

# Scepticism And Belief In English Witchcraft Drama

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*Rediscovering Renaissance Witchcraft* Marion Gibson 2017-11-27 Rediscovering Renaissance Witchcraft is an exploration of witchcraft in the literature of Britain and America from the 16th and 17th centuries through to the present day. As well as the themes of history and literature (politics and war, genre and intertextuality), the book considers issues of national identity, gender and sexuality, race and empire, and more. The complex fascination with witchcraft through the ages is investigated, and the importance of witches in the real world and in fiction is analysed. The book begins with a chapter dedicated to the stories and records of witchcraft in the Renaissance and up until the English Civil War, such as the North Berwick witches and the work of the 'Witch Finder Generall' Matthew Hopkins. The significance of these accounts in shaping future literature is then presented through the examination of extracts from key texts, such as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Middleton's *The Witch*, among others. In the second half of the book, the focus shifts to a consideration of the Romantic rediscovery of Renaissance witchcraft in the eighteenth century, and its further reinvention and continued presence throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including the establishment of witchcraft studies as a subject in its own right, the impact of the First World War and end of the British Empire on witchcraft fiction, the legacy of the North Berwick, Hopkins and Salem witch trials, and the position of witchcraft in culture, including filmic and televisual culture, today. Equipped with an extensive list of primary and secondary sources, *Rediscovering Renaissance Witchcraft* is essential reading for all students of witchcraft in modern British and American culture and early modern history and literature.

*Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard 1937

**Religion and the Decline of Magic** Keith Thomas 2003-01-30 Witchcraft, astrology, divination and every kind of popular magic flourished in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from the belief that a blessed amulet could prevent the assaults of the Devil to the use of the same charms to recover stolen goods. At the same time the Protestant Reformation attempted to take the magic out of religion, and scientists were developing new explanations of the universe. Keith Thomas's classic analysis of beliefs held on every level of English society begins with the collapse of the medieval Church and ends with the changing

intellectual atmosphere around 1700, when science and rationalism began to challenge the older systems of belief.

### **A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718** Wallace Notestein 1911

*Kingdom of the Wicked* Kerri Maniscalco 2020-10-27 A James Patterson Presents Novel From the #1 New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of the Stalking Jack the Ripper series comes a new blockbuster series... Two sisters. One brutal murder. A quest for vengeance that will unleash Hell itself... And an intoxicating romance. Emilia and her twin sister Vittoria are streghe -- witches who live secretly among humans, avoiding notice and persecution. One night, Vittoria misses dinner service at the family's renowned Sicilian restaurant. Emilia soon finds the body of her beloved twin...deseccated beyond belief. Devastated, Emilia sets out to find her sister's killer and to seek vengeance at any cost-even if it means using dark magic that's been long forbidden. Then Emilia meets Wrath, one of the Wicked-princes of Hell she has been warned against in tales since she was a child. Wrath claims to be on Emilia's side, tasked by his master with solving the series of women's murders on the island. But when it comes to the Wicked, nothing is as it seems...

*The Meaning of Witchcraft* Gerald B. Gardner 2004-03-01 Thought to be the father of modern witchcraft, Gerald Gardner published *The Meaning of Witchcraft* in 1959, not long after laws punishing witches were repealed. It was the first sympathetic book written from the point of view of a practicing witch. *The Meaning of Witchcraft* is an invaluable source book for witches today. Chapters include: Witch's Memories and Beliefs, The Stone Age Origins of Witchcraft, Druidism and the Aryan Celts, Magic Thinking, Curious Beliefs about Witches, Signs and Symbols, The Black Mass, Some Allegations Examined. *The Meaning of Witchcraft* is a record of witches' roots-and a tribute to a founding pioneer with the courage to set that record straight.

**Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England** Peter Elmer 2016-01-14 *Witchcraft, Witch-hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England* offers a wide-ranging and original overview of the subject of witchcraft and its place in English society, covering the period from the beginning of witch trials in the early years of the reign of Elizabeth I through to the repeal of the *Witchcraft Statute* in 1736. In contrast to other approaches to the subject, which have tended to focus on the origins of witchcraft in gender and/or socio-economic explanations, this volume situates belief in witchcraft and witch-hunting within the context of the political and religious debates of the period, shedding new light on the subject through a series of original case studies based on extensive archival research.

### **Witches, Midwives, and Nurses** Barbara Ehrenreich 2003

**A defence of witchcraft belief** Eric Pudney 2021-02-23 This is the first published edition of a fascinating manuscript on witchcraft in the collection of the British Library, written by an unknown sixteenth-century scholar. Responding to a pre-publication draft of Reginald Scot's sceptical *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), the treatise represents the most detailed defence of witchcraft belief to be written in the early modern period in England. It highlights in detail the scriptural and theological justifications for a belief in witches, covering ground that may well have been considered too sensitive for print publications and presenting learned arguments not found in any other contemporary English work. Consequently, it offers a unique insight into

elite witchcraft belief dating from the very beginning of the English witchcraft debate. This edition, which includes a comprehensive analytical introduction, presents the treatise with modernised spelling and relevant excerpts from Scot's book.

### **The Wonders of the Invisible World** Cotton Mather 1862

Supernatural Fiction in Early Modern Drama and Culture Ryan Curtis Friesen 2019-07 Beliefs and claims concerning impossible phenomena and superhuman agency require literary historians to determine whether an occult system of magical operation is being described in a given text. Each chapter in this volume evaluates whether a chosen early modern author is endorsing magic as efficacious or divinely sanctioned, or criticizing it for being fraudulent or unholy. By examining works of fiction, it is possible to explore fantastic settings which were not intended to be synonymous with the early modern audience's everyday experience, settings where magic exists and operates according to the playwrights' designs. The book also determines what historical sources provided given authors with knowledge of the occult and it speculates on how aware an audience would have been of academic, classical, or popular contexts surrounding the text at hand. It brings together authors of fiction with philosophers and academics in Early Modern England and compares their ways of describing and understanding the world. It also explores popular culture, as well as the culture of the learned and elite. The book examines the intellectual consequences of the Reformation and compares the spiritual and doctrinal practices of the occult to those of orthodoxy.

### Scepticism and Belief in English Witchcraft Drama, 1538-1681 Eric Pudney 2016

**The Witch of Edmonton** Thomas Dekker 2021-11-22 At the center of this remarkable 1621 play is the story of Elizabeth Sawyer, the titular "Witch of Edmonton," a woman who had in fact been executed for the crime of witchcraft mere months before the play's first performance. Described by the authors as a tragi-comedy and drawn in part from a pamphlet account of the trial then circulating, the play not only offers a riveting account of the contemporary superstitions embodied by the figure of the witch, but also delivers an implicit critique of the society that has created her. This edition of the work offers a compelling and informative introduction, thorough annotation, and a selection of contextual materials that helps set the play in the context of the "witch-craze" of Jacobean England.

The Crucible Arthur Miller 2012-03-19 "The Crucible" is a 1952 play by the American playwright Arthur Miller. It is a dramatization of the Salem witch trials that took place in the Province of Massachusetts Bay during 1692 and 1693. Miller wrote the play as an allegory of McCarthyism, when the US government blacklisted accused communists. Miller himself was questioned by the House of Representatives' Committee on Un-American Activities in 1956 and convicted of "contempt of Congress" for refusing to identify others present at meetings he had attended. It was first performed at the Martin Beck Theater on Broadway on January 22, 1953. Miller felt that this production was too stylized and cold and the reviews for it were largely hostile (although The New York Times noted "a powerful play in a driving performance"). Nonetheless, the production won the 1953 "Best Play" Tony Award. A year later a new production succeeded and the play became a classic. It is a central work in the canon of American drama. Fuji Books' edition of "The Crucible" contains supplementary texts: \* "Tragedy And The Common Man", an essay by Arthur Miller. \* Excerpts from Nathaniel Hawthorne's magnum opus "The Scarlet Letter", a narrative of the Salem Witch trials. \* A few

selected quotes of Arthur Miller.

*The History of Witchcraft and Demonology* Montague Summers 2012-03-07 This classic of esoterica, written by the field's foremost scholar, employs colorful, little-known anecdotes and historical accounts to explore witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy, damnation, Satanism, and every variety of magic.

**Witchcraft, Demonology, and Confession in Early Modern France** Virginia Krause 2015-01-19 Situated at the crossroads of history and literary studies, this book examines confession's place at the heart of French demonology. Drawing on evidence from published treatises, the writings of skeptics such as Montaigne, and the documents from a witchcraft trial, Virginia Krause shows how demonologists erected their science of demons on the confessed experiences of would-be witches.

Representing Magic in Modern Ireland Andrew Sneddon 2022-05-31 This Element argues that Ireland did not experience a disenchanting modernity, nor a decline in magic. It suggests that beliefs, practices and traditions concerning witchcraft and magic developed and adapted to modernity to retain cultural currency until the end of the twentieth century. This analysis provides the backdrop for the first systematic exploration of how historic Irish trials of witches and cunning-folk were represented by historians, antiquarians, journalists, dramatists, poets, and novelists in Ireland between the late eighteenth and late twentieth century. It is demonstrated that this work created an accepted narrative of Irish witchcraft and magic which glossed over, ignored, or obscured the depth of belief in witchcraft, both in the past and in contemporary society. Collectively, their work gendered Irish witchcraft, created a myth of a disenchanting, modern Ireland, and reinforced competing views of Irishness and Irish identity. These long-held stereotypes were only challenged in the late twentieth-century.

*Thomas Middleton and the Plural Politics of Jacobean Drama* Mark Kaethler 2021-05-10 *Thomas Middleton and the Plural Politics of Jacobean Drama* represents the first sustained study of Middleton's dramatic works as responses to James I's governance. Through examining Middleton's poesis in relation to the political theology of Jacobean London, Kaethler explores early forms of free speech, namely parrhēsia, and rhetorical devices, such as irony and allegory, to elucidate the ways in which Middleton's plural art exposes the limitations of the monarch's sovereign image. By drawing upon earlier forms of dramatic intervention, James's writings, and popular literature that blossomed during the Jacobean period, including news pamphlets, the book surveys a selection of Middleton's writings, ranging from his first extant play *The Phoenix* (1604) to his scandalous finale *A Game at Chess* (1624). In the course of this investigation, the author identifies that although Middleton's drama spurs political awareness and questions authority, it nevertheless simultaneously promotes alternative structures of power, which manifest as misogyny and white supremacy.

*A Break with Charity* Ann Rinaldi 1992 While waiting for a church meeting in 1706, Susanna English, daughter of a wealthy Salem merchant, recalls the malice, fear, and accusations of witchcraft that tore her village apart in 1692.

**Purity and Danger** Professor Mary Douglas 2013-06-17 *Purity and Danger* is acknowledged as a modern masterpiece of anthropology. It is widely cited in non-anthropological works and gave rise to a body of application, rebuttal and development within anthropology. In 1995 the

book was included among the Times Literary Supplement's hundred most influential non-fiction works since WWII. Incorporating the philosophy of religion and science and a generally holistic approach to classification, Douglas demonstrates the relevance of anthropological enquiries to an audience outside her immediate academic circle. She offers an approach to understanding rules of purity by examining what is considered unclean in various cultures. She sheds light on the symbolism of what is considered clean and dirty in relation to order in secular and religious, modern and primitive life.

#### Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft Walter Scott 1885

*A Lesson in Vengeance* Victoria Lee 2021 Felicity Morrow returns to the Dalloway School after her girlfriend's tragic death, only to meet Ellis Haley--a new student and a teenage literary prodigy--who enlists Felicity's help in researching the school's bloody, occult history for her new book.

*Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment* Lizanne Henderson 2016-04-08 Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment* represents the first in-depth investigation of Scottish witchcraft and witch belief post-1662, the period of supposed decline of such beliefs, an age which has been referred to as the 'long eighteenth century', coinciding with the Scottish Enlightenment. The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were undoubtedly a period of transition and redefinition of what constituted the supernatural, at the interface between folk belief and the philosophies of the learned. For the latter the eradication of such beliefs equated with progress and civilization but for others, such as the devout, witch belief was a matter of faith, such that fear and dread of witches and their craft lasted well beyond the era of the major witch-hunts. This study seeks to illuminate the distinctiveness of the Scottish experience, to assess the impact of enlightenment thought upon witch belief, and to understand how these beliefs operated across all levels of Scottish society.

*Animals, Animality, and Literature* Bruce Boehrer 2018-09-20 *Animals, Animality, and Literature* offers readers a one-volume survey of the field of literary animal studies in both its theoretical and applied dimensions. Focusing on English literary history, with scrupulous attention to the interplay between English and foreign influences, this collection gathers together the work of nineteen internationally noted specialists in this growing discipline. Offering discussion of English literary works from *Beowulf* to Virginia Woolf and beyond, this book explores the ways human/animal difference has been historically activated within the literary context: in devotional works, in philosophical and zoological treatises, in plays and poems and novels, and more recently within emerging narrative genres such as cinema and animation. With an introductory overview of the historical development of animal studies and afterword looking to the field's future possibilities, *Animals, Animality, and Literature* provides a wide-ranging survey of where this discipline currently stands.

Thinking with Demons Stuart Clark 1999 Dr Clark offers an interpretation of the witchcraft beliefs of European intellectuals of the period, based on their publication in the field of demonology. This work will increase our understanding of the cultural history of early modern Europe.

The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper 1967 The Civil War, the

Restoration, and the Glorious Revolution in England laid the institutional and intellectual foundations of the modern understanding of liberty, of which we are heirs and beneficiaries. The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century uncovers new pathways to understanding this seminal time. Neither Catholic nor Protestant emerges unscathed from the examination to which Trevor-Roper subjects the era in which, from political and religious causes, the identification and extirpation of witches was a central event. Trevor-Roper points out that "In England the most active phase of witch-hunting coincided with times of Puritan pressure -- the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the period of the civil wars -- and some very fanciful theories have been built on this coincidence. But... the persecution of witches in England was trivial compared with the experience of the Continent and of Scotland. Therefore... [one must examine] the craze as a whole, throughout Europe, and [seek] to relate its rise, frequency, and decline to the general intellectual and social movements of the time...".

*The Witchcraft Sourcebook* Brian P. Levack 2004 This collection of trial records, laws, treatises, sermons, speeches, woodcuttings, paintings and literary texts illustrates how contemporaries from various periods have perceived alleged witches and their activities.

**Cultures of Witchcraft in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present** Jonathan Barry 2017-10-09 This volume is a collection based on the contributions to witchcraft studies of Willem de Blécourt, to whom it is dedicated, and who provides the opening chapter, setting out a methodological and conceptual agenda for the study of cultures of witchcraft (broadly defined) in Europe since the Middle Ages. It includes contributions from historians, anthropologists, literary scholars and folklorists who have collaborated closely with De Blécourt. Essays pick up some or all of the themes and approaches he pioneered, and apply them to cases which range in time and space across all the main regions of Europe since the thirteenth century until the present day. While some draw heavily on texts, others on archival sources, and others on field research, they all share a commitment to reconstructing the meaning and lived experience of witchcraft (and its related phenomena) to Europeans at all levels, respecting the many varieties and ambiguities in such meanings and experiences and resisting attempts to reduce them to master narratives or simple causal models. The chapter 'News from the Invisible World: The Publishing History of Tales of the Supernatural c.1660-1832' is available open access under a CC BY 4.0 license at [link.springer.com](https://link.springer.com).

**The Witch in History** Diane Purkiss 2013-05-13 'Diane Purkiss ... insists on taking witches seriously. Her refusal to write witch-believers off as unenlightened has produced some richly intelligent meditations on their -- and our -- world.' - The Observer 'An invigorating and challenging book ... sets many hares running.' - The Times Higher Education Supplement

**Scepticism and belief in English witchcraft drama, 1538-1681** Eric Pudney 2019-03-14 Winner of the 2019 Warburg Prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities for an outstanding work of literary history This is a study of the representation of witches in early modern English drama, organised around the themes of scepticism and belief. It covers the entire early modern period, including the Restoration, and pays particular attention to three plays in which witchcraft is central: *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634) and *The Lancashire Witches* (1681). Always a controversial issue, witchcraft has traditionally been seen in terms of a debate between 'sceptics' and 'believers'. This book argues instead that, while the concepts of scepticism and belief are central to an understanding of early modern witchcraft, they are more fruitfully understood not as static and

mutually exclusive positions within the witchcraft debate, but as rhetorical tools used by both sides.

**The Witches** Stacy Schiff 2015-10-27 The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Cleopatra*, the #1 national bestseller, unpacks the mystery of the Salem Witch Trials. It began in 1692, over an exceptionally raw Massachusetts winter, when a minister's daughter began to scream and convulse. It ended less than a year later, but not before 19 men and women had been hanged and an elderly man crushed to death. The panic spread quickly, involving the most educated men and prominent politicians in the colony. Neighbors accused neighbors, parents and children each other. Aside from suffrage, the Salem Witch Trials represent the only moment when women played the central role in American history. In curious ways, the trials would shape the future republic. As psychologically thrilling as it is historically seminal, *THE WITCHES* is Stacy Schiff's account of this fantastical story—the first great American mystery unveiled fully for the first time by one of our most acclaimed historians.

**The Witches of Lancashire** Richard Brome 2003 In this ribald comedy, first performed at The Globe in 1634, everything is going wrong at a wedding, and everyone in attendance is eager to believe a local coven is to blame.

*The Book of Witches* Oliver Madox Hueffer 1908

**Witchfinders** Malcolm Gaskill 2007-10-31 In 1645, Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne exploited the anxiety and lawlessness of the time and initiated a brutal campaign to drive out the presumed evil in their midst. Gaskill recounts the most savage witch-hunt in English history. By the fall of 1647 at least 250 people had been captured, interrogated, and tried, with more than 100 hanged.

**Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe** Julian Goodare 2020-07-20 Demonology – the intellectual study of demons and their powers – contributed to the prosecution of thousands of witches. But how exactly did intellectual ideas relate to prosecutions? Recent scholarship has shown that some of the demonologists' concerns remained at an abstract intellectual level, while some of the judges' concerns reflected popular culture. This book brings demonology and witch-hunting back together, while placing both topics in their specific regional cultures. The book's chapters, each written by a leading scholar, cover most regions of Europe, from Scandinavia and Britain through to Germany, France and Switzerland, and Italy and Spain. By focusing on various intellectual levels of demonology, from sophisticated demonological thought to the development of specific demonological ideas and ideas within the witch trial environment, the book offers a thorough examination of the relationship between demonology and witch-hunting. *Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe* is essential reading for all students and researchers of the history of demonology, witch-hunting and early modern Europe.

*Scepticism and Belief in English Witchcraft Drama, 1538-1681* Eric Pudney 2016

**Dangerous Familiars** Frances E. Dolan 1994 Even now in the mass media, women are often portrayed as murderers in their own homes, although in reality women are much more likely to be the victims of domestic violence than the perpetrators. Looking back at images of violence in the popular culture of early modern England, we find similar misperceptions. The specter of

the murderer loomed most vividly not in the stranger, but in the familiar; and not in the master, husband, or father, but in the servant, wife, or mother. A gripping exploration of seventeenth-century accounts of domestic murder in fact and fiction, this book is the first to ask why. Frances E. Dolan examines stories ranging from the profoundly disturbing to the comically macabre: of husband murder (legally defined as "petty treason"), wife murder (or "petty tyranny"), infanticide, and witchcraft. She surveys trial transcripts, confessions, and gallows speeches, as well as pamphlets, ballads, popular plays based on notorious crimes, and such well-known works as *The Tempest*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Citing contemporary analogies between the politics of household and commonwealth, she shows how both legal and literary narratives attempt to restore the order threatened by insubordinate dependents. Representations of women who plot to kill their husbands, masters, children, and neighbors, she finds, articulate fears of women's sexual appetites and capacities for violence, as well as anxieties about the perils of intimacy and the instability of class and gender positions. In an epilogue, Dolan envisions literary history itself as a battle to the death among generic intimates. The novel is cast in this drama as the rebellious off-spring of pamphlet and ballad, a ruthless heir that flourished through its readiness to devour its parents.

*Witchcraft, Demonology and Magic* Marina Montesano 2020-05-20 Witchcraft and magic are topics of enduring interest for many reasons. The main one lies in their extraordinary interdisciplinarity: anthropologists, folklorists, historians, and more have contributed to build a body of work of extreme variety and consistence. Of course, this also means that the subjects themselves are not easy to assess. In a very general way, we can define witchcraft as a supernatural means to cause harm, death, or misfortune, while magic also belongs to the field of supernatural, or at least esoteric knowledge, but can be used to less dangerous effects (e.g., divination and astrology). In Western civilization, however, the witch hunt has set a very peculiar perspective in which diabolical witchcraft, the invention of the Sabbat, the persecution of many thousands of (mostly) female and (sometimes) male presumed witches gave way to a phenomenon that is fundamentally different from traditional witchcraft. This Special Issue of *Religions* dedicated to Witchcraft, Demonology, and Magic features nine articles that deal with four different regions of Europe (England, Germany, Hungary, and Italy) between Late Medieval and Modern times in different contexts and social milieus. Far from pretending to offer a complete picture, they focus on some topics that are central to the research in those fields and fit well in the current "cumulative concept of Western witchcraft" that rules out all mono-causality theories, investigating a plurality of causes.

[Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England](#) Peter Marshall 2002-07-11 This is the first comprehensive study of one of the most important aspects of the Reformation in England: its impact on the status of the dead. Protestant reformers insisted vehemently that between heaven and hell there was no 'middle place' of purgatory where the souls of the departed could be assisted by the prayers of those still living on earth. This was no remote theological proposition, but a revolutionary doctrine affecting the lives of all sixteenth-century English people, and the ways in which their Church and society were organized. This book illuminates the (sometimes ambivalent) attitudes towards the dead to be discerned in pre-Reformation religious culture, and traces (up to about 1630) the uncertain progress of the 'reformation of the dead' attempted by Protestant authorities, as they sought both to stamp out traditional rituals and to provide the replacements acceptable in an increasingly fragmented religious world. It also provides detailed surveys of Protestant perceptions of the afterlife, of the cultural meanings of the appearance of ghosts, and of the patterns of commemoration and memory

which became characteristic of post-Reformation England. Together these topics constitute an important case-study in the nature and tempo of the English Reformation as an agent of social and cultural transformation. The book speaks directly to the central concerns of current Reformation scholarship, addressing questions posed by 'revisionist' historians about the vibrancy and resilience of traditional religious culture, and by 'post-revisionists' about the penetration of reformed ideas. Dr Marshall demonstrates not only that the dead can be regarded as a significant 'marker' of religious and cultural change, but that a persistent concern with their status did a great deal to fashion the distinctive appearance of the English Reformation as a whole, and to create its peculiarities and contradictory impulses.

**Pentecostalism and Witchcraft** Knut Rio 2017-10-29 This open access book presents fresh ethnographic work from the regions of Africa and Melanesia—where the popularity of charismatic Christianity can be linked to a revival and transformation of witchcraft. The volume demonstrates how the Holy Spirit has become an adversary to the reconfirmed presence of witches, demons, and sorcerers as manifestations of evil. We learn how this is articulated in spiritual warfare, in crusades, and in healing or witch-killing raids. The contributors highlight what happens to phenomena that people address as locally specific witchcraft or sorcery when re-molded within the universalist Pentecostal demonology, vocabulary, and confrontational methodology.