XIX COLÓQUIO DE OUTONO

No princípio era a palavra
O lugar das Humanidades

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“In the Beginning was the Word” The Place of Humanities

EDITORES

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XIX COLÓQUIO DE OUTONO
"NO PRINCÍPIO ERA A PALAVRA". O LUGAR DAS HUMANIDADES

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IN A FLIGHT OF FANCY FROM PENDLE TO SALEM – THE CULTURAL MEMORY OF THE EARLY MODERN WOMAN AS WITCH ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

NAS ASAS DA IMAGINAÇÃO DE PENDLE PARA SALEM – A MEMÓRIA CULTURAL DA MULHER BRUXA DO SÉCULO XVII EM AMBOS OS LADOS DO ATLÂNTICO

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The depiction of the composite and cumulative image of the early English modern woman as witch in the Pendle witch trials of 1612 (Lancashire, UK) does not differ significantly from the one later portrayed in the Salem witch trials of 1692 (New England, USA). It suggests that the cultural memory of the woman as witch had remained in the fancy of the early English immigrants, soared out of the British Isles and crossed the Atlantic into the North-American Continent. Thus, the mnemonic processes involved and how they unfolded diachronically and geographically between and beyond the early modern English and colonial New England cultures, attest to the transculturality of the cultural memory of the woman as witch. We intend, first, to illustrate this by discussing some of the defining aspects of the (trans)cultural immaterial religious sites of memory of the early modern woman as witch, in both Pendle Hill in Lancashire England and in Salem in Massachusetts, New England (US). And, second, we highlight one of the material sites of the cultural memory between the 1612 Pendle Hill trials and the 1692 Salem witch trials regarding the English accusatorial procedures, as far as the crime of witchcraft was concerned.

Keywords: Early modern witchcraft; (trans)cultural memory; material/immaterial sites of memory; woman as witch; Lancashire witches; Salem witch trials.

A imagem, composta e cumulativa, da mulher-bruxa, tal como representada no julgamento das bruxas de Pendle de 1612 (Lancashire, Reino Unido), não difere significativamente daquela replicada posteriormente no julgamento das bruxas de Salem de 1692 (Nova Inglaterra, EUA), ou seja, a memória cultural da mulher-bruxa inglesa atravessou o Atlântico nas asas da imaginação dos primeiros imigrantes ingleses. Tal sugere que os processos mnemónicos sustentaram a transculturalidade da memória da mulher-bruxa inglesa do

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século XVII, não só entre a cultura inglesa e a cultura colonial da Nova Inglaterra, mas também para além destas, diacrónica e geograficamente. Pretendemos, pois, em primeiro lugar, discutir alguns dos aspetos mais pertinentes dos sítios religiosos imateriais (trans) culturais da memória da mulher-bruxa do século XVII de Pendle Hill e de Salem. E, em segundo lugar, salientaremos um dos sítios materiais da memória cultural que ligam o julgamento das bruxas de Pendle Hill em 1612 ao das bruxas de Salem em 1692, nomeadamente, os procedimentos acusatórios ingleses aplicados ao crime de bruxaria.

Palavras-chave: Bruxaria inglesa no século XVII; memória (trans)cultural; sítios materiais/imateriais de memória; mulher-bruxa; bruxas de Lancashire; julgamento das bruxas de Salém.

In early modern European witch persecuting societies, like the English one, witchcraft was considered a serious intellectual pursuit. The orthodox demonic concept of witchcraft diverged from the residual pre-Christian popular beliefs, and the acknowledgement of witchcraft, as well as the understanding of what or who a witch is, was prolifically discussed in the demonological treatises.[1]

Witchcraft was also a severe crime. The Witchcraft Act of 1604 came into effect within a year of James I's accession to the throne of England and was even harsher than any previous versions for it made causing harm resorting to magic – *maleficium* –, even if it did not result in or lead to death, a capital crime. It also decreed death for anyone found guilty of committing a punishable offence using magic for the second time. It also prohibited the use of dead bodies in magic or the keeping – as opposed to the conjuration – of spirits. In effect, it made it much simpler to convict anyone suspected of witchcraft, as the burden of proof was much reduced.

The crime of witchcraft, however, was perceived in both a secular and spiritual level. Those who were accused of practising any form of witchcraft were also heretics, and therefore traitors to God and associates of the Lord's prime enemy, the Devil. Since the Middle Ages, this biblical entity and his demons had been progressively empowered. They began to be believed as

1 For a more extensive understanding of early modern magic and witchcraft in Continental Europe versus early modern England see, for example: Ankarloo & Clark, 1999; Ankarloo, Clark & Monter, 2002; Barry, Hester & Roberts, 1996; Barstow, 1994; Bever, 2008; Briggs, 1996; Cameron, 2010; Cavendish, 1975, 1977; Clark, 1997; Cohn, 1975; Durston, 2000; Evans-Pritchard & Douglas, 1970; Ewen, 1933; Hoyt, 1989; Hutton, 1991; Klaits, 1985; Kors & Peters, 2001; Larner & Macfarlane, 1984; Levack, 2006; Maxwell-Stuart, 2001; Notestein, 1911; Pavlac, 2009; Scarre, 1987; Sharpe, 1996; Stewart & Strathern, 2004; Thomas, 1971.

perilous tempters and destroyers of the body and the soul. In ecclesiastical accounts, the Devil murdered the innocent, lured people into renouncing their allegiance to God, caused destruction, induced possession, and copulated with either humans or animals, and had metamorphic abilities. Later these came to characterise the demonic Continental woman as witch. This archetypal witch emerged as a heretic who entered a formal pact – a covenant – with the Devil by signing in blood on his black book for her preternatural[2] power, thus deliberately surrendering to the demands of apostasy by renouncing God. In doing his bidding, a witch practised murder, infanticide, cannibalism, sodomy, and bestiality. She also attended diabolic euphoric nocturnal orgiac meetings known as sabbats where she engaged in intercourse with the Devil.

The early modern English popular witch was somewhat different from the continental demonic one. In England, it was believed that a witch could manipulate the natural and supernatural worlds using good and harmful magic deeds. Since pre-Christian times, the English popular witch, or rather, the wise-woman and cunning man, was believed to facilitate the natural and supernatural worlds and overcome the mystifying adversities of life, using sympathetic, deceptive or manipulative magic. In most instances, the wise woman, or cunning-man, was the only available worldly rescue in the community and those who could afford it would have one on a yearly retainer.

Most of the time they were well-regarded for having the power to heal the sick or injured people and animals. They could also soothe aches, bring about love, exercise divination, find lost treasures or personal items, conjure the spirits, obstruct or enable human reproduction. They would also guarantee that everyday household errands, such as beer brewing and butter churning were successful. All of it was achieved using incantations, herbal potions and poultices, charms, prayers, rituals, sleight of hand and mostly by promoting a placebo-effect healing process (*vd.* Froome, 2010). At times, however, their so-called powers could be used to cause harm, either upon request for a fee or as vindication against some past unforgotten injustice, against themselves. This most basic form of witchcraft was also termed

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2 For 16th and 17th-century Christians, witchcraft, ghosts and the power of the Devil constituted the 'preternatural'. It related to what occurred beyond the normal bounds of nature and ranged from the activity of the Devil himself and the demonic dealings of magical agents such as witches, to the activities of all spiritual agents other than God and his immediate servants: the angels, the disembodied souls of the dead and demons. (Young, 2013, 23–26)

maleficium. Additionally, the influence and the use of the evil eye or *fascinatio* – the ability to look at someone or something to effect a transfer of malevolence or envy, which would usually manifest itself in the form of disease or loss of power – was believed to be equally harmful. Cursing or the resorting to imprecatory words was also not an uncommon practice to bringing down some form of misfortune on someone. Though witchcraft and magic in England were endemic, the witch trials were infrequent, the number of witches accused varied only between one and four, and they were often acquitted. In 1612, for example, the presiding judge Sir Edward Bromley of Lancashire stated that the few defendants who were acquitted were as guilty as those who had been sentenced to death (*vd.* Potts & Bromley, 1612, sig.X1). The English Assize judges were seemingly cautious when handling of witchcraft interrogations and trials, and indeed, before 1612, no English judge had convicted so many witches at one Assize.

By the early seventeenth century, Continental Europe learned witchcraft beliefs had already crossed the channel over to England, mainly through the critical writings of several Protestant demonologists, coming together to form the composite archetypal cultural memory of the English women-as-witch. For example, King James I and his French-influenced views on witchcraft in his *Daemonology* (1597 Scotland and 1603 England). George Gifford's works on witchcraft: *A discourse of the subtill practises of deuilles by witches and sorcerers* (1587) and *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcrafts* (1593). Also, William Perkins' *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (1608).

Indeed, according to Briggs, the first approximation to a sabbat in England came with the Pendle Hill trials of 1612 in Lancashire, one of the most relevant and resonating witch trials in English witchcraft history, "and even here what appeared to have happened is far removed from the fantasies of Continental demonologists" (Briggs, 1996, 53). According to Wallace Notestein, one of the first scholars of English witchcraft[3], "no case in the course of superstition in England gained such wide fame" (Notestein, 1911, 99). In 1612 "no County in

3 For other historical works which reference the Pendle witch trial of 1612 before Notestein see for example: *The History of the Lancashire Witches: Containing, the Manner of Their Becoming Such; Their Enchantments, Spells, Revels, Merry Pranks, Raising of Storms and Tempests, Riding on Winds, &c. The Entertainment and Frolicks which Happened Among Them. With the Loves and Humours of Roger and Dorothy. Also, a Treatise of Witches in General. Conducive to Mirth and Recreation. The Like Never Before Published* (1750) by Baines and Croston; *Lancashire Cheshire, Past and Present: A History and description of the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester, forming*

the kingdom was more scandalised by the degrading superstition than the County of Lancaster" (Baines & Croston, 1886, 267), "a dark corner of superstition, witchcraft and popery" (Raines, 1875, 1). It was the home of the Lancashire witches of 1612: a group of men and women who were arrested in or near Pendle Forest, taken to trial at Lancaster Castle and who, apart from for the one who perished in prison, were either acquitted, imprisoned or hanged in the outskirts of Lancaster, in August of the same year (Sharpe, 1996, 99; Peel & Southern, 1985, 11).

All that is known about the case of the Pendle Witch trials of 1612 is found in a contemporary primary source titled *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster*, authored by Thomas Potts and published in 1613.[4] Potts's wide-ranging official account of the trials is undeniably a discriminatory version that contributed to the widespread and notoriety of these witch trials, and to greater dissemination of the Protestant English views on witchcraft (Pavlac 2009, 126–127).

Over four hundred years ago, in the Pendle Forest of Lancashire, Northern England, thrived a village rivalry between two families who seemingly practised popular magic[5], each led by an elderly matriarch. On the one side, there was Elizabeth Southerns, better known to neighbours and patients alike as 'Old Demdike', who was the head of the Device family. The Devices included her daughter, Elizabeth Device, and her grandchildren Alice, James, and young Jennet. On the other side, there was the broken-down and almost blind Anne Whittle, called 'Old Chattox', and her daughter Anne Redfearne.[6] The Devices blamed Old Chattox for having murdered Old Demdike's husband using *maleficium*, eleven years earlier. The already tense village dynamics between these two families and their neighbours was further stressed with the snub of

the North-Western Division of England from the earliest Ages to The Present Times (1867) by Baines, Fairbairn and Warren.

4 Besides Thomas Potts's work, only the following contemporary works have brief or indirect mentions to the case of the Pendle witch trials: *The Journal of Nicholas Assheton* (vol. 14) *The Farington Papers* (vol. 39); *Stewards' House and Farm Accounts of the Shuttleworths of Smithills and Gawthorpe* (vols. 35, 41, 43, 46) – "the constable of Padiham to the carrage of Pearson, his wife [Margaret Pearson] to Lancaster." *Materials for the History of Lancashire* (vol. 61) and in John M.R.S.L's *Traditions of Lancashire* (vol. I)

5 Also termed manipulative or sympathetic or image magic.

6 "In 18th-century Clitheroe, anyone who called a woman 'Chattox' or a 'Demdike' was taken to court and fine, for though long after their deaths, they were still remembered by the Lancashire folk as the most feared and fearsome of the Pendle witches." (Lofthouse, 1976, 60)

begging by many of the least fortunate members of the community.[7] Despite this, both the locals and nearby villagers came to these cunning women asking for their help with all sorts of dire day-to-day difficulties. They scraped out a living at the foot of Pendle Hill, in the margins of Pendle Forest and of decent society, and were reciprocally implicated in crimes such as the run of the mill thefts, extortion, and bribery to local officials.

On March 21, 1612, Alison Device came across John Law, a traveling peddler. As he would not part with some pins for her, she allegedly cursed him. Upon the immediate appearance of a big black dog, John Law almost immediately fell under a strange illness, which by modern standards can easily be identified by any layman as a stroke. Law's family, who were not from the Pendle Hill area, appealed to the local justice of the peace, Roger Nowell. Aged sixty-two in 1612, he was an experienced local JP, an important local landholder, and perhaps most relevant in this case, indirectly acquainted with William Perkins – the leading early modern Puritan demonologist and friend of William Whittaker – a relative of Roger Nowell.[8] After a brief investigation, Nowell did not only arrest Alison Device, her mother Elizabeth Device, and her grandmother Old Demdike, but also Old Chattox and her daughter Anne Redfearne as well. They were all imprisoned in the Well Tower (also known as 'The Witches' Tower'), situated on the eastern side of Lancaster Castle (Goodier, 2011, 106–107).

On Good Friday of 1612, Elizabeth Southern, alias Old Demdike, had been arrested and imprisoned. Shortly after, Old Demdike's village friends and relatives met at her home, then known as 'Malkin Tower', to allegedly plot to free her and her family from prison by blowing up Lancaster Castle. According to statements taken from Old Demdike's grandchildren by magistrate Roger Nowell of Read Hall, they all later admitted to the conspiratorial nature of this gathering. Presumably, the resolve was to use gunpowder to blow up Lancaster Castle, kill the warders and release the prisoners (Clayton, 2011).

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7 Some witchcraft historians, such as Robin Briggs in his (Briggs, 1996) apply the social accusation theory, i.e. when people turn down requests for charity by begging villagers, particularly those known for being cunning people, their guilt facilitate the blaming of any subsequent accidents on the malice of these "witches".

8 Froome believes that "Internal evidence in *The Wonderfull Discoverie…* strongly suggests that Roger Nowell had studied Henry Boguet's work, as well as Jean Bodin's *De la Démonimanie ded Sorcieres* (1593) and Brian Darcey's *A True and Just Record* (1582)" (Froome, 2010, 220).

As the authorities rounded up all the newly identified suspects and the interrogations escalated into torture, they started pointing fingers at each other. Moreover, in one of the most influenced testimonies by Continental demonology, Old Demdike admitted to having met, many years before, in the forest, a familiar – an animal-shaped demon, in this case, a black cat or brown dog – that took the shape of a boy named Tibb. He later placed the Devil's Mark on her, a skin tag under her left arm from which he would occasionally suck her blood. Only after their third encounter, did she initiate her practice of *malificium* at his bidding. She further admitted to having passed on her *maleficia* teachings to her daughter Elizabeth and older grandchildren James and Alison, as well to some of her neighbours. Indeed, Old Chattox claimed that Old Demdike had brought the Devil to her in the form of an alluring young man, who gave her imps, Fancie and Tibbe (Pavlac, 2009, 1–3).

For the Pendle forest folk, many of the small animals around them – such as hares, cats, dogs and birds, especially, the raven – served the purpose of familiars. These were considered earthbound representatives of the underworld and were thought to be the conduit through which humans could converse with the spirit world. The adoption of animals as familiars and their endowment with spiritual powers is an intricate part of Pendle Forest lore. Besides Old Demdike, many of the alleged Pendle witches acknowledged having the companionship of a familiar. Interestingly, whenever a familiar appears in their confessions, about the charge of *maleficium*, the accused admit that their familiars were responsible for carrying out their darkest thoughts. The familiars took upon themselves to harm or kill the intended victim while the witch stood by. In her statement, Alizon Device claimed having been counselled by her grandmother Old Demdike "to let a Divell or a Familiar appeare to her, and that shee, this examinate would let him suck at some part of her; and she might have and doe what shee would." (Potts & Bromley, 1612 sig. R3a)

Several murder charges were laid against these women, from killing cows to having killed a prominent local tenant holder, Robert Nutter. The motives included retribution against unsolicited sexual advances, threats of unwarranted evictions, refusal of a much-needed meal, not honouring on the parting of a promised shirt, all sorts of complaints, and even revenge for having quite simply been nagged or laughed or muttered at. All such untimely deaths were brought about using *malificium* resorting to their familiars, burning effigies, or smashing clay poppets (Pavlac, 2009, 1–3).

On August 19, Sir Edward Bromley and Sir James Altham, experienced judges in cases of witchcraft[9], presided over a short but incisive trial at Lancaster Castle in which they heard and accepted all the fanciful evidence and hearsay presented against the accused witches, as well as young Jennet Device's testimony against her own family. Five of the accused were acquitted, including the prosecution's child witness, Jennet Device. By the time of the trial, her grandmother Old Demdike had already died in Lancaster Castle prison. Anne Redfearne was found innocent of the murder of Robert Nutter (or Nuttle) but convicted for the murder of his father twenty years earlier. Margaret Pearson was sentenced to standing four days in the stocks in four different neighbouring towns with a sign on her forehead describing her "crimes" in detail, followed by one year in prison. A total of ten of the accused witches, many of the Device (Demdike) and Redfearne (Chatox) families, women and men alike, were sentenced to death by short drop hanging. Officials hanged them the very next day, on August 20, 1612 (Pavlac, 2009, 1–3).

We thus agree with Pavlac that the Pendle witch trials illustrate both the contemporary pervasiveness of King James I's view of witchcraft aligned with the Continental European demonology doctrines, expressed in his *Daemonology*, as well as with the English popular beliefs and practice of sympathetic magic. Though rare in the English witch trial legal landscape, such accusations of cunning women, meeting up with the Devil and partaking in sabbats as witches, or their practising of *malificium* instead of plain ancestral sympathetic magic, thus alarming and enraging the local villagers over alleged witchcraft, should not come as a surprise (Pavlac, 2009, 126–127). It is also likely that both the witnesses and the accused witches as well as Lancashire Catholics and 'crypto-Catholics' had assimilated Continental witchcraft beliefs from the missionary priests (Young, 2013, 149–150). Also, latent,

9 "In another trial, earlier that year in nearby Samlesbury, Judge Bromley had allowed all three of the accused to be acquitted. In that case, fourteen-year-old Grace Sowerbutts had blamed three women for tormenting her and bringing her to a *sabbat*, a gathering by night of witches where they danced and had intercourse with demons. Judge Bromley found Sowerbutts' testimony not credible, learning that a Roman Catholic priest had fed the girl lurid tales of bloodsucking witches who murdered babies. In a different trial held the previous month, however, he and his colleague, Judge Altham, sentenced Jennet Preston of York to death. Although Preston had been acquitted on a different charge of witchcraft earlier that year, in July the jury found her guilty of killing Thomas Lister by witchcraft. A deathbed accusation by the victim and the bleeding of his corpse when Preston had touched it convinced the jury. Evidence sent by the diligent justice of the Peace Nowell attesting that Preston had been part of the Malkin Tower conspiracy linked the two cases." (Pavlac, 2009, 1–3)

though residual, Roman Catholic religious factions may have contributed to the crafting of the conspiratory meeting at Malking Tower to blow up Lancaster Castle[10] as a reaction to the rise of Protestants in the region, since "attempts to suppress Roman Catholicism had been less successful in Lancashire than anywhere else in kingdom" (Peel & Southern, 1985, 84). Hence, as argued, without the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the Pendle witch trials might indeed have never taken place.

It is this composite and cumulative English cultural depiction of a woman as witch that finds its heading from the English immaterial religious memory site to a new one: Puritanism and witchcraft in the early modern New England.

The Salem witch trials began in the early winter months of 1692 when two girls in the household of the newly appointed Puritan minister Samuel Parris of Salem Village began to suffer strange convulsions. They were his nine-year-old daughter Elizabeth ('Betty') Parris and his eleven-year-old niece, Abigail Williams. William Griggs, the resident physician, upon examining the girls concluded that they were exhibiting all the signs of possession brought about by witchcraft. For over a month, Parris prayed and fasted but soon enough he instructed his daughter and niece to name their tormentors, and so they did. A few weeks later, there were more afflicted girls and their accusations increased and spread from Salem Village to neighbouring communities. Before long these claimed the entire county of Essex in Massachusetts (Godbeer, 1992, 79–181).

Between January 1692 and May 1693, approximately a hundred and eighty-three townsfolk and villagers in Massachusetts were accused of being witches and faced charges for a crime punishable by death under the early modern English common law. Of the accused, a hundred and fourteen men, women and children were arrested and gaoled for months. Other forty-three people were tried, and twenty-seven were convicted and sentenced to death. Nineteen people were hung by short-drop. A senior man, Giles Corey, was pressed to death with stones for refusing to enter a plea. Another eight people ended up dying in prison, including two nursing infants of the jailed women and a little girl. Six of the condemned were ultimately reprieved, while sixteen

10 This is almost a direct reference of the infamous foiled Gunpowder Plot involving the Roman Catholic Guy Fawkes only several years earlier in 1605. Fawkes' attempt to blow up the English Parliament and King James VI and I along with it, did not have the intended outcome merely due to the timely confession of one of his co-conspirators.

others who had the financial means and could count on the help of family relatives of good social standing, managed to escape prison entirely. Forty-six people confessed to being witches.[11] The only two people who were found innocent were unfortunately too poor to pay their jail fees and had to sell themselves into indentured servitude to eventually obtain their release from prison. By early October, the newly appointed Governor William Phips halted the trials, but the Salem witch hunt only came to an end over a year after it had begun. On May 12th of 1693, Governor Phips issued a general amnesty to all the accused and convicted who were still languishing in jail.

Seventeenth-century New England Puritans were the Calvinist sect of the Protestant reformers, and for them, witch-hunting was an ever-present reality. Moreover, though mostly Puritan, the colonists remained quite close to the Tudor and Stuart tradition as far as their beliefs about the woman as witch were concerned. No differently, the Salem clergy, congregation members and villagers shared with their contemporaries in England the same (trans)cultural memory about the woman as witch. As Elizabeth Reis explains,

> puritan belief held that a witch was someone (in practice usually a woman) who had covenanted with the devil rather than with God, thus allowing the devil to use her shape to torment others in his war against the godly. For a woman to become a witch, Puritans believed, she was required to pledge to him her soul [at nightly gatherings, the 'sabbats']. Upon receipt of this promise, the devil granted the woman extraordinary powers [such as the power to leave their own bodies and to become rogue apparitions of themselves as 'specters' or as ferocious animals, to fly, and to communicate with animals that became their 'familiars'] [all] to terrify the godly and to recruit other into the devil's service. (Reis, 1998, xiii)

In other words, a witch was thought to interfere with Nature. Therefore, the witch's preternatural powers encroached in the realm of God's powers and

11 According to David D. Hall "[c]onfession released people from their punishment and restored them to 'the body of God's people.' For the Puritan magistrates, the purpose of the civil courts was fundamentally a religious one and the execution of justice was carried out according to the righteous word of God. This hinged on the ritual of confession. The people charged with crimes, appeared before the magistrates and were expected to acknowledge their guilt, reveal the truth and exhibit repentance" (Hall, 1990, 175). Also, on the importance of confessing to the sin and crime of witchcraft for the Puritans, Reis concludes: "Confessions had to be accompanied by sincere contrition. [...] The Salem witch trials epitomize the kind of confession required of accused women. Because of the supernatural nature of the Devil's perceived powers, witchcraft was a special case, difficult to prove without a confession. But confession, whether voluntary or coerced, had to follow certain prescriptions [as it] was the only way to avoid damnation." (Reis, 1998 131).

it was perceived as the ultimate heresy and apostasy. Like back in England, the crime of witchcraft in early modern New England was also largely associated with "weak-minded wenches, easily misled by the Great Deceiver or ill-tempered hags who asked the Devil for assistance" to perform *maleficium*, that is, to cause harm to others by preternatural means (Karlsen, 1998, 5).

In addition to inflicting harm on neighbours and their property, the Puritan woman as witch incurred in apostasy for she entered into a covenant with the Devil. The Puritan ministers were thus particularly wary about the woman as witch being the Devil's agent who ensnared members away from their congregations. As a woman as witch, she was both an enemy of New England society and the Puritan faith (Karlsen, 1998, 2–5).

Despite the Puritan ministers' persistent negative reinforcement, the use of deceptive or sympathetic magic in Early New England was common and persisted. The colonists, though Puritan in faith, resorted to it as a means of comfort in the face of their distress facing the New World's challenges or, more prosaically, as an effective means of taking revenge or seeking for some restitutive justice for the wrongs they might have suffered. It should come, then, as no surprise, that many of the Puritan women accused of witchcraft would indeed accept and confess, not so much to dabbling in magic – though most did – but to being possessed by the Devil, as they felt guilt for having dabbled in sympathetic magic or just for having failed to curb their sinful thoughts. Moreover, most of the accusers were other women who also saw themselves as being possessed, *i.e.* tormented by the spectrum of a certain witch. As Karlsen observes, "accusers denounced witches for behaviours and emotions that were widespread among the colonists, not least of all among the accusers themselves" (Karlsen, 1998, 225).

It stands to reason that the (trans)cultural memory of the woman as witch would have eventually been vanquished by the early modern New England Puritan theocracy. However, one of the material sites of cultural memory between the 1612 Pendle Hill trials and the 1692 Salem witch trials regarding the English accusatorial procedures as far as the crime of witchcraft is concerned, prevented it.

Jennet Device, the granddaughter of Old Demdike, daughter of Elizabeth Device, and the youngest (half)sister of Alizon and James Device, was in 1612 between nine and eleven years old. After her close relatives were sent to Lancaster prison, she was taken in by JP Roger Nowell, having spent several months in his home at Read Hall. While her brother, James Device,

admitted to practising witchcraft and described in detail his and his family's magical wrongdoings, Jennet stood on the court bench and denounced all her relatives, as well as the other accused friends and neighbours, of being witches.

More significant still is her having identified every single one of the participants in the Malking Tower sabbat and her mother, Elizabeth Device, as witches. In "The Examination and Evidence of Jennet Device" as (re)presented in Potts in *The Wonderfull Discoverie*...., she testifies as follows:

> [....] being a yong Maide, about the age of nine yeares, and commanded to stand vp to giue euidence against her Mother, Prisoner at the Barre: Her Mother, according to her accustomed manner, outragiously cursing, cryed out against the child in such fearefull manner, as all the Court did not a little wonder at her, and so amazed the child, as with weeping teares shee cryed out vnto my Lord the Iudge, and told him, shee was not able to speake in the presence of her Mother. [...] In the end, when no meanes would serue, his Lordship commanded the Prisoner to be taken away, and the Maide to bee set vpon the Table in the presence of the whole Court, who deliuered her euidence in that Honorable assembly, to the Gentlemen of the Iurie of life and death, as followeth. viz. Iennet Deuice, Daughter of Elizabeth Deuice, late Wife of Iohn Deuice, of the Forrest of Pendle aforesaid Widdow, confesseth and saith, that her said Mother is a Witch, and that this shee knoweth to be true; [...] That vpon Good Friday last there was about twentie persons (whereof onely two were men, to this Examinates remembrance) at her said Grandmothers house, called Malking-Tower aforesaid, about twelue of the clocke: all which persons this Examinates said mother told her, were Witches and that they came to giue a name to Alizon Deuice Spirit, or Familiar, sister to this Examinate, and now prisoner at Lancaster. [...] And shee further saith, That shee knoweth the names of sixe of the said Witches, viz. the wife of Hugh Hargraues vnder Pendle, Christopher Howgate of Pendle, vnckle to this Examinate, and Elizabeth his wife, and Dicke Miles his wife of the Rough-Lee; Christopher Iackes of Thorny-holme, and his wife:[G3b2] and the names of the residue shee this Examinate doth not know, sauing that this Examinates mother and brother were both there. And lastly, she this Examinate confesseth and saith, That her mother hath taught her two prayers: the one to cure the bewitched, and the other to get drinke; both which particularly appeare. (Potts & Bromley, 1612 sigs. F4b, G3b1, G3b2)

Under normal circumstances, the evidence of young children was not allowed in the English courts because of their implicit lower level of understanding, they were, therefore, considered unfit witnesses, especially if under the age of thirteen. Nevertheless, in witchcraft trials, children became admitted to prove crimes of witchcraft, which illustrates the degree of severity

and extraordinary nature of such offences. King James I made it quite clear in his *Daemonology* that witchcraft was a crime *exemptum*. Therefore, children could also be required to give testimony against their parents and relatives, their testimonies being sometimes used as the breaking point of a case (Darr, 2011 198–200).[12]

Moreover, in English trials, one child would usually testify against one single person, usually his or her relative. In the Lancashire case of 1612, Jennet testified against more than one person: her mother, her brother, and several neighbours. Her testimony was taken as undisputed evidence for the prosecution, and vital in initiating broader allegations of witchcraft (Martin 103). The breakthrough in the Pendle witch trials of 1612 came when Roger Nowell obtained the string of allegations we have previously seen, which hang almost exclusively upon the evidence from his child witness, Jennet Device.

Many of the details about the Lancashire trials of 1612, as (re)presented in Potts' pamphlet, were used in *The Guide to Grand Jury Men* by Richard Bernard, a Puritan clergyman and religious writer. Considered one of the last seminal works of Protestant demonology, it was first published in 1627, reprinted not long after, in 1629. In it, Bernard summarised the Lancashire witches' demonic characteristics, their powers, their compacts with the Devil, the familiars and the sabbat, and more importantly to our argument, the nine-year-old Janet Device's testimony. His writings were later integrated into the subsequent editions of Michael Dalton's *Country Justice*, first published in 1618, which became a widely used and many times reprinted judicial manual by the early modern English magistrates and justices of the peace. All those involved in witchcraft prosecutions proceedings, whether as accusers, witnesses, examining justices, jurors or assise judges, after the case of the Pendle witch trials of 1612, were forced to deal with a broader range of ideas of what witchcraft was about, and how it might be legally proved.

Dalton acknowledges that in his later editions of this handbook for working justices he resorted to two primary sources for the section on investigating witchcraft, which were Richard Bernard's *Guide to Grand Jury Men* and Potts'

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12 Before young Jennet Device, in the 1566 Chelmsford trial, 12-year-old Agnes Brown was the first child to testify for the prosecution in a witchcraft trial and the content of her testimony would be referenced in subsequent English witch trials. Though there were three witches on trial in Chelmsford in 1566, Agnes only testified against two of them, Agnes Waterhouse and her daughter Joan Waterhouse. However, more than just a witness, she also claimed to being afflicted with lameness and tormented by the witch's familiar (Martin, 2005, 77, 87, 89, 91).

The Wonderfull Discoverie… One can, however, notice that he was also influenced by King James' *Daemonology*, notably as he dedicates several pages to the felonies of "Conjuration" and "Witches", to how the magistrates should define the crime of witchcraft, identify and examine witches, how to gather evidence, as well as to how to obtain the testimonies from extraordinary witnesses, as is the case of children (*cf*. Sharpe, 1996, 94). In other words, how to establish valid legal proof in witchcraft cases.

Later, in 1692, the legal and accusatorial proceedings regarding the crime of witchcraft in New England's Puritan secular courts were identical to the ones in Old England. Like the English JPs, the Puritan magistrates also resorted to Dalton's useful book of Law, *Country Justice*. In it, they found, along with how to identify, examine and punish a demonic witch, the legal precedent established with Janet Device's testimony in the Pendle Witch case. A 1690 edition of this work, available in the Archives of Maryland USA, reads as follows:

> But for Children, I find in the Book of the Discovery of Witches at Lancaster Assizes, Anno Dom. 1612. That the Son and Daughter of Elizabeth Device, a Witch, were not only examined by the Justices of Peace against the said Mother, and the said Examination certified and openly read upon the Arraignment and Trial; but the Daughter also was commanded, and did give open Evidence against her Mother then Prisoner at the Bar. I farther find in the said Book of the Discovery of Witches, that two Children, the one about nine years of age, the other of fourteen, did upon their Oaths give Evidence against the Prisoners upon their Arraignment. (Dalton, 1690, 408)

The legal precedent established in 1612 Pendle was, then, still in effect in 1692 Salem. It is one of the material sites of memory which corroborates the transcultural – and in this case the transatlantic also – migration of the cultural memory of witchcraft and the woman as witch from England to New England. It made it tolerable for the New England Puritan magistrates to accept all the witchcraft accusations made by the group of young Salem girls, such as eleven-year-old Abigail Williams and her cousin, nine-year-old Elizabeth Parris. It also further nurtured the Puritan belief in the Devil and its evil sin-ridden servants, the witches. Because of it, the Salem Puritan ministers and judges alike, unquestionably accepted as evidence every statement of both the accusers and the confessed witches: the girls' complaints of punches and pinches delivered by the spectres of witches, the possessed like behaviour, the sightings of the Devil himself with his acolytes, the witches'

supposed flights through the air on poles to midnight masses in open fields. All these were very much in line with the flights of fancy of the English witchcraft lore and demonology.

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