commentators played with and reversed tropes present in Catholic Martyrologies when discussing this divisive figure. Frances E. Dolan, \textit{Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture} (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), 177-179.
  \item \textsuperscript{166}Dolan, \textit{Whores of Babylon}, 178.
  \item \textsuperscript{167}After the Bawdy House riots, Elizabeth Cresswell dedicated herself strongly to politics, which this document mocks: "One thing Daughter I am resolved on, never to concern myself with \textit{State Matters}, as you have done, and am afraid was very out of your way: You have an honest calling, and though I say it, a very ancient one, and was of great esteem in all Ages of the World." This excerpt hints that Cellier was a prostitute, not a midwife and it provides some humour by having Creswell insist she would never involve herself in politics. Anonymous, \textit{A Letter from the Lady Creswell to Madam C. the Midwife on the Publishing her Vindication, &c.} (1680), 2.
\end{itemize}
such a *parlous woman,*” which suggested a sort of prostitution on Cellier’s part. Creswell continued:

> But then again I consider, as to the *Point* of your *Religion,* ‘tis the best in the World for us, for we can *Whore* and *whore* again and *Confess* and *fess,* and obtain *Pardon,* and be *pardoned* to all intents and purposes, and go out of the World after a whole life of sinning, as *Innocent as Children unborn*... though for my part ‘tis much to our comfort that you are driving on such a Design, though for my part ‘tis all one to me what *Religion* goes up. I am old, and hope to die honestly in my *Calling.*

This statement drew a specific connection between Catholicism and the sex trade. Creswell spoke to the ways Cellier’s Catholicism was seen to facilitate and even support her perceived sexual immorality through the confession and forgiveness of sins, a practice presented as dishonest in this text. Creswell somewhat sarcastically presented Catholicism as being the perfect religion for sex workers because it allowed them to continue what was conceived of as an immoral practice without suffering the spiritual consequences. While the document did not state that all sex workers in this period were Catholic, it asserted that it would be beneficial to be so because of this practice. Though, as noted, Cellier was depicted as elderly elsewhere, this text highlighted only Creswell’s advanced age. This disparity would seem to be related to the fairly pervasive notion that bawds were elderly women and prostitutes were younger. While Cellier was often depicted as bawd-like, this document hinted that she was a former employee of Cresswell, highlighting aspects of her personality seen to resemble that of prostitutes. In any case, these records continue to suggest that age was important in situating the bawd-prostitute relationship in print. Like witchcraft, the bawdry associated with these women could sometimes be intrinsically linked to their Popish leanings.

**Co-Conspirators**

Though historians often consider witches and bawds to have been vulnerable and isolated, their contemporaries did not. The power of early modern perceptions should not be ignored. If people did not truly believe in witchcraft, they would not have brought potentially capital charges against community members, nor would they have engaged in extrajudicial activities like scratching and ducking elderly community members when legal channels failed. Individual bawds and witches were thought to pose real harm to society, but they were often depicted as working in groups to fully enact their machinations. While more Continental notions like Sabbaths and covens were less common in England, they were far from unknown. Bawds were also believed to work in groups. According to Paul Griffiths, the bawds of Elizabethan London were seen as orbited by pimps, prostitutes, and others. Ideas of groups of witches or bawds working in an underground demimonde against proper, God-fearing society would have been powerful.

Successful bawds were represented as moving often and having a broad network of associates. Such is the case for Mother Needham, a woman depicted as both matronly and somewhat frail—traits of a woman who was older if not elderly—in newspapers and visual sources. Newspapers described her as having brothels in four or five different locations between 1723 and her death in 1731, indicating long-standing participation in the sex trade. The story of Leucippe featured another

173 One depiction of bawds states “[s]he sits continually at *rack rent*; especially if her *Landlord* bear office in the Parish; for her moveables in the house; (beside her quick Cattle) they are not worth an *Inventory*, only her beds are most commonly in Print.” Anonymous, *Twelve Ingenious Characters*, 37-38.
174 *Daily Post*, Thursday 14 March 1723; *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, Saturday 5 September 1724; *Daily Post*, Monday 7 September 1724; *British Journal*, Saturday 12 September 1724; *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, Saturday 12 September 1724; *Parker's London News or the Impartial Intelligencer*, Wednesday 7 April 1725; *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteteer*, Saturday 10 April 1725; *Daily Journal*, Tuesday 5 November 1728; *Country Journal or the Craftsman*, Saturday 9 November 1728; *Gloucester Journal*, Tuesday 12 November 1728; *Weekly Journal or British
procuress with multiple companions. In order to seduce Leucippe into prostitution, her unnamed beau took her to meet his mother and his family, all supposedly of a higher social class than that from which she originated: “I remember there was my Lady Duchess of such a Place, a charming Hussey; then the Countess of Elsewhere, then my Lady Dowager of a third Town; then a superannuated Volunteer; an old Bully who was call’d Sir John, and his tawdry Consort.”

Though the ages of these women were not specified, their descriptions likewise seem to indicate they were older or elderly, especially “Sir John’s” “Consort” and “my Lady Dowager of a third Town.” Acting as a group, they ensured that Leucippe was sufficiently intoxicated to facilitate her seduction and the beau’s disappearance. Regardless of the typicality of the story of these women pretending to be a family to orchestrate Leucippe’s ruin, it clearly played on a notion that the procuress could work in tandem with others.

Bawds might have built these networks by training other disreputable women in their profession. As informed by popular conceptions of bawds, these training collectives would likely have resulted in older bawds acting as mentors of sorts to younger bawds. One paper described Mary Sylvester as having “served her Apprenticeship with the celebrated Bawd Dame Elizabeth Needham.”

This statement could indicate that Sylvester had been employed by Needham, but could also mean the two had spent time together at the Bridewell, as Sylvester had been “indicted for a Bawd” before her 1725 trial. Referring to this relationship as an “apprenticeship” seems to indicate that the older Needham took a role of authority in this pairing. Henry Fielding’s 1751 critique of the penal system sheds further light on this possibility. Fielding, as a Justice of the Peace, considered places like the Bridewell to be “Schools of Vice, [and] Seminaries of Idleness.” He questioned “[w]hat good

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Gazetteer, Saturday 9 November 1728; Evening Post, 3 October 1730-6 October 1730; Grub Street Journal, Thursday 8 October 1730; British Journal, Saturday 10 October 1730; Fog’s Weekly Journal, Saturday 10 October 1730.

Narrative or the Delightful and Melancholy History of Leucippe, Thursday 12 November 1719.

Daily Journal, Tuesday 13 July 1725.

Proceedings, LL, t17250630-45, June 1725, Mary Sylvester.

Consequence then can arise from sending idle and disorderly Persons to a Place where... with the Conversation of many as bad, and sometimes worse than themselves, they are sure to be improved... in the Practice of Iniquity? Furthermore, newspapers described bawds as being arrested in groups. Between 1680 and 1730 there were a number of reports of bawds being arrested or being tried at the same time. Logistically-speaking this may have been the result of raids by reform societies or new reform laws such as those passed by Queen Anne. There are other examples which seem to have represented a movement to dismantle a series of brothels in Great Pulteney-Street. Whether they were connected as neighbours in the same district of London or were joined together as convicts, bawds appear far from isolated in the primary source material.

Conceptions of networks were even more prevalent in accounts of witchcraft. As the concept of the Sabbath did not penetrate English consciousness as deeply as it had elsewhere, the mass gatherings seen on the Continent do not appear as frequently in the source material. Groups of witches were nonetheless described in England as well. Sometimes the witch’s companions were also depicted as

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179 Fielding, An Enquiry Into the Cause of the Late Increase of Robbers, 49.
180 For example, see Daily Journal, Thursday 14 March 1723; London Journal, Saturday 16 March 1723; Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer, Saturday 16 March 1723; Daily Journal, Tuesday 5 November 1728; Country Journal or the Craftsman, Saturday 9 November 1728; Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer, Saturday 9 November 1728; Gloucester Journal, Tuesday 12 November 1728; Daily Journal, Monday 16 January 1727; London Journal, Saturday 6 April 1723; Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer, Saturday 6 April 1723; Daily Courant, Tuesday 23 March 1731; London Evening Post, 24 April 1731-27 April 1731; Daily Journal, Monday 26 April 1731; Daily Post, Monday 26 April 1731.
181 As reported in the Observator, “a Company of Lewd Women, to the number of 60 odd, were then upon Examination before the Bench of Justices, Assembled for that Purpose in the Church-Vestry. It seems the Justices, in Obedience to Her Majesties Proclamation, had the Night before spread their Net, and had caught all these Ladies.” These arrests were in response to “Her Majesties Proclamation against Vice, Prophaness, &c.” Observator, 13 March 1703- 17 March 1703; Faramerz Dabhoiwala refers to similar laws in Dabhoiwala, The Origins of Sex, 59.
182 The Weekly Journal asserted that “last Sunday Morning some Peace Officers, with divers Assistants, went, by special Order, to visit the Houses of Pleasure, commonly called Bawdy Houses, which are said to be kept by Mother Needham alias Bird, and Mother Hodgson, in Great Pulteney-street.” Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer, Saturday 16 March 1723. On 6 April 1723 the same publication asserted that “the noted Damsel-Market, which used to be kept in Great Pulteney-street, is like to be entirely ruined, by reason of the late Prosecutions commenced against the principal Traders there; to of whom, viz. Mother Hodgson and Mother Jolley are already broke and withdrawn; and we every Day expect to hear the like of the famous Mother Needham,” perhaps indicating that this area or these women were specifically targeted. Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer, Saturday 6 April 1723.
elderly, but in other cases it was only one of the witches who was old, often depicted as the principal figure of malevolence with younger assistants. The elderly Temperance Floyd was tried and executed alongside Susannah Edwards and Mary Lloyd, who were also described as “Aged”. Though Floyd was alone in squeezing Hannah Thomas to death, the three “had been the Death of Two more, besides several others that they had Lamed by their Hellish Art... they had been the Destruction of many Cattle both small and great, and many more things...” Alice Samuel, also depicted as elderly, was executed alongside her husband and daughter, after a series of bewitchments that lasted months. While her husband’s participation was not highlighted in Boulton’s 1716 text, her daughter continued her tormenting of the Throckmortons. Amy Duny, whose advanced age was highlighted during Dorothy Durent’s deposition, and Rose Cullender (probably about sixty years of age) were tried and executed at the same time for related crimes and were said to appear together to those they bewitched. A witches’ collective was also hinted at in the depositions about the ill-fated voyage to Virginia. Elizabeth Masters tried to convince William Rennols and Martha Jeffres to “be of [her] Gang,” of which Rennols’ mother was already a part. Two periodicals provided further evidence for a common belief that witches worked in groups. They were printed in 1709 and 1723, but related a similar story of a priest debunking accusations against three suspected witches. From the little detail provided, the women were not working together but their suspected malevolence had a cumulative effect on their community. One woman was accused of turning men into swine, the second was accused of burying

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184 Anonymous, *The Tryal, Condemnation, and Execution of Three Witches*, 4-5.
187 Athenian Gazette or Casuistical Mercury, Sunday 29 November 1691.
188 Tatler, 26 May 1709-28 May 1709; *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, Saturday 20 July 1723. Though these two works were printed fourteen years apart, the information contained therein is largely identical, save that the earlier printing is framed as a letter, whereas the later one was printed as a news story. The later version also specified that this event took place in Yorkshire, whereas the earlier did not provide a location.
body parts from hanged men to use in spells, and the third was accused of using figural magic to cause intestinal pain to neighbourhood children. The public perception of witches and bawds saw them as colluding together in sin, which speaks to many of the religious and social anxieties of late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. People felt that the religious and moral integrity of the country was in danger of being undermined from within. As discussed above, elderly women were seen as particularly susceptible to participate in sinful behaviour, through their inclination to either seduce others or to be seduced themselves into immorality. Such old women were thus seen as harmful to godly society. While a single bawd or witch could cause significant damage through her behaviour, multiple witches and bawds acting together posed an even greater risk.

**Conclusion**

This chapter examined a number of documents which give insight into how people considered witches and bawds. These categories have been found through examining a number of different types of sources. Though newspapers and other periodicals feature heavily in this chapter, sources like the *Old Bailey Proceedings* and a number of other pamphlets were also examined. None of the themes discussed above were taken from a single type of document, which is further indication of the widespread distribution of these conceptions. The repetition across various media gives a sense of their strength. Were these traits not credible presentations of witches and bawds, they would not have been prevalent in such a variety of material.

Though there were a number of differences in the ways witches and bawds were seen by their contemporaries, there were also a number of commonalities beyond their prominent connection as examples of transgressive elderly femininity. As the previous paragraphs show, both bawds and witches could be represented as seductresses, overly lustful, anti-mothers, and servants of the devil. Furthermore, they were connected with Catholics, another marginalised group in early modern England.
Popular fear of the witch and procuress was heightened by the sense that they were part of networks of lewd sinners, working against English, Christian society. Where this chapter has concentrated on their interior qualities and behaviour, the next chapter will examine the physical characteristics jointly attributed to bawds and witches.
Chapter Two: Perceptions of Bawds’ and Witches’ Bodies

Introduction

Descriptions of bawds’ and witches’ physical traits reflected contemporary views that one’s physical appearance reflected one’s soul or morality. In Neoplatonist thought—a framework important in the Renaissance and sixteenth-century Europe—beauty and shapeliness were linked to morality.\(^1\) Ideal beauty in this context was generally thought to encompass pale skin and hair and red lips and cheeks. Though Neoplatonism was no longer relevant by the seventeenth century, Edith Snook maintains that considerations of beauty “remain entrenched in early modern England.”\(^2\) Deformity, unpleasantness, and ugliness were likewise taken to demonstrate immorality in early modern discourses. Bawds and witches were commonly depicted as having transgressive physicalities. These women were depicted as old and dry as well as deformed and disfigured, traits which were generally connected with old women as a class of people. More specifically, witches were believed to bear diabolical teats, and bawds were represented with pox marks, both physical traits accorded moral importance. Though these physical traits were different in form, they paralleled one another in literary representations of witches and bawds, as visible manifestations of these elderly figures’ immoralities. Finally, bawds and witches were frequently associated with smelliness, rottenness, and death, concepts with intersecting meanings and importance.

Other scholars have discussed the deeper social significance of physical traits. Sara Matthews Grieco asserts that ugliness was associated with both poverty and vice in early modern England.

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Conversely, beauty was generally “the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible goodness,” though female beauty could still arouse suspicion.³ This belief did not negate the perceived inferiority of women and their lesser natures, an idea common within early modern society.⁴ Ugliness and other unpleasantness remained strongly associated with immorality and transgression. The connection between transgression and physical ugliness and deformity was well-established by 1680, though it did not remain static throughout the eighteenth century. Jokes made at the expense of people with physical deformities became less common as the eighteenth century continued, but the connections between people with deformities and transgression were tenacious.⁵ These understandings were based on a long-held notion that the body “did not simply constitute the individual self, but was a site for cosmic intervention and divine retribution,” a belief which can be seen in many of the sources examined for this thesis.⁶

As old women, bawds and witches were associated with a notion of ugliness specifically reserved for aging bodies, Helen Yallop has asserted that the aging body could be “a site for the representation of all that was nasty and ugly in the world,” as well as a site for more general fears surrounding mortality.⁷ Naomi Baker focuses on the connection between elderly women and ugliness in early modern art. Using works such as Cranach’s *Fountain of Youth* (1546), which depicts “ugly old women” awaiting the “metamorphosing power” of a magic pool to restore their youth and beauty, Baker unearths a contemporary sense that elderly femininity was inherently repugnant to onlookers.

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She particularly notes “the isolated…yearning” images of these elderly women.8 Katharine Kittredge describes the belief demonstrated in a number of eighteenth-century documents that “any attractiveness that an older woman possesses is essentially fraudulent—‘purchased’ rather than ‘native’.”9 She suggests that also common in literary works in this period were discussions of “primping hags who are unaware of their physical repellence,” discouraging aging and aged women from public life.10 Similarly, Lynn Botelho describes depictions of female old age as associated with physical unpleasantness and evil.11 Botelho suggests that in these depictions, old women “were either simply old and ugly or they were old, ugly, and evil.”12 The ugliness of witches, bawds, and other transgressive women takes on added significance when examined as part of this framework of depictions of the elderly.

Any discussion of the physical traits of bawds and witches requires a broader sense of the concept of physical aging in this period, which necessitates consultation of contemporary medical treatises. Several medical texts have thus been examined for this chapter. They range in date from 1685 to 1725 and vary in topic and focus. Some like James Cooke’s *Mellificium Chirurgiae* (1685), John Crawford’s *Cursus Medicinae* (1724), and Nicholas Robinson’s *A New Theory of Physick and Diseases* (1725) were more general. Other texts were written about women, such as a 1725 translated edition of [the Pseudo] Albert Magnus’ *De Secretis Mulierum*, John Maubray’s *The Female Physician* (1724), and *Aristotle’s Compleat Master-Piece* (1690); these texts tended to discuss pregnancy and birth. George Cheyne’s *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (1724), provided another perspective on the aging body

8 Baker, “‘To Make Love to a Deformity’,” 92-95.
10 Kittredge, “‘The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d’,” 261.
12 Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print,” 234.
through his instructions on how to live a longer life. Though scientific knowledge continued to develop and include new medical theories such as iatromechanism in this period, English medical writing about aging tended to be conservative, not differing greatly from earlier medical theory.¹³

Medical treatises displayed a complex and varied understanding of gender difference that belies Thomas Laqueur’s thesis that the concept of a “one-sex body” dominated until the eighteenth century.¹⁴ Laqueur has had a number of detractors who have raised doubts about his chronology and the simplicity of this formulation.¹⁵ The complexity of understandings of sexual difference is borne out by the medical texts consulted in this chapter. For example, although Aristotle’s Compleat Master-Piece and the Anatomy of the Humane Body referred to the ovaries as testicles, indicating what could be termed a one-sex model, women’s genitals and reproductive systems were generally discussed on their own terms and not as inverted versions of men’s.¹⁶ The de-sexing that the elderly underwent also challenges the one-body model. Old women were somewhat masculinised and old men were conceptually feminised by the aging process. As Helen Yallop has found, men reverted to a childlike, de-sexed state after the perceived loss of their virility, the characteristic which uniquely made them men. Furthermore, elderly men’s bodies were thought to become colder, similar to how elderly women’s bodies became colder in some scientific theory. Elderly women became somewhat de-sexed as a result of the loss of their menstrual cycles and their ability to fulfill the expected task of giving birth.¹⁷

While age and its effect on health are present in these contemporary medical texts, old women

¹³ Yallop, Age and Identity in Eighteenth-Century England, 60.
¹⁴ Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 4–6, 8, 10–11.
¹⁷ Yallop, Age and Identity in Eighteenth-Century England, 111,115-117
were largely invisible. Though there is discussion of the elderly, it was generally in the context of old men or of old people as a whole.\textsuperscript{18} This was most likely because men, in one- and two-body models, were considered the standard body from which women deviated. This sentiment was stated explicitly in Aristotle's \textit{Compleat Master-Piece}: “wherefore the Judgement which we shall pass in every Chapter does properly Concern a Man, as comprehending the whole species, and but improperly the Woman, as being but a Part thereof, and included in the man...”\textsuperscript{19} Women's medical concerns were treated as less important than men's in texts not specifically about women. These women were neither the focus nor the intended audience of these texts. Medical books, especially guidebooks for reaching old age, tended to be directed toward middling, male readers.\textsuperscript{20} Despite these limitations, medical treatises are nonetheless helpful in understanding how bodies were regarded in the early modern period.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Old and Dry}

Both bawds and witches were thought to be abnormally hard and dry. It is likely that these

\textsuperscript{18}Helen Yallop suggests that texts that refer to old men intended their advice solely for elderly men. Yallop, \textit{Age and Identity in Eighteenth Century England}.
\textsuperscript{19}Anonymous, \textit{Aristotle's Compleat Master-Piece}, 98.
\textsuperscript{20}The length of these medical texts made them an unlikely purchase by the poorer orders; \textit{De Secretis Mulierum} (1725) is the shortest at just over 100 pages long and the longest, James Cooke's \textit{Mellificum Chirurgiae} (1685), is more than 600 pages in length. Furthermore, when discussing exercise, George Cheyne suggested that those who could not ride "must be carried in a Coach or Litter." This suggestion was directed to the very old, the very young, and those who were mentally unwell. While not an unreasonable advice, a coach or a litter would have been beyond the means of the poor, a fact that seems to parallel the concerns about these texts. George Cheyne, \textit{An Essay of Health and Long Life} (London and Bath: For George Strahan and J. Leake, 1725), 95. Though there was nothing that would necessarily stop someone from reading a book that was not intended for them, especially given the fact that such texts were sometimes sold second-hand at reduced prices, the length of these texts may have made the cost prohibitive for poorer members of society, even if these sources were not beyond their levels of literacy. Jennifer Evans, \textit{Aphrodisiacs, Fertility and Medicine in Early Modern England} (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2014), 33; Botelho, "Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print," 226, 228; Yallop, \textit{Age and Identity in Eighteenth-Century England}, 10-14.
\textsuperscript{21}This literature differs little from other print literature in conveying nuanced cultural understandings of bodies. As Laura Gowing observes, "Renaissance medical texts... openly acknowledge the power of story, myth, and metaphor in making sense of the body.” Laura Gowing, \textit{Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 3. Mary E. Fissell also uses medical treatises in conjunction with cheap print. Her book, \textit{Vernacular Bodies}, draws upon this combination of scientific and popular literature to track growing negative beliefs about women’s bodies, the uterus, and childbirth. Mary E. Fissell, \textit{Vernacular Bodies: Reproduction in Early Modern England} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 10, 52, 59-74, 14-89. Medical texts are thus fruitful companions to other contemporary literature in accessing the popular perceptions of marginalised old women that this chapter seeks to unearth.
qualities resulted from their perceived age, as humoural theories, common from classical Greece to the early modern period, associated the elderly with coldness and dryness as well as coldness and moistness. Though the 1680-1730 time period was at the tail end of these beliefs, humoral theory was not necessarily completely discredited or ignored. Many of the texts examined for this thesis spoke of the different natures of men and women, qualities which were thought to change with age. Women were believed to be already cold, whereas the elderly were the only men considered so. Likewise, people were seen to move between moistness and dryness, depending on their place in the life cycle. Gowing also suggests, however, that the hardness and dryness of the witch’s body was an inversion of "the fluid bodies of proper women." This hardness kept witches from demonstrating the "openness," softness, and permeability associated with women and women’s bodies in contemporary social figuration. Witches, in this conception, were both inherently women and anti-women. Though their hardness made them unlike proper women, their stereotypical gender and attacks on bodies and households placed them directly within the female realm.

Jane Wenham, whose 1712 witch trial ignited controversy, was described as exceptionally hard and dry, even for a suspected witch. At one point one of Wenham’s suspected victims tried to scratch her, to no avail. Though the scratching was ferocious, it was ineffective: “...she scratched Jane Wenham in the Forehead with such Fury and Eagerness, that the Noise of her Nails seemed to all that were present as if she were scratching against a Wainscoat, yet no Blood followed... no Blood came, altho’ her Forehead was sadly mangled and torn by

22 Though coldness and moistness seems to have been the more common belief in medieval texts on the ages of man, scholar J.A. Burrow believes the association of coldness and dryness in the elderly to have been a genuine rival tradition. J.A. Burrow, The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 21, 38. Laura Gowing refers specifically to the dryness associated with elderly women in Hippocratic ideals, perhaps indicating more cemented theories in the early modern period. Gowing, Common Bodies, 78. See also pp. 12, 13, 19 in Burrow’s text, as well as Elizabeth Sears, The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 13, 23-24, 27-28, 61.


24 Gowing, Common Bodies, 74-75, 80.
the Girl's Nails... Both the sound created by the scratching at her flesh, though it tore, and the lack of blood despite the mangling of her forehead demonstrated Jane Wenham's supposed hardness and dryness. The text later described a test performed wherein a pin was repeatedly driven deep into her skin, which also failed to produce any blood.

The language of oldness and dryness was also used in *The Bawds Tryal and Execution*. Though the source described the fantasy of a man infected with venereal disease, it spoke to many of the stereotypes and beliefs about bawdry that this thesis has examined. Its detailed description of the bawd's poor bodily condition made her sinful state apparent. There was a sense of dryness about her body: “Her Skin was as rivel’d as a sheet of Parchment that had been too hastily dry’d after taking wet, which she endeavoured to put a Youth upon with the borrow’d Complexion of Paint.” Furthermore, “her old Bones were cased with a new varnish cover, like the Skeleton of a decrepid Chair clad in a new Skin of painted leather.” Though this bawd was not described quite as unnaturally dry as Jane Wenham, the language used is both reminiscent of dryness as well as decidedly unflattering. To compound this sense, the author described some of her physicality in terms of winter: “Old age like a Cold Winter, had drest her Head with a Hoary-Frost of Gray Hairs.” Though it seems unlikely in the English climate, James Cooke associated winter with dryness in his *Mellificium Chirurgiae* (1685). Cooke provided a short breakdown of age-based humoral composition stating that “Old Age, divided into Aged to sixty; and decrepit, to lives end. In it is viscid Flegm, which manifests it self from more slow motion of the Body, and full Wit. As to the Time of the Year, Winter is cold and dry.”

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27 “Riveled” was generally used in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries to describe the face, though it could also be used to describe dried fruit or seeds. “rivelled | rived, adj.” OED Online. June 2014. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/166419?redirectedFrom=riveled (accessed August 11, 2014).


There are multiple print documents that described witches and bawds in such a manner. A poetic list of a crowd of cheats included “Old Bawds, worse wrinkled than old Witches.” One section of Edward Phillips’ *Beau’s Academy* provided a list of word associations to use in word games. One of the words which accompanied “Bawd” was “withered.” The text also provided adjectives associated with such words as “Magick,” “Poison,” and “Pandar.” Though “withered” was only one among many, the fact it accompanied such words as “shameless,” “beastly,” “brothel,” and “obscene” may indicate that this was a wide-ranging conception. *Round About Our Coal-Fire: or, Christmas Entertainments*, a text which made direct connection between witches and bawds, described a stereotypical witch as “of so dry a Nature, that if you fling her into a River she will not sink.” That a witch was to be “burned” as punishment further cements a sense of woodenness, dryness, especially since hanging, not burning at the stake, was the method of execution used in England for crimes other than treason. Finally, Thomas D’Urfey’s *The Virtuous Wife, or Good Luck at Last* touched briefly on this conception. *Sir Lubberly Widgeon*, feeling tricked into an unsavoury marriage, asserted “Why, what a damn’d unreasonable thing is this? Now that a man must be forc’d to marry a Witch *Volens nolens*, whether he will or no-pox, I’ll hang myself rather, I’ll never- nay a wither’d old Witch - a Bawd too it may be.” This assertion is noteworthy for its connection between witches, bawds, and dryness.

Women’s aging process may have been especially viewed as one of drying out and hardening, thereby removing one of the most consistent (if a little unflattering) descriptors of the adult female body. *The Toothless Bride: Or, the Wonton Old Woman*, a 1705 ballad, demonstrated that the belief was current in popular consciousness as well as medical theory. This woman was able to marry only because of her ample money. In fact, money was depicted as being her only desirable aspect since her genitals

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32 Phillips, *Beau’s Academy*, 20, 26, 29, 7, irregular pagination.  
were described as "musty" and she could barely move. Early modern understandings of menstruation buttressed the popular belief that as people, especially women, aged they dried and hardened. In fact, menses occurred in youth and middle age because "young women are very full of Moisture and Humours, which are mostly dried up in elderly Women." Some theorists asserted that women menstruated because their bodies were simply not hot enough to dispose of bodily toxins in the same way that men's bodies were. While some scholars contend that this coolness was not always described negatively and could indicate an efficiency to women's bodies, the stoppage of menses was often depicted in medical texts as a condition that needed to be cured. To many people in the medieval and early modern periods, women were inherently leaky. Menstruation can be seen as part of this leakiness and part of the reason women's bodies were viewed with suspicion or derision. Though the

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35 Anonymous, The Toothless Bride: or, the Wonton Old Woman (London: E. Johnson, 1705), single sheet. This idea was demonstrated in medical texts from well before the 1680-1730 period, which could indicate either the commonness of the idea or how deeply it had penetrated into public consciousness. For example, Helkiah Crooke wrote that in elderly women, the "necke of the wombe" was "hard callous and as it were gristly, by reason of the often attrition and the frequent flowing of their courses." While Crooke did not use the term "musty," both descriptions illustrate a sense of dryness. Helkiah Crooke, Mikrokosmographia (London: Thomas and Richard Cotes, 1631), 234-235.

36 Women's menstrual cycles were generally thought to start around 12 or 14 and were thought to continue until women were 45 or 50. These ages are listed fairly consistently in the medical texts that discuss menstruation, which indicates that the expectations were probably fairly consistent. Cooke, Mellificium Chirurgiae, 352; Anonymous, Aristotle's Compleat Master-Piece, 22-23.

37 Pseudo Albertus Magnus, De Secretis Mulierum: or, the Mysteries of Human Generation Fully Revealed (London: E. Curll, 1725), 5.


medical sources consulted for this thesis generally support Susannah Ottaway’s contention that menopause was not considered important in this period, it is nonetheless worth exploring evidence for Lynn Botelho’s assertion that it held significance for the visible changes it wrought upon women’s bodies. Since menstruation was sometimes considered necessary to cleanse the body of toxins, it was thought that women who ceased their menses might retain these poisons within themselves. This retention was thought to render them capable of performing feats similar to witchcraft, according to De Secretis Mulierum. This treatise asserted that if an old woman were to "look earnestly and intently upon a Child in the Cradle, that Child's Eyes will soon be infected," a possibility reminiscent not only of the evil eye but also of the way small children were particularly vulnerable to witchcraft. This reaction could result from a pooling of the poisons from the retained menstruum seeking to escape the body through any means. Post-menopausal women’s potential to induce harm in this way is another example of the significant role played by the dry, aged female body in creating a sense of danger and transgression.

Deformed and Disfigured

Aging might bring weakness and disfigurement. For example, James Cooke, author of one

40 Menopause is a difficult consideration in discussions of female aging in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While the historiography often discusses menopause as a significant marker, Ottaway contends that since menopause was thought to hit around 50 and the onset of old age was more likely 60, the two thresholds are not necessarily connected. Susannah R. Ottaway, The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 35-41. Lynn Botelho’s discussions of menopause in the seventeenth-century rural parish, Cratfield, somewhat problematises Ottaway’s assertion, though some difference can be explained by their different chronological foci. Botelho’s concern is the visible effects of menopause on the bodies of the poor. Outside the loss of reproduction, a major component of female identities and social expectations, they may have grown facial hair and wrinkles, lost teeth, or developed hunches, among other physical changes. Botelho’s assertion that elderliness and appearance were connected could have resulted in women being considered elderly at a much younger age than their male counterparts. Lynn Botelho, "Old Age and Menopause in Rural Women of Early Modern Sussex," in Women and Ageing in British Society since 1500, eds. Lynn Botelho and Pat Thane (Harlow, England: Longman, 2001), 448-52, 53, 59, 60-61.

41 This reaction was the result of toxins of the body swimming in the woman’s eyes or from a pooling of the poisons seeking to escape the body by any means. Pseudo Albertus Magnus, De Secretis Mulierum, 89-90. Though its lack of intent renders this possibility not perfectly analogous to witchcraft, it is reminiscent. Keith Thomas mentions “potent, but invisible emanation[s] from her eyes” as one method by which witches harmed. This is similar to the evil eye, though Thomas also highlights hitting and verbal cursing as more common witchcraft methodologies. Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (London: Penguin Books, 1971), 519.

42 Pseudo Albertus Magnus, De Secretis Mulierum, 89-90.
medical text examined for this thesis, spoke of a propensity for the elderly to become "crook'd-backt." Bodily changes that accompanied age made completing physical tasks difficult. Nicholas Robinson, another such author, examined how these physical limitations could also extend to the senses:

the Organs of Hearing, Seeing, Tasting, Smelling, and Feeling, all are mightily impair'd, because the Animal Spirits are defective, because the Nerves, their proper Instruments of Action, are relax'd, and last, because the general Frame of the Solids, and several Organs they compose, and the Actions they perform, are greatly endamag'd, and, of Consequence, unable to longer carry on the Concerns of Life... Robinson’s assertions helped explain the physical weaknesses of the elderly. While the senses were Robinson’s major concern in this passage, the problem could be seen to extend to the entire body as the “animal spirits” and nerves were damaged by the passage of time. This damage was seen to affect the ability of the elderly body and its organs to function like a younger body. Robinson was working from a newer scientific framework, so his explanations did not much resemble those of humoural theory. However, both modes of medicine evinced concern over the loss of puissance experienced by the elderly. Such weakness was thought to make the elderly especially vulnerable to inclement weather and other negative environmental conditions. “The Blood of the Aged is every most certainly poor and viscid,” physician George Cheyne observed, adding “Their Perspiration little or none at all; and their concoctive Powers weak.” Though this change in elderly women was generally discussed in the context of menstruation and menopause, Cheyne’s description of thick, sticky blood and an inability to sweat is reminiscent of the dryness attributed to the elderly in some medical frameworks. Mother Needham also demonstrated some of this perceived age-related weakness. She and another bawd were

43 Cooke, Mellificium Chirurgiae, 427-428.
described as “past Labour” in 1723 and the sense of her infirmities was only increased by her criminal sentence to the pillory in 1731, when she was apparently “so very ill, that she laid along under the pillory.”

Bawds and witches also seem to have borne a disproportionate degree of the disfigurement attributed to the elderly. *Twelve Ingenious Characters, or, Pleasant Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons and Things* satirically describes a woman whose “Teeth are faln out; [and] her Nose and Chin, intend very shortly to be friends and meet about it.” The anonymous *The Constables Hue and Cry after Whores & Bawds, &c.* echoed this familiar depiction of the bawd: “Her Teeth are all fallen out, at which her Nose and Chin are so much concerned that they they (sic.) intend to meet about it in a little time, to make up the Difference.” Another print account of a bawd recounted rotten teeth and blackened lips from excessive alcohol consumption: “for those Bone-Charcoles burnt almost to dust with the liquid Fire of hot Drinks, appeared through her Tiffany Lips as black as Night.” Her soul, as reflected through her unpleasant body, was “ulcerated.” Though “the ponderous weight” of this bawd’s “Threescore Years” would have undoubtedly made her elderly to early modern readers, there was certainly more to this depiction than only her age. Though this unnamed bawd’s age—and also that of other bawds—would have certainly informed how viewers understood her and her behaviour, this passage describes her disfiguration as the result of her immoral lifestyle.

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46 *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, Saturday 16 March 1723; *Grub Street Journal*, Thursday 6 May 1731.
47 Anonymous, *Twelve Ingenious Characters, or, Pleasant Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons and Things* (London: S. Norris, 1686), 36-37. This particular passage presented a more dire description of what may have been hinted at in *The Devil and the Strumpet*, where venereal disease was described as having damaged Jane Freeman’s nose. Anonymous, *The Devil and the Strumpet: Or, the Old Bawd Tormented* (London: For E.B., 1700), 4.
48 Anonymous, *The Constables Hue and Cry after Whores & Bawds, &c.* (London: for John Smith, 1701), 6. This passage is at least as old as 1616, when Sir Thomas Overbury described Maquerela, an archetypal bawd, as follows: “Her teeth are falne out, marry her nose, and chin, intend very shortly to bee friends, and meet about it. Her yeeres are sixty and odde: that shee accounts for her best time of trading; for a Bawde is like a Medlare, shee’s not ripe, till she bee rotten...” Quoted in Mario Digangi, *Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character from Shakespeare to Shirley* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 167.
The ugliness of the bawd was often also used as a device to represent her inner corruption. This was a common feature of the theatrical depictions of bawds Mario DiGangi discusses. DiGangi asserts that dramatic bawds were “rotten and decrepit.” Their bodies were “grotesquely dried up and worn out” which signified to their audience the “loathsomeness” of their deeds. “Ostensibly,” DiGangi argues, “the ideological lessons to be learned from the decrepit body of the bawd is that physical degeneration constitutes the ‘natural’ punishment for sexual degeneracy.” Though the bawds DiGangi discusses come from plays earlier than the works discussed in this thesis, the depictions hold true until after 1730. Laura J. Rosenthal and Katherine Kittredge also discuss this aspect of the bawd. The bawds these scholars examine were fat as well as deformed. Rosenthal examines a bawd from The English Rogue (1666-1671); she is quite large, has an “elephantine” nose, and is quite toothless. Her examination grants this bawd’s fatness moral importance; “[t]he bawd has grown into a ‘tun’ of flesh, fattened by her profits at the expense of these now-suffering souls. She has consumed so greedily that she can no longer even move.” The consumption is, of course, not only physical but also metaphorical. She has consumed the bodies, lives, and perhaps even souls of her prostitutes. Kittredge links the ugliness and deformity of bawds to voracious sexuality. The bawds Kittredge examines have become “physically larger by their intemperance and ‘gross habit’.” Kittredge discusses the death of Mrs. Sinclair, a bawd from Clarissa (1748). Sinclair, much like the woman discussed above, was a large woman, “distended by her evil deeds,” such as her seduction and corruption of innocent young girls and women. Though Kittredge’s analysis is short, she places it within her discussion of contempt for the sexualities of aging women. It is also in the context of transgression: “the choice of older women to move away from socially or morally acceptable sexuality seems to bring with it a physical price—a physical

51DiGangi, Sexual Types, 161.
53 Katharine Kittredge, “‘The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d’,” 258.
54 Kittredge, “‘The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d’,” 259.
metamorphosis into monstrosity.”55 In this analysis, women’s status as bawds is secondary to their status as sexually active older women.56 However, their size and other unpleasant aspects of their physiology do appear within the greater context of unpleasant depictions of bawds’ bodies.

Moll White, the fictional suspected witch from the Spectator (1711) was also described as deformed, weakened, and not in her right mind. She was described as “a wrinkled Hag, with Age grown double,/ Picking dry Sticks, and mumbling to her selfe/ Her Eyes with scolding Rheum were gall’ed and red,/ Cold Palsy shook her Head; her Hands seem’d whither’d;/ ...her crooked Shoulders...”57 In a question about the existence of young witches to the British Apollo, the querent asserted that “[i]t’s a common thing in the World to say (if an Old Woman looks ugly) she is (or at least looks like) a Witch.”58 This perception had deep roots. Reginald Scot, author of a text held as one of the most well-known sceptical works of the sixteenth century, famously asserted that “such as are saw to bee witches, are women which be commonly old, lame, bleare-eied, pale, fowle, and full of wrinkles... They are leane and deformed... to the horror of all that see them.”59 John Gaule asserted similarly in 1646, stating that “every old women with a wrinkled face, a furr’d brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a square eye... is not only suspected, but pronounced for a witch.”60 Though Gaule wrote at a time of heightened witchcraft prosecutions, his beliefs still had some weight in 1680, though people by then were less likely to be successfully accused of witchcraft. By 1680 and well into the eighteenth century those documents

55 Kittredge, “‘The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d’,” 259.
56 Kittredge’s analysis considers women older than thirty as “older.” Kittredge, “‘The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d’,” 247.
57 While the paper itself does not call Moll White a witch, it does describe the certainty of the village and surrounding area, with even skeptics being half-convinced that she was. Spectator, Saturday 14 July 1711, emphasis original.
58 British Apollo, 26 January 1711- 29 January 1711.
60 Quoted in Sharpe, Instruments of Darkness, 172.
which discuss witches presented rather conventional ideas of the witch, and ugliness was a central part of these beliefs. 61

Lynn Botelho argues that the characteristics associated with ugliness in cheap print illustrations of witches are intimately associated with the stereotyping of witches as elderly women. She asserts that pictures of witches and pictures of elderly women share many features, toothlessness being a common characteristic in these images. In cheap print, elderly women and witches alike were “Characterized by an overextended nose and chin, and visually reinforced by a recessed and shrunken mouth. They were also often depicted in profile, their facial features in relief, serving only to exaggerate an already exaggerated form.” 62 Furthermore, the elderly subjects of these cheap print images were “simply old and ugly or they were old, ugly, and evil,” and the pictures only grew more unpleasant when the figures depicted were definitely meant to be witches. 63 While Botelho acknowledges that these sources represent a simplified portion of early modern witchcraft beliefs, she has made a connection between easily-available unflattering depictions of elderly women and images of witches. 64 Other historians examining other primary sources and time periods have also made this connection. 65 This evidence further supports the likelihood of a longstanding association of deformity with witchcraft. The inherent connection between aging, weakness, and disfigurement attributed to the elderly in general in this period is clearly present in accounts of bawds and witches.

Marked Witches

61 This is an observation formed through examination of these primary source base of this paper. While a few sources do discuss young beautiful witches, they are quite short with a satirical tone to them. See, British Apollo, 26 January 1711-29 January 1711; Original Weekly Journal, Saturday 9 April 1720; Mists Weekly Journal, Saturday 30 April 1726; Anonymous, Round About Our Coal-Fire, 20-21, 23. A less satirical source which describes a witch as young is Anonymous, Vertue Rewarded; or, the Irish Princess. A New Novel (London: R. Bentley, 1693), though she is not necessarily seen as beautiful.
62 Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print,” 231.
63 Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print,” 234, 236-237.
64 Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print,” 238-239.
Witch’s marks or teats, signs of demonic or familiar feeding, served legally and culturally to prove a woman’s moral degeneracy. The witch’s mark held an interesting place in English courts, differing from the understanding of the symbol in the rest of Western Europe. While this concept was important in other European jurisdictions, it tended to be of concern to demonologists who saw it as a direct result of the diabolical pact. Maleficium, the evil action, tended to be more important in the English context and the English tended to focus more on the familiars than on any pact with the devil. Familiars, though often also demonic, were thought to do the witch’s bidding in return for feeding through these witches’ marks. Orna Alyagon Darr suggests that this mark, considered to be “tangible” proof of the practice of witchcraft, acquired greater significance by the late seventeenth-century. Darr likewise asserts that the legal inclusion of the witch’s mark in a trial was not until the later sixteenth century and the use of the mark to prove malefeasance did not become legal precedent until a few years after the landmark Lancashire case of 1612, though it is possible that the witch’s mark had significance before this date. Certainly, it was significant into the late seventeenth century. The literary material examined for this thesis indicates that it remained a potent concept, though it had changed from the earliest examples, from small marks into full teats. Though this thesis acknowledges the waning of


67 Robin Briggs asserts fairly convincingly that the demonological aspect was more prevalent than is generally asserted in the historiography in the form of the familiar, which tended to be demonic, if not the devil. Darr, Marks of an Absolute Witch, 114; Sharpe, Instruments of Darkness, 70-75; Robin Briggs, Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft (New York: Viking, 1996), 29.

68 Darr, Marks of an Absolute Witch, 112, 128, 131.
witchcraft beliefs, it argues, like Gaskill, that it was a process of uneven, slow change.\textsuperscript{69}

It was not so easy to remove these beliefs from public consciousness. \textit{Round About Our Coal-Fire} (1730), which took a somewhat satirical tone when discussing witches, identified the witch's teat as a necessary component of the witch. Not only must a witch be an ugly old woman living alone, "she must have a black Cat, two or three Broomsticks, and Imp or two, and two or three Diabolical Teats to suckle her Imps."\textsuperscript{70} This statement, made in the tail end of the period covered by this thesis, demonstrates how the witch was a stereotype in written texts on the subject. This is similarly borne out by the pamphlet published twenty years after the trial of Rose Cullender in 1682. It made specific mention of marks found on Cullender, one of which was clearly distinguished as something other than a naturally-occurring protrusion: “there was a little hole, and it appeared unto them as if it had been lately sucked, and upon the straining of it there issued out white milkie Matter."\textsuperscript{71} Such examples demonstrate not only the continuing interest in this sort of narrative at a time when trials had started to wane, but also a continuing understanding of the witch’s mark.

Perhaps one of the more unique representations is from Richard Boulton’s \textit{A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft} (1715-1716). Though written over a century after the 1589-1593 case it discussed, Boulton’s text is a testament to readers’ continued interest in the manifestations of witchcraft. It recounted drops of blood on a suspected witch’s chin for which closer inspection did not reveal a source.\textsuperscript{72} Mother Samuel initially denied any knowledge of the blood’s origins, but eventually admitted that the blood was caused by her familiar assuming the form of a black chicken to feed on her:

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\textsuperscript{69} For example, see Malcolm Gaskill, "Witchcraft and Evidence in Early Modern England," \textit{Past and Present} 198 (2008): 33-70.
\textsuperscript{70}Anonymous, \textit{Round About Our Coal-Fire}, 15.
\textsuperscript{71}Anonymous, \textit{A Tryal of Witches at the Assizes Held at Bury St. Edmunds for the County of Suffolk} (London: William Shrewsbery, 1682), 36-37. The text had described another, natural mark found on Cullender’s body. This protrusion was the result of carrying a too-heavy load and may have been a hernia.
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Being asked whether it was a natural Chicken, because when it came to her Chin she did scarce feel it, but when she wiped it off, her Chin bled; she saith further, That the said Dun Chicken first came to her Chin and sucked, before it came to Mr. Throckmorton’s House, and that the Evil and Trouble that came to Mr. Throckmorton’s Children came by means of the Dun Chicken. This particular aspect of Boulton’s analysis is notable because the original pamphlet of 1593 treated the bleeding chin and the small marks left behind much differently. Unlike Boulton, it simply stated that these events “were given in evidence, and readie to be given against the parties accused, if either neede should have required or time served, upon the oath of divers Gentlemen on the Assises bay at Huntington, before the sayde partyes.” Such evidence attests to a sustained, if not growing, interest in the witch’s mark by the period of this thesis.

In some cases, searching for the witch’s mark may have occurred after death and was used as a method to confirm suspicions about women in their neighbourhood. Such was the situation presented in the pamphlet Strange News from Shadwell, Being a True and Just Relation of the Death of Alice Fowler. Having found Fowler’s body, “[s]everal of the Neighbours were so curious to search the Corps, and do all of them affirm that they found in the private parts of the Corps five Teats; to wit, four small ones and one very big, and that they were all of them as black as a Coal.” This discovery was used to prove people’s long-standing suspicion that Fowler was a witch, based upon her unpleasant attitude and

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73 Boulton, A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft, 98, emphasis original.
75 This was also true of Alice Samuel: “When the Execution was over, and these Three Persons were dead, the Jaylor, whose Business it is to see them buried, stripped off their Cloaths, and found upon the Body of Alice Samuel, a little Lump of Flesh, like a Teat, about half an Inch long, which being near her Private Parts, they covered them, and let several people see it. The Jaylor’s Wife squeezing it with her Hand, a Mixture of yellowish Milk and Water issued out of it, then clear Milk, and at last Blood it self.” While this particular instance is a more typical instance of a witches’ mark, it is less important to Boulton’s analysis than the bloody spots. Boulton, A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft, 153.
76 Anonymous, Strange News from Shadwell, Being a True and Just Relation of the Death of Alice Fowler (London: E. Mallet, 1684), 3, emphasis original.
her habit of carrying on conversations with herself.\textsuperscript{77} While this discovery did not result in legal action, as Fowler was dead, the fact that her neighbours took it upon themselves to search for such marks is telling as there was no real benefit to having searched her body. That her neighbours took this action can reveal some implied trends about this evidence of wrongdoing. The first point is that it demonstrates that these ideals had penetrated the public consciousness. That the people who apprehended suspected witches often later searched them for the witch’s mark lends support to this possibility.\textsuperscript{78} Secondly, such a search might reflect some scholars’ assertions that the beliefs surrounding the witch’s mark originate in popular culture as opposed to learned demonology.\textsuperscript{79} It might then be natural for people to take such action on their own recognisance, in the hunt for tangible ways to prove their suspicions against an elderly, unpleasant neighbour.

Alice Fowler was stripped bare not only by her murderer but also by her neighbours, who echoed official procedures in an unofficial capacity. In most witchcraft investigations and trials, searches of women’s bodies for marks were officially-sanctioned and usually ordered by a justice of the peace. This action echoed somewhat the procedural process of the Jury of Matrons, which determined if women to be executed were pregnant. Similarly women, often elderly, searched bodies for signs of plague and sometimes established cause of death in cases where cause seemed not natural. While the searchers seem to have been marginalised by the eighteenth century—forced into potentially deadly work to keep their pensions—the position was powerful enough that documentation of natural death was required for some burials. Many searches for witches’ marks seemed to focus on the genital area, so the need for women to do the searching emerged from a concern for modesty and respect for their expertise. These behaviours were in line with official conduct, which is not surprising considering that the average person seems to have been familiar with the Jury of Matrons or searchers of the dead and

\textsuperscript{77} Anonymous, \textit{Strange News from Shadwell}, 1.
\textsuperscript{78} Darr, \textit{Marks of an Absolute Witch}, 124.
their procedures.\textsuperscript{80}

Though historian James Sharpe asserts that the insensibility associated with the witch’s mark on the Continent was rarer in the English context, the source material from 1680-1730 indicates that early modern people believed, as on the Continent, that the marks had little to no sensation.\textsuperscript{81} A 1700 guide to identifying witches, \textit{The Tryal of Witchcraft; or, Witchcraft Arraign’d and Condemn’d} asserted that the witch’s mark was “Insensible, so that being pricked it will not bleed, as Natural marks will do.”\textsuperscript{82} An elderly woman in Somerset was suspected of bewitching two young people with whom she had exchanged harsh words over her age and her troubled financial situation. Since she had some especially tense encounters with the young girl who was especially affected by the bewitching, she was brought before the justice of the peace who had her searched by a “\textit{Jury of Women} who found about her several purple Spots, which they prickt with a sharpe Needle, but she felt no pain: She had about her other Marks and Tokens of a \textit{witch.”}\textsuperscript{83} This source indicates the extent to which the entire community could get involved in investigating suspicions. In order to ascertain the results of the search they swam her three times, comparing the results of her swimming with that of “a Lusty young Woman who sunk immediately, and had been drown’d had it not been for the help that was at hand.”\textsuperscript{84}

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80 They can also be seen as similar to those searches initiated to gain evidence in infanticide cases or to determine the paternity of an illegitimate child. Laura Gowing asserts that the heavy involvement of women in searches of these sorts as well as witchcraft trials undoubtedly had their roots in the “embeddedness of women in their communities.” Gowing, \textit{Common Bodies}, 154-169. While such searchers were not without their critics, the extent to which midwives and searchers of the dead still worked in official capacities illustrates the extent to which women’s knowledge of the body and physical health was still relied upon. James C. Oldham, "On Pleading the Belly: A History of the Jury of Matrons,” \textit{Criminal Justice History} 6 (1985): 5, 8-9; Richelle Munkhoff, "Searchers of the Dead: Authority, Marginality, and Interpretation of the Plague in England, 1574-1665," \textit{Gender and History} 11 no. 1 (1999): 10, 13, 22-23; Kevin Siena, "Searchers of the Dead in Long Eighteenth-Century London," in \textit{Worth and Repute: Valuing Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, Essays in Honour of Barbara Todd}, eds. Kim Kippen and Lori Woods (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011), 132-133, 140-142; Laura Gowing, \textit{Common Bodies}, 159-162.

81 Sharpe, \textit{Instruments of Darkness}, 73.

82 John Bell, \textit{The Tryal of Witchcraft; or, Witchcraft Arraign’d and Condemn’d} (Greenwich: Henry S. Richardson, 1700), 20.


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identity was often something of a public affair.

The witch’s mark also made an appearance in the case of Jane Wenham, though in a different context than is usually found in such treatises. This particular case is important because of the lateness of the date at which it occurred and the public debate it inspired about the existence of witchcraft. Furthermore, though Wenham was convicted of witchcraft, she was not executed. Otherwise, it was not a remarkable case. The account by Francis Bragge introduced the reader to longstanding tensions in the community and suspicions of witchcraft centred on Jane Wenham.85 After Wenham was apprehended and confronted under suspicion of bewitching two girls, she tried to prove her innocence by offering “to be tried, by searching her Body, to see whether she had any Teats, or, by throwing her into the Water.” The request was initially denied, though a later, officially-mandated search revealed no evidence.86 It is perhaps the difficulty of using the witch’s mark in legal proceedings, despite its established cultural significance, which can account for the fact that Wenham was found guilty despite the lack of mark.87 Regardless, Wenham’s offer gives further insight into the significance of the teat among common perceptions of witchcraft and the broader cultural belief in the connection between external marks and internal immorality.88

Poxed Bawds

Just as witches’ marks were regarded as proof of witchcraft, physical marks of venereal disease seem to have functioned in a similar way for bawds (and prostitutes). These visual proofs are similar only in what they represented (immoral behaviour), however, not in their cause or description.89 In

86 Bragge, A Full and Impartial Account of the Discovery of Sorcery and Witchcraft, 10, 11.
87 Darr, Marks of an Absolute Witch, 125-131.
88 The swimming of witches, though it had great cultural staying power, was not sanctioned by English courts. By offering to allow herself to be swum, Wenham was reflecting popular—not legal—sentiments. Heikki Pihlajamaki, “‘Swimming the Witch, Pricking for the Devil’s Mark’: Ordeals in the Early Modern Witchcraft Trials,” The Journal of Legal History 21 no. 2 (2000): 44.
89 Nor were these physical marks used exclusively to identify bawds from the rest of the general population as they were used with witches. Another similar tendency can be seen earlier in the early modern period in understandings
1989 sociologist Stanislav Andreski made a direct connection between physical symptoms of syphilis and the witch’s mark. “Among the tormentor’s prurient sadistic enjoyments,” he observed, “was the... search of insensitive spots which were regarded as proof of being a witch.” Andreski further contended that “syphilitics [also] develop insensitive spots, this practice constitutes another pointer to the connection between the [witchcraft] persecutions and the disease.”

It must be acknowledged, however, that this is a weak comparison. The teats or small bloody marks discussed above are little like the sores or caved-in faces described on the bodies of syphilitics, nor is there any proof that contemporaries believed witches to have venereal disease.

Descriptions of venereal disease were informed by important concepts of visibility. Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton discuss the power dynamics of the visible bodies in the eighteenth century. While bodies were generally less visible than they are now, “the bodies of the powerful and the socially weak... were represented differently and were available for scrutiny in contrasting ways.” While the bodies of the powerful remained hidden, the bodies of the poor did not. These bodies could be described in detail not only through print, in descriptions of the poor, criminals, deserters, etc., but also through institutional records, from hospitals or workhouses. Distinguishing marks were important to this program. “Marks left by birth or lived experience formed indelible records,” write Morgan and Rushton, “so their accurate description was held to provide evidence of apparently unchangeable physical identities.” People could be identified by these marks, whether they emerged from labour or

\footnotesize{of “plague tokens”—sores that sometimes accompanied the plague. These sores were connected to the bills of mortality, publications that publicised plague mortality in London, in that “both [were] signs of God’s judgement.” One author asserted “[f]or, God will not have his Strokes hidden: his marks must bee seene,” indicating this understanding of the tokens. Quoted in Munkhoff, “Searchers of the Dead,” 8. The marks on the body visibly connected the sufferer’s and the community’s sin to the disease considered punishment for wrongdoing. Munkhoff, “Searchers of the Dead,” 8-9.}

\footnotesize{90 Stanislav Andreski, *Syphilis, Puritanism and Witch Hunts: Historical Explanations in the Light of Medicine and Psychoanalysis with a Forecast about Aids* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillian Press Ltd., 1989), 80.}

corporal punishment. The markings described on bawds fit into these trends of representation.

Kevin Siena argues that skin and skin diseases were accorded particular moral significance in the eighteenth-century. While the poor were already disadvantaged in terms of sheer aesthetic preferences, skin diseases were considered to be signs of immorality. This tendency was applied not only to such diseases as the pox, but also to the itch and leprosy, which were intimately connected to the pox in the minds of early modern medical theorists. All of these diseases noticeably disfigure the skin and the body. Symptoms of venereal disease, or even witches’ marks, spoke to strong cultural narratives of what these symbols represented.

While it is impossible to diagnose precisely from written descriptions which disease caused these marks, this section will generally refer to the condition (or these conditions) as “the pox,” “venereal disease,” or “syphilis.” The tangible signs of moral degeneracy that were perceived to affect bawds were arguably also applicable to prostitutes. However, bawds were seen as former prostitutes and as having engaged in a long lifetime of debauchery. Thus, the symptoms of bawd’s diseases were often depicted as quite advanced, to the point at which their faces were falling in or they were losing their extremities. One source, Twelve Ingenious Characters, or, Pleasant Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons and Things discussed many of the perceived traits of the bawd, both personal and physical. Though couched in somewhat obscure language, this text hints that the figure of the bawd may have been perceived as a former prostitute: “A Bawd, is an old Char-cole that hath been burnt her self, and therefore is able to kindle a whole Green Coppice.”

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93 Similarly, Sophie Carter puts forward that prostitutes’ “moral degeneracy” would have been mirrored by their “state of visible disrepair.” Sophie Carter, “‘This Female Proteus’: Representing Prostitution and Masquerade in Eighteenth-Century English Print Culture,” Oxford Art Journal 22 no. 1 (1999): 73-74.
96 Anonymous, Twelve Ingenious Characters, 36.
Since this particular tendency was uniquely connected to the visual, it is fitting that pictorial resources enter the analysis. Hogarth’s *A Harlot’s Progress* was a six-image series that depicted the archetypal prostitute’s seduction and fall and was immensely popular amongst viewers from many social strata.\(^\text{97}\) Though the prints were from the 1730s, the characters and themes came directly from the 1720s. This work featured venereal disease prominently. It is possible to track Moll Hackabout’s personal condition through the six plates of the series, from an uninfected state in the first (Fig. 1: *Arrival in London*) to her sad funeral in the sixth (Fig. 2: *The Harlot’s Funeral*). Hogarth clearly intended the series as a cautionary tale. The potential consequences of a life of prostitution were made visible: a quick decline into illness, lock up and hard labour in the Bridewell, ignominious death from venereal disease, and a funeral at which none of the mourners were upset. However, the figure of the bawd (usually identified as Mother Needham) problematises such a certain, straight-forward reading of these images, though she only appears in the one plate.\(^\text{98}\) In each of these plates, the presence of venereal disease could be identified by skin lesions. Moll Hackabout had visible sores on her face and bust in plates 2 (Fig. 3: *The Harlot Quarrels with her Jew Protector*), 3 (Fig. 4: *The Harlot at her Dwelling Place in Drury Lane*), and 4 (Fig. 5: *Beating Hemp in Bridewell*).\(^\text{99}\) In plate 1, these lesions were clearly visible on Mother Needham’s otherwise matronly face. Though Needham was shown as having many more of the marks than her erstwhile victim, it was Moll who succumbed to the disease. It seems likely that this incongruity existed to highlight the effect of exposure to prostitution on the hitherto innocent Moll in


\(^{99}\) Jack Lindsay asserts that “the medicine [in plate three] shows that she is already tainted,” though the fact that the marks on Hackabout’s face in plate two were not present in the first plate may indicate infection occurred before she was turned out onto the streets. Lindsay, *Hogarth*, 60.
contrast to the long-debauched Needham. The country lass was far more vulnerable to the ravages of venereal disease than the older, more tainted Needham, who was considered one of the most notorious bawds of the early eighteenth century by her contemporaries, to the point that she died from a pelting she received while standing in the pillory. While it would go too far to say that contemporaries would have viewed Moll Hackabout as being completely innocent of any moral wrongdoing, she was likely seen as a victim. After all, Mother Needham was shown to have taken advantage of her innocence and naïveté to lead her into a life of sin, at the behest of the notorious “Rape-Master General.”

Visible symptoms of advanced venereal disease also emerged in textual descriptions. The Constables Hue and Cry presented a poxed procuress. Like Hogarth’s Needham, the bawd in this document was presented as the root cause of her clients’ and employees’ infections: “The Pox [is] her Punishment, her end is Death.” The pamphlet The Devil and the Strumpet, or the Old Bawd Tormented was another such example in its portrayal of the aged procuress Jane Freeman. Though her venereal disease was not described in depth, it was one of the first things said about Freeman. She was said to be quite diseased, having “old Claps, and new ones on the back of them.” The pamphlet discussed the damage to her nose as a result of her infection. The reader was informed that the brimstone and smoke smell the devil released upon departure could have killed her, “had not her Nose been well season’d with the Perfumes of the Pox many years before,” possibly reflecting not only the ways in which syphilis could affect the facial bones and facial structure but also the supposed longevity of her infection. The disease could progress to the point where people lost, or seemed to lose, their noses. The Devil and the Strumpet also demonstrated a consideration of Freeman’s body. Though not discussed as explicitly as

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100 Similarly, David Bindman suggests that Needham, “whose Junoesque respectability is belief by the pock-marks on her face,” can be viewed as a natural contrast to Hackabout. Not only do her respectable clothes contrast with obvious markers of her lack of respectability, but her pockmarks can be seen to contrast with Hackabout’s innocence as well. Bindman, Hogarth, 56.
101 Anonymous, Constables Hue and Cry, 8.
102 Anonymous, The Devil and the Strumpet, or, the Old Bawd Tormented (London: E.B., 1700), 3.
103 Anonymous, The Devil and the Strumpet, 4.
the bodies of witches, her bruised and beaten body was described in some detail:

her Thighs, Belly, Legs, Arms, Head, Shoulders, Hips, Buttocks, and all parts of her body, were bruised to such a terrible degree, that she was as black as a Shooe (sic.) all over; but more especially her Arms and Thighs, where in some places the very Flesh and Skin was pull’d off as if with Pincers...

It is possible that this description was meant to mirror the intimacy necessary involved in searching the bodies of murder or assault victims and witches; the whole body would have needed to be examined in a way that was hindered by clothing. The description of Freeman’s body fulfilled a similar role to that of the descriptions of her nose; the results of the beatings were a tangible marker of her immoral activities and lifestyle. Though it was not particularly in line with other depictions of bawds, this source depicted the beating in similar ways to other sources’ description of the venereal damage described on bawds. Both were shown to be a direct result of bawdry as a lifestyle choice.

The dedication to The Insinuating Bawd and the Repenting Harlot also demonstrated such a conception. While the old bawd’s venereal disease was only referred to briefly in the text of the poem, it came through in the dedicatory material. After her seduction was assured, the bawd abandoned the “harlot” in order to go to Bath in an attempt to cure herself. Her body was described as both already rotten and continually rotting. The unnamed harlot wished that there be no cure for her affliction and she expressed desire that the bawd would lose her “nose” at Bath “in order to Punish you, for those ills which you have not been Contented to Practice your self, but to draw innocence into.”

Again, the loss of the nose was featured prominently as a symptom of advanced venereal disease and associated with immoral behaviour.

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The nose had potent symbolism. The loss of the nose was conceptually more severe than the lesions. Symptomatically it referred to a more severe or advanced form of the disease. Though advanced venereal disease was not necessarily age-specific, these literary sources highlighted the age of the suffering bawds. As above, Hogarth’s Needham was shown as more heavily diseased than Moll Hackabout who did not suffer from a collapsed face, though she succumbed to venereal disease at a young age. Jane Freeman, described as “the Old Bawd” in the title of the pamphlet about her experiences, was also severely infected.\textsuperscript{107} Another description of bawds having collapsed faces, as discussed above, initially introduced the bawd as an “Old Char-cole.”\textsuperscript{108} Visually, when focusing on these women’s bodies, nasal disfiguration was a more obvious sign of the disease and the perceived moral failure of the afflicted. Sores could appear anywhere on the body and could be hidden by clothing or cosmetics; however, a deformed or collapsed nose could be neither hidden nor denied. Furthermore, noses had long-held symbolic significance. The nose was sometimes viewed as a somewhat female feature as a result of its leakiness and the fact that the smelling apparatus was sometimes conceptualised as a set of “breast-like teats.”\textsuperscript{109} To continue the metaphor of leakiness, in public parlance noses could be used as visible stand-ins for female genitalia. As Gowing notes, “[t]he face is meant to make whoredom visible, to enable a perceptible distinction between honest and dishonest women.”\textsuperscript{110} However, by 1680 the association between disfigured noses and wrongdoing was applied to both genders. In either judicial or extrajudicial contexts, disfiguring or slitting someone’s nose was a permanent method of public humiliation and could mark the victim as a perpetrator of certain

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\item\textsuperscript{107} Freeman had “old Claps, and new ones on the back of them” as well as a nose damaged by venereal disease. Anonymous, \textit{The Devil and the Strumpet}, 3, 4.
\item\textsuperscript{108} Anonymous, \textit{Twelve Ingenious Characters}, 38, emphasis original.
\end{itemize}
infractions, both legal and sexual. As a result, the nose was also a potential target in cases of assault. As a result, the nose was also a potential target in cases of assault. The focus on the collapsed or damaged noses of bawds can be seen as part of this cultural understanding of the nose.

**Smelly and Rotten**

One reoccurring theme in unpleasant representations of the bodies of elderly women, witches, and bawds is that of smelliness. In this method of thinking, a person’s scent, like their skin, was often connected to their morality or immorality. As discussed above, the sense of smell was sometimes associated with women. Historian Constance Classen has dedicated a number of works to the connection between gender and scent. While much of her research is concerned with the role gender played in the perception and conceptualisation of bodily smells, Classen also refers more specifically to foul odours attributed to witches. Witches, like other transgressive women smelled badly, a belief which was only emphasised by the perception that witches were post-menopausal women. Though this stink is, in part, due to their physical embodiment as women, Classen also connects it to their

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112 These connections were culturally specific. Clare Brant asserts that smell had “a complex semiotics,” which meant that odours considered pleasant to Christians may be unpleasant for others. Clare Brant, “Fume and Perfume: Some Eighteenth-Century Uses of Smell,” *Journal of British Studies* 43 no. 4 (2004): 446. Scholars Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott similarly assert the cultural-specificity of odours. Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (London: Routledge, 1994), 3. Likewise, Holly Dugan uses Lacquer’s discussion of the discursively constituted body to suggest a theory of discursively constituted scents and scent meanings. Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume*, 8. A semiotic shift in the reception of scents may have occurred in early modern England, as a result of the Reformation. Though it was a slow process, perfume and sweet smells may have slowly been rendered symbolically-null by the changing belief and trade systems of the English Church and society as it became more Protestant and more international. Some historians have asserted that scents associated with the Satanic or evil were the only spiritually-significant odours in the early modern period. Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England*, 27, 30.
association with corruption, death, and their general immorality. Of all women, witches and prostitutes were thought to have the worst scents. Witches were thought to smell like sulfur, brimstone, rotting corpses, and toxicity. These scents were associated with Satan and with the more concrete activities of witchcraft, but also resulted from their “physical putridity,” which matched their general immorality. Similarly, prostitutes were thought to stink, though these smells were less identifiable than the witch’s. Those odours associated with prostitutes were not only practical, as working conditions in brothels were probably often suboptimal, but also metaphysical, as virginal bodies were thought to smell sweeter than non-virginal ones. The disease and contagion associated with prostitution would have been other factors in the conception of their smell. The source material demonstrates that the bawd, conceived of as an aged, former prostitute, was included in this consideration. More specifically, the stench of bawds—sometimes described as sewer-like or excremental—was sometimes seen as the result of their dishonour, further emphasising the connection made between the physical and the moral.

Jonathan Reinarz has found that the beliefs about the smells of witches and prostitutes predated the early modern period. Some existed from the middle ages and others were even older.

114 Classen, “The Odor of the Other,” 143-144.
115 Reinarz, Past Scents, 118.
116 Reinarz, Past Scents, 118-120. Though the focus on stench in these sources appears to be connected to perceptions of bawds’ and witches’ moralities, medicinal conceptions of scent were also common in early modern England. Best known is the connection made between the spread of diseases such as the Plague through the corruption of the air via “stagnant water, decaying rubbish, dead animals, human excrement,” general bad odours or dirt, etc., all of which Keith Thomas connects with the idea of miasma. Keith Thomas, “Cleanliness and Godliness in Early Modern England,” in Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson, ed. Anthony Fletcher (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 72. See also, Classen et al., Aroma, 62 and Alain Corbin, The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1986), 13-17. Scent was perceived to affect people through the permeability of the human body; smells were believed to enter the body and be absorbed by the brain. It is through this mechanism that foul odours were considered dangers to health, though this belief also meant that good odours could be healthy or nourishing. Mark S.R. Jenner, “Civilization and Deodorization? Smell in Early Modern English Culture,” in Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas, eds. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 131-134; Corbin, The Foul and the Fragrant, 17; Dugan, The Ephemeral History of Perfume, 11.
117 Cockayne, Hubbub, 236-237.
Reinarz connects this continuity to the simplicity and malleability of the metaphors associated with odours. To put it simply, “[s]mell was regularly relied upon to distinguish good girls from bad ones, particular scents... allowed for instantaneous identification of members of the social body thought to be corrupted.” Those who practiced witchcraft, bawdry, or prostitution were viewed as morally corrupt. Not only were bawds generally considered former prostitutes, they were also depicted as betrayers of their own sex and kidnappers of souls. The corruption they caused to children’s bodies was also seen to be done to their souls. The first chapter of this thesis discussed the connections made in the primary source material between witches, bawds, and the devil. These foul scents, though individually connected with the witch and the bawd, can provide a further, physical connection to the diabolical. The devil was said to stink of such things as sulfur, brimstone, or excrement. The satanic behaviours of elderly bawds and witches were seen as reflected in their embodiment of diabolical stench.

Smelliness was discernable in the source material regarding witches. Alice Fowler was one such example. When Alice Fowler’s neighbours moved the blanket covering her nude body there was “so great a stink when they stir’d the Corps that they could hardly endure the Room.” There could be a purely practical explanation for this odour; Fowler had been ill and confined to bed for some time before she was murdered, and undoubtedly practiced a lower level of personal hygiene than her younger, healthier counterparts. However, given the societal importance accorded scents, the bad odour coinciding with the discovery of the witch’s marks could have been considered damning evidence to those present. Though Alice Fowler was clearly never arrested, statements asserting her witchcraft

118 Reinarz, Past Scents, 121.
121 Anonymous, Strange News from Shadwell, 3.
122 Anonymous, Strange News from Shadwell, 3.
made by her son and a woman for whom she acted as wet nurse were included in the pamphlet. Contemporaries’ connection between odour and witchcraft was undoubtedly a factor here.

_The Devil and the Strumpet_ offered examples of similar depictions of bawds. Much like Fowler, Jane Freeman was quite ill and unable to care for herself. Unpleasant odours were featured several times in this source. The first was during Freeman’s initial encounter with the devil. When she called upon God for aid, the devil disappeared in a puff of smoke and brimstone so strong that it was almost enough “to have ended her Days by Suffocation.” This quotation has already been discussed in the context of Freeman’s (presumed) venereal disease; however, it is also significant in the context of unpleasant scents associated with immoral femininity. Freeman’s interaction with the devil caused her chambers to be infused with his stench. The other example was more direct in presenting the smell as emanating from the bawd herself. This second instance occurred after a period of reoccurring attacks by the devil. The pamphlet averred that during an assault, for fear of her life, Freeman voided both her bowels and her bladder. As a result she “was perfum’d with such Natural and Artificial Scents, that if the Devil himself had staid any longer, unless he had lost the Sense of Smelling, he had run the risk of being Poison’d.” This stench was described as strong enough to pose a risk to the devil himself. The description of the scents as both "Natural" and "Artificial" was intriguing, potentially indicating that the source of the odour was not just her excrement but also the corruption of her soul. Furthermore, the description of the scent as toxic was reminiscent of the concerns regarding post-menopausal bodies discussed above and the perceived toxicity of witches. This description of Freeman as having soiled herself echoed familiar tropes about elderly and aging women. The connection to fecal and other excretory matter was similar to fictional depictions of elderly spinsters engaging in illicit sexual activities.

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123 Anonymous, _Strange News from Shadwell_, 2.
125 Anonymous, _The Devil and the Strumpet_, 6-7.
126 See Kittredge, “The Ag’d Dame to Venery Inclin’d,” 256.
such as the title character in *The Old Maid* who became covered in the contents of broken chamber pots while engaging in these liaisons or Lady Harriot Pastime in *Amusements in High Life*. 127 This particular instance could also be commentary on the ways in which the bodies of bawds were considered to be uncontrollable as a result of their long-term sexual voracity or evil-doing. 128

Witches and bawds were further described as having unpleasant breath. For example, while the procuress in *The Bawds Tryal and Execution* was depicted as aesthetically and morally repulsive, her breath was also horrendous, being “Venemous Vapour.” 129 Similarly, D’Urfey’s Lubberly Widgeon’s intended bride, whom he had likened to both witches and bawds, had “a Breath that will blast him, and 1000 imperfections more.” 130 Madam Bibbington, one of the witch-bawds in Ward’s *Satyrical Reflections on Clubs*, was “as Drunk as the Devil, with her Garmants so disoblig’d by Second-hand Claret, that she stinks as bad as a Country Sherriffs Breath at the latter-end of the Sises.” 131 While it is possible that the malodour associating with Bibbington referred to her entire body, her propensity for drink and the association of her odour with a “Country Sherriffs Breath” does lend itself to also associating this scent to her breath.

Bawds’ and witches’ unpleasant scent was also attributed to the decayed nature of their bodies. The words, “corpse,” “carcass,” and “rotten” each evoke interconnected ideas surrounding death and

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128 Human waste matter had long connotations in early modern England. Echoing comical scenes from literature discussed above, the contents of chamber pots were often used in assaults to humiliate their victims. Kittredge, "The Ag'd Dame to Venery Inclin'd," 258-259; Hurl-Eamon, *Gender and Petty Violence* 79. Though human waste matter was occasionally used medicinally, it was more generally a sign of sickness and a source of fear. Louise Christine Noble, “‘And Make Two Pasties of your Shameful Heads’: Medicinal Cannibalism and Healing the Body Politic in Titus Andronicus,” *ELH* 70 no. 2 (2003): 681. Excrement was understood to go beyond urine and feces to include bile, phlegm, and sweat. It seems safe to assume that disgust was likely instinctual, based on the “stench of feces, urine, and putrid vomit.” Shigehia Kuriyama, “The Forgotten Fear of Excrement,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38 no. 2 (2008): 428, 430.


131 Ned Ward, *Satyrical Reflections on Clubs: in Twenty nine Chapters* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1719), vol. 4: 305. A more complete introduction to this text can be found in “Popish Associate” in Chapter One.
unpleasantness, and their association with witches and bawds is telling. Jane Freeman was referred to as a “Carcass” repeatedly, sometimes even as a “rotten Carcas.” The body of the bawd in *The Insinuating Bawd: and the Repenting Harlot* was also depicted as a “filthy Carcase” with “rotten Limbs” and as a “Rotten Corps.” In 1686, an anonymous author wrote that "a Bawd is like a Medlar, she's not ripe, till she be rotten." In 1699 Edward Phillips repeated this assertion in *The Beau’s Academy*. His response to the question “what is a Bawd like?” was “A Medlar, for she is not ripe till she is rotten.” Medlar fruit was widely known to be distinct in being palatable only after it had been allowed to rot. A character in the play *The Relapse; or, Virtue in Danger* addressed the concept of marriage as a bawd: “Why, how now Matchmaker, art thou here still to plague the World with Matrimony? You old Bawd, how have you the Impudence to be hobbling out of your Grave... Years after you are rotten.” Though this bawd was used conceptually rather than literally, it still demonstrates the connection between the concept of the bawd and decay.

Rot was sometimes a shared characteristic of bawdry and witchcraft in sources that linked the two. Ward presented his bawds as forming a coven: “they are met together in one of their Brothel Sanctuaries, where they lay aside that Effeminacy that should be Part of their Nature, and without Disguise, let loose the very Devil that to their Shame possesses them.” Decay and age were presented as the consequences for their immorality. They continued with their witchcraft until “wrinkl’d Age” and “a painful Decay... either hurry them to Despair, or bring them to Repentance.” Most of these women were rotten in some way, notably “Ghostly Althea” whose “Teeth [were] as loose, and as rotten as a Set

of old Park-Pails round the Seat of a decay’d Family.”  The description of Moll White, fictional suspected witch, continued “And on her crooked Shoulders had she wrap’d/The tatter’d Remnants of an old striped Hanging,/Which serv’d to keep her Carcass from the Cold.”  Here again “Carcass” was used to describe a living body.

Two visual sources of witches conveyed a similar perception. The first, (Fig. 6) John Michael Rysbrack’s “The Witches in Macbeth” depicted the three witch characters approaching a fire on an altar.  Perhaps as a result of the crudeness of the sketch, the witches appeared skeletal; though they were fleshy, they had sharply defined bones. The witch on the right had skull-like features, with black eyes and an open mouth. The other two had the pointy chin and caved-in mouth common in illustrations of elderly women. Though these witches were explicitly characters, they were in congruence with contemporary understandings of witches’ appearances. While they were also largely in line with the description provided by the play, they were missing the beards referenced by Banquo.

The second image, (Fig. 7) Andrew Lawrence’s etching after Salvator Rosa’s 1668 “Saul and the Witch of Endor” was more detailed.  It depicted “The moment when the spirit of the prophet Samuel, hooded in a long mantle, has been summoned by the semi-naked witch lighting a flame from a branch, while Saul bows his head to Samuel his mentor.”  This image showed a Biblical story, significant to early

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140 *Spectator*, Saturday 14 July 1711.
141 There is no date more specific than 1720-1770 provided for the creation of this image, but Rysbrack provides a sense of the persistence of skeletal images of witches. John Michael Rysbrack, “The Witches in Macbeth,” drawing, ca. 1720-1770, *Witches and Wicked Bodies*, ed. Deanna Petherbridge (Edinburgh: National Galleries Scotland, 2013), 89.
142 Banquo says “…What are these/So wither’d and so wild in their attire,/That look not like the inhabitants o’ the earth,/And yet are on’t? Live you? Or are you aught/That many may question? You seem to understand me./By each at once her choppy finger laying/Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,/And yet your beards forbid me to interpret/That you are so.” Macbeth, I.iii.40-48.
143 Though this image is not dated more specifically than 1730-1754 it adds further evidence to the persistence of skeletal associations with witchcraft. Additionally, though this piece was originally displayed in Rome, it was recreated by an English artist indicating its reach to a wider audience. Andrew Lawrence, “Saul and the Witch of Endor,” etching, ca. 1730-1754, *Witches and Wicked Bodies*, ed. Deanna Petherbridge (Edinburgh: National Galleries Scotland, 2013), 101.
modern witchcraft beliefs, where Saul had the Witch of Endor call the spirit of Samuel for advice at the time of war with the Philistines. The Witch, surrounded by skeletons, owls, and bats occupied a large portion of the image. That skeletons made up the majority of the ghastly apparitions further demonstrated the association between witches’ bodies and death. The witch herself was also somewhat skeleton, like the Witches from Macbeth; her ribs and the bones in her face were clearly defined and she was the only person in the image without defined pupils.

The construction of bawds and witches as dead or rotten was only part of a larger pattern in the depiction of elderly women. Once no longer considered beautiful, Véronique Nahoum-Grappe asserts, a woman’s body “was associated with death, whose grimacing, sexless skeleton, staring at her from beyond the mirror, already held her decaying but still bedizened body in its embrace.” A living woman was depicted as a "carcass" in a 1727 newspaper. "She barr’d her Door with her Carcass to save her Cash, and resolv’d to turn to Dust in her Chamber," the account read. As dead bodies could not enact plans to save their money, there can be no question that “carcass” referred to a living woman here. Another poem addressed the concept of rottenness and old women. This poem, published in The Diverting Post in 1705 was directed "[t]o an Old Woman whom he lov’d." Though the verse professed love, it was not flattering, highlighting features not typically considered attractive and echoing descriptions of bawds above. He loved this woman despite her age and decay: "And you, like Medlars, now most please,/ When more corrupt and rotten." In an effort to dissuade his elderly Granny Gregory from remarrying, Jack Drumbold told her "your alluring Charms,/must needs please a Man in Bed,/To have cold Death lye in his Arms." It is difficult not to see these references to death and decay

147 Weekly Packet, 20 January 1719- 27 January 1719.
148 The Diverting Post, 17 February 1705- 24 February 1705.
149 Anonymous, The Old Woman’s Resolution, single sheet.
as negative representations of elderly femininity. Witches and bawds lay at the extreme end of a continuum that held all bodies of elderly women as subject to lifelessness and rot.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored a variety of depictions of witches’ and bawds’ physical traits. Medical texts have been brought into this part of the investigation for the light they shed on general perceptions of the physical signs of aging. Like visual sources, medical treatises are an obvious point of investigation into early modern concepts of aging bodies. It is important to note, however, that any separation of moral and physical qualities is artificial, as one’s character was believed to be imprinted on one’s flesh to a certain degree in early modern thought. When combined with the increasing decrepitude of old age, the innate inferiority of femininity tended to ensure that most elderly women could expect to be low in their contemporaries’ regard, but bawds and witches were thought to exemplify the worst traits.

Much like the moral qualities examined in the first chapter, there were significant commonalities in these depictions of bawds’ and witches’ physical attributes. Dryness, deformity and disfigurement loomed large. The external manifestations of their debauched lifestyle differed between witches (who bore the marks of demonic suckling) and procuresses (who had the marks of tertiary syphilis), but both revealed the immorality of their bearers. Like the worst accounts of elderly women as a whole, bawds and witches were also seen as smelly, rotting, and dead.
Conclusion: Competing Representations

This thesis has demonstrated that, when examined together, witches and bawds offer historical insight into popular perceptions of aging femininity. Both tended to be presented in print as specifically elderly figures of feminine transgression. While other models of marginalised women undoubtedly existed at this time, including scolds, infanticides, and petty traitors, none were as frequently constructed as elderly. In addition to age, witchcraft and bawdry shared many other related qualities in the accounts of their appearance and behaviour that appeared in cheap print between 1680 and 1730. Both had connections to diabolism and Catholicism. Both were seen as perverse mothers, and as evil persuaders to sin who operated in large networks. They were reputed to be inappropriately lustful, dry, and wrinkled, sporting a range of deformities. Their smelly, rotten flesh bore the marks of their depraved lifestyle. These tropes were overwhelmingly negative, in keeping with contemporary concepts of witchcraft and bawdry.

The print media of 1680-1730 is integral to this thesis. Print comprises most of the primary source material and historical study of the ways people interacted with these works has influenced the analysis. The existing literature makes it clear that people derived pleasure from reading pamphlets and other cheap print and could influence its creation as well as its impact.¹ Arguably, the influence of a single piece of writing could be widespread. Though people did not necessarily agree with every work they consumed, dissemination of similar ideas throughout various genres probably spoke to a wide variety of people and viewpoints. Such diversity requires an approach that looks for patterns within multiple representations, rather than a single, uniform stereotype.

It is thus important to acknowledge that not all witches and bawds were old, and that sorcery

and procuring was not exclusively feminine in print accounts. There are accounts of male involvement in the sex trade, for example.² In 1711 Thomas Hall was brought before the Westminster Courts “for procuring whores for men” among other charges.³ Men had been involved in facilitating the sex trade since at least the middle ages; however, by the late seventeenth century the term bawd was understood as inherently feminine. This gendering is reflected in the Observator, which printed a letter signed by a number of bawds including a “John Harris.” This signature prompted the explanation that such men should be referred to as “cock-bawds.”⁴ Men could be associated with witchcraft as well, and James Sharpe, Christina Larner, Edward Bever, Katharine Hodgkin, and Malcolm Gaskill have noted their occasional presence in the trial records.⁵ Even when gendered female, witches were sometimes referred to as young and often beautiful.⁶ Such instances hint at the fact that bawds and witches did not always fit the stereotype of the repellent old woman recounted in this thesis, but their relative rarity upholds the fact that the latter image tended to dominate popular thinking. The existence of alternative representations simply illustrates the fluidity of print and the diverse community involved in its

² The topic of cock-bawds and pimps tends to be overlooked despite the frequency with which the terms appear in the source material. Paul Griffiths contends that the pimp’s main job was attracting customers, transporting women to clients, or controlling access to the brothels. Women were assigned the role and the blame for running the brothels, regardless of the legal statistics. The roles of pimps were lower in the hierarchy of brothels, but they also seem to have been less controversial in the eyes of commentators. Paul Griffiths, “The Structure of Prostitution in Elizabethan London,” Continuity and Change 8, no. 1 (1993): 45-49.


⁶ British Apollo, 26 January 1711- 29 January 1711; Original Weekly Journal, Saturday 9 April 1720; Mists Weekly Journal, Saturday 30 April 1726; Anonymous, Round About Our Coal-Fire, 20-21, 23; Anonymous, Vertue Rewarded; or, the Irish Princess. A New Novel (London: R. Bentley, 1693). However, the young witch in Vertue Rewarded is an indigenous woman from South America converted to Catholicism and living in Spain, and is arguably an example of a denigrated figure to an early modern British audience.
production and consumption.

Despite the above exceptions, most primary source representations of bawds and witches presented them as elderly women and were largely negative. Transgression and marginalisation are integral to this thesis, though these foci do not encompass the full breadth of depictions of elderly women. While print sources were not always in line with the criminal record, they often asserted their own truthfulness and spoke to people’s beliefs. As the 1680-1730 time period was one of a growing print media and a growing concern about female criminality, these depictions are historically important. Witches and bawds can be seen as key figures of evil in the literature of the time. Even with the waning credulity regarding witchcraft, popular belief in this time period was still powerful enough to occasionally prompt violence against the suspects.7 Furthermore, bawds were continuing figures of popular hatred though ideas about prostitutes were in flux.8

Vilification often masks vulnerability, and this is likely true of the real-life elderly women who were imbued with the negative traits of bawds and witches. The conception of vulnerability has been explored in the witchcraft historiography of the 1970s and the 1980s when Alan Macfarlane and Keith Thomas hypothesised a guilt model of witchcraft accusations. While historians have generally moved


away from complete acceptance of this theory, it has not been entirely dismissed. The image of the procuress also made the bawd vulnerable, in no small part because it generated a disproportionate degree of public outrage at older women. The legal consequences of bawdry, such as standing in the pillory, branding, or flogging left culprits exposed to public retaliation. The widespread publication of bawds’ names, community involvement in policing morality, and mounting hostility could also lead to further vulnerability. Furthermore, the resources available to bawds did not necessarily protect them. The Bawdy House Riots of 1668, where up to 40,000 people violently destroyed most of the brothels in London, speaks to this vulnerability.

Print accounts of bawds and witches offer occasional glimpses into how these negative stereotypes could provoke violence. For example, one suspected witch was held against her will for many weeks, during which time her accusers scratched her multiple times, despite the fact that it was legally assault. Print sources demonstrate the potential for condemnation of this kind of activity while

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9 Malcolm Gaskill points to its lack of applicability outside Essex, the focus of Macfarlane’s initial study. Arguments for greater influence from above have also weakened acceptance of this model. Finally, Edward Bever asserts that accused witches were often members of village society in bad standing, but not completely on the margins. Malcolm Gaskill, “Witchcraft and Neighbourliness in Early Modern England,” in Remaking English Society: Social Relationships and Social Change in Early Modern England, eds. Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard, and John Walter (Rochester, New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 212-215, 218; As discussed in Sharpe, Instruments of Darkness, 11-12; Bever, “Witchcraft, Female Aggression and Power in the Early Modern Community,” 956-957, 958.

10 The image of the procuress persisted despite the fact that men were known to play a significant role in luring maidens and running brothels. Randolph Trumbach, Sex and the Gender Revolution, Volume One: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 112-134; Mario DiGangi, Sexual Types: Embodiment, Agency, and Dramatic Character from Shakespeare to Shirley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 162- 165.

11 Dabhoi, The Origins of Sex, 10, 47, 53, 57, 59.

12 Dabhoi, The Origins of Sex, 57-59.


14 Richard Boulton asserted that her daughter was also scratched. Richard Boulton, A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft, vol. I (London: E. Curll and J. Pemberton, 1715-1716), 54, 56-57, 148-149, 111-117, 120-121, 123, 131, 136-137, 139. The ferocity with which it was described in this case can be seen to mirror the ferocity of the attack on the old woman attacked by the ale-draper. The practice may have survived to such a late date because it was a highly popularised method of interacting with witches. Its use in the extremely notorious Witches
attesting to its prevalence. The *Spectator* argued that every misstep by a local woman led to speculation on her diabolic associations.\(^{15}\) Similarly, another author claimed that an ale draper and his wife attacked a “poor old harmless Woman” simply because they did not like her “Phiznomy, or neighbourhood.” This attack was characterised as excessively vicious; the couple had “without the termination of Judge or Jury,” apparently commenced “in Cutting and Slashing her Arm to fetch Blood of her.”\(^{16}\) The press was less sympathetic in its description of violence against bawds, which tended to take place after conviction of the crime of bawdry.\(^{17}\) As noted in the previous paragraph, carting and placement in the pillory raised the potential for violence against bawds. Elizabeth Needham’s death was believed to have been caused by her treatment in the pillory, brought on by her broad notoriety as a procuress.\(^{18}\) Another bawd,
“against whom the Rage of the People was so Violent, that it is said, she was almost Kill’d by their
throwing at her,” was placed in the pillory for being an accessory to rape. At times, spurious law suits
could be introduced against notorious figures. In 1725 a “young Whore and an Old Bawd” were
forcibly searched and narrowly escaped prosecution for the theft of a £4 watch on the basis that the
prosecutor was also of “very bad Character.” Similarly, a jestbook featured a story where a bawd was
stripped, tarred and feathered, and paraded down the street as an act of revenge. Another source
asserted that nothing scares a bawd “so much as the approach of Shrove-Tuesday,” a reference to the
tradition of attacking brothels.

It is important to note that elderly women were not always vilified and vulnerable to violent
attacks. References to aged women in the cheap print of 1680-1730 reveal a small space in which their
advanced years might afford them respect and protection, rather than suspicion and condemnation.
The Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer demonstrated this possibility in 1721, with a (likely apocryphal)
story celebrating a seemingly lowborn women of 120 years of age. This woman was the cause of some
curiosity because of her age and her “perfect Health and Sound Memory.” She created such a stir
among the well-off and influential that she was paraded through a park to be admired, met the princess,

by this means.” The names of the other bawds in this text are elided. Anonymous, Round About our Coal-Fire, 20. Hogarth’s bawd is also generally referred to as Elizabeth Needham.

19 Intelligence Domestick and Foreign, Tuesday 28 May 1695.
20 Heather Shore, “The Reckoning’: Disorderly Women, Informing Constables and the Westminster Justices, 1726-
2013), August 1727, trial of Sarah Martin and Sarah Mullenux.
22 Simon Dickie, “Hilarity and Pitilessness in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: English Jestbook Humor,” Eighteenth-
23 Anonymous, Twelve Ingenious Characters, or, Pleasant Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons and Things
(London: S. Norris, 1686), 38.
24 Though women could live into advanced age if they survived their first and last pregnancies, 120 years is an
unlikely lifespan. Morgan Kelly and Cormac Ó Gráda, “The Poor Law of Old England: Institutional Innovation and
Demographic Regimes,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History 41 (2011): 34; Susannah Ottaway, The Decline of Life: Old
and was given at least £50 by the people at Court. While this source marvelled at the woman’s mental acuity, another took it as a matter of course. Truth, depicted as an aged woman, was said to be “very beautiful for all her Age, which was only to be known by her Gravity.” Each of these examples indicate ways in which elderly bodies could elicit popular admiration and respect.

A 120 year-old and a symbol of Truth were arguably highly unique, and the more common positive example of aging in this period was arguably the pensioner. Men and women were eligible for pensions either for age or impoverishment. There was a sense of morality implicit in the legal definition of pensioners as the Old Poor Law defined them as the “worthy” or “deserving” poor, centering pensioners within the communities and contrasting them with vagrants and other types of undesirables. Susannah Ottaway describes pensioners as independent and hardworking and many supplemented their aid by doing what work they could. This work often involved such tasks as picking stones from the road, nursing the ill, identifying plague victims, washing and laying out the dead, spinning, fostering children, or entering a workhouse, acts which usually kept the poor within the community. Receiving aid was often also contingent on moral uprightness. People could be denied aid if the overseers found them ethically wanting and many workhouses had strict codes of conduct for

25 Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer, Saturday 15 July 1721.
26 Weekly Visions of the Late Popish Plot, Friday 29 April 1681, emphasis mine.
27 Ottaway, The Decline of Life, 35.
28 Kelly and Ó Gráda, “The Poor Law of Old England,” 345; Joan Kent and Steve King, “Changing Patterns of Poor Relief in Some English Rural Parishes circa 1650-1750,” Rural History 14 no. 2 (2003): 136-137, 140. Kent and King introduce the concept that some of the poor were seen as “unworthy,” thereby necessitating that others were seen as worthy. Pat Thane believes similarly, that “[p]riority for relief went to respectable members of the neighbourhood... Vestries removed disorderly pensioners from almshouses or temporarily deprived them of relief with the aim of improving their behaviour. The aged poor could not regard relief as a right; it was conditional, at least in theory, on observing strict norms of behaviour.” Pat Thane, Old Age in English History: Past Experiences, Present Issues (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 99. Thane elaborates her point on pp. 103, 114.
their inmates, emphasising piety and other moralities.  

This discussion of competing representations indicates the broad scope of printed depictions of witches, bawds, and other elderly women. However, aging tended to be denigrated more often than it was praised, and the overwhelmingly negative traits associated with bawds and witches were undoubtedly informed by these unpleasant conceptions of the elderly. Age was generally associated with death or decay and ugliness. Virtually any elderly woman could be seen as potentially unruly, socially unpleasant, and unable to control her (grotesque) sexuality. She was also considered more masculine than a younger woman. Elderly men, in turn—though potentially valued as venerable and wise—could be denigrated as infantile and feminine. Thus, even uncritical depictions of the elderly were informed by a range of negative assumptions. Contemporaries who criticised older women as witches and bawds could imbue non-transgressive women with similar traits of excessive lust, ugliness,

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33 van Tilburg, “Tracing Sexual Identities in ‘Old Age’,” 370, 382; Botelho, “Images of Old Age in Early Modern Cheap Print,” 236.

This conclusion has attempted to address depictions of witchcraft and bawdry beyond the traits discussed in the body of this thesis, indicating the presence of competing representations. Beyond merely highlighting a strain of imagery not entirely in keeping with the rest of the thesis, this conclusion has attempted to add dimension to discussions of bawds, witches, and elderly women. Arguably, these varying discourses can be seen as imparting similar information; life for elderly women between 1680 and 1730 was often difficult, especially if they behaved in ways that transgressed the narrow range of acceptable behaviour for this segment of society. These behavioural norms demanded tightly controlled sexuality and stoic independence. Economically disadvantaged women may have been more likely to behave aggressively toward those younger than themselves, or seek their assistance in ways that might bring them under suspicion of procuring youth to the evils of prostitution or diabolism. Similarly, the marks of a lifetime of poverty and struggle—wrinkled skin, disfigurations, and blemishes—constituted physical proof of immorality according to contemporary lore. Print helped to entrench these qualities as key to defining the witch and the bawd as a category of marginalisation into which poor women could be placed. Transgression and representation have been integral issues to this thesis. Though these elements are not necessarily reflective of historical events, they make it possible to identify beliefs and values. These printed materials demonstrate that many elderly women led somewhat fraught lives; that transgressions were often imagined similarly; and that witches and bawds were depicted in similar ways.36

35 British Journal, Saturday 21 May 1726; Beam, “Should I as Yet Call You Old?,” 102-104; van Tilburg, “Tracing Sexual Identities in ‘Old Age’,” 382.
36 Differentiating between crime and transgression allows for acknowledgement of the role that imagination plays in understanding human behaviour. Richard Hillman and Pauline Rubbery-Black assert that “Transgression’, like crime, is discursively mediated—it can be measured only by what is written or reported—but it stands in a closer (indeed intimate) relation to imagination. Insofar as it implies the crossing of boundaries, it denotes a process, rather than a fixed state. As such, it throws into relief the intervention of subjective judgement and invites a destabilizing interrogation of what it means, not just to cross those boundaries, but to put them in place.” Transgression is constructed; however, because it is constructed socially and imaginatively, these concepts had great power. Richard
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Appendix One: Figures

Fig. 1, William Hogarth, “Arrival in London,” 1732, S,2.20 © Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 2: William Hogarth, “The Harlot’s Funeral” 1732, S,2.30, © Trustees of the British Museum.
Fig. 3: W. Hogarth, “The Harlot Quarrels with her Jew Protector,” 1732, S,2.23, © Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 4: William Hogarth, “The Harlot at her Dwelling Place,” 1732, S,2.24, © Trustees of the British Museum.
Fig. 5: W. Hogarth, “Beating Hemp in Bridewell,” 1732, S,2.27, © Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 6: J.M. Rysbrack, “The Witches in Macbeth,” 1720-1770, 1868,0822.7604, © Trustees of the British Museum.
Fig. 7: Andrew Lawrence, “Saul and the Witch of Endor,” 1730-1754, W,7.131, © Trustees of the British Museum.