ETCHED ON THE BODY: FEAR OF THE FEMALE IN AINSWORTH'S *THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES*

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the textual and discursive construction of the witch figure in 16th and 17th century Europe through William Harrison Ainsworth's *The Lancashire Witches* (1848). As a Victorian representative of English literature, the novel accounts a fictionalized version of the Pendle witchcraft trials that were held in 1612 while taking its characters from the only 'historical' recount of the trials, Thomas Potts' *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (1613). Using Michel Foucault's theory of "power-knowledge interrelationship", this study argues how the concept of witch hunt had become synonymous with women hunting, made possible by, what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak calls, the "epistemic violence" that was exercised by patriarchy over the female body. This defilement of the constituted knowledge of women is explained with the depictions within the novel that shows how the female sex was branded essentially evil and sinful by their nature, through discursive and textual means that Christian theology, demonology, and the inquisition had manufactured. The character Thomas Potts highlights how the agents of patriarchy hinged their arguments on the discourse that is created by the dominant power during the trials, especially for their own political benefit. The main aim is to show how the female sex was epistemically violated by the produced knowledge of these institutions because of the castration anxiety that the "abject" female body emanates for the male dominance, which is underlined by the visually 'unnatural' descriptions of certain witches. The torture scenes featuring the witch Nan Redferne reveals how patriarchy

applies coercion and fetishizes the “abject” body of the witch to overcome this castration anxiety. The characters Mother Demdike and Alice Nutter reveal the figure of the witch to be another “monstrous-feminine” that threatens the patriarchal order and male dominance through their gender transgressive behaviour as prime examples of the “castrator woman”.

Keywords: William Harrison Ainsworth, Witchcraft, Gender , Abject, The monstrous -feminine, Epistemic violence

ÖZET

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH'ÜN *THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES* ROMANINDA KADIN KORKUSU

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İngiliz Edebiyatı ve Kültür İncelemeleri Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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Bu tez William Harrison Ainsworth'ün *The Lancashire Witches* (1848) adlı romanında cadı figürünün 16. ve 17. yüzyıl Avrupa'sındaki metinler ve söylemdeki oluşumunu inceler. İngiliz edebiyatının Viktorya dönemi temsilcisi olan bu roman, karakterlerini ve olayları Pendle'da düzenlenen cadı avlarının tek 'tarihsel' anlatımı olan Thomas Potts'un *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (1613) eserinden alarak kurgulaştırır. Bu çalışma Michel Foucault'nun "söylem ve iktidar" kuramını kullanarak, cadı avı kavramının ataerkilliğin tüm dünyada uyguladığı "epistemik şiddet" aracılığıyla nasıl kadın avı kavramı ile eşanlamlı hale geldiğini tartışır. Hristiyan teolojisinin, demonolojisinin ve engizisyonun uyguladığı bu şiddet, romanda kadınların doğası gereği özünde nasıl kötü ve gühahkar olduğunu gösteren tasvirlerle kadın kimliğinin nasıl bu epistemik şiddete mağruz kaldığını gösterir. Özellikle Thomas Potts karakteri, ataerkilliğin temsilcilerinin kendi siyasi çıkarları için, egemen güç tarafından üretilen bu söyleme nasıl dayandığını vurgular. Temel amaç, bu söylemsel şiddetin kadın bedeninin erkek egemenliği için yaydığı iğdiş kaygısı nedeniyle üretildiğini göstermektir. Bu kaygı roman içerisinde belirli cadıların anormal betimlemeler ile tasvir edilmesine yol açar. Cadı Nan Redferne'in yer aldığı işkence sahneleri, ataerkilliğin bu iğdiş edilme kaygısının üstesinden gelmek için nasıl baskı uyguladığını ve cadının "iğrenç" bedenini fetişleştirdiğini ortaya koyar. Özellikle Mother Demdike ve Alice Nutter

karakterleri ataerkil düzeni ve erkek egemenliğini kadın cinsiyet kimliğine uygunsuz davranışlarıyla tehdit ederek, bu iğdiş edilme kaygısının vücut bulmuş hali olarak cadı ismi altında canavarlaştırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: William Harrison Ainsworth, Cadı, Cinsiyet rolleri, Canavar kadınlar, Epistemik şiddet

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of witches, a figure of the matriarchal and empowered woman, who transgresses the patriarchal social boundaries related to gender, has been ever-present within literature. The depictions of these marginalized figures that appear to be formed by phallogocentric history and its narrative, could arguably be considered a femme fatale stereotype. Using the witches in W. H. Ainsworth's *The Lancashire Witches* [1](1848), this study aims to offer an interpretation of the ways in which the female sex had been systematically seen as evil incarnate for their gender transgression, especially during the early modern Europe witchcraft trials. In addition, focusing on the body of the witch as the main source of the abject and frightening state, this thesis showcases how the witch stereotype was ultimately an embodiment of the castrating woman. To achieve this, a brief historical survey of the formation of the witch, including the definitions and historical artefacts that served to construct the concept, is given.

As Ronald Hutton claims, in *The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present* (2018), witchcraft studies "*has become one of the most dynamic, exciting and thickly populated areas of scholarship, on a truly international scale […] during the past forty-five years*" (Hutton 2018: xiii). Since "*[s]cholars based in English-speaking lands across the world have drawn upon insights furnished by criminology, psychology, literary criticism, cultural studies and the philosophy of science*" (Hutton 2018: xiii), there are a plethora of definitions for what a witch is. According to different schools of thought, the figure of the witch takes different forms, meanings, and even a different agenda. Hutton points out four definitions; a bad witch is "*someone who causes harm to others by mystical means*", while white witches use these mystical powers for the benefit of others, there are witches who practise "*Witchcraft*" (especially with a capital w) as "*a particular kind of nature based Pagan*

[1] This study makes use of the Project Gutenberg e-book edition of the novel that is published online at https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/15493.

Religion", and finally a witch "*as a symbol of independent female authority and resistance to male domination*" (Hutton 2018: ix-x).

Alan Macfarlane in *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (1991) also ratifies the validity of Hutton's definitions of what a witch is by showing how the mystical power of the bad witch is often "*believed to be the result of power given by some external force (for instance, the Devil) and to result in physical injury to the person or object attacked by it*" (Macfarlane 1991: 4). The followers of "*white witchcraft*" and their influence, as MacFarlane also points out, "*is the reverse, both because its ends are 'good' rather than 'bad', healing rather than hurting, and because it employs outward means—for instance, gazing into a crystal ball*" (Macfarlane 1991: 4). The theory of the followers of Witchcraft as a Pagan religion that Hutton uses in his definitions was brought forward by M. A. Murray in her *Witch-cult in Western Europe* (1921). According to Murray, the witches who were persecuted by the Christian Inquisitors were not "*the evil creatures described by their persecutors, but a highly organized pagan cult*" (Macfarlane 1991: 10). "*Witches, she claimed, met regularly at their 'Sabbats', they formed 'covens' of thirteen, each of which had a leader dressed in animal guise. They feasted, danced, and sang*" while performing rites of fertility (Macfarlane 1991: 10). The Inquisition, therefore, "*turned this cult of pre-Christian gaiety into a deadly onslaught on the values of society [...] in their attempt to stamp out paganism*", resulting in "*the innocent meetings [to be] described as orgies*" (Macfarlane 1991: 10). Hence, according to Murray's interpretation, witches appear to be a minority group consisting of simple practitioners of a ritualistic pagan religion, who were marginalised by Christian power upholders especially during the 16th and 17th centuries. The 'good' and 'bad' witches, however, are practically rooted in human history, in contrast to modern definitions of the witch being a practitioner of a pagan religion, or a symbol of female resistance to male domination. Most importantly, the stereotypical depictions of good and bad witches through different ages plays a vital role in understanding how witches were dubbed satanic and witchcraft became a heresy.

Since "*the majority of recorded human societies have believed in [beneficial users of 'magic'], and feared, in an ability by some individuals to cause misfortune and injury to others by non-physical and uncanny ('magical') means*" (Hutton 2018: 10), the witch as a construct seems to have a representative in multiple cultures. Those

who used 'magic' for the benefits of others appear in "*most traditional human societies*" offering services like "*healing, divining, removing the effects of witchcraft, tracing lost and stolen goods, or inducing one person to love another*" (Hutton 2018: xi). "*Given honours and privileges […] in very simple societies*", they also "*operate as independent entrepreneurs […] in complex social groups*", "*offering service for clients as "service magicians*" (Hutton 2018: xi). These figures take different names in different cultures as they are referred to as "*cunning folk or wise people […] in England*", "*medicine men or women*" outside Europe, or "*witch-doctors*" in Africa (Hutton 2018: xi). The 'bad' witches, in contrast, are "*accused, in addition, or instead, of striking at the religious and moral underpinnings of their society*" in many cases, through their use of non-physical and uncanny ways of causing misfortune (Hutton 2018: 3). "[*T]reated with […] spontaneous anger and horror*" through their association with "*a general hatred of humanity and society*" that stems from attacking the religious and social norms, they are hunted, killed, or prosecuted as public enemies (Hutton 2018: 4).

Modern-day academia has often been "*interested in structures of social and political power and […] gender relations*" within the early modern witch trials (xiii), because the fear these figures cause seems to be directly related to power relations. This is also emphasised by political witchcraft accusations taking place between two separate groups of people, since "*people who have traditionally feared witchcraft tend to accuse [the Other] of it much more frequently in times of economic pressure and/or of destabilizing economic, political and cultural change*" (Hutton 2018: 28). Hence, the witchcraft trials are often interpreted as "*woman hunting*", a systematic way of killing independent women who pose a danger to patriarchy and heteronormative gender roles, and therefore the social order. It "*confirm[s] the authority of the traditional leaders and society*" (Hutton 2018: 28). The European stereotype of the "*satanic witch*", then, appears to be a product and the continuation of the same discourse that created many "*femme fatale*" types. Consequently, the "*ideas and images of witchcraft [seem to be] inherited from antiquity*" (Hutton 2018: 44), especially the idea of the female sex being essentially evil.

According to Hutton "*the oldest European society from which evidence exists for attitudes to magic, including witchcraft, is the ancient Greek*" (Hutton 2018: 54). The Greeks were among the first people to define and name people who dealt with

metaphysical and uncanny magic and prosecute them. Plato, for example, "*called for the death penalty for any kind of magician who offered to harm people in exchange for financial reward*" and argued that "t*hose who tried to coerce deities, for any reason, should be gaoled*" (Hutton 2018: 56). Although "*there is no clear record of any trial of a person for working destructive magic in the whole of ancient Athenian history*" (Hutton 2018: 56), there are a couple of names like; the *agurtēs*[2], the *goes*[3], the *epoidos*[4] and the *mantis*[5]. The word *magos* is especially important, as it is used to incorporate most of the things the previous four defined people do, and the work of the *magos* is defined as *mageia* which "*became the root of the word 'magic'*" (Hutton 2018: 55). The abundant interest in magic results in, perhaps, the first prototypes for the witch stereotype, which is seen in Ancient Greek literature.

The first depictions of violent women who overpower social boundaries through breaking taboos can be traced back to the Greek antiquity, especially the Greek figures of maenads. The resemblance between a maenad and a witch appears quite parallel as a maenad is described as;

> *"[F]emale follower of the Greek god of wine, Dionysus. The word maenad comes from the Greek maenades, meaning "mad" or "demented." During the orgiastic rites of Dionysus, maenads roamed the mountains and forests performing frenzied, ecstatic dances and were believed to be possessed by the god. While under his influence they were supposed to have unusual strength, including the ability to tear animals or people to pieces."* (Britannica: 2010)

The depiction of these paganistic violent women, who live secluded and one with nature, parallels the concept of a witch and their sabbath. As "*they wear their hair loose, crowned with ivy and other foliage; their attire includes snakes worn as belts; they hold in their arms and suckle fawns or wolf cubs*" (Hedreen 1994: 48). The imagery created by these depictions is quite familiar, as it is also connected to the femme fatale type. The animals of the maenads function very much like a witch's familiar[6]. Especially the symbolic "*snakes worn as belts*" enable this parallel between

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[2] A kind of wandering priest

[3] "*A person specialised in dealings with ghosts, either exorcising them or setting them on people*" (Hutton 2018: 55)

[4] Singer of incantations

[5] An expert in the "*revelation of hidden things, especially the future*" (Hutton 2018: 55)

[6] *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines a familiar as "*small animal or imp kept as a witch's attendant, given to her by the devil or inherited from another witch […] that assumed any animal shape, such as a toad, dog, insect, or black cat*" (*Britannica* 2016)

a witch, who worships Lucifer, Satan, or the serpent, and a maenad who worships Dionysus. Both figures appear to incorporate occult symbolism within their rituals of ecstasy, whether intoxicated by the god of wine, or the serpent of forbidden knowledge, which enables them to transcend their gender performances. As depicted in works belonging to different periods like Euripides' *The Bacchae* and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, these figures appear to have denounced their performative gender roles both physically and by their actions. Maenads are able to dismember children, and the famous three witches of *Macbeth* appear through the narration of Banquo in Act 1, Scene 3 depicted as; *"'withered' and 'wild', unearthly beings ('That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth') with 'skinny lips', chapped ('choppy') fingers and beards (1.3.40–46)*" (Atherton 2017). Moreover, the notorious witches create a parallel with the maenads as they use body parts for their incantations. These figures manage to awaken terror through their "*unnatural*" quality. Hence, it could be argued that a witch gains her monster-like quality not from her subjective being, but through her contradiction, as a taboo subject, to the formulated knowledge of the historical context and discourse she belongs to. Although both figures, as women, would be expected to have the qualities of a stereotypical nurturing, motherly, and passive female, by "*transgression or violation of schemes of cultural categorization*", becoming impure through achieving "*interstitiality*", as Noel Carroll puts it, "*[t]hey are unnatural relative to a culture's conceptual scheme of nature. They do not fit the scheme; they violate it*" (Carroll 1987: 55). They manage to create "*threat and disgust*" through the violation of their attributed gender roles, becoming synonymous with danger and evil.

The Greek context also offers two mythological characters who can be considered to resemble a witch, Circe and Medea. Circe in Homer's *Odyssey* uses potions and a wand to turn Odysseus's crew into animals. In Euripides's *Medea,* Medea also uses potions and brews for her magical aims, one being murder. However, the two are not often referred to as witches, since "*neither is human [...] nor unequivocally evil*" (Hutton 2018: 58). They do not fit the "*definition of being the hidden enemies within society who work destructive magic under the inspiration of evil*" (Hutton 2018: 56). Nevertheless, both are "*immensely influential figures in later European literature, as ultimate ancestresses of many of its magic-wielding females*" (Hutton 2018: 58). This is caused by their use of brews which is another motif that is recurrently used to define witchcraft, the witch's cauldron. "*The work of the magus in*

general [was to] become equated with veneficium and with maleficium, meaning the intentional causing of harm to others […] in the second century AD" by the Romans who borrowed the terminology from the Greeks (Hutton 2018: 61). The word *veneficium* especially was derived from Greek *pharmaka*, a range of substances that are brewed to form drugs or potions, which both Medea and Circe made use of.

The origin of the European evil witch, who is especially female, however, is not rooted in European culture but a Mesopotamian one. The Greek interest in magic and the terms that are created for it stem from the contact between the Greeks and Persians. This is suggested by how the "*hostility to magic appeared in Greece in the fifth century BC, as one response to a number of developments*" one of these being the "*war with the Persians*" (Hutton 2018: 55). Moreover, "*the term magos […] was in origin the name for one of the official Persian priesthood, serving the Zoroastrian religion*" (Hutton 2018: 56). The famous ordeal by swimming of the European witchcraft trials also has its roots in "*[t]he famous law code of the Babylonian king Hammurabi*" (Hutton 2018: 49). "F*rom the early second millennium, [this law] allowed somebody accused of witchcraft to undergo the ordeal of jumping into a sacred river*", if the person drowned, "*the charge was regarded as proven and the accuser inherited [the accused's] estate*" (Hutton 2018: 49). In many historical sources belonging to Mesopotamia, "*the stereotypical witch […] is assumed to be female, which seems to match the generally low status of women […] and make witchcraft an assumed weapon of the weak and [the] marginalized*" (Hutton 2018: 50). This also parallels the discourse created by the Christian texts that will be discussed in Chapter I of this study, where the female sex is often seen as inclined to magic because of their physical lack and social status. As a result, "*[i]n the few cases of actual prosecutions for witchcraft, which span the whole period of the various Babylonian and Assyrian monarchies, the accused were all women*" (Hutton 2018: 50). This underlines how, especially "*for Persian and Iranians the witch [was] essentially female*". Moreover, "*[the witches'] rites were thought to be carried out at night, while naked*" (Hutton 2018: 51), a motif that takes place in literature related to witches under the name of black sabbath, which seems to have a Mesopotamian origin as well.

The Hebrews who shared the Mesopotamian region with Persians had also developed a witch stereotype in their texts. For example, "*the Mosaic Law ordered that a mekhashepa should not be permitted to survive*", *mekhashepa* being "*a specially*

female practitioner of some kind of magic" (Hutton 2018: 52). This passage is "*officially translated in Jacobean England as "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:18)*" (Hutton 52), which was almost used as a slogan by the witch-hunting inquisitions of early modern Europe. Texts related to Judaism featured portrayals of "*anonymous women or heretics […] as the natural practitioners of witchcraft, keshaphim, […] being defeated by rabbis*" (Hutton 2018: 53). "*[W]omen rather than men, especially working in groups [were] identified as [witches]*" in religious stories (Hutton 2018: 54). This dichotomy between religious men and essentially evil women was also present during the early modern witch hunts.

Perhaps the most important figure in the formation of the witch in early modern Europe was also a product of Jewish mythology, from Mesopotamia. As Hutton points out, the witch had two representations in historical and literary texts;

> *"Some societies in different parts of the world have held two concurrent concepts of the witch, one taking the form of a theoretical being, which operates by night and performs effectively superhuman feats, and one representing genuine human beings who are suspected and accused of witchcraft in day-to-day life."* (Hutton 2018: 67)

This stereotypical being that especially operated at nighttime, referred to as "*the night-demoness*" by Hutton himself, seems to have its origins in the myth of Lilith. First mentioned in multiple incantation bowls dating between AD 400 and 800 in ancient Mesopotamia, she is described as a type of a night creature that looks like a bird having the features of a "*young naked woman with long disheveled hair and prominent breasts and genitals*" (Hutton 2018: 68). This figure, much like the witch figure that was created in the early modern period, appears to be the "*antithesis of the well behaved […] wife or daughter of the age […] in her aggressive and immodest sexuality and unkempt, wild state*" (Hutton 2018: 68). The Talmud also features Lilith as a single being with long hair and wings (Hutton 2018: 68). However, Lilith "*suddenly [takes] a quantum leap in her mythological persona […] [i]n an eight century Jewish text, the Alphabet of Ben Sira*" (Hutton 2018: 69). This text gave her "*a back story as the first wife of Adam and integrated [her] into the Hebrew Bible*", which constituted her as "*the most feared demon of Judaism and one of the great imagined figures of the Western world*" (Hutton 2018: 69).

Lilith's constitution in various texts, later, created "*various child-killing demons […] called mormō, mormoluke, gellō and lamia, who were, as in Mesopotamia, also dangerous to young women, on the eve of marriage or while or*

after giving birth", also sexually preying on young men and devouring them (Hutton 2018: 69). Romans also created a figure called *strix* (*strigae* being the plural form) in accordance with this myth, a female monster that preyed on young children at night, "*feeding on their blood, life force, or integral organs*" (Hutton 2018: 69). What makes Lilith an important figure, much like the witches of early modern Europe, however, is not the ability to fly at night-time or prey upon children or young men. It is her 'dangerous' nature against the heteronormative values of patriarchy. Since she is depicted as being the first female figure that does not accept male dominance, not obeying Adam's wish of laying under him because they were equal, her figure is arguably a proto-feminist one. Moreover, it also suggests how patriarchy turns disobedient females into monster-like figures, to propagate their moral teachings on women for their compliance. The clear parallel in their dominant attitudes against patriarchy seems to make the figure of a witch and Lilith alike and gives an idea about the witch figure being a fictional narrative of the patriarchy, created by the fear of the female power.

Back in Europe, the concept of the witch was also linked with the female sex by the Romans. In literary, political, and historical texts, ancient Rome stands as one of the harshest climates in the way they dealt with witches. In 331 BC "*over 170 female citizens, two of them noblewomen, were put to death for causing […] an epidemic […] with veneficium*" (Hutton 2018: 61). In the years 184 to 180 BC, "*much bigger trials were held in provincial towns, claiming over two thousand victims in the first wave and over three thousand in the second*", the charge being *veneficium* again (Hutton 2018: 61). Although "*its impossible to tell whether this meant poisoning in the straightforward sense, or killing by magical rites, or a mixture*" if the word was used as an element of witchcraft, "*then the republican Romans hunted witches on a scale unknown anywhere else in the ancient world, and at any other time in European history*", even surpassing early modern witchcraft trials (Hutton 2018: 61).

"*[T]he literary images that [Romans] produced were the main ancient source cited by early modern authors to prove the long existence of the menace from witchcraft*" (Hutton 2018: 62). The literature that appears in the late first century BC and continues into the later centuries of the empire feature "*women who habitually work a powerful and evil magic, using disgusting materials and rites and invoking underworld and nocturnal deities and spirits, and human ghosts*" (Hutton 2018: 62).

Horace features a woman named Canidia in his epodes as a "*hag who poisons food with her own breath and viper's blood*", having a book filled with incantations she makes love potions and curses those who offend her (Hutton 2018: 62). Another Roman writer Lucan's female character Erictho appears as "*another repulsive old woman who understands the mysteries of the magicians which the gods abominate*" (Hutton 2018: 62). Much like the witches of the early modern trials she can make the weather change, cause storms and change the stream of rivers. She also "*practices human sacrifice, but on a grander scale, even cutting children from wombs to offer up burnt on altars*" (Hutton 2018: 62). Apuleius, a Roman philosopher and writer, "*put a range of magic-working women of different ages and degrees of wickedness and power into a novel*", "*[remarking] women as a sex often do [these]*" (Hutton 2018: 63). The witches that these texts feature "*inverted the natural as well as the religious order*" of the period (Hutton 2018: 63). Therefore, what is important in the process of creation of these literary texts is to preach moral teachings to women. As the "*image of the witch appeared as an antithesis of the idealised and politicised version of female behaviour*" for its creators, the witch was again used as a warning for women who were 'wicked', much like the Mesopotamian myths before, and the witches of early modern Europe later (Hutton 2018: 63). These literary texts had a great impact on the region because the "*soil was fertile already [;] Rome had punished countless people by [performing] veneficium. Rome, therefore, already had a sense of wicked women agents of murder and social disruption*" (Hutton 2018: 63). The early modern demonologists, who essentially branded the female sex with an evil nature, "*were to take these 'literary inventions' seriously*" while forming the satanic witch (Hutton 2018: 63).

What made the patriarchal invention of the witch 'real' for the early modern demonologists, perhaps, is the accusations of witchcraft in the Roman political context. In fact, "*[Romans] became the first people in Europe and the Near East […] to make accusations of [witchcraft] as a political weapon*" to establish stability and authority within the state (Hutton 2018: 64-65). The first emperor Augustus "*declared war on all unofficial attempts to predict the future, which might encourage people in disruptive political ambitions*" (Hutton 2018: 65). The second Roman emperor Tiberius also "*drove a couple of senators to suicide by investigating charges against them*" for consulting to magic users (Hutton 2018: 65). Witchcraft being seen as a

concrete and punishable crime by the likes of two different Roman emperors may have led the concept becoming a reality.

This quick survey reveals a recurrent theme of women as being users of magic that is often destructive and points out how monstrous creatures that posed a danger to the stability of society were often depicted as belonging to the female sex. Hutton also points out this treatment of patriarchal societies;

> *It seems that cultures which had defined magic as an illicit, disreputable and impious activity, and in which women were excluded from most political and social power, such as the Greek and Roman (and Hebrew and Mesopotamian), were inclined to bring the two together into a single stereotype of the menacing Other.* (Hutton 2018: 64)

What connects the early modern witch trials in Europe to all these historical and literary artefacts is the construction of the satanic witch being "*indisputably rooted in pre-Christian antiquity*" (Hutton 2018: 281). Since "*[Christianity] absorbed a mixture of cultural traits of crucial importance to its attitudes [...] derived from sources spanning the whole extent of the world between the Atlantic and the Indus Valley*", it formed the figure of the satanic witch through these different cultures (Hutton 2018: 280):

> *"From the Persians it derived a view of the cosmos as divided between opposed utterly good and utterly evil divine personalities, with witches serving the evil one. From Mesopotamia came a fear of demons, as constantly active and malevolent spirits abroad in the world seeking human allies and victims. The Hebrews contributed a belief in a single true God, all-powerful and all-knowing. The Greeks stigmatized magic, defining it in opposition to religion as an illegitimate manipulation by shady human beings of normally superhuman power and knowledge, for their own ends and those of those who paid them. The Romans supplied a highly coloured image of the witch as a person of total evil, in league with evil forces, and dedicated to unnatural, antisocial and murderous activities. They also provided apparent precedents for the large-scale trial and execution of people for engaging in magic."* (Hutton 2018: 281)

Christianity, therefore, had an immense amount of stereotypical female monsters to pick and choose from. All these monsters had one characteristic in their nature, which is being a threat to the dominant heteronormative values of male-dominated patriarchy. It seems that Christianity assimilated all these previous monstrous females "*fitting*

them into a Christian framework […] as heretics and satanists" (Hutton 2018: 288) while forming the ultimate stereotype of the witch.

The "*unnatural*" femme fatale type that appears to be created beginning with antiquity, therefore, plays an important role to understand "*the European witch-craze or the European witch-hunt*" that took place during "*the early modern period or European history, stretching from roughly 1450 to 1750*" (Levack 2005: 1). In *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (2005), Brian P. Levack points out the relationship between classical texts and how they "*contributed to the formation of witch beliefs in the Middle and the early modern period*";

> "*Classical texts, even those that took a skeptical view of witchcraft, also contributed to the construction of an enduring image of the witch figure. Horace's presentation of the character of Medea in one of his Epodes […] which draws on earlier representations of the same character in earlier classical literature, contributed to later representations of witchcraft by Roman and Renaissance dramatists.*" (2005: 5)

In addition to these fictional "*representations*" of "*the witch figure*", Laveck also comments on the usage of biblical texts and Christian theology and their effect on "*the formation of witch beliefs*" as the most important factor (Levack 2005: 5). Many religious documents, like "*the account of the witch of Endor in the Old Testament*" and "*Exodus 22:18*", appear to function as "*important sources*" "*during the period of prosecution*" (Levack 2005: 7) as *"demonologists and clerics cited texts from the Bible to endorse the actions they were taking against alleged witches*" during "*the period of witch-hunting in the early modern period*" (Levack 2005: 7). Hutton comments on how the already feared femme fatale type of the dangerous "*witch was turned […] into practitioners of an evil anti-religion*" by the construction Christianity had performed through these texts;

> "*The construction of the image of the satanic witch religion, and the trials which resulted, represented a new and extreme application of high medieval Christian theology, designed both to defend society against a serious new threat and to purify it religiously and morally to an extent never achieved before*." (Hutton 2018: 280)

Although "*there is no consensus of opinion*" on why the "*witch craze*" took place (Levack 2005: 2) and why "*witchcraft beliefs and accusations occurred throughout most of Europe [especially] in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*" (MacFarlane 1999: 6), the Church and the discourse it created appears to be the chief agent behind the construction of the witch figure as a threat to mankind at the time. As a result,

"*thousands of persons […] were tried for the crime of witchcraft*", "*half of these individuals […] executed, usually by burning*", but most importantly "*most of them [were] women*" (Levack 2005: 1). Hence, in the construction of the witch as a monster, gender seems to play a significant role.

The "*frenzied, irrational or maniac forms of behaviour in pursuing [witches]*" (Levack 2005: 2), that peaked in late 16th and 17th century Europe is often attributed to numerous reasons as Levack suggests;

> "*[…]the witch-hunt has been attributed, in whole or in large part, to the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition, the use of judicial torture, the wars of religion, the religious zeal of the clergy, the rise of the modern state, the development of capitalism, a series of agricultural crises, the widespread use of narcotics, changes in medical thought, social and cultural conflict, an attempt to wipe out paganism, the need of ruling elites to distract the masses, opposition to birth control, the spread of syphilis, and the hatred of women.*" (2006: 2)

Although the "*witch-craze*" poses "*more disagreement and confusion*" than "*any other historical problem*" (Levack 2006: 2), religion seems to be playing the most important part as its cause. "*The hatred of women*" especially underlines the core element behind the hunt for witches, considering the patriarchal quality of the religious discourse, and supports the idea of gender playing a major role. Since a woman's "*present position in society is entirely due to Christianity*", "*inferior and dependant, [whereas] man superior and ruler*", according to Mathilda Joshlyn Gage (2002: 2), the female sex appears to have always had the potential of being evil;

> "*As soon as a system of religion was adopted which taught the greater sinfulness of women, over whom authority had been given to man by God himself, the saying arose "one wizard to 10,000 witches" and the persecution for witchcraft became chiefly directed against women. The church degraded woman by destroying her self−respect, and teaching her to feel consciousness of guilt in the very fact of her existence. The extreme wickedness of woman, taught as a cardinal doctrine of the church, created the belief that she was desirous of destroying all religion, witchcraft being regarded as her strongest weapon, therefore no punishment for it was thought too severe. The teaching of the church, as to the creation of women and the origin of evil, embodied the ordinary belief of the Christian peoples, and that woman rather than man practiced this sin, was attributed by the church to her original sinful nature, which led her to disobey God's first command in Eden.*" (2002: 68-69)

The female sex appears to be stained by the myth of Eve and the Fall, constituting them as "*sinful*" in their "*nature*". Their essence, according to the Church, was against God and religion. Therefore, the wicked and evil women had to be punished in the name of God.

The Pendle witch trials that took place in 1612 in Lancashire, England are considered as one of the most famous witch trials in English history (Spence 2017: 25). Although the memory of these witches might seem to rest in the dusty pages of history as a bloody stain, nowadays, the ground where twelve people were judged, and nearly all killed, stands as a tourist attraction. Featuring the 45-mile "*Pendle Witch Trail*" and "*Pendle Witches Brew*" beer, the whole county of Lancashire appears to be "*appropriated by the tourist and heritage industries*" (Sharpe 2002: 1). William Harrison Ainsworth's *The Lancashire Witches: A Romance of Pendle Forest (*1848) is "*the only one of his forty novels to remain continuously in print to this day*" (Richards 2002: 166). Before talking about Ainsworth's "*last major work*" (Carver 2003a: 11), however, his figure in the English literary tradition should be mentioned.

William Harrison Ainsworth and his body of work are often overlooked by 'canonical' English literature critics. "*[A] prolific English novelist once held in such high regard that many of his contemporaries viewed him as a natural successor to Sir Walter Scott*" (Carver 2003a: 1), Ainsworth and his works seem to have not survived the test of time. Due to the constant winds of change of norms within literary and critical spaces, Ainsworth appears to be once popular and now forgotten, although referred as being one of the three most popular writers in England along with "*Mr. Charles Dickens [and] Sir E. Bulwer Lytton*"[7]. Ainsworth's fall from grace, as Carver argues, seems to be caused by his nonconformist attitude in literary production as "*Ainsworth's creative vision was an idiosyncratic one*" which is why "*he was punished by the literary establishment*" in addition to "*his own refusal to conform to the moral and aesthetic standards of the Victorian novel*" (Carver 2003a: 1). However, his works "*deserve attention in their own right as significant works of literature*" to appreciate "*the development of the English novel in the immediately post-Romantic period*" (Carver 2003a: 1).

"*Charles Dickens's only serious commercial rival until the late 1840s*" (Carver 2003a: 2), Ainsworth rose to fame "*in 1834 with the publication of his hugely popular*

[7] George W. M. Reynolds' *Miscellany* May 22, 1847

gothic romance Rookwood (1834), *which bought fame over-night*" (Carver 2003a: 4). Recounting the life of English highwayman Dick Turpin, *Rookwood* "*prompted many comparisons to Scott*", constituting Ainsworth's literary figure in English reading public, where he would "*become the most popular historical novelist of the nineteenth century after Scott*" (Adams 2005: 54). Ainsworth's mastery in creative craftsmanship as a historical novelist can be seen in the way "*[t]he section of the novel devoted solely to Dick Turpin, 'The Ride to York,' became so popular in its own right that it was often published separately*" (Carver 2003a: 5). Moreover, the narrative within the novel managed to enchant the reading public so much that people really started to believe in "*[t]he well-known legend that Turpin rode from London to York in one night*" while it was completely "*Ainsworth's invention*" (Carver 2003a: 5). Although literature that dealt with highwaymen often captured the interest of middle-class readers, the success behind *Rookwood* was not only its subject matter, but Ainsworth's way of writing that "*tended to alchemically blend different genre devices within a single text*" (Carver 2003a: 5). In the preface to *Rookwood,* Ainsworth states his influences;

> "*I resolved to attempt a story in the bygone style of Mrs. Radcliffe (which had always inexpressible charms for me), substituting an old English squire, an old English manorial residence, and an old English highwayman, for the Italian marchese, the castle, and the brigand of the great mistress of Romance.*" (qtd. in Carver 2003a: 5).

Therefore, Ainsworth seems to be playing an important role in the transition between the age of the gothic and the Victorian period as Carver suggests;

> "*Rookwood is an enthusiastic amalgam of gothic, picaresque and historical romance, updated and transplanted to England, complete with morbid ballads, comic songs and all the blood and thunder of melodrama. […] Most significantly, Ainsworth had […] finally brought the gothic novel to the mainland, albeit dressed in historical costume. Rookwood represents a transitional moment in the development of the genre, taking the Radcliffean design and then turning it into something quite different, quite new: a bridge between the eighteenth century gothic and the soon-to-come contemporary urban nightmares of Reynolds, Dickens, Poe and Stevenson.*" (Carver 2003a: 5-6)

"*[A]lthough his melodramatic excesses were a constant source of ridicule among his literary peers*" (Carver 2003a: 1), the way in which Ainsworth created, perhaps, what might be called an unorthodox mixture through implementing different devices from various genres, may have enabled him to achieve popularity within readers that enjoy 'low' literature.

Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839), "*which again combined the historical genre with criminal appeal […] followed Dickens' Oliver Twist (1838)*", managing to "*briefly eclips[e] the popularity of Dickens' work*" (James 2006: 105). Featuring the tale of the notorious Jack Sheppard, the novel's "*[s]ales were enormous, initially exceeding three thousand copies a week*" (Carver 2003a: 7). "*Issued as a novel in three volumes [in October of 1839]*", "*[b]y the end of October there were eight theatrical versions [of Jack Sheppard] running concurrently in London*" (Carver 2003a: 7). Considering the subject matter of both of these novels "*concerned young boys being drawn into the criminal underworld*" (Carver 2003a: 7), the success that Ainsworth had achieved seems to be again made possible by his style rather than the novel's form or content. However, the "*novel of criminal life whose popularity out stripped even that of Twist*" (Adams 2005: 74) would mark the downfall of W. H. Ainsworth, although having achieved great success;

> "*William Ainsworth's* Jack Sheppard *became one of the sensations of the era; by the autumn of 1839, eight different theatrical versions were being staged in London. Sheppard pushed the moral boundaries farther than anything in "respectable" fiction. Not only did the novel celebrate criminal life (rather than an innocent's rescue from it) but it gave more explicit attention to sexuality than Dickens had risked. Its dubious celebrity was sealed in 1840, when the valet of Sir William Russell slit his employer's throat, and later claimed to have been inspired by* Jack Sheppard." (Adams 2005: 74)

Carver comments on how this event made "*Ainsworth an easy target for petulant literary criticism*" which gives an idea about "*Ainsworth's unwarranted and current exclusion from the Victorian literary canon*" within English literary tradition (2003a: 8). "*Stung by accusations that his novels romanticized crime, Ainsworth [later] turned to a current antiquarian interest in London's buildings, using them as historical backdrops to The Tower of London (1840), Old St Paul's (1841) and Windsor Castle (1843)*" (James 2006: 105).

"*Abandoning the underworld gothic at which he was so adept*" (Carver 2003a: 8), Ainsworth's later novels moved towards "*safer historical precincts*" (Adams 2005: 87). The criticism of the 'moral' Victorian critics would haunt Ainsworth for the rest of his life. Considering the texts that he had produced were already going out of fashion, in addition to the "*literary criticism [that] has been [harsher] on this author than on any other of his age*" (Carver 2003a: 20), "*he died impoverished, a far cry from the great success of the late 1830s and 1840s […] although he published 25*

novels between 1860 and his death in 1882" (Adams 2005: 314-315). As his reputation as a writer declined, "*his literary energies were channelled into editing Ainsworth's Magazine (1842–54), as well as supervising Bentley's Miscellany (1854–68) and The New Monthly Magazine (1845–70), which he owned*" (James 2006: 105). The critics branding Ainsworth's most successful works as immoral "*Newgate novels*" that dangerously influenced the reading masses seems to be a breaking point in his writing career. There are still no "*Oxford World's Classics editions of Ainsworth's novels, no cheap Penguin paperbacks, no BBC costume dramas, no adaptations on Radio 4, no Hollywood movies*" even for his major works that surpassed Dickens (Carver 2003a: 19-20). This ratifies Carver's claim of how Ainsworth and his work appear to be marginalised from the rest of Victorian literature, since "*Ainsworth made some powerful enemies at the height of his fame, and their critical annihilation of his work was so absolute that future generations of literary critics often do little more than paraphrase the original attacks, with little apparent attention paid to his actual writing*" (Carver 2003a: 2). Although *"[i]n his heyday, Ainsworth was compared to Scott, Dumas and Hugo*" (James 2006: 105), "*[t]he years have not been kind to the memory of the Manchester-born Victorian author William Harrison Ainsworth*" (Carver 2003a: 1).

Like many of his novels that mythologize notorious and historical English figures and the events around these figures, like Jack Sheppard and Dick Turpin with his novels *Rookwood* (1833) and *Jack Sheppard* (1838), *The Lancashire Witches* (1848) deals with one of the most famous witch trials in English history, the Pendle trials of 1612 (Richards 2002: 166). Referred as "*Ainsworth's last major, national success […], [marking] the end of his literary celebrity*" (Carver 2003a: 11), the novel takes its characters from Thomas Potts' *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (1613), as does other fiction that deals with the Pendle witches. Jeffrey Richards also highlights how Potts' *Discoverie* "*provides Ainsworth not just with characters but reported events which he turns into action sequences*";

> "*Whatever historians now make of the witchcraft tales told at the trial, Ainsworth takes many of them literally for the purposes of his novel. He recounts the witchcraft activities and the feud between the families of Mothers Demdike and Chattox, their familiars, their visitations by the Devil, and their bewitching of the pedlar John Law, of the daughter of Richard Baldwyn, and of the hero Richard Assheton, all of whom die following their witchery. The night-flying, the burial of clay models of victims, the*

gathering of skulls and teeth from graveyards, the witch-gathering at Malkin Tower, all reported in the trial evidence, are all to be found in Ainsworth's narrative, faithfully recreated." (2002: 179)

The Lancashire Witches (1848) starts with the "Introduction" titled "The Last Abbot of Whalley" that is set in 1536 to provide a fictional history for the Demdike lineage which serves as a mythologisation of the real Lancashire witches. The novel introduces the characters Borlace Alvetham—also known as Demdike—and John Paslew during the Pilgramage of Grace protests. As the narrative progresses, it is revealed that Paslew had accused Alvetham of witchcraft to become the Abbot of Lancashire. As a result, Alvetham was condemned to a lingering death. However, Alvetham happens to escape this punishment through a real pact with Satan this time. He returns to Lancashire as Nicholas Demdike to take revenge from Paslew and manages to achieve his revenge my turning Paslew in to the Royalist forces, who were against the crown during the protests. Demdike offers his hand with the condition of his daughter being baptised by Paslew. However, Paslew refuses and curses the Demdike lineage through an anathema before dying at the same time with Demdike, which results in the whole bloodline of Demdikes to become witches. After creating the gothic atmosphere through a prophecy, the narrative fast forwards to early-seventeenth century Lancashire and tells the tales of the Lancashire witches in 1612.

"Book the First" named "Alizon Device" introduces the notorious witches of the Lancashire county. Establishing the rivalry between the Demdike and Chattox families, the narrative follows the stories regarding these witches through Thomas Potts's investigation of the area. Through the May Day festivities, where all the leading characters gather, the novel lays bare all the rumours and the results about the witches through the mouths of Nicholas Assheton, Richard Assheton, Roger Nowell, and Alice Nutter, which Potts makes great use of during his investigation throughout the first book. The anathema Paslew had uttered appears to be in full effect and all the Demdike lineage is rumored to be real witches because of it. The cursed infant baby of Nicholas Demdike becomes the head witch Mother Demdike. The narrative also introduces Alizon—who is chosen as the May Queen—as the granddaughter of Mother Demdike during these festivities. However, it is later revealed that she is actually the long-lost daughter of Alice Nutter. Through this revelation the first book showcases the battle between the rest of the witches and Alice Nutter who abandons her wicked life and tries to save Alizon from becoming a servant of Satan like herself. The rest of the

witches try to capture Alizon to offer her to the Devil as another servant. Richard Assheton, a nobleman of the county, falls in love with Alizon and tries to save her from the triangle of witches consisting of Alice Nutter, Mother Chattox and Mother Demdike.

"Book the Second" named "Pendle Forrest" showcases the notorious witches of the county and the supernatural powers that enable them to terrorize the area of Lancashire to full effect. In this book Mother Demdike kidnaps Alizon in Malkin Tower and imprisons her in order to offer her as another witch to Satan. Furthermore, the novel features Richard's efforts to save the damsel in distress that is Alizon as another gothic motif. As a result of the rivalry between her and Mother Demdike, Mother Chattox helps Alizon escape by offering her a ride on her broomstick. In the backdrop, the narrative features the battle between Alice Nutter and Roger Nowell for the land of Rough Lee. Accused by Nowell for usurping the land through witchcraft, Nowell tries to take Rough Lee from Alice through force. Although a battle is fought between the people who support Alice and those who support Nowell, Alice manages to beat Nowell by using magic and performing witchcraft. Featuring a standoff between the three witches at Pendle Hill after all these events, the final chapter of the second book depicts the deaths of Mother Chattox and Mother Demdike, where they are burned by the men lead by Potts, Nicholas, and Richard. Alizon is saved by her lover and Alice manages to break free from the inquisition.

"Book the Third" named "Hoghton Tower" depicts all the remaining witches who are a part of the Demdike and Chattox clans, apart from Alizon, Jennet Demdike, and Alice Nutter as being rounded up and taken to Lancaster Castle for the trial, including a visit from King James I. This book also shows Alice as being freed from the bonds of Satan through constant fasting and praying as a result of her penitence. Jennet asks for the help of Alizon to save her family from prison, however Alizon refuses to do so. As a result, Jennet curses Richard Assheton with magic and tells the hiding place of Alice Nutter to Thomas Potts. Alizon dies praying while trying to fend of Alice's demon familiar who has been sent by the Devil to convince Alice to become a witch again. Alice also dies even before the trials as a result of her loss. Richard who has been through hell to save Alizon dies because of Jennet's curse, resulting in Alizon and Richard being buried next to each other. Jennet appears to be the sole survivor of the executions, however, she also gets executed twenty years later as a witch. The

novel ends with the deaths of all the people who were rumoured to be a witch, whether innocent, penitent, or evil.

Functioning as a mediaeval romance, the story features Richard Assheton and Alizon Device in their quest for love in supernatural turmoil. Featuring witches, ghosts, paintings that come alive and move out of their frames, occult scenes of black sabbaths, and evil demons that take the form of doppelgängers, the novel appears to be an uncanny gothic take on the notorious history of Lancashire County. One gothic element that plays quite a significant role, however, stands as a representative of the epistemic violence that the women who were accused of witchcraft suffered, and that is the anathema the character Abbot Paslew utters to curse the Demdike family. This curse appears to be a representation of the religious discourse that violated the female body under the manufactured identity of a witch. Since witchcraft and witches were the utterances of the church that were based on discursive rumours rather than physical evidence, the novel depicts the battle between the existence and the manufactured 'evil woman' essence of the accused witches. Therefore, Ainsworth's *The Lancashire Witches,* through the figures of the Pendle witches, depicts an example of "*epistemic violence*" that the female body suffered, where the signifier of the female body is violated through a manufactured concept of knowledge that is etched on their body, as its signified, by the discourse of the church. This study aims to reveal how this "*epistemic violence*" was caused by the "*abject*" body of the female sex while underlying the marginalization of the witches by the patriarchy.

Chapter I deals with the examples of the "*epistemic violence*" under which almost all the female cast of the novel suffers. To understand the power-knowledge interrelationship, the chapter introduces some of the misogynistic ideas that Kramer and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum* ratified, functioning as a handbook for witch hunts in the 16th and 17th centuries. By employing Foucauldian discourse analysis to reveal the discursive construction of the "witch" and the witchcraft trials, this chapter also centres around Potts's actions throughout the novel to reveal the political nature behind these concepts. Using Kristeva's concept of the "*abject*" and Creed's "*the monstrous feminine*", Chapter II tries to make sense of how the witch stereotype came into being as a femme fatale type by this discourse through the visual descriptions of the accused female sex. The final chapter emphasises how the marginalisation of these

women were caused by their power dominance over patriarchy by paying close attention to the characters Alice Nutter and Mother Demdike.

CHAPTER I

THE MYTH MADE FACT: WITCHCRAFT AND THE WITCH AS DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTS

"*Frailty, thy name is woman*"
Hamlet, William Shakespeare

A "*Witch hunt*" is defined as "*an attempt to find and punish people who hold opinions that are thought to be unacceptable or dangerous to society*"[8]. Although the witch hunts of the seventeenth century probably had a different definition for it, the modern definition suggests a conflict between two different groups of people. It emphasises one group who regulates the discourse of what is right and wrong and a group of people who appear to be marginalised by the power upholder as taboo subjects. This raises the question; how did these groups of women, having no importance in the social hierarchy, become a danger to the society that they were living in during the seventeenth century? The answer seems to be lying within texts that were produced especially in the fifteenth century as Heidi Breuer suggests;

> "*The fifteenth century saw the rise of writing specifically designed to link women, witchcraft, and diabolic activity (the quintessential work of this nature is Jacob Sprenger and Henry Kramer's* Malleus Maleficarum*), and some of the most influential authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries participated in the conflation of femininity with demonology and monstrous maternity. The witch figure, in both legal and literary contexts, functioned as a warning to all women: stay in the home, caring for children, or risk becoming a wicked hag. This warning was particularly ominous because it was, in effect, backed by the legal system. Literature told women what behaviors were witchy, and the courts punished them if they didn't toe the line.*" (2009: 142)

Considering "*[t]hose suspected of being witches were often 'strong' women with knowledge of magic who struggled in times of crisis for their physical and social well-*

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[8] Definition of "*Witch hunt*" from the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

being", these women seem to be a danger to "*the conception of an early modern patriarchal society*" (Opitz-Belakhal 2009: 90). The construction of the concept of "*witch*" appears to be a representation of the "*power-knowledge*" interrelationship. "*The monstrous feminine*" functions as a "*knowledge*" produced by the dominant patriarchal "*power*" through these writings and literature, aiming to persecute and discipline the strong and dominant female body that violates the culturally attributed gender roles of a woman. As Foucault suggests, the group in power, with its institutions, always controls the discourse, therefore the actions that stem from these discourses;

> "*What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.*" (Foucault 1980: 119)

By creating knowledge through its power, patriarchy, under the name of religion, seems to create a fictional narrative for another negative archetype for women. Since the formation of "*truth*" is dependent on the institutional ratification and its regulation of knowledge (Foucault 1972: 216-219), these writings, especially *Malleus Maleficarum*, create a manufactured identity for women under the name of "*witch*" and make it "*true*". Thus, the female body becomes a "*subaltern*" who suffers from "*a complete overhaul of the episteme*" through "*epistemic violence*" (Spivak 2010: 249), "*that is, violence exerted against or through knowledge*" (Galván-Álvarez 2010: 12) by the patriarchal power. The concept of a "*witch hunt*", therefore, appears to be the result of "*the construction of epistemic frameworks that legitimise and enshrine those practices of domination*" (Galván-Álvarez 2010: 12) made possible by the power-knowledge interrelationship. Through the application of Foucauldian discourse analysis, this chapter discusses this exerted epistemic violence, as well as the formation and the use of the witch figure by patriarchy while underlining the power relationships behind the witchcraft trials in *The Lancashire Witches* (1848).

How the discourse of the patriarchal clergy marginalises the accused women by branding them as witches is depicted in the "Introduction" chapter of *The Lancashire Witches: A Romance of Pendle Forest (*1848). This "*Gothic version of an actual historical event*" starts with a "*[p]otent combination of fact and fancy, of history and romance, [and] of chronicle and melodrama*" (Richards 2002: 169). Since the era

in which the novel was produced was heavily interested in "*the antiquarian picturesque*", the text itself plays a great "*role in interpreting the past*";

> "*The antiquarians, tireless and industrious, published antique documents, undertook archaeological excavations, collected coins, manuscripts, relics and artefacts, published learned journals, compiled local histories and guide-books, charted the evolution and iconographic significance of churches, castles and cathedrals, drew up family genealogies, studied and interpreted heraldry, collected folktales and superstitions. The imprint of such activities is to be found in Ainsworth's novels.*" (Richards 2002: 169-170)

The way the novel manages to evoke this "*antiquarian*" attitude can be traced in the "Introduction", since it is set in 1536 to create a history for the folktales and superstitions of the region, building up especially to the Pendle witches. The novel, in quite a local colorist attitude, creates a "*historical*" rivalry between two Cisterian monks, Borlace Alvetham and Brother John Paslew.

The Lancashire Witches introduces these characters during the "*Pilgrimage of Grace*", a "*formidable rebellion in the northern counties of England"* that aimed at *"the restoration of Papal supremacy throughout the realm*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). John Paslew, who is the Abbot of Whalley, appears to be a leading figure in the rebellion in Lancashire. Naming himself the Earl of Poverty, he criticises the king by saying: "*the Church is to be beggared, the poor plundered, and all men burthened, to fatten the king, and fill his exchequer*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). As he is waiting at a signal beacon that is intended as a call to arms for the rebels against an attack by the Royalists, the character Nicholas Demdike is introduced, and his name marks the beginning of the theme of witchcraft in the novel. Paslew refers to Demdike as "*he whose wife is a witch*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). It appears that "*Bess Demdike is an approved and notorious witch*", according to Paslew, and "*hath been seen by credible witnesses attending a devil's sabbath on this very hill*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). As soon as his name is uttered, Nicholas Demdike appears "*standing near a little pool on the summit of the mountain, about a hundred yards from them*", with a "*black hound*" that "*may be his wife*" according to a monk called Haydocke (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). Offended by Demdike who says the abbot "*shall be hang'd at his own door*", Paslew commands his men to detain him as "*he is practicing his devilries on the mountain's side*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). Seen as speaking "*some words, which the superstitious beholders*

construed into an incantation", Demdike disappears (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). A detailed description of Demdike is given by the narrator after the Royalists start their attack and Abbot Paslew starts his escape; he is described as having "*savage features, blazing eyes, [a] tall gaunt frame, and [a] fantastic garb, [which] made him look like something unearthly*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i). The chapter ends with Demdike explaining how the abbot is doomed to fail in his quest, offering him help in the matter, and asking in return for the abbot to baptise his daughter, who was not baptised earlier because of her mother's notorious witchcraft. The abbot, however, declines any conditions that the wizard offers, seeing him as the "*bond-slave of Satan*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. i).

The next two chapters of the "Introduction" follow Paslew's failed escape and his imprisonment by the Royalist forces that ultimately catch him. The fourth chapter of the "Introduction" called "The Malediction", appears to be an important chapter — if not the most— within the book because of the anathema uttered by Paslew. As he is taken captive by the sheriff to be hanged, Nicholas Demdike often visits and follows Paslew on the path that will lead to the gallows. He offers to rescue him constantly on the terms of his daughter getting baptised, as he makes sure that Paslew will be hanged, and asks "*wilt them now accede to my request?*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. iv). As a response Paslew says "*No*" and adds;

> *"By the holy patriarchs and prophets; by the prelates and confessors; by the doctors of the church; by the holy abbots, monks, and eremites, who dwelt in solitudes, in mountains, and in caverns; by the holy saints and martyrs, who suffered torture and death for their faith, I curse thee, witch!" cried Paslew. "May the malediction of Heaven and all its hosts alight on the head of thy infant—.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. iv)

The Abbot of Whalley, John Paslew, knowing that both Bess and Nicholas are witches, curses not only the couple but also their descendants;

> *"Children shall she have," continued the abbot, "and children's children, but they shall be a race doomed and accursed—a brood of adders, that the world shall flee from and crush. A thing accursed, and shunned by her fellows, shall thy daughter be—evil reputed and evil doing. No hand to help her—no lip to bless her—life a burden; and death— long, long in coming—finding her in a dismal dungeon. Now, depart from me, and trouble me no more.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. iv)

What Paslew does here can be seen as a prime example of "*epistemic violence*". He, through announcing this curse, does not punish the two for being witches, but he also stains the name Demdike. Hence, it appears that the name of the father, which is the Demdike surname, gets violated for eternity by Paslew, situating the identity of the members of the family line in the symbolic order, even before they are born, as taboo subjects. The utterance of the Abbot manufactures an "*evil*" essence for the infant, whose existence will be shaped by it. The knowledge generated by this discursive act will shape the existence of the rest of the Demdike family that will be depicted throughout the book. The word Demdike as a sign will attribute a metaphysical signified that is generated by the constituted knowledge, through the curse of Paslew, although there is no sign or evidence of the next generation being witches. The word Demdike will only have the meaning "*witch*" as its signified.

The last chapters of the "Introduction" reveal the true identity of Nicholas Demdike to be a Cisterian monk named Borlace Alvetham and depict how John Paslew betrayed him to become the Abbot. As Paslew's confession takes place, and Demdike disguises himself as a monk that has come to hear his confession, the mystery unfolds;

> "*Be seated, I pray you, and listen to me, for I have much to tell. Thirty and one years ago I was prior of this abbey. Up to that period my life had been blameless, or, if not wholly free from fault, I had little wherewith to reproach myself—little to fear from a merciful judge—unless it were that I indulged too strongly the desire of ruling absolutely in the house in which I was then only second. But Satan had laid a snare for me, into which I blindly fell. Among the brethren was one named Borlace Alvetham, a young man of rare attainment, and singular skill in the occult sciences. He had risen in favour, and at the time I speak of was elected sub-prior.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. vi)

It appears that Paslew accuses Alvetham "*of sorcery and magical practices*" and "*the terrible crime of witchcraft, and [Alvetham] was found guilty*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. vi). Since Alvetham was "*skilled*" in "*occult sciences*" and studied the "*mystical figures*" and "*cabalistic characters*", "*the accusation was easy, for the occult studies in which he indulged laid him open to charge*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. vi). Paslew appears to have sealed the fate of another person through his discursive means, condemning Alvetham "*to die a fearful and lingering death*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. vi). However, it turns out that Alvetham had managed to run out of the prison he was put into, through a real pact with Satan this

time, and donned the identity of Nicholas Demdike to take his revenge upon Paslew. Demdike also explains how his wife Bess was deemed a witch not because of her own doing but because of "*the weird meetings [Demdike] attended*", although she was called the "*Flower of Pendle*" before their marriage (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. vi). This revelation also suggests how Bess was also marginalised by an invisible discursive crime of witchcraft that hinges itself and its meaning to a chain of absent signifiers. Although there was no evidence of her being a witch, her relationship with her notorious husband alone is enough to cause rumours that constitute a false reality about her.

As both Alvetham and Paslew "*[perish] together*" at the end of the "Introduction", the chapter ends with the narrator revealing the result of Paslew's utterances;

> "*As to the infant, upon whom the abbot's malediction fell, it was reserved for the dark destinies shadowed forth in the dread anathema he had uttered: to the development of which the tragic drama about to follow is devoted, and to which the fate of Abbot Paslew forms a necessary and fitting prologue. Thus far the veil of the Future may be drawn aside. That infant and her progeny became the LANCASHIRE WITCHES.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Introduction, ch. x)

As suggested by the narrator, the "*utterances*" of the abbot seal the "*destinies shadowed forth*" through the "*anathema*". The Demdike family and the discursive essence of their being precedes their existence. The origin of the Lancashire witches, ultimately, appears to be hinged on a discursive act that constitutes their place in the symbolic order.

The result of his discursive act leads to representations of "*epistemic violence*" starting with "Book the First" named "Alizon Device". Taking place approximately seventy-six years after the "Introduction", this chapter of the novel introduces the marginalised women that were accused and killed in the 1612 Pendle witch trials. The interpretation of the history of these witches that had started with the previous book of the novel continues all through this book as well. Although the whole event had started, according to Potts's historical account, with "*[Alizon Device's] fateful encounter with the pedlar John Law*" that took place on 21 March 1612 (Sharpe 2002: 1), the novel does not include this event taking place in its introduction, and the families of Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox, as well as Alice Nutter, are already regarded as witches. The establishment of these figures as witches right from the start of the narrative, even

before Potts arrives at Pendle and starts throwing out accusations, gives an idea about how these women and their existence had been stained by discursive means. As pointed out by Broedel, this suggests how women were led to be believed to be witches not by physical but rather metaphysical and discursive evidence as "*rumor, hearsay, and legend played an important part*" (Broedel 2003: 7). Paslew's curse seems to be a representation of the idea of "*witchcraft [being] a secret crime", having "no crime scene", or "no weapon", [and] "[h]ow witchcraft [was] a mystery to those who believed they were experiencing its effects*" (Machielsen 2011: 1).

Alice Nutter's land dispute with Nowell for Rough Lee leads the narrative of the novel to the introduction of the character Thomas Potts as a representative of the agent of the dominant power. Described as "*prepared to resort to any expedient to gain his object*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch iii), this description sums up the attitude against the accused women in a nutshell throughout the novel as well as any legislative agent of patriarchy. During the May Day festivities, Alice and Nicholas Assheton converse on Alizon and her supposed witch family, and Alizon's relation to them, although the narrative does not show any sign of witchcraft performed by them yet. Alice states, upon seeing Alizon for the first time, that "*[t]hose finely modeled features, that graceful figure, and those delicate, cannot surely belong to one lowly born and bred*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). Upon this, Nicholas Assheton starts talking about the Demdike family, especially commenting on how Mother Demdike is "*a mischievous and malignant old witch, who deserves the tar barrel*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). Potts is first encountered in the novel during this May Day scene, "*[swallowing] with greedy ears*" as Alice and Nicholas talk about how "*Pendle Forest swarms with witches*" and how "*[t]hey are the terror of the whole country*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). As Potts "*[throws] in a word*" by saying "*[s]o there are suspected witches in Pendle Forest, I find*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv), the novel introduces another power-knowledge interrelationship similar to Paslew's utterances.

The character Thomas Potts, as an agent of the dominant power, introduces King James I's *Daemonologie* (1597) as one of the sources of the "*epistemic violence*" that the female sex suffered at the time while talking to Alice and Nicholas during the May Day festivities. The dialogue between Potts and Alice Nutter especially shows how James I's book influenced the treatment of the female body through the

knowledge it created. After eavesdropping on Alice and Nicholas, Potts tells how "*[he] shall make it [his] business to institute inquiries concerning them*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). James' notorious "*personal engagement with diabolism and witchcraft*" (Ezroura 2021: 9) is also stated by Potts when he says "*our sovereign lord the king holdeth witches in especial abhorrence, and would gladly see all such noxious vermin extirpated from the land, and it will rejoice me to promote his laudable designs*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). Potts continues by saying how "*[James] is never so well pleased as when the truth of his tenets are proved by such secret offenders being brought to light, and duly punished*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). Alice Nutter's response, however, reveals the true function of James' *Daemonologie*; "*The king's known superstitious dread of witches makes men seek them out to win his favour," observed Mistress Nutter. They have wonderfully increased since the publication of that baneful book*!" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). Although Potts claims that the book "*was intended to check the crimes of necromancy, sorcery, and witchcraft, and not to increase them*", Alice emphasizes the mistreatment the female sex experiences from the bodies of the power by saying how "*it will make more witches than it will find*" by the "*power [put] into hands that will abuse it*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). Considering how these trials created professions like "*the new profession of "pricker", "specialized in pricking the Devil's marks on the body of the witch to test her real identity*" and how "*they were paid well for the job*" (Ezroura 2021: 14), Alice's comments on "*abusement*" of power seems to stand correct. Moreover, it also highlights Pott's interest in the matter and why "*[he] seems to have the 'Daemonologie' at his finger ends*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). The Pendle witch trials as a whole, as suggested by Sharpe, appear to be a representation of the misuse Alice points out;

> "*[…] the trial does seem to have been, in part, an attempt to curry favour with the King. Although it eventually met with some success, to bid for royal favour by prosecuting witches was a risky strategy, for cases of witchcraft and demonic possession were by now being disputed, in Lancashire and elsewhere, and James himself had been showing clear signs of scepticism. Potts therefore aimed high, basing his own account of the methods and findings of the Lancashire witch trial on the principles set out by the King in the 1590s.*" (Sharpe 2002: 19)

The hands that Alice mentions were none other than Potts's since "*Potts's [The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster] was carefully crafted*

to secure James I's favour" so much so that "*Potts's text was constructed around [Daemonologie]*" (Pumfrey 2002: 23). Potts, therefore, could be trying to exploit the power he is attributed by the state to gain both material and social gains through this "*attempt*" to "*curry favour with the King*". This is also suggested by how he constantly quotes *Daemonologie* to ratify his actions. Alice's comments on the misuse of power, then, appear to function as a foreshadowing for Potts's attitude that will be depicted in the later chapters of the novel that is explained by himself as well; "*If I can unearth a pack of witches, I shall gain much credit from my honourable good lords the judges of assize in these northern parts, besides pleasing the King himself, who is sure to hear of it, and reward my praiseworthy zeal*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv).

As Potts's "*historical*" text shows the "*construction of the trial, of the evidence, and of the crime itself*" rather than pointing out physically existing evidence (Sharpe 2002: 20), the fictional Potts will depict how the term 'witch' was on absent signifiers. Potts's statement of not being afraid of "*these terrible hags*" appears to be quite convenient as well. "*For as our high and mighty sovereign hath well and learnedly observed*" says Potts and continues to reveal the source of his courage;

> "*—'if witches be but apprehended and detained by any private person, upon other private respects, their power, no doubt, either in escaping, or in doing hurt, is no less than ever it was before. But if, on the other part, their apprehending and detention be by the lawful magistrate upon the just respect of their guiltiness in that craft, their power is then no greater than before that ever they meddled with their master. For where God begins justly to strike by his lawful lieutenants, it is not in the devil's power to defraud or bereave him of the office or effect of his powerful and revenging sceptre'.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv)

Although witches are almost capable of doing any evil deed from "*invoking any evil spirit*" to "*killing or otherwise hurting any person by such infernal arts*", the presence of a "*lawful magistrate*" is enough for their powers to become futile (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv). This topic of agents of good and evil having a battle on earth, which seems to be ratifying the bodies of the power is of course not something new. In the 15th century especially, the seminal text *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) brought this idea of the clergy having the protection of God on their side, as suggested by Broedel;

> *In the Malleus, the witch becomes the effective agent of diabolic power, a living, breathing, devil on earth in respect to those around her. On the other hand, the witch's*

> *power was to some extent balanced by the power of the Church, which could deploy divine power in the form of sacraments and sacramentals for the protection of the faithful. While God and the devil retreated into mechanical passivity the efforts of their human followers became increasingly important.* (Broedel 2003: 5)

Following the ideas of the authors of *Malleus* (1486), both James' *Daemonologie* and Potts's actions that stem from it, seem to be doing the same thing that *Malleus* did. These texts appear to be creating a binary opposite for the "*metaphysical presence*" of "*God and the devil*" through establishing presence by the means of "*human followers*". Moreover, this binarism seems to be ratifying the existence of the institutions of the dominant ideology and enabling them to create power relations and prosper within it. Both the church and the legislators gain the quality of being 'true', 'real', and 'good' because the witches are also 'true', 'real', but 'evil'. Both of these texts appear to create a knowledge that enables them to establish power over the "*Other*", and through their established power they construct knowledge, namely the concept of the witch in this case.

The way the female body is turned into the "*metaphysical presence*" of evil and the devil can also be seen in Nicholas' comments on Potts's "*lawful*" "*duty*" of "*apprehending and detention*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv);

> *"You will do well, Master Potts," said Nicholas; "still you must not put faith in all the idle tales told you, for the common folk hereabouts are blindly and foolishly superstitious, and fancy they discern witchcraft in every mischance, however slight, that befalls them. If ale turn sour after a thunder-storm, the witch hath done it; and if the butter cometh not quickly, she hindereth it. If the meat roast ill the witch hath turned the spit; and if the lumber pie taste ill she hath had a finger in it. If your sheep have the foot-rot—your horses the staggers or string-halt—your swine the measles—your hounds a surfeit—or your cow slippeth her calf—the witch is at the bottom of it all. If your maid hath a fit of the sullens, or doeth her work amiss, or your man breaketh a dish, the witch is in fault, and her shoulders can bear the blame. On this very day of the year—namely, May Day,—the foolish folk hold any aged crone who fetcheth fire to be a witch, and if they catch a hedge-hog among their cattle, they will instantly beat it to death with sticks, concluding it to be an old hag in that form come to dry up the milk of their kine."* (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv)

The figure of a witch appears to be the embodiment of any type of misfortune for both the common folk and the institutions of power, becoming the physical "*metaphysical presence*" of anything related to superstition and even bad luck. The reason why

witches are seen as being behind everything 'bad' seems to be caused by the only evidence witchcraft can have, and that is "*the oral testimony of victims of witchcraft and of accused witches themselves*" (Broedel 2003: 5). Since witchcraft hinges on "*the testimony of 'reliable witnesses'*", that is "*[reported] as fact*", "[…] *the witches were the common people's witches, those unpleasant and unpopular individuals held responsible for damaging crops, souring milk, and causing illness out of petty malice*" (Broedel 2003: 5). Nicholas' comment on every act of superstition being attributed to witchcraft seems to show how "*witchcraft was created within a discursive field of "words and deeds", in narrative accounts of unexpected or otherwise [any] unexplainable harm*" in villages (Broedel 2003: 6). Hence, considering the period, the identity of witches appears to be constructed from not direct experiences of the inquisitors or magistrates, or any 'scientific' or theological sources but daily life hearsays. The testimonies of the accused witches also show how "*[t]he hidden world of witchcraft could not be seen, [they] could only be heard about from the witch's mouth*" (Machielsen 2011: 2). Therefore, a witch was not found by physical evidence but by oral confirmation that was "*extracted under torture*", from the marginalized and repressed women, as Machielsen also suggests. The inaccuracy of these testimonies, considering the immense torture women went through, emphasizes both the illogical formation of the term the witch and how ideological power produces and ratifies a knowledge that itself produces through coercion.

The patriarchal attitude of the whole discourse that brands the female body as evil can be found all across *Malleus*, from "*[w]hen a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil thoughts*" (Mackay 2009: 163) to how "*women are found to be superstitious in larger numbers than men*" (Mackay 2009: 164), the whole text builds up this generalization of the female sex being "*easily impressed*" because of their "*nature*". They are considered even more dangerous than the male sex because "*they have loose tongues*" that spread evil influence to other women (Mackay 2009: 164). Furthermore, because of the "*lack of physical strength, [women] readily seek to avenge themselves secretly through acts of sorcery*". Ultimately branding women, much like Paslew did with his anathema, as weaker and prone to evil while quoting from *Ecclesiasticus*; "*It will be more pleasing to stay with a lion and a snake than to live with an evil woman. All evil is small compared to the evil of a woman*" (Mackay 2009: 164). Potts directly

underlines this phallocentric ideology that encompasses witchcraft while talking to Nicholas about the tendency of women towards evil;

> "*You will do us good service then, Master Potts, replied Nicholas. But since you are so learned in the matter of witchcraft, resolve me, I pray you, how it is, that women are so much more addicted to the practice of the black art than our own sex. The answer to the inquiry hath been given by our British Solomon, replied Potts, and I will deliver it to you in his own words. The reason is easy, he saith; for as that sex is frailer than man is, so it is easier to be entrapped in those gross snares of the devil, as was over well proved to be true, by the serpent's deceiving of Eve at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sex sensine.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv)

The mythological figure of Eve being mentioned emphasizes how the female sex is traditionally fetishized with "*epistemic violence*". Potts' words show how the Church as a patriarchal institution embodies a fear of women and a desire to "put them in their place". Broedel points out how Institoris and Sprenger established this phallocentric lens to turn "*witch-hunting*" into "*woman-hunting*" in *Malleus*;

> "*Their minds are warped, twisted like the rib from which Eve was first formed; and just as the first woman could not keep faith with God, so all women are faithless. This, the authors add, is shown by the very etymology of the word for "woman," "for it is said that femina is from fe and minus because a woman always has and keeps less faith.*" (Broedel 2003: 176)

The "*theory of the eternal feminine*" (Beauvoir 2010: 23) functions as the main source for the church and its representatives to exercise power over the female sex. Almost as an *a priori,* the female body is epistemically violated, by the *episteme* of what a woman is that is manufactured and ratified by none other than the apparatuses of the dominant patriarchy itself. The "*frailty*" of the female sex for Potts and all Western thought, presupposes their existence. Defined by "*lack*" and "*defect*", the body of the female "*is nothing other than what man decides*", a myth defined and manufactured by patriarchy (Beauvoir 2010: 26). She is to be punished, oppressed, and fetishized as "*[s]he is the Other*" (Beauvoir 2010: 26).

The relationship that the church establishes between the Devil and the female sex can also be seen as a representation of the "*faithless*", "*twisted*", and sexually insatiable woman. Before the witchcraft trials of the 16th and 17th centuries, the "*relationship between the devil and the magician always portrayed the devil as subordinate being called to task, willing or not, like a servant, and made to perform*

according to his master's will" (Federici 2009: 186). But, there seems to be a shift in the power dynamics between the devil and his witches. The female sex who was already sexually deviant does not take control of the devil but, "*the Devil function[s] as her owner and master, pimp and husband at once*" (Federici 2009: 187). Women do not simply sign a contract with their blood, as Dr. Faustus might do, but they have to have intercourse with the devil to seal the deal. Patriarchal as the whole witchcraft craze is, this belief emphasizes the patriarchal understanding of the sexual deviancy of women, whereas the overreacher men get the pen and paper. Where men seek the devil through the study of the occult to meet their needs or even for scientific and academic purposes, women invite him to their beds when the devil appears out of nowhere. This, perhaps, is why witches are considered a menace to the male sex as a whole since the act of sexual intercourse seems to not require male dominance anymore, as witches are depicted as being able to fulfill their sexual needs without their male counterparts. This loss of the sexual dominancy of men is quite symbolically described in *Malleus*;

> "*This takes place on the basis of seven different sorts of sorcery, by means of the tainting of the sexual act and fetuses in the womb with various acts of sorcery, as is mentioned in the bull. First, by diverting the minds of men to irregular love and so on. Second, by impeding the procreative force. Third, by taking away the limbs appropriate for this act. Fourth, by changing men into the shape of beasts through the art of conjuring. Fifth, by destroying the procreative force with reference to females. Sixth, by causing a miscarriage. Seventh, by offering babies to demons.*" (Mackay 2009: 171-172)

The female sexuality of the witches appears to be quite juxtaposed with any heteronormative act. They make penises disappear, cause miscarriages, and take away the reproductive force from the male sex by making them impotent. This is perhaps why "*[n]ot only did the witch-hunt sanctify male supremacy, it also instigated men to fear women, and even to look at them as the destroyers of the male sex*" (Federici 2009: 188). The whole witch hunt seems to have occured to take back the sexual dominance the male sex lost, getting the castrated phallus from the witches, the same witches who had the power to bend the mind of the male sex to their will. The whole manufactured identity of a witch, therefore stands, as another *femme fatale*; An essentially evil being that leads men to death and destruction, and that should be eradicated. Even the possibility of a woman taking over this sexual power was alarming, and according to the church, every woman was already "*wicked*" and "*twisted*" in essence.

This almost Platonic idea of essence exceeding existence can be seen in Potts's words when he remarks on the names of the witches and his views on Alice Nutter;

> "*A singular woman, that Mistress Alice Nutter. I must inquire into her history. Odd, how obstinately she set her face against witchcraft. And yet she lives at Rough Lee, in the very heart of a witch district, for such Master Nicholas Assheton calls this Pendle Forest. I shouldn't wonder if she has dealings with the old hags she defends—Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. Chattox! Lord bless us, what a name!—There's caldron and broomstick in the very sound! And Demdike is little better. Both seem of diabolical invention. […] Look to yourself, Mistress Nutter, and take care you are not caught tripping.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv)

Alice not only sets "*her face against witchcraft*", but she also questions the discourse of power. This leads Potts to accuse her of being a witch. As the representative of power, he requires her absolute compliance, and seeing it not done, utters the word "*witch*". This suggests not only a power relation between the state and the people but genders as well. "*[T]he essentially feminine nature of witchcraft"* and *"witches [being] defined exclusively as women*" (Broedel 2003: 183) enable Potts to accuse her easily. To no one's surprise, the fate of anyone who is branded with the word witch in the novel is similar and leads to execution. Potts's comments on Chattox's name are also symbolic of the "*epistemic violence*" that the female sex suffers. Although he never saw or talked to Chattox, without any empirical experience, the essence of her name makes him accept her as a witch. This also emphasises how the rumours and hearsays played the most important part in judging these women. These biassed accusations towards the genders are also emphasised by the characters Richard and Nicholas Assheton.

Richard, a noble squire who falls in love with Alizon and tries to save her from the triangle of witches, often contradicts the same discourse and does not abide by it. Nicholas "*essentially playing Mercutio to his cousin Richard's Romeo*" (Carver 2003b: 6) in this romance, also tries to defend Alice and Alizon. However, this seems to be possible because of their gender and class that enables them to have a say on the matter. Richard especially remarks on Paslew's curse and its effects on the women by saying;

> "*And see you not how easily the matter is explained? 'Give a dog an ill name and hang him'—a proverb with which you are familiar enough. So with Mother Demdike. Whether really uttered or not, the abbot's curse upon her and her issue has been*

> *bruited abroad, and hence she is made a witch, and her children are supposed to inherit the infamous taint.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v)

The "*naming*" of these families through the discursive curse Paslew uttered, as Richard also suggests, shows how these women have fallen victim to rumours rather than physical evidence. The Demdike name only has the signified of being a witch for these women, hence, they are constituted as essentially evil even before their deeds that establish them as witches. Richard continues to argue about all the other members of the Demdike family and Mother Demdike and their victimised state by saying; "*the prejudice existing against her is sure to convict and destroy her*" and that it must be "*prevented*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). He also states "*[h]er great age, infirmities, and poverty, [being] proofs against her*", pointing out the treatment towards women who have "*abnormal*" looks that do not fit social expectancies and class (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). He also states "*superstitious vulgar*", namely the low class people, being "*naturally prone to cruelty, have so many motives for revenging imaginary wrongs*", in reference to how witchcraft accusations often took place in villages and low-class circles (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). The way these accusations were exploited is also stated by him; "*It is placing a dreadful weapon in their hands, of which they have cunning enough to know the use, but neither mercy nor justice enough to restrain them from using it. Better let one guilty person escape, than many innocent perish*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Richard's analysis of the whole witch craze during the May Day festivities is quite valid. Since the accusations of witchcraft were common within villages and among villagers, the best resolution for a personal enmity towards, say, a rival dairy producer, would be to accuse the milkmaid of witchcraft. Therefore, they would quickly get rid of the competition. The village folk use this victimisation model with ease because it requires no evidence whatsoever. Richard concludes this speech by saying;

> "*So many undefined charges have been brought against Mother Demdike, that at last they have fixed a stigma on her name, and made her an object of dread and suspicion. She is endowed with mysterious power, which would have no effect if not believed in; and now must be burned because she is called a witch, and is doting and vain enough to accept the title.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v)

Richard seems to understand how the word witch presupposes a punishment of death. The "*undefined charges*" are also quite important because they suggest there being no

evidence for the crime of witchcraft. Most importantly, Richard seems to understand how rumours shape and stigmatise women under the name of witchcraft that "*fixes*" meanings to their names. Throughout the novel, both Richard and Nicholas question and ponder the concept of witchcraft and often conflict with the agents of the state. However, they are never judged or acted against by any forces of the power, in contrast, the disobedient members of the female sex are the only people that are punished instantly and incessantly.

Nan Redferne and her capture by the men who were after Mother Chattox, and the scenes that follow also highlight how witchcraft was based very much on rumour, the absence of both physical evidence and the devil, but most importantly rivalry. As a relative of a witch, Nan Redferne is immediately referred to as "*the young witch*" (Book the First, ch. v). Although Richard defends her by saying that "*[she] is no witch, […] "[n]o more than any of these lasses around us*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v), Potts arrives at the scene and forbids her release by saying; "*So you have found a witch, my masters. I heard your shouts, and hurried on as fast as I could. Just in time, Master Nicholas—just in time, […] rubbing his hands gleefully*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). The symbolic speech of Potts is quite important here. Since he brands Nan as a witch without any single idea of what has happened, the idea of witchcraft accusations not needing a single piece of evidence is highlighted. Potts' utterances are also important because he is a representative and an agent of the power, as soon as he brands Nan with the word witch, a crowd that mostly consists of common folk, apart from Richard and Nicholas, start to "*[gather] around her, yelling, hooting, and shaking their hands at her, as if about to tear her in pieces*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Nan appears to be both accused and judged at the same time just by using the word witch. This is also suggested by their decision to move on with the examination;

> "*Remove her instantly to the Abbey, Sparshot, [Potts] cried, and let her be kept in safe custody till Sir Ralph has time to examine her. Will that content you, masters? Neaw—neaw, responded several rough voices; swim her! —swim her! Quite right, my worthy friends, quite right, said Potts. Primo, let us make sure she is a witch—secundo, let us take her to the Abbey.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v)

Although Richard appears to, again, seek empirical evidence for Nan's accusations, Potts's behaviour shows the illogicality of the judiciary actions that were taken to deal with witches. He wants to make sure that "*she is a witch*" first, then "*take her to the*

Abbey" for further examination. However, how they will make "*sure*" will require no more examination. Since the trial by swimming kills the woman whether she is a witch or not, Nan will be dead either way. Therefore, Potts appears to be not seeking justice but the praise that he aims to get from King James, therefore he starts "*rubbing his hands gleefully*" upon an encounter with a "*witch*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Nicholas also solely accuses her of being a "*witch*" because Mother Chattox is "*her old grand-dame*", therefore "*there can be no doubt as to her being a witch*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v), this shows how the other family members are branded because of their relation to Mother Chattox, like many women were at the time. Upon investigating the "*magical verses inscribed*" on a cross that Chattox supposedly used to "*render herself invisible*", Potts says; "*What strange, uncouth characters! I can make neither head nor tail, unless it be the devil's tail, of them*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Yet again, this scene shows that the single evidence of the *maleficarum* is something no one knows or understands about, probably even the accused, Chattox herself.

Jem Device of the Demdike clan also appears at the scene while a crowd forms around Nan at the churchyard. His appearance and actions are also quite important since "*[m]any of the accusations of witchcraft in 1612 spring from the family of Old Demdike blaming that of Old Chattox, or vice versa*" (Swain 2002: 80). The narrator also explains that there is "*a deadly enmity [that] existed*" between the two families (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Although Jem is also believed to have meddlings with witchcraft and is often suspected, "*[this] circumstance create[s] no tie of interest between them, but the contrary*" and he appears to be "*the most active of her assailants*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). He even makes the already superstitious crowd chase a rat by saying "*t'owd witch, i' th' shape ov a rotten!—loo-loo-loo!*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Playing along with the crowd to perhaps get rid of his rival, he of all the people is heard saying "*swim her!-swim her!*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Since both of the families, according to historical accounts, "*were competing against each other for a limited market, making a living by healing, begging and extortion*" (Swain 2002: 80), Jem appears to be seeking to use the accusations for personal economical gains. Paralleling Richard's ideas concerning the "*superstitious vulgar*" which are "*naturally prone to cruelty, have so many motives for revenging imaginary wrongs*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First,

ch. v), this scene shows how the term witch was almost used as a weapon against people, especially between village folk. The narration that follows Nan's accusations again displays how rumours and gender roles attributed to women establish the identity of a witch. As she is "*noted for her skill in modelling clay figures*" and is not "*able to shed a tear, not a single tear*", Nan is "*a clear witch*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Since Nan states that she would "*scorn to weep fo t' like o' yo!*", her defiant body that refuses to play along with the myth of the passive and hysteric woman, constitutes her as a witch in the eyes of people. Her dominant and masculine behaviour results in her female body being attributed with the signified that the knowledge of the church constituted, marking her as an 'unfeminine' evil woman. Moreover, Nan's capture shows how this 'academic' and 'theological' knowledge of the church, especially the example of *Malleus* and *Daemonologie*, were shaped around myth and rumour. Moreover, it reveals that "*local rumors [alone] provided such a reliable indication of the presence of witchcraft [...] when such rumors reached the authorities*" (Broedel 2003: 99). Ultimately, epistemic violence towards the female sex underlines the way patriarchal power exercises a "*disciplining of women*" through "*the most monstruous attacks on the body perpetrated in the modern era: the witch-hunt*" just because they did not fit the essence of a "*woman*" that the phallocentric ideology had manufactured (Federici 2009: viii).

The chapter named "The Revelation" of the "Book the First" reveals a set of secrets about Alizon and her family, the Demdikes. Through these revelations, Alizon, "*in reality hanged as a self-confessed witch, becomes the beautiful tragic heroine of Ainsworth's romance*" (Richards 2002: 179). As the novel hints at the possibility of Alizon having "noble blood" in her, through the constant contrast between her and her supposed family, she is eventually revealed as Alice Nutter's long-lost daughter Millicent. This discovery starts to depict Alizon's battle against the "*epistemic violence"* that violates her existential being. Since she was already considered to belong to a coven of witches through her relation to the Demdike family, she is regarded as such even though she has nothing to do with the bloodline. However, Alice Nutter is also rumoured to be "*a witch and in league with witches*" "*an invented charge by*" Potts, because of "*the rumours that she had her husband killed in order to own Rough Lee"* (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vii). Although Alice explains how "*he died from hard riding after hard drinking*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch.

iv), Potts' claims eventually brand her as a witch. Alizon's fate seems to be sealed no matter what happens since she appears to move from a coven of witches to becoming a daughter of one again.

With this discovery and the accusations revolving around Alice Nutter, the novel shifts its narration to emphasize Potts' "*invented charges*". In "Chapter IX" named "The Two Portraits in the Banqueting-Hall", Potts is described as a person who manufactures claims through distortion and bribery. At the banquet following the May-day events, Potts pays close attention to Jennet, to make her talk about her family of supposed witches. Following his motto "*witches can be proof against witches*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix), he praises Jennet for her cleverness, claiming that she is "*the sharpest, undoubtedly*" and claiming how she is "*neglected*" by her family (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix). He tries to make her ratify the accusations he makes against people by saying how he "*can put [her] in a way of making [her] fortune*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix). Potts continues to wash the mind of nine-year-old Jennet by saying how "*it would not surprise [him], if every one of [her] family, including [herself], should be arrested, shut up in Lancaster Castle, and burnt for witches*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix). He suggests the only "*way of escaping the general fate of [her] family-not merely escaping it- but of acquiring a large reward*" by the means of "*giving evidence against them-by telling all [she] know[s]*" to him (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix). Potts even tries to blame Alizon for her beauty, questioning whether "*she obtained her extraordinary and otherwise unaccountable beauty by some magical process-some charm- some diabolical unguent prepared […] from fat of unbaptised babes, compounded with hembane, hemlock, mandrake, moonshade, and other terrible ingredients*", since "*she could not be so beautiful without some such aid*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix). It seems like an extremely beautiful female body gets its fair share of being accused of witchcraft much like an "*abnormal*" and "*ugly*" one. However, quite ironically, Alizon's beauty actually stems from her virtue and kindness, as suggested by Jennet "*[she] is os good as she's pretty*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix). Although Jennet understands Potts' "*grand scheme*", she eventually talks about how "*Mistress Nutter has bewitched [Alizon]" and asks "who'll ye gi' me*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. ix), emphasising the historical treatment of child witnesses in witchcraft trials. It shows how "*the extraordinarily heinous crime of witchcraft permitted*

extraordinary legal measures", including "*admitting evidence from witches and children*" that was "*reasoned*" by King James himself (Pumfrey 2002: 34). Considering how ten people "*including Anne Whittle (alias Chattox), the gentlewoman Alice Nutter, and one man, were found guilty and hanged, nine of them on the evidence of the young girl Jennet Device*", during the Pendle trials (Pumfrey 2002: 22) and how "*[t]he evidence of the children Jennet and James Device was vital in initiating the wider allegations of witchcraft*" (Sharpe 2002: 2), the scene between Potts and Jennet suggests the way children were also used in these trials. It appears that they were often brainwashed and tricked into the idea that they would be getting rewarded for their contribution. However, considering how Jennet Device was also killed and would "*[find] herself transformed from child witness to witch*" twenty-four years later (Findlay 2002: 146), her historical and fictional character suggests another exploitation that the witch inquisition had performed, in addition to how tentative and arbitrary women's positions in society are.

In his article "From Belief to Madness: The Discourse of the Witchcraze", Fortushniok argues how "*Malleus [had] conver[ted] metaphysical definitions into legal classifications*" and how "*the courtroom became a sanctioned theoretical experiment where legal evidence was subservient to metaphysical proof*" in the witchcraft trials (2013: 5). In "Book the Second" named "Pendle Forest", the usage of hearsay as "*legal evidence*" for "*metaphysical proof*" is also highlighted. The narrative follows the journey of Nowell and Potts through Pendle Hill, where they talk and investigate the victims of witchcraft as they make their way towards Rough Lee. They arrive at "*the village of Sabden*" a place upon which "*a blight seemed to have fallen*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. iii), and the inhabitants of this village seem to be suffering from witchcraft;

> "*Roger Nowell, who had visited it a few months ago, could scarcely believe his eyes, so changed was its appearance. His inquiries as to the cause of its altered condition were every where met by the same answer—the poor people were all bewitched. Here a child was ill of a strange sickness, tossed and tumbled in its bed, and contorted its limbs so violently, that its parents could scarcely hold it down. Another family was afflicted in a different manner, two of its number pining away and losing strength daily, as if a prey to some consuming disease. In a third, another child was sick, and vomited pins, nails, and other extraordinary substances. A fourth household was tormented by an imp in the form of a monkey, who came at night and pinched them all*

> *black and blue, spilt the milk, broke the dishes and platters, got under the bed, and, raising it to the roof, let it fall with a terrible crash; putting them all in mental terror. In the next cottage there was no end to calamities, though they took a more absurd form. Sometimes the fire would not burn, or when it did it emitted no heat, so that the pot would not boil, nor the meat roast. Then the oatcakes would stick to the bakestone, and no force could get them away from it till they were burnt and spoiled; the milk turned sour, the cheese became so hard that not even rats' teeth could gnaw it, the stools and settles broke down if sat upon, and the list of petty grievances was completed by a whole side of bacon being devoured in a single night.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. iii)

From the severe conditions of people who appear to have fallen ill with a "*strange sickness*", to mischievous imps that pinch people at night, the whole village seems to be lost in a chaotic turmoil. The reason for these events appears to be caused by none other than Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. The whole village seems to be cursed because they "*refus[ed] to supply them with poultry, eggs, milk, butter, [and] other articles, which [the witches] had demanded*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. iii). A man who calls himself "*Oamfrey o' Will's o' Ben's o' Tummas' o' Sabden*" tells "*his tale*" to Nowell and Potts where he explains how he, along with all the village, had "*offended*" Mother Chattox and Mother Demdike (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. iii). Potts refers to the man as "*Humphrey Etcetera*" and tells him to "*comfort [him]self*". It should also be mentioned that Potts keeps all this information in his memorandum book to use in the trials. However, the claims of the villagers appear to be quite metaphysical. None of the villagers have seen either Chattox or Demdike casting any spells, yet they assume that all the diabolical things that are happening in the village are caused by the two. This attitude assumes every single misfortune and harm as being the deed of the witches, whereas some of them may have been happening for other reasons. Echoing Institoris' ideas about witchcraft, as in "*his investigation the emphasis was placed squarely upon concrete misfortunes attributed to maleficium and rumors of malign occult powers*" (Broedel 2003: 16), the whole village, as well as Potts, constitutes the witch as the prime source for evil through "*direct accusations, rumors, legends, and snippets of traditional witchcraft beliefs*" (Broedel 2003: 16). Therefore, it seems like the evidence for these metaphysical occurrences are supported by interpretations of vague events rather than direct experiences.

Mary Baldwyn's death is also suggestive of these accusations being built on shaky ground. Since she is described as another person who was cursed and killed by Mother Chattox, it is revealed later that "*she had ever done [Chattox] [any] harm*" and had died because of an illness rather than a curse (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xiii). The unreliability of these accusations is also suggested by Potts' memorandum. Although he notes these stories as concrete legal evidence, he does not care about the names of the people who give their testimonies. He notes Humphrey's name as "*Humprey Etcetereta*", suggesting the existence of a rumour being sufficient, rather than having reliable and real witnesses since he writes his name wrong.

Potts' encounter with John Law, the historical pedlar whose encounter with Alizon Device started the trials at Lancashire, also suggests a reliance on rumour as evidence. Although he appears to have "*had a paralytic stroke*", "*his face [...] greatly disfigured, the mouth and neck drawn awry, the left eye pulled down, and the whole power of the same side gone*", he claims that it was "*witchcraft*" that made him ill (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. iv). Moreover, he claims that "*[he] con scarcely rekillect [the encounter], [his] head [being] so confused*" because of the stroke that he experienced, but his testimony is noted as evidence by Potts (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. iv).

Witnesses who Potts gathers as evidence for the trial also suggest quite an important aspect regarding the trials of Lancashire. As all the people who accuse these women appear to be village folk, suggested by their fragmented Lancashire dialect, it appears that "*the various trial documents that are reproduced within The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches were not themselves simply 'matters of Fact'*" (Almond 2012: 10). "*They too were the brief and subsequent summaries of complex and no doubt long interrogations and examinations, of leading questions and elicited answers, of truth and fiction, construction and invention*" (Almond 2012: 10). Moreover, the unreliability and the fictionality of these testimonies that are gathered by Potts himself suggests how his writings "*made the secret world of witchcraft visible*" by bringing these interpretations into legal process, turning local myth to reality (Machielsen 2011: 1). His writings appear to follow the same tradition that *Malleus* created, that is "*to take the witch constructed by learned theologians, the witch of traditional legend, folktale, and rumour, and the old woman huddled before the inquisitor's bench and to blend them into a single being*" (Broedel 2003: 21). His "*practices of the witches of*

Lancashire appeared to confirm the king's work" (Almond 2012: 8), ultimately creating a concrete representation for the metaphysical "*evil woman*" myth through the bodies of these witches, "*a being capable of satisfying the demands of all situations in which her existence was meaningful*" (Broedel 2003: 21).

Consequently, the representations of epistemic violence in the novel showcase how the female cast of the novel suffers from accusations that are solely based on discourse. Paslew's curse and Potts's way of crafting the accusations throughout the novel can be seen as a representation of the same discourse of the Church that stained the female sex. Since there is no evidence of magic being used by the accused women, the accusations reveal how Christian theology constitutes them as essentially evil. This is also suggested by how no one accuses Jem Device of witchcraft, the sole male member of the Demdike family, but all the female members related to him.

CHAPTER II

UGLY AS SIN: THE BODY OF THE WITCH AND WITCHCRAFT TORTURES

“*But, I've already told you, I'm not a witch at all! Witches are old, and ugly*”

Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

The epistemic defilement of the female body that the patriarchy committed during the witch trials of the seventeenth-century in Europe can be best explained through the female body itself. Especially Julia Kristeva’s concept of the “*abject*” and Barbara Creed’s “*monstrous feminine*” highlight how the “*knowledge*” of the female, the horrific and dangerous “*Other*”, was constituted by the fear it purported for patriarchy. This chapter will discuss the bodies of the female sex who are accused of witchcraft in *The Lancashire Witches*, to point out their “*abject*” quality as a representative of their so called destructive monstrosity.

In *Powers of Horror* (1980), Kristeva defines “*abject*” as something that is “*neither [a] subject or [an] object*” (1982: 1);

> “*When I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly speaking, a definable object. The abject is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. What is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and autonomous. The abject has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I.*” (Kristeva 1982: 1)

According to Kristeva, the “*abject*” resides on the borders between the self and the object, as a concept that is neither of the two. Defining a “*corpse*” as the “*utmost [example] of abjection*”, she shows the cause of “*abjection*” stemming from something that “*does not respect borders, positions, [and] rules*”, “*disturb[ing] identity, system, [and] order*” (1982: 4). “*Abject*” appears to be “*[t]he in-between, the ambiguous, [and] the composite*” since “*[i]t is something rejected from which one does not part*” (Kristeva 1982: 4). The “*abject*”, or “*the other*”, as suggested by Kristeva, seems to be

a necessary linguistic unit to define the "*I*" through its opposition that is evoked by its ambiguous state of being something that is both feared and desired at the same time. Rina Arya also suggests this function of the abject concerning the constitution of the self;

> "*The dual nature of the abject explains the precarious nature of 'I'. The borders of the self are neither fixed nor unshakeable. Once expelled, the 'other', or the abject does not disappear but hovers and challenges the boundaries of selfhood. The abject…has the propensity to shatter the unity of the self, yet…it takes us to the heart of our being, defines our identity.*" (2014: 6)

Ann McKenzie Roge comments on the dichotomy between the "*I*" and the other being, that is evoked by Kristeva's "*abjection*", especially present in the power relationships between male and female bodies in patriarchal societies;

> "*For Kristeva, the ways in which fear of the abject manifests in culture is often through patriarchy, stemming from fear of the female, sexual other. Patriarchal power structures—often justified through religion—seek to impose borders for social safety, working under the assumption that woman, the sexual other, possessor of generative powers which posit her existence as one constantly teetering on the blurred lines between nature and society, is seen as dangerous.*" (2017: 3-4)

Kristeva also suggests a "*force that can be threatening for divine agency*" also rooted "*historically (in the history of religions) and subjectively (in the structuration of the subject's identity), in the cathexis of maternal function—mother, women, reproduction.*" (Kristeva 1982: 91). The female body appears to have "*a power (maternal? natural?—at any rate insubordinate and not liable of being subordinated to Law) that might become autonomous evil but is not, so long as the hold of subjective and social symbolic order endures*" (Kristeva 1982: 91). This danger of possible impurity and abjection, Kristeva elaborates, "*serves a logic of distribution and behaviour on which the symbolic community is founded: a Law, a reason*" (Kristeva 1982: 91), hinting at the "*abject*", dangerous, and potentially evil body of the female being a product of the patriarchal discourse.

In *The Monstrous Feminine* (1993), Barbara Creed builds upon Kristeva's idea of the "*abject*" female body and explores the term "*monstrous feminine*". Stating that "*[a]ll human societies have a conception of the monstrous-feminine, of what it is about woman that is shocking, terrifying, horrific, abject*" (Creed 1993: 1), she explores the

representations of the "*abject*" female figure in the horror film genre. To point out the construction of the female as the "*monstrous feminine*" she states;

> *The concept of the monstrous-feminine, as constructed within/by a patriarchal and phallocentric ideology, is related intimately to the problem of sexual difference and castration […] mediated by a narrative about the difference of female sexuality as a difference which is grounded in monstrousness and which invokes castration anxiety in the male spectator.* (Creed 1993: 2)

Building upon the Freudian understanding of "*castration anxiety*", Creed reveals how the body of the female sex itself emanates danger. Although "*Freud's argument […] constitute[s] woman as victim*", Creed states "*[s]uch a position only serves to reinforce patriarchal definitions of woman which represent and reinforce the essentialist view that woman, by nature is a victim*" (Creed 1993: 7). In contrast to this victimhood, Creed, "*argue[s] that woman is represented as monstrous*" (1993: 7), to point out how female sexuality itself is constructed as a sign of monstrosity and threat. However, the shift in passive victim to the active monster, argues Creed, does not connote a "*feminist*" or "*liberated state for the female body*";

> "*The presence of the monstrous feminine in the popular horror film speaks to us more about male fears than about female desire or feminine subjectivity. However, this presence does challenge the view that the male spectator is almost always situated in an active, sadistic position and the female spectator in a passive, masochistic one.*" (Creed 1993: 7)

This idea suggests how the definition of a woman always constitutes itself by the phallus, rather than her female self. Moreover, it constitutes the female body as an ambiguous abject figure that is both feared and desired by the patriarchy. The male requires the female body to constitute itself as the phallic superior "*I*", yet the castrated female "*Other*" resonates with fear for the phallus. Creed's concept of the "*monstrous feminine*" gains its ultimate dangerous state through this shift in roles as the previously "*castrated*" female becomes the "*castrator*";

> "*Freud put forward a number of theories to support his view that woman's genitals appear castrated rather than castrating. Viewed from a different perspective, each of these theories supports--and frequently with more validity—the argument that woman's genitals appear castrating.*" (Creed 1993: 110)

However, the construction of the "*monstrous feminine*" appears to be a male fantasy as Freud's notions "*[are] based on irrational fears about the deadly powers of the vagina*" (Creed 1993: 121), it appears that "*it is man who constructs woman as*

castrator" (Creed 1993: 121). The castrating female appears to depict male fears as it connotes a danger to patriarchy, "*a fear of a loss of power, and that the woman-as-castrator figure symbolically represents a woman who usurps male phallic power to disrupt the symbolic*" (Roge 2017: 19). Joseph Cambelll also discusses castration as a motif in primitive mythologies regarding the witches;

> "*[T]here is a motif occurring in certain primitive mythologies, as well as in modern surrealist painting and neurotic dream, which is known to folklore as the toothed vagina—the vagina that castrates. And a counterpart, the other way, is the so-called phallic mother, a motif perfectly illustrated in the long fingers and nose of the witch.*" (1960: 73)

Malleus Maleficarum also "*discusses magical penis theft in three different places*" where witches remove and steal "*the male member*" (Smith 2002: 88). All these texts show that the fear of witches seems to have its roots in the "*monstrous feminine*" and castration anxiety. Creed also highlights "*the central reason for the persecution of witches [as] [the] morbid interest in the witch as 'other' and a fear of the witch/woman as an agent of castration*" (Creed 1993: 74). The witch, therefore, appears to be the personification of this fear.

Laura Mulvey, in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", also points out this ambiguous and abject state of the female body;

> "*The paradox of phallocentrism in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of the castrated women to give order and meaning to its world. An idea of woman stands as linchpin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies.*" (1989: 14)

The epistemic violence that the patriarchal Church had created, therefore, seems to be made possible by the male desire itself. The same dichotomy that attributed the gender roles to women seems to be taking place at the centre of the entire witch hunts, including the one in *The Lancashire Witches*, if Mulvey's further ideas about the representation of women in cinema are applied to this text aswell ;

> "*Woman […] stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning.*" (Mulvey 1989: 15)

However, Mulvey also comments on the fear that the abject female body manifests through its castrated body. "*The female figure poses a deeper problem*", it "*[implies] a threat of castration and hence unpleasure",* "*always [threatening] to evoke the*

anxiety it originally signifies" (Mulvey 1989: 21). According to Mulvey, patriarchy overcomes this anxiety in two different ways;

> "*The male unconscious has two avenues of escape from this castration anxiety: preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma (investigating the woman, demystifying her mystery), counterbalanced by the devaluation, punishment or saving of the guilty object (an avenue typified by the concerns of the film noir); or else complete disavowal of castration by the substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure itself into a fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous [.]*" (Mulvey 1989: 21)

The "*voyeurism*" of the "*male gaze*", as Mulvey comments, "*has associations with sadism: pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt (immediately associated with castration), asserting control and subjugating the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness*" (1989: 21-22). This sadistic behaviour of punishment can especially be seen in the voyeuristic nature of tortures that took place in witchcraft cases.

In Ainsworth's *The Lancashire Witches,* all the accused women, apart from Alizon, who appears as a virtuous Mary type, and Alice Nutter who appears as the penitent, portray this quality of "*the abject*" castrator, especially through their physical descriptions. Almost all the witches are depicted as the epitome of the "*monstrous feminine*", as scary crones since they are a matriarchal threat to the power dominance of the patriarchal order. The first chapter of the first book "The May Queen" establishes a distinct difference between the rest of the Demdike — or Device— family and Alizon Device through their physical descriptions. Jennet Device is introduced as the first person belonging to the Demdike family line. Her physical descriptions while watching Alizon's preparations for May Day festivities underlines her qualities as an abject witch;

> "*Attentively watching these proceedings sat on a stool, placed in a corner, a little girl, some nine or ten years old, with a basket of flowers on her knee. The child was very diminutive, even for her age, and her smallness was increased by personal deformity, occasioned by contraction of the chest, and spinal curvature, which raised her back above her shoulders; but her features were sharp and cunning, indeed almost malignant, and there was a singular and unpleasant look about the eyes, which were not placed evenly in the head.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. i)

Jennet's "*diminutive*", "*deformed*", "*malignant*", and "*unpleasant*" qualities as a witch foil Alizon's pure and tender qualities. This contrast not only with her sister but with the rest of her family is quite suggestive of the "*epistemic violence*" that Alizon will

suffer throughout the novel. As Alizon is not a member of the Demdike family but is an infant that was kidnapped by them, her beauty and gentle characteristics will fall victim to the discourse created by Paslew's curse. Ultimately, she is accused of being a witch, because of her surname and the name of the father Demdike.

The difference between Alizon and her supposed family is also emphasised by the different dialects of speech that the narrative suggests when Jennet is accused of being jealous of Alizon's beauty;

> "*Ey jealous," cried Jennet, reddening, "an whoy the firrups should ey be jealous, ey, thou saucy jade! Whon ey grow older ey'st may a prottier May Queen than onny on you, an so the lads aw tell me." "And so you will, Jennet," said Alizon Device, checking, by a gentle look, the jeering laugh in which Nancy seemed disposed to indulge—"so you will, my pretty little sister," she added, kissing her; "and I will 'tire you as well and as carefully as Susan and Nancy have just 'tired me." "Mayhap ey shanna live till then," rejoined Jennet, peevishly, "and when ey'm dead an' gone, an' laid i' t' cowld churchyard, yo an they win be sorry fo having werreted me so." "I have never intentionally vexed you, Jennet, love," said Alizon, "and I am sure these two girls love you dearly."* (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. i)

Since "*[t]hroughout the narrative the peasants, the countryfolk, the lower classes and most of the witches speak in phonetically rendered Lancashire dialect*" and "*[t]he gentry, heroes, and heroines, all speak standard English of a suitably archaic kind*", the narrative through this difference in the dialect, as suggested by Jeffrey Richards, seems to be "*demonstrating linguistically [the] innate superiority*" of Alizon (Richards 2002: 172). In addition to being different in beauty, she is set apart linguistically too.

Elizabeth Device, the mother of Alizon, Jem, and Jennet Device, is also used to emphasise Alizon's "*superiority*". It seems like, in the case of Jennet, the apple did not fall far from the tree, as Elizabeth is described similarly as physically inferior and abject;

> "*Her dress was of dark red camlet, with high-heeled shoes. She stooped slightly, and being rather lame, supported herself on a crutch-handled stick. In age she might be between forty and fifty, but she looked much older, and her features were not at all prepossessing from a hooked nose and chin, while their sinister effect was increased by a formation of the eyes similar to that in Jennet, only more strongly noticeable in her case. This woman was Elizabeth Device, widow of John Device, about whose death there was a mystery to be inquired into hereafter, and mother of Alizon and Jennet,*

though how she came to have a daughter so unlike herself in all respects as the former, no one could conceive; but so it was." (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. i)

Much like Jennet, the words that are used to describe Elizabeth suggest a link between deformity and ugliness being a source, or proof, of evil that stems from her female body. She appears in "*dark red*", "*lame*", looking "*much older*" than her real age, and "*sinister*" because of the same deformity that she shares with Jennet. Most importantly, however, her phallic "*hooked nose and chin*", with the "*crutch-handled stick*" creates a stereotypical witch look for her. These qualities of the Demdike witch lineage, especially their physical deformation and ugliness can also be seen as a reason for these women to fall victim to Paslew's discursive curse that etched the word witch on to their bodies. Since the witchcraft trials were "*one of the few places where the accused's physical appearance might enter the legal record, [and] they potentially centered on the witch's sex and old age*" (Machielsen 2011: 2), and their deformed bodies were also another element, on top of the discursive curse, that led the people to think of them as witches. Their bodies appear monstrous as representatives of abjection manifested because of their sex. This case of body politics regarding witchcraft was so believed by the people of the early modern period that "*punching a witch on the nose was […] believed to strip her of her powers*" (Machielsen 2011: 4). The disfigured eye of the family is also another element that physically ratifies them as being a witch. The term "*evil eye*" was especially attributed to the witches, as suggested by Broedel;

"*Institoris and Sprengeras* [9] *accept an established fact that the gaze of certain persons – menstruating women for example – has a natural power capable of bringing about physical effects, and that in some angry or disturbed old women this gaze may be sufficient to do real harm to young and impressionable minds and bodies.*" (2003: 23)

Potts, in his historical account of the Pendle witches, also writes about this deep belief in the power that is represented on the deformed body of the witch by accusing women of their "*wrinkles*"[10], as well as "*reporting one common proverb '[h]er eyes are sunke in her head, GOD blesse us from her*'" (qtd. in Machielsen 2011: 4), showing how being old, ill, or deformed could lead a person to be accused of witchcraft. Therefore,

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[9] Authors of *Malleus Maleficarum* or the *Hammer of Witches*, the most seminal 'academic' study on witches.

[10] "*The wrinkles of an old wiues face is good euidence to the Iurie against a Witch*." from *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (Potts 1613)

the bodies of these females appear to be judged because of their abject and "*unnatural*" qualities.

Mother Chattox, who is also a notorious witch in the county, is introduced along with "*her grand-daughter, pretty Nan Redferne*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Her abject looks being also like the Demdike family's is quite suggestive of her *maleficarum*, suggestive of how being sinful and having physical infirmities are interrelated in the eyes of the people;

> "*They were females, one about five-and-twenty, very comely, and habited in smart holiday attire, put on with considerable rustic coquetry, so as to display a very neat foot and ankle, and with plenty of ribands in her fine chestnut hair. The other was a very different person, far advanced in years, bent almost double, palsy-stricken, her arms and limbs shaking, her head nodding, her chin wagging, her snowy locks hanging about her wrinkled visage, her brows and upper lip frore, and her eyes almost sightless, the pupils being cased with a thin white film. Her dress, of antiquated make and faded stuff, had been once deep red in colour, and her old black hat was high-crowned and broad-brimmed. She partly aided herself in walking with a crutch-handled stick, and partly leaned upon her younger companion for support.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v)

The visual descriptions of Nan and Mother Chattox are quite juxtaposing. Chattox's ugliness and being quite unfeminine shows how "*witches were mostly identified by the populace by their ugliness*" and "*popular superstition sees ugliness [as] a sign of supernatural strength*" (Purkiss 2005: 127). The concept of disgust being achieved by the physical qualities of the witch enables the female body to be attributed "*awesome powers in virtue of their impurity*" (Carroll 1987: 57), in addition to their cognitive impurity that does not fit the accepted feminine model.

These abject witches appear to be the embodiment of the castrating "*monstrous feminine*" by "*transgression or violation of schemes of cultural categorization*", becoming impure through achieving "*interstitiality*", as Noel Carroll puts it, "*[t]hey are unnatural relative to a culture's conceptual scheme of nature. They do not fit the scheme; they violate it*" (1987: 55). These figures manage to awaken terror through their unnatural quality and abject status. Hence, it could be argued that a witch gains her monster-like quality not from her subjective being, but through her contradiction, as a taboo subject, according to the formulated knowledge of the historical context and discourse to which she belongs.

Chattox seems to be "*invested with magical powers*" because of the fear she creates as the castrator. The old and "*palsy-stricken*" body, with pupils that are "*cased with a thin white film*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v), forces the body of the female to be considered a taboo object. A witch evokes fear rather than desire unlike a "real" female body. "*[H]er old black hat*" accompanied "*with a crutch-handled stick*" completes her 'witch' look (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). This relation between ugliness and *maleficarum*, is also suggested by Nicholas' actions. Upon seeing Chattox, Nicholas accuses of her of being a witch directly; "*Back to thy den, old witch! Ar't crazed, as well as blind and palsied, that thou knowest not that this is a merrymaking, and not a devil's sabbath? Back to thy hut, I say! These sacred precincts are no place for thee*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Although "*[o]ne of the most common ways of identifying a witch was to spot a member of a family known to contain witches*" and "*[d]aughters and even sons of accused or convicted witches were very often accused themselves*" (Purkiss 2005: 146), Nicholas never accuses Nan of being evil. As Nan is "*pretty*" with "*fine*" hair and a "*neat foot and ankle",* she does not manifest any evil or impurity (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Later it is revealed that Nicholas believes that Chattox had cursed his brother with "*quick-wasting sickness and death by [...] infernal arts*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). However, Chattox responds "*Thou wert the gainer by his death, not I. Why should I slay him?*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). "*I will tell thee why, old hag"* [cries] Nicholas; "*he was inflamed by the beauty of thy grand-daughter Nancy here, and it was to please Tom Redferne, her sweetheart then, but her spouse since, that thou bewitchedst him to death*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). These 'valid' accusations for most of the village folk, although having no proof, emphasizes how the identity of witch was quite easy to pin on a woman just because of her abject appearance. Chattox is also quite aware of this discursive crime requiring no evidence and shows this by making fun of Nicholas saying; "*If I had any hand in his death, it was to serve and pleasure thee, and that all men shall know, if I am questioned on the subject—ha! ha!*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). She knows only an utterance would be enough to accuse someone of witchcraft, especially coming from a privileged member of society like Nicholas.

As Nicholas is quite furious with Chattox because of the curse she supposedly cast, he decides to catch and punish her. The scenes that follow this conflict show the

act of witchcraft essentially being a metaphysical crime. This is depicted during the words that Chattox utters to escape from Nicholas and Richard;

> "*Let me go, Nicholas Assheton," she shrieked, "or thou shalt rue it. Cramps and aches shall wring and rack thy flesh and bones; fever shall consume thee; ague shake thee—shake thee—ha!" And Nicholas recoiled, appalled by her fearful gestures. "You carry your malignity too far, old woman," said Richard severely. "And thou darest tell me so," cried the hag. "Set me before him, Nance, that I may curse him," she added, raising her palsied arm.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v)

Upon the acts of the impure body of the witch, Nicholas is "*appalled by her fearful gestures*". Her gestures however are not dangerous because of the gestures themselves; they are dangerous because of the body of the "*monstrous feminine*" that performs them. Since the bodies of these females are epistemically violated by the phallocentric discourse that constitutes their meaning as evil beings, the body of the witch through its gestures and abject being shows how the identity of a witch "*is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results*" (Butler 2002: 33). Through these gestures they show how "*the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means*" (Butler 2002: 173). Therefore, when Butler's concept of gender performativity is applied to the novel, Chattox's "*gestures*" that constitute her as a witch gives the "*idea that the subject is an effect rather than a cause*" for witchcraft to exist (Salih 2003: 48). The witch's impure, ugly, and unnatural body that the hegemony creates through the power that constitutes knowledge forces the existence of these women to be defined by their manufactured essence. Therefore, one is not born a witch but appears to be made one by the knowledge created to define them as fearful beings. This is also suggested by the continued performance of Chattox where she continues her curse;

> *"I will teach him to cross my path," she vociferated, in accents shrill and jarring as the cry of the goat-sucker. "Handsome he is, it may be, now, but he shall not be so long. The bloom shall fade from his cheek, the fire be extinguished in his eyes, the strength depart from his limbs. Sorrow shall be her portion who loves him—sorrow and shame!" "Horrible!" exclaimed Richard, endeavouring to exclude the voice of the crone, which pierced his ears like some sharp instrument. "Ha! ha! you fear me now," she cried. "By this, and this, the spell shall work," she added, describing a circle in the air with her stick, then crossing it twice, and finally scattering over him a handful*

of grave dust, snatched from an adjoining hillock." (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v)

Chattox's physical revolt and opposition to the male forces, rather than having a passive female performance, emanates fear for Richard and Nicholas. As a result of Chattox's performance of the castrator witch, even Richard who was quite a sceptic about the existence of witches says; "*Ah! This must indeed be a witch! […], recovering from the momentary shock*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). This as suggested "*call[s] the category of 'the subject' into question by arguing that it is a performative construct; and asserting that there are ways of 'doing' one's identity" rather than essentially being*" (Salih 2003: 45). As Chattox manages to escape from the hands of the crowd of people Nicholas gathers, her following actions are also considered evidence of witchcraft because of the previous performative ones. "*[T]he old hag Chattox" appears to be nowhere to be found",* although Richard "*saw her standing there with her grand-daughter*" a minute ago (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Nicholas directly interprets the actions by saying; "*Notwithstanding her blindness, the old hag must have managed to read the magic verse […] and so have rendered herself invisible*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v), suggesting after the witch performance she demonstrated, every other action performed by her to be branded as *maleficarum*. However, Chattox hides in a "*small beautiful chapel*" that is revealed by the narration later (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vii). This logical explanation of where she went while the men were chasing her reveals how the "*performativity*" constitutes her subject as a witch.

This whole incident also reveals another issue with the concept of witchcraft. As mentioned before, the term witch hinges on absent signifiers that presuppose the existential meaning of the being. Witchcraft being "*punishable even in the absence of any proven damage to persons and things*" (Federici 2009: 170), suggests the absent signifier of evidence. Since Chattox's curse did, and will, not do any damage to either Richard or Nicholas, this absence seems to be ratified by the narrative. The other link on this chain of absence is the "*metaphysical presence*" of Satan. Although Chattox's actions lead the two characters Nicholas and Richard to believe that she "*must indeed be a witch*", the absence of Satan suggests a different view. Broedel suggests how "*maleficium is not simply a kind of magical or occult harm, but harm wrought through a cooperative endeavor on the part of both the witch and devil, when bound together in a particular kind of contractual relationship*" (2003: 23). As the devil is nowhere

to be seen, in addition to the absence of evidence, Chattox seems to be accused not because of her *maleficium*, but because of body politics that enables the dominant power to exercise coercion over individuals through the power-knowledge interrelationship. Therefore, "*[w]itches, whether young or old, seem to derive their power neither from a pact with the devil nor from any form of ritual. Rather, it emanates directly from their bodies*" (Machielsen 2011: 12) and are punished for it.

Through the descriptions of these women the novel seems to follow the classical trope of the evil and monstrous appearance for the sinful witch figure. Like the witches of old in Mesopotamia and Rome, they seem to be portrayed as the antithesis of what a real woman should be through their disfigured state. However, the novel also showcases beautiful and innocent woman as being accused of witchcraft. The characters of Alizon Device and Nan Redferne seem to suggest that the abject is not evoked through any type of monstrousness or ugliness but rather from the female sex and the female body itself. It seems that the castration anxiety that the vagina itself purport for the phallus, constitutes women as a dangerous being regardless of physical appearance.

Alizon Device plays quite an important role to understand the fright that is created through the abject quality of the female sex. Although the whole Demdike family is cursed to become the Lancashire witches, Alizon seems to be different from the rest. As Alizon is revealed to have been chosen as May Queen for the festivities, her beauty is emphasised by calling her the "*[l]ovelier maiden in the whole country*" and how "*no one better deserved the high title and distinction conferred upon her that [Alizon]*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. i). To symbolically emphasise her beauty and purity, in contrast to the rest of the family, she is even likened to the "*personification of May herself*";

> "*So enchanting was her appearance altogether, so fresh the character of her beauty, so bright the bloom that dyed her lovely checks, that she might have been taken for a personification of May herself. She was indeed in the very May of life—the mingling of spring and summer in womanhood; and the tender blue eyes, bright and clear as diamonds of purest water, the soft regular features, and the merry mouth, whose ruddy parted lips ever and anon displayed two rows of pearls, completed the similitude to the attributes of the jocund month.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. i)

With eyes "*as diamonds of purest water*", "*tender blue eyes*", and teeth like "*pearls*", not only her family but no other person could be "*compared with her*" (Ainsworth

2005: Book the First, ch. i). To emphasise Alizon's pure and tender qualities, the descriptions of the rest of the family members create quite a juxtaposition during the preparation scenes for the May Day festivities. However, Alizon appears as one of the women accused of witchcraft regardless of her beauty. Moreover, Alizon appears to be the complete antithesis of the witch figure in appearance and in behaviour through the scenes which feature Alizon as pious and kind.

Nan Redferne and her trial ultimately shows that the female sex was put through the sadistic method of turning the abject female body into a voyeuristic fetish object regardless of appearance and behaviour especially during witch hunts. Potts explains this coercion exercised over the female body through his description of the trials and methods of torture a witch goes through;

> "*She should be scratched with pins to draw blood from her; weighed against the church bible, though this is not always proof; forced to weep, for a witch can only shed three tears, and those only from the left eye; or, as our sovereign lord the king truly —no offence to you, Mistress Nutter—'Not so much as their eyes are able to shed tears, albeit the womenkind especially be able otherwise to shed tears at every light occasion when they will, yea, although it were dissemblingly like the crocodile;' and set on a stool for twenty-four hours, with her legs tied across, and suffered neither to eat, drink, nor sleep during the time. This is the surest Way to make her confess her guilt next to swimming. If it fails, then cast her with her thumbs and toes tied across into a pond, and if she sink not then is she certainly a witch.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv)

The discursive evidence that shows a woman is a witch seems to be uttered under heavy torture. "*Scratched with pins*" and "*set on a stool for twenty hours*" in bondage with no water or food, the confessions extracted from these women surely cannot be considered proof of their "*witchcraft*". The trial by "*swimming*" Potts mentions, however, seems to be the best example of how the crime of witchcraft presupposes its punishment. Whether the woman floats or drowns, she is a witch, no matter what the outcome is she is cast in the waters to die. The methods of extracting this evidence range "*from the strappado, to the thumbscrews, to the wheel, the iron lady, the […] iron spikes chair, to the bridle, the hot chair, [and] ducking*" (Ezroura 2011: 13), although not mentioned by Potts here. Hence, the whole ordeal showcases how the identity of a witch appears to be the result of physical coercion that ultimately forces the female to confess that she is a witch through the instrument of torture. They "*admit*

to the identity that the apparatus [projects] and [wants] the witches themselves to construct and confirm" (Ezroura 2011: 13). As Potts continues to explain the process of accumulation of "*evidence*" under torture, he also introduces another term related to witchcraft, "*the witch-mark*";

> "*Other trials there are, as that by scalding water—sticking knives across—heating of the horseshoe—tying of knots—the sieve and the shears; but the only ordeals safely to be relied on, are the swimming and the stool before mentioned, and from these your witch shall rarely escape. Above all, be sure and search carefully for the witch-mark.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iv)

The "*mark*" mentioned by Potts varies "*from scratches, to moles, to birthmarks, wrinkles, to warts, to a skin condition or handicap*" (Ezroura 2011: 13), and was seen as the mark of the Devil during the witch trials in the early modern Europe. Hence, the body of the witch seems to be again judged for its abnormalities, and their impurities as signifiers of the abjection it embodies, as Carroll suggests, managing to create "*threat and disgust*" (1987: 55). The witch's ability to "*shed tears*" that Potts quotes from James I's book opens up another discussion on this idea of the concept of "*woman*". This idea belonging to the "*sovereign lord*" is directly taken from *Malleus Maleficarum*. In *Malleus*, Institoris reports that a witch "*does not have [the] ability to shed tears",* and often "*dab her cheeks and eyes with spit as if she were crying*" to trick the jury (Mackay 2009: 549). A woman who does not cry, therefore, is directly sentenced to death through witchcraft.

The fetishization of the female body under the name of disciplining through punishment and torture can also be traced in the set of trials Nan goes through. Her set of trials and tortures begin with a "*mild trial*" where she is "*weighed against the church Bible*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v), requested by Nicholas Assheton. The bible Nan is weighted with is not a usual one either; it is "*an immense volume, bound in black, with great silver clasps*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Although the weight of the book is not mentioned further, it appears to be made as heavy as it can be. Moreover, this suggests the possible victimisation of a woman who is perhaps malnourished, and light-weighted. One can imagine this leading up to women who were too skinny, or little girls, being branded as a witch, since "*[m]any woman accused and tried for witchcraft were old [as well as] poor*" (Federici 2009: 193). Nan, however, passes the weight test but her innocence is not approved, with the support of the crowd Potts forces Nan to go through the "*ordeal of swimming*" (Ainsworth 2005:

Book the First, ch. v). Jem especially wants Nan to be "*swimmed*", he even recaptures Nan while she almost manages to escape with Richard. Nan ends up getting her clothes "*torn from her feet and limbs by the rude hands of the remorseless Jem and the beadle, and bent down by the main force of these two strong men*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v). Her "*thumbs and great toes [...] tightly bound together, crosswise, by the chords*", she gets taken to the river to go through the trial by swimming (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. v).

"Chapter VI" named "The Ordeal by Swimming" takes the already present body politics that were exercised on women who were accused of witchcraft and shows how the body of the female sex experiences coercion after the accusations. Since there is a lack of physical evidence, the body of the witch is used to extract the truth by the power upholders. As "*the confession of the accused could be valorized as an absolute truth*" during the witchcraft trials, "*[t]he point of torture is not only that it hurts, but that the pain is supposed to elicit true speech*" (Purkiss 2005: 235). This treatment of the female body is also stated by the narrator;

> "*Nance Redferne, it has been said, was a very comely young woman; but neither her beauty, her youth, nor her sex, had any effect upon the ferocious crowd, who were too much accustomed to such brutal and debasing exhibitions, to feel any thing but savage delight in the spectacle of a fellow-creature so scandalously treated and tormented, and the only excuse to be offered for their barbarity, is the firm belief they entertained that they were dealing with a witch.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi)

"*The firm belief*" the narrator suggests here is solely dependent on the ideology the church had manifested through the ages. As women were lacking, the abject, and the other, through history, it would seem, the "*epistemic violence*" takes its toll on the body of the female. Although quite different with her "*young*", "*beauty*", and "*comely*" looks, in contrast to Demdike and Chattox, she is "*tormented*" just because she is a "*witch*". Her "*beauty*" seems to have no power of saving her from the brand. "*Her sex*", however, appears to be the sole reason why she is "*treated*" by the "*crowd*" that takes a "*savage delight*" in this whole ordeal. She is a witch because she is a woman, which emanates danger for the phallus or the dominant power. As Nance showes no reason or evidence behind her witchcraft and has no "*impure*" and "*unnatural*" qualities like the other witches mentioned in the text, one cannot skip over the fact that she is found guilty because of her sex. And since she is a woman, whether or not she

has done anything at all, her 'faithless' and 'deceiving' qualities that are 'inherited' from Eve are enough for her to undergo due punishment.

Therefore, Nan's situation does indeed explain how torture "*was seen as a way of helping the accused to speak the truth*" (Purkiss 2005: 238). The tortures do 'help', not the tortured female body, but the patriarchal torturer. The power-knowledge interrelationship behind the whole witchcraft craze seems to validate its preaching in this case, since "*the body of the other*" appears "*as the site from which truth can be produced, and to using violence if necessary to extract*" the manufactured "*truth*" (DuBois 2016: 6). It shows how female "*bodies were turned into texts, were made to speak, were read, and the results [that were sought by the dominant power] displayed*" (Purkiss 2005: 199). The patriarchal power uses coercion to ratify the knowledge through torture; first, creating the knowledge of the witch as a continuation of the 'evil' woman that is sinful, then using this knowledge to exercise torture over the female body that does not perform the gender roles attributed to it, and lastly ratifying the knowledge it created through the use of this power exercise. Ultimately, all the actions of the patriarchy, however, seem to be caused and supported by the "*abject*" state of the female sex. Therefore, the witch-hunt ultimately appears to be a woman-hunt as also suggested by Federici;

> "*The witch-hunt,then, was a war against women; it was a concerted attempt to degrade them, demonize them, and destroy their social power. At the same time, it was in the torture chambers and on the stakes on which the witches perished that the bourgeouis ideals of womanhood and domesticity were formed.*" (2009: 186)

The "*ideal*" that the tortures try to reach by "*degrading*" the object of the Other can also be seen in Nan's trial. Since "*the truth is born from torture, [and] is released in a painful labor that turns the informer into a woman giving birth*" (DuBois 2016: 152), the body of the witch is also turned into a spectacle "*of the production of broken bodies and psyches, both for local and international consumption*" (DuBois 2016: 155). This spectacle is not only used to create a consensus on the mob of people that experience this "*birth*" of the myth of the "*witch*", but it also depicts a "*voyeuristic pleasure at the spectacle of this beating*" (DuBois 2016: 151), paralleling Laura Mulvey's ideas of getting over the fear of being castrated through sadistic methods (Mulvey 1989: 21). Jane who had "*her long, fine chestnut hair trailing upon the ground*" gets "*her white shoulders exposed to the insolent gaze of the crowd, and her trim holiday attire [gets] torn to rags by the rough treatment she [experiences]*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the

First, ch. vi). Manhandled by the villagers and Jem, Nan's situation shows how "*sexual sadism [was] displayed by the torture to which the accused were subjected*", revealing "*a misogyny that has no parallel in history*";

> "*According to the standard procedure, the accused were stripped naked and completely shaven (it was argued that the devil hid among their hair); then they were pricked with long needles all over their bodies, including their vaginas, in search for the mark with which the devil presumably branded his creatures (just as the master in England did with runaway slaves). Often they were raped; it was investigated whether or not they were virgins- a sign of innocence[...].*" (Federici 2009: 185)

"*Nance's cries of distress*" are only answered "*by jeers, and renewed insults*", as she gets stripped to find the "*witch-mark*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). By chance or ill fate, her "*dung coloured mole [is] discovered upon her breast*", "*contrasting strongly with the extreme whiteness of her skin*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). As her privacy is penetrated by the male gaze, her flesh is also penetrated with a "*pin*" when Jem "*plunge[s] it deeply into the poor creature's flesh*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). All the village "*[proceeds] along the main street of the village leading towards the river*" leaving their houses and "*rushing forth*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). The previously beautifully depicted Nan becomes a "*creature*" at the hands of her captors, emphasizing her loss of social power through the torture, and her becoming a fetish object.

Nan's "*ordeal*" continues to take place while she "*[represses] the cry that must otherwise have been wrung from her*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). Although crying essentially would save her life, Nance does not cry and represses it to not give the dominance the oppressor seeks. As "*not a drop o' blood flows, an [she] feels nowt", Jem continues to brand her as a clear witch*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). Jennet Device also appears at the scene and makes fun of Nan because of the rivalry between their families. In return, Nan claims that Jennet is also "*a born an' bred witch*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi), explains how "*her brother Jem [...] is a wizard*", and how "*they're the gran-childer o' Mother Demdike o' Pendle, the greatest witch i' these parts*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). Nan goes far enough to point out the "*fiend's mark o' [Jennet's] sleeve, "written i' letters ov blood*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). Although "*that's where [Jennet's cat] scratted [her]*", Nan applies the same method of distortion Jem performed on her body (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi.). As Jem claimed that a mole was her

"*devil's mark*", Nan also uses superstition to fuel her claims that are caused by the enmity between the families. This points out how "*many of the accusations of witchcraft in 1612 [had sprung] from the family of Old Demdike blaming that of Old Chattox, or vice versa*" (Swain 2002: 80). Potts also takes advantage of this rivalry between them as suggested by his actions where he says while "*rubbing his hands*" again; "*who but witches can be proof against witches*", quoting from James' *Daemonologie* (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi).

The outcome of Nan's ordeal shows how the "*revolting scenes*" regarding her trials "*are enacted to gratify the brutal passions of the mob*" as suggested by the narrator (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). As she is tied and dropped into the river, Jem and a beadle, called Sparshot, hold the coil of ropes from two different sides, resulting in her body to float on the water. Although she becomes "*an undeniable witch*" because of it, the narration reveals how they judge her as one because of their lack of knowledge in physics (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). She appears to be unable to sink because of "*the tension of the chords*" since she is being pulled from the left and right of the riverbank, and because of her "*woolen apparel*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi) that makes her float. Potts, "*enchanted with the success of the experiment*", quotes James and says how the "*sovereign lord and master the king, in his wisdom, hath graciously vouchsafed to explain the matter*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). Potts quotes how "*Water [according to James' Daemonologie] shall refuse to receive [witches] in her bosom, that have shaken off their sacred water of baptism, and wilfully refused the benefit thereof*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). Jem also says how Nan is "*a witch fo sartin*", "*but as he [speaks], chancing slightly to slacken the rope, the tension of which maintained the equilibrium of the body" the poor woman instantly sink[s]*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). The reaction of the crowd as well as the other spectators is also important to consider since "*a groan, as much of disappointment as sympathy, break[s] from the spectators, but none attempt[s] to aid her*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi).

Furthermore, "*on seeing [Nan] sink, Jem abandon[s] the rope altogether*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi), suggesting the voyeuristic and sadistic pleasure the audience took from the whole ordeal through fetishizing Nan's body, rather than a just trial that seeks an unbiased result. Only Richard and Nicholas, people

apart from the villagers and the bodies of the power, help and save Nan. Most importantly, Nan starts to cry with a "*violent hysterical sobbing*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi), suggesting that she according to the church's rules was not a witch all along and was only holding back her tears as a protest against the dominance sought. After saving Nan, Richard, as the voice of reason, points out how these women are punished before being convicted or condemned, and how the laws "*are made for protection, as well as punishment of wrong*". The whole ordeal shows that the witchcraft trials and ordeals are "*relic[s] of a ruthless age*", as Richard Assheton suggests (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. vi). Nan appears to have suffered just because of the "*epistemic violence*" of the patriarchal church that presupposed the essential evil and danger in women. She was judged and tortured because she was a woman, a source of abjection through the fear of castration she connotes.

Although the early chapters of the novel "*lays out all the common sense reasons for not believing in witchcraft*" (Richards 2002: 181), the last two chapters of "Book the First" overshadows "*the arguments against [the] belief in witchcraft*" through the Gothic romance qualities that are to follow (Richards 2002: 183). The almost modern understanding of witchcraft as something that does not exist and rooted in superstition rather than anything else appears to be emphasized through the lack of physical evidence surrounding the accused witches. Previously contrasting Potts's nonsensical and far from just actions and dialogues with the accused Alizon, Alice, Nance, and the rest of the clans of Demdike and Chattox to emphasize the inhumane treatment the female sex had experienced, the novel seems to leave all the arguments it raised against this craze in its later parts. The characters that stood like the representatives of reason, namely Alice and Richard who defended the ill-treated women in the text, find themselves enveloped in a turmoil of "*full-blooded supernatural sequence*" (Richards 2002: 183). This shift in the narrative starts to take place at the late hours of the banquet. A banquet that started with Pott's exploitative approaches towards Jennet and ended with Nicholas Assheton dancing with Isole de Heton, who appears to have magically stepped off of her portrait to dance with him. Especially the last chapter of "Book the First" named "The Nocturnal Meeting" marks the start of the complete control of "*themes, atmosphere and ethos of the Gothic Romance*" that will take over the rest of the novel (Richards 2002: 185). In this chapter, the novel features a black sabbath where all the accused witches gather. Alizon and

Dorothy Assheton drink a mysterious potion that results in them looking "*wild and strange*", completely "*unlike themselves*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. x). Dorothy starts yelling "*To the moon! to the stars!—any where*!" and chanting the unintelligible words "*Emen hetan! Emen hetan*!" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. x). They appear quite frantic and bewildered, so much so that after these utterances they find themselves "*irresistibly dragged*" to a church belonging to a monastery. The Gothic atmosphere of the sabbath appears to be also quite abject, unnatural and interstitial;

> "*Their ears were then assailed by a wild hubbub of discordant sounds, hootings and croakings as of owls and ravens, shrieks and jarring cries as of night-birds, bellowings as of cattle, groans and dismal sounds, mixed with unearthly laughter. Undefined and extraordinary shapes, whether men or women, beings of this world or of another they could not tell, though they judged them the latter, flew past with wild whoops and piercing cries, flapping the air as if with great leathern bat-like wings, or bestriding black, monstrous, misshapen steeds. Fantastical and grotesque were these objects, yet hideous and appalling. Now and then a red and fiery star would whiz crackling through the air, and then exploding break into numerous pale phosphoric lights, that danced awhile overhead, and then flitted away among the ruins. The ground seemed to heave and tremble beneath the footsteps, as if the graves were opening to give forth their dead, while toads and hissing reptiles crept forth.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. x)

The concept of interstitiality is defined by Carroll as "*categorically contradictory, categorically incomplete, or formless*." (1987: 55). The visual description of the scene and its grotesque qualities of "*interstitial*" beings within it parallels the qualities of witches in general. The "*unearthly laughter*", "*undefined*" yet "*extraordinary shapes*", and the gender fluidity of the attendees who are not categorically "*men*" or "*woman*". The concept of disgust being achieved in these depictions enables the sabbath and its coven of attendees to gain "*awesome powers in virtue of their impurity*" (Carroll 1987: 57). The whole scene becomes "*fantastical*" because of the "*grotesque*", "*hideous*" and "*appalling*" witches. Since Carroll also defines "*monsters*" as "*not only physically threatening*" but also "*cognitively*", being a "*threat to common knowledge*" (1987: 56), the epistemic violence of the Church that established women as "*impure*" and "*unclean*" because of their abject state enables them to gain their monster-like quality. They manage to awaken terror through their "*unnatural*" quality because of their abject state.

The detailed description of the attendees seems akin to the famous three witches of *Macbeth.* Mother Mould-heels, one of the witches, is also "*hunchbacked*", "*toothless*", and "*bearded*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. x). Within the "*assemblage of men and women, but chiefly the latter*" that are "*old, hideous*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. x), "*Alice Nutter presides with Chattox, Demdike and Redferne all present*" (Richards 2002: 183). Alizon's sister little Elizabeth Device also gets inducted into the coven and becomes a witch. The novel constitutes all the previously accused witches into real witches. However, what the narrative does here is to create a redemption arc for Alice, who refuses to give her child Alice to "*enter into a covenant with the Prince of Darkness*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. x). Alice appears quite maternal, which is not a stereotypical quality of a witch. Since a witch is supposed to be a figure that "*suck[s] the blood of babies*" (Pavlac 2009: 165), "*[murder] men [and] babies*" for Satan (166), and "*[use] magic unguents from dead babies"* (Pavlac 2009: 171), Alice's motherly behavior creates an antithesis against this unmaternal monster. Therefore, the novel creates a subplot where Alice tries to overcome her internal conflict of saving her soul from Satan. As also suggested by Jeffrey Richards, the end of "Book the First" starts off the character arc that "*begins the battle for Alice's soul, which is a continuing theme of the book*" (2002: 179). It also raises the question of whether a witch is able to repent and free herself from these bonds and achieve salvation rather than being immediately killed for her sins. This is also suggested by the incident that took place at the banquet. As Nicholas Assheton "*yield[s] to the snares of Satan*," while dancing with the ghost of "*wicked votaress*", Isole de Heton, who appears to be a servant of Satan, he is recommended "*long fasting and frequent prayer*" for his sins (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. i). In contrast to witches, women who also yield to the "*snares of Satan*", a person of noble blood and male sex appears to easily achieve repentance, whereas a woman probably would have not gotten away this easily.

The visual depictions of the accused women showcase how the stereotypical female threat, the witch, is portrayed as a monster. This depiction suggests how the witch is nothing more than a woman who transgresses her gender roles. Like all the other female monsters of antiquity, they are represented as abject and ugly figures because of their transgression. Moreover, the tortures that took place as a part of the trials appear to be a manifestation of the way in which patriarchy fetishizes the abject

female body. This fetishization of the female body is also highlighted through women who are not depicted as monsters. All women it appears regarded as abject because of their sex. The voyeuristic nature of these tortures, like Nan's, suggests how the body itself is used to propagate an ideology to the masses. By punishing the transgression of the 'wicked' female and forcing her to accept being a witch, patriarchy ratifies the existence of these fictional monsters.

CHAPTER III

STEALING THE PHALLUS: WITCHCRAFT AND FEMALE POWER

"*Double, double toil and trouble;*
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble."
Macbeth, William Shakespeare

In "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection", Barbara Creed states that "*[the]monstrous is produced at the border which separates those who take up their proper gender roles from those who do not*" (1986: 71). All the physical descriptions of the accused witches, especially the members of the Demdike and the Chattox family, function as the dangerous castrator witch suggested by their ambiguous physical state. However, Alice Nutter and Mother Chattox seem to be the embodiment of the "*monstrous-feminine*" that "*crosses or threatens to cross the 'border' [as] abject*" (Creed 1986: 21) through the reversal of gender roles they were attributed by the period that they were living in. They seem to pose danger and trouble because of their dominance over the patriarchy under the name of witchcraft.

The witch hunt being an exercise of power to eliminate female threat, that metaphorically steals the phallus (the dominance), can be traced within the novel through the land dispute between Roger Nowell and Alice Nutter for Rough Lee. Alice Nutter's introduction in the novel poses a "*violation*" of the cultural norms regarding gender roles; she appears to have "*the monstrous-feminine*" quality through her symbolic theft of the phallus as a woman through witchcraft. Introduced in the third chapter of the first book, she appears to have been accused of witchcraft because of her husband Richard Nutter's death. Richard was "*seized with a strange and violent illness, which, after three or four days of acute suffering, brought him to the grave*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iii). The people of the county believe that Mistress Nutter had "*all [the] share in the dark transaction*" regarding her husband's death (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iii). The reason behind these claims appears to be the fact that Alice now owns Rough Lee, thanks to the death of her

husband, the death of the symbolic male phallus. This rise in economic power, in contrast to the other women of Lancashire, who are not property owners, appears to be a valid reason for people to accuse her of witchcraft. Her coming into the possession of this land also leads Potts to be called from London by Roger Nowell, because of a "*dispute between [Alice] and Roger Nowell, relative to the boundary line of part of their properties which came together*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch. iii). Although the "*dispute*" was settled before, in favor of Roger Nowell, "*Mistress Nutter [refuses] to abide by it*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the First, ch iii). Roger Nowell being a magistrate, therefore having political power above most of the people, and Alice refusing to "*abide*" by the outcome, could arguably be shown as a representative of how Alice is not a typical woman of her time. Alice's dominant attitude, apart from Nowell's material gains, might be the reason why she was accused of witchcraft, as Alice wins the dispute in "Book the Second". The events depicted between the dominant power and Alice may give an idea about how a gentlewoman got killed along with people consisting mostly of cunning women and beggars at the real trials in 1612. Nowell may have accused her just to get the land back, as the historical evidence suggests "*many victims [of witchcraft accusations] were subaltern, but many were also from the nobility and the wealthy classes and had to lose their property to the State*" (Ezroura 2021: 6).

According to Deborah Willis, "*witch-hunting [...] began at a time when an unusual number of women had inherited or were claimants to highly visible—and hotly contested—positions of power*" (1995: 19-20). Since Alice inherits Rough Lee through the death of her husband, the proof of witchcraft against Alice Nutter is established through her rule over a piece of land that Roger Nowell claims to possess according to the plans of the area's borders. However, it is interesting to note that Roger did not have any claims over the land while Alice's husband was alive. Therefore, how "*the propriety of female rule, generated anger and rage, as well as loyal support*" (Willis 1995: 20), can be seen through Potts's conviction about the land dispute between Nowell and Alice;

> "*Observe, further, all these extraordinary and incomprehensible changes in the appearance of the country, and in the situation of the marks, meres, and boundaries, are favourable to Mistress Nutter, and give her the advantage she seeks over my honoured and honourable client. They are set down in Mistress Nutter's plan, it is true; but when, let me ask, was that plan prepared? In my opinion it was prepared*

first, and the changes in the land made after it by diabolical fraud and contrivance. I am sorry to have to declare this to you, Master Nicholas, and to you, Master Richard, but such is my firm conviction." (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. vii)

The land dispute between Alice Nutter and Roger Nowell arises from the differences between two "*plans*" that show the borders of Rough Lee. Roger Nowell claims that his plan is the legitimate one, whereas Alice's is false. However, Alice issues an investigation of the land to prove that the land is hers. As a result of the investigation that is run by Potts, it is decided that Alice Nutter had changed "*the appearance of the country*" in favour of herself through witchcraft. Considering that Potts is a foreign attorney who is not familiar with the landscape of Lancashire and the only evidence of the true borders of the land being accessed through Nowell's plan, there seems to be a power relation between the dominant patriarchy and Alice. Moreover, like the rest of the accused, the crime of witchcraft appears to be a mystery that has no evidence other than the "*plans*" and the discourse of patriarchy that requires no physical evidence. This is also suggested during the siege of Rough Lee. As soon as Alice is accused of witchcraft by the bodies of power, the village folk abide by the discourse created. A villager called Henry Mitton shows how the accusation alone generates all the hearsay regarding a witch;

"*If yo want a witness agen that foul murtheress and witch, Alice Nutter, ca' me, Master Roger Nowell, he said. Ey con tay my Bible oath that the whole feace o' this keawntry has been chaunged sin yester neet, by her hondywark. Ca' me also to speak to her former life—to her intimacy wi' Mother Demdike an owd Chattox. Ca' me to prove her constant attendance at devils' sabbaths on Pendle Hill, and elsewhere, wi' other black and damning offences—an among 'em the murder, by witchcraft, o' her husband, Ruchot Nutter. A thrill of horror pervaded the assemblage at this denunciation; and Master Potts, who was being cleansed from his sable stains by one of the grooms, cried out— This is the very man for us, my excellent client. Your name and abode, friend?*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. viii)

Although the narrative calls the man "*Henry Mitton*" prior, the old man says that his name is "*Harry Mitton o' Rough Lee*". Saying that he has "*dwelt [in Rough Lee] seventy year and uppards*", he talks about all the rumours that have been circulating around regarding Alice and all the other witches. He claims that she murdered her husband to gain the land, she attends black sabbaths, and she used witchcraft to change the face of the land. He, as a representative of the village folk, shows that even the utterance of the word witch brings to mind every other absent signifier related to the

concept of witchcraft, and Alice Nutter becomes the embodiment of a castrator, a witch. Moreover, he shows how the image of a witch is based on fiction as his claims are all based on local rumours, myths, and superstitious witchcraft beliefs rather than concrete evidence. However, as the witch-hunt functions as an exercise of the patriarchy, rather than just trials, his words are taken as "*established proofs of witchcraft against Mistress Nutter*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. viii), along with other metaphysical evidence. The ill-treatment of women under the name of doing God's and the King's work is also emphasised by Richard, as the dominant power of patriarchy, "*in making the charge*", also "*pronounce[s] the sentence of condemnation*" as well (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. viii).

The "*sentence of condemnation*" that Richard mentions affects Alizon the most. The novel reveals all accused women as indeed being witches, whereas Alizon is never mentioned as one nor has she shown any actions related to witchcraft. However, Nowell wants to not only send Alice to Lancaster Castle "*but all her partners in guild-Mother Demdike and her accursed brood, the Devices; old Chattox and her grand-daughter, Nance Redferne*" including Alizon, claiming "*[he] will spare none*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. viii). Alizon is also quite aware of the "*epistemic violence*" that she experiences because of her relation to witches. As Richard asks why Alizon is always in distress, she reveals how her "*history*" makes her a danger;

> *"I know not, replied Alizon, in a tone of deepest anguish, "but I feel as if my destiny were evil; and that, against my will, I shall drag those I most love on earth into the same dark gulf with myself. I have the greatest affection for your sister Dorothy, and yet I have been the unconscious instrument of injury to her. And you too, Richard, who are yet dearer to me, are now put in peril on my account. I fear, too, when you know my whole history, you will think of me as a thing of evil, and shun me.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. ix)

The "*destiny*" that is "*evil*" stems not from her existence but rather from the anathema that Paslew had uttered in the "Introduction". She is revealed to be not a Demdike, but her being is violated by the essence of the Demdike curse since people do not know that Alice is Alizon's real mother. However, her existence appears to be unable to override the essence of the curse again because Alice turns out to be a witch too.

S. J. Carver points out the relation between witchcraft and power in *Ainsworth's The Lancashire Witches* by emphasising the dominance of women that is enabled through witchcraft;

> "*In The Lancashire Witches, Ainsworth's previously passive female victims become suddenly very active. The Demdike dynasty is one based upon matriarchal rather than patriarchal authority, the implication being that the peasant women have fallen into grace rather than out of it, from a cultural hell of repressive fathers, husband, priests and landlords into a heaven of self-realisation and determination.*" (2003b: 27)

This is also suggested by Alice's domination over Nowell during the siege of Rough Lee. As her authority enables her to gain the support of the people, Nowell is forced to negotiate with her. The forces of the patriarchy appear to be unable to physically penetrate the matriarchal fortress that is Rough Lee, and only are able to have access through Alice. Alice is also quite aware of her power as she talks with Nowell;

> "*Then you really believe me to be a witch? said the lady. I do, replied Nowell, unflinchingly. Since you believe this, you must also believe that I have absolute power over you, rejoined Mistress Nutter, and might strike you with sickness, cripple you, or kill you if I thought fit.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. x)

Alice appears to be in total control within the matriarchal space she inhabits. She leads the conversation by saying how Nowell "*will forego this intention*", regarding the witch-hunt he embarks on (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. x). She "*advises*" him to "*retract all [he] [has] uttered to [her] prejudice*", giving Rough Lee to him in return (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. x). She asks him to "*clear [her] completely from the dark aspersions cast upon [her] character, and [Nowell] [to] abandon [his] projects against [her] adopted daughter, Alizon, as well as against those two poor old women, Mothers Demdike and Chattox*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. x). Alice wants his complete obedience and when Nowell seems to resist these requests, she raises a doppelgänger through an incantation. Even if Nowell does not do what he is asked, Alice seems to be able to perform them through witchcraft. Left with no choice but to abide with her requests, Nowell accepts the conditions Alice introduces, emphasising her dominance over the representative of patriarchy. The reason why Alice does not use magic to accomplish the things she asks Nowell to do is quite clear. Since her character arc goes from a witch to "*a penitent and guilty Eve figure*" upon finding out that Alizon is her long-lost daughter (Carver 2003b: 29), she tries to cut her ties with the Devil. She tries to repent, unlike the rest

of the witches who "*are Eve 'fallen,' free, empowered and unrepentant*" (Carver 2003b: 29) to become a maternal mother figure. Instead of charming Nowell with magic, she tries to overcome the discourse itself by making the power figure debunk the rumours and the ill name that are attributed to the women who are regarded as witches.

Through the introduction of the character Mother Demdike, *The Lancashire Witches* ultimately reveals witchcraft as being "*the demonization of female sexuality and confluence in the popular imagination of unrestrained women and licentiousness or evil*" (Bennett 2015: 1). This is emphasized through the power of "*[t]he head witch, Mother Demdike, [who] is the ultimate radical feminist, choosing to rule in hell rather than serve in heaven*" (Carver 2003b: 29) especially in comparison to Alice Nutter. Since Alice, "*[h]aving tasted the forbidden fruit and the attendant freedom which it offers […] ultimately adopt[s] a feminine role with which Victorian readers would find more acceptable, that of guilt-ridden penitent*", the role of "*queen witch*" appears to belong to Mother Demdike (Carver 2003b: 32). The narrative introduces Mother Demdike after she kidnaps Alizon, imprisoning her in Malkin Tower, and Richard Assheton travels to Malkin Tower to save her. Richard's travels, however, show that "*the elemental Mother Demdike is also Mother Nature unrestrained, an angry goddess who seems to mock the order imposed on her realm by patriarchal society*", suggested by "*[h]er tower [being] protected by a wild tempest, through which Richard must battle*" (Carver 2003b: 30). The "*black clouds gather over [Richard's] head*", a "*thunder-storm commences*", the weather grows "*darker and darker*", as he approaches Malkin Tower, the den of the witch (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xi). As suggested by Stephen Carver, Mother Demdike appears to be "*the forest*" itself, "*her spirit possessing every rock, branch and creature*" (2003b: 31);

> "*The smaller birds ceased singing, and screened themselves under the thickest foliage; the pie chattered incessantly; the jay screamed; the bittern flew past, booming heavily in the air; the raven croaked; the heron arose from the river, and speeded off with his long neck stretched out; and the falcon, who had been hovering over him, sweeped sidelong down and sought shelter beneath an impending rock; the rabbit scudded off to his burrow in the brake; and the hare, erecting himself for a moment, as if to listen to the note of danger, crept timorously off into the long dry grass.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xi)

The inhabitants of the matriarchal space owned by Mother Demdike appear to be under the rule of her natural presence over the land. She appears to be the most dominant being within the Pendle Forest, as both the weather and the animals act and take shape according to her will. Even Richard's horse, named Merlin ,perhaps as an allusion to the scholarly quality of wizards opposed to the wicked witch archetype, "*refuse[s] to stir*" in the face of "*Mother Nature*" herself, as a "*crackling bolt*" "*[strikes] the earth at his feet*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xi).

Mother Demdike's physical description emphasises her "interstitial" and abject power as a witch. Her "*androgynous appearance, coupled with her supreme supernatural power, […] casts her as the most overtly satanic-Eve correlative in the text*" (Carver 2003b: 29):

> "*Scarcely had the last notes died away, when a light shone through the dark red curtains hanging before a casement in the upper part of the tower. The next moment these were drawn aside, and a face appeared, so frightful, so charged with infernal wickedness and malice, that Richard's blood grew chill at the sight. Was it man or woman? The white beard, and the large, broad, masculine character of the countenance, seemed to denote the former, but the garb was that of a female. The face was at once hideous and fantastic—the eyes set across—the mouth awry—the right cheek marked by a mole shining with black hair, and horrible from its contrast to the rest of the visage, and the brow branded as if by a streak of blood. A black thrum cap constituted the old witch's head-gear, and from beneath it her hoary hair escaped in long elf-locks. The lower part of her person was hidden from view, but she appeared to be as broad-shouldered as a man, and her bulky person was wrapped in a tawny-coloured robe. Throwing open the window, she looked forth, and demanded in harsh imperious tones— Who dares to summon Mother Demdike?*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xi)

The unnatural and categorically contradictory state of her appearance suggests a monstrous quality. Her face is "*frightful*", "*charged with infernal wickedness and malice*" because she appears neither as a "*man or [a] woman*". Her figure appears to have denounced their performative gender roles both physically, with a "*beard*" and a "*masculine countenance*" and by her actions where she lets destruction and chaos run rampant, especially within the forest. She appears to be a concrete depiction of the violent woman type who overpowers the social boundaries through breaking taboos, especially through forbidden knowledge, which enables them to transcend their gender performances. She is truly monstrous however because she overperforms the cultural

categories of gender to elevate herself above the patriarchy. Instead of abiding by the consensus of the patriarchy and becoming an Eve figure, she appears to have denounced God and the phallocentricity of the church through a pact with Satan to gain power dominance or stealing the phallus;

> "*There was nothing human in her countenance, and infernal light gleamed in her strangely-set eyes. Her personal strength, evidently unimpaired by age, or preserved by magical art, seemed equal to her malice; and she appeared as capable of executing any atrocity, as of conceiving it. She saw the effect produced upon him, and chuckled with malicious satisfaction. Saw'st thou ever face like mine? she cried. No, I wot not. But I would rather inspire aversion and terror than love. Love!—foh! I would rather see men shrink from me, and shudder at my approach, than smile upon me and court me. I would rather freeze the blood in their veins, than set it boiling with passion. Ho! ho! Thou art a fearful being, indeed! exclaimed Richard, appalled. Fearful, am I? ejaculated the old witch, with renewed laughter. At last thou own'st it. Why, ay, I am fearful. It is my wish to be so. I live to plague mankind—to blight and blast them—to scare them with my looks—to work them mischief.*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xi)

Instead of becoming a fetish object for the male sex to derive pleasure from under the name of "*love*", Demdike wants to "*inspire aversion and terror*". She seeks power that will make men "*shrink*" and "*shudder*". Her complete being seems to symbolise a "*female power that was deemed threatening enough to be recast in the public eye as witchcraft*" (Bennett 2015: 140), because she aims to disturb the pattern of patriarchy where the female is defined through its relation to the male. Instead of something that is to be "*smiled*" at and "*courted*", she wants to cast "*fear*" and "*plague mankind*". For a witch, therefore, Satan seems to play the role of an emancipator, a Miltonic Romantic hero, against God who demands the subordination of women. The relationship between the Devil and witches seems to enable Ainsworth's witches to "*positively trailblaze in their self-emancipation*" (Carver 2003b: 26).

The power of these deviant female witches, however, fails. The magical and the occult "*are finally terminated in good Tory fashion by the King and the Law*", "*bringing a satisfying closure to the events*" of the narrative (Richards 2002: 185). Although Richard Assheton fails to save Alizon by himself, Chattox helps Alice escape. The final scene of the witches takes place at the beacon on the summit of Pendle Hill, where the fate of the Pilgrimage of Grace was also sealed. Alice and Mother Chattox interrupt Mother Demdike on Pendle Hill where she prepares a black

sabbath to offer Alizon to the Devil. Alice states that "*[she] only want[s] to save [Alizon]"* and renounces the Devil (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xvi). The other witches also lose their power at the same time because they fail to make an offering to the Devil by sacrificing Alizon. Paslew who uttered the anathema against the Demdike family appears as a ghost after Richard lights the beacon to disturb the black sabbath. Paslew casts Demdike into the fire of the beacon saying; "*Thy term on earth is ended, and thou shalt be delivered to unquenchable fire. The curse of Paslew is fulfilled upon thee, and will be fulfilled upon all thy viperous brood*" (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Second, ch. xvii). Chattox is also thrown into the flames by the soldiers that arrive at the "*crime scene*". Only Alice and Alizon remain, suggesting "*[t]he rebellion [being] over, and the hell's angel in once more the angel of the house*" (Carver 2003b: 35) since Alice, the penitent, and Alizon, the virtuous, are the only women who are not cast into the fire immediately. However, both Alice and Alizon, as well as Richard Assheton, die in "Book the Third". Therefore, it seems that "*[t]he story of Alice and Alizon merely confirms that the rewards of virtue are largely spiritual, whereas the witches are seen actively to enjoy their mortal existence*" (Carver 2003b: 35). The rest of the witches get executed at Lancaster Castle, and King James I attends the whole ordeal himself. Paslew's curse which epistemically violated the entire Demdike family, therefore, gets fulfilled as all the members of the Demdike family, as well as Alice Nutter, Chattox, and Alizon, die.

The narrative therefore symbolically parallels the accusations of witchcraft by killing every member of the female sex who was rumoured to be a witch, perhaps underlining how these accusations had eventually led to death, whether the person was innocent or not. Alice Nutter and Mother Demdike showcase how the abolishment of female power was the prime aim of patriarchy during these trials. By branding them as witches, female castrators of the phallic power, patriarchy and its agents seem to be after not simple monsters, but "the monstrous-feminine" that threatens the patriarchal order.

CONCLUSION

Using Ainsworth's *The Lancashire Witches* (1848), this thesis has discussed one of many representations of perhaps the most notorious evil woman archetype, the witch, under the scope of gender roles. By doing so, the main aim was to show how "*historical European witchcraft [was] quite simply a fiction*" (Briggs 2002: 6) and "*[had] a solid basis in reality*" (Levack 2006: 13) at the same time. The previous historical representations that constituted the female sex as being essentially evil and dangerous through various textual artefacts of antiquity seems to have enabled Christianity in constituting this concept as being 'real'. The ancient texts that have been discussed in the introduction chapter of this study, follow the creation of the essentialist myth of "*woman*", and reproduction of it through different ages and continents. These writings establish and continue the grand patriarchal narrative and invention of truth, reality, and the illusion of "*woman*" through the act of forming a consensus in a Nietzschean way (Nietzsche 1980: 217-219). The dangerous witch stereotype seems to be an epistemic violence that this narrative etches on the female body through the power-knowledge interrelationship which Christianity made use of in early modern witch trials. Ultimately, this narrative appears to stem from the symbolic danger to the phallus, the male dominance, through the "*abject*" quality of the female body which constitutes them as "*the monstrous feminine*".

Accordingly, *The Lancashire Witches* depicts a group of women who are cursed by Abbot Paslew's utterances that constituted them as evil in parallel with the grand narrative of phallogocentric religious establishments. The fate of these women who are all killed for their essential and hereditary evil, being the descendants of Eve, showcases how discourse gives shape to their existence in a society, prior to even being born. As a result, the Demdike family, especially the female members, are constituted as witches. Therefore, Paslew's anathema creates the familiar dichotomy between "*the world of the symbolic, represented by the priest-as-father*" and "*the world of the pre-symbolic, represented by woman aligned with the devil*" (Creed 1986: 74). Moreover, the appearance of the character Potts enables the text to reveal how this discourse had

been used by the dominant power for personal as well as the grand benefit of patriarchal order in a political way. Potts's actions within the novel underline the formation of the witch being hinged on the different discursive defilement of the female sex. Basing his arguments from texts like James I's *Daemonologie* (1597), and *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), Potts reveals how the literature related to demonology especially marginalised women, for their possibility of a transgressive behaviour that causes danger to all society. By doing so, the nature of witchcraft trials being based on rumor and oral evidence taken under torture rather than physical evidence was highlighted. The common folk who had been guided with the agents of this discourse like Potts, treated the body of the female sex as a sign for all types of misfortune as a result.

The visual depiction of the accused women enables the text to delve into the concept of "*the monstrous feminine*" through their "*abject*" nature. As most of the accused women within the text appear to be monstrous and "*interstitial*" creatures, *The Lancashire Witches* follows the same ideology of patriarchy that constitutes women who portray transgressive behaviour as monsters. All the members of the Demdike bloodline and Mother Chattox are depicted as being disfigured and disgusting caused by their dominant matriarchal nature against patriarchy. As a result, all women are given powers beyond imagination that enable them to become a threat to common knowledge and society. However, this depiction reveals the underlying meaning behind the creation of the monstrous women being a manufactured one. Their disruptive appearance parallels their disturbance of "*identity, system, [and] order*" (Kristeva 1982: 6) as female castrators. "*[T]he terrifying shock of threatened castration at the sight of the female genitals*" (Freud 1981: 354) which resulted in the creation of numerous "*gendered monsters, many of which were female*" (Creed 1986: 67), also manifests itself in the physical descriptions of these women.

Through Nan Redferne's voyeuristic torture scenes, where she is put through a set of trials like ordeal by water, scratching, and bondage, the narrative showcases how patriarchy uses these forms of physical discipline to punish the female castrator through a collective act of voyeurism. Performed open to the general public, the nature of these tortures underlines how patriarchy uses its own manufactured concepts to practice physical dominance over women and extract the ratification of this concept from the female body at the same time. The body of the "*monstrous feminine*" is treated

with sadism by the patriarchal forces to overcome this castration anxiety the witch evokes. Hence, the tortures function as a form of "*purification of the abject*" (Creed 1986: 75).

Alice Nutter and Mother Demdike appear to be the chief representatives of the female power that the patriarchy feared and created the "*the monstrous feminine*" concept as a response. Their dominant, matriarchal, and transgressive behaviour to the gender roles within the period they were living in emphasises the agenda witchcraft accusations had in their nature. To oppress and marginalise any possibility of female dominance, both 'monstrous' women are killed for their transgression since "*[t]hey signify a split between two orders: the maternal authority and the law of the father*" (Creed 1986: 73). Therefore, the punishment of their female bodies stem from the anxiety that is caused by "*the fragility of the symbolic order in the domain of the body which never ceases to signal the repressed world of the mother*" (Creed 1986: 74).

If postmodernist thought has taught one thing to human society, it is the subject of history ultimately being a construction, an interpretation of the past, produced through language. There are numerous interpretations for what really caused the early modern European witch trials. This study aims to only suggest the possibility of one; the whole "*witch craze*" possibly having a political agenda based on gender roles. The witch appears to have the same function much like the previous female monsters of Greece, Rome, and Mesopotamia, to propagate a warning for the traditional passive and obedient woman. Since witchcraft is as "*a psychic potential we cannot help carrying around within ourselves as part of our long-term inheritance*" (Briggs 2002: 394), patriarchy turned the female body into an "*uncanny*" object. "*The monstrous feminine*" that has its roots in almost every society seems to have produced another representative under the name of a witch for the castrator women stereotype who poses a danger for the patriarchal order. It is important to note that *The Lancashire Witches,* as a Victorian representative of English literature that deals with the topic of witches, also ends with a warning directly for "*the ladies of the county*" of the age to "*beware*" of "*their fascination and spells*" under the name of witchcraft (Ainsworth 2005: Book the Third, ch. xv). The witch stereotype, therefore, functions as a warning yet again, created through a fear of female power.

What perhaps has kept *The Lancashire Witches* (1848) in print to this date can be best explained with the approach of the other novels that deal with the Pendle

witches. The narrative within the novel problematizes the concept of witchcraft through *"[laying] out all the common sense reasons for not believing in witchcraft*" (Richards 2002: 181), moreover, Alice Nutter and "*her objections make perfect sense to modern ears*" (Richards 2002: 182). However, "*Alice Nutter turns out to be the leader of the witches and an expert in the practice of witchcraft*" (Richards 2002: 182). This clear juxtaposition between "*the modern common sense belief that witchcraft did not exist having been clearly put in the early part of the book*", in contrast to "*the rest of the narrative [that] is concerned to show how witchcraft [is] in full operation*" (Richards 2002: 182), enables the reader to have a "*contrapuntal reading*" of the whole concept of witchcraft, through its intermingled yet opposite points of view. This enables one to read "*with an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present*" (Said 1994: 78), which later literature regarding the subject of witches often makes use of. As a prime example, Jeanette Winterson's novel *The Daylight Gate* (2012) shows how the post-modern lens tries to underline the marginalisation of women during the Pendle witch trials, as a historiographic account. The introduction of the book explains that the story is told to "*[follow] the historical account of the witch trials and the religious background – but with necessary speculations and inventions*" (Winterson 2012: viii). The character of "*Alice Nutter is not the Alice Nutter of history*" but a fictional woman —who rides horses, owns lands, and ultimately revolts — that is given a platform to be heard, rather than her "*historical*" silenced being that was defined and represented by the phallogocentric discourse of the age.

By "*refut[ing] the natural or common-sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction, by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, [and] signifying systems*" (Hutcheon 2010: 93), *The Daylight Gate* "*presents a metafictional and metahistorical narration to create a counter-history of minorities, especially women*" (Arıkan 2015: 232). The 'witch' Sarah Demdike bites and "*[spits] the bloody tongue*" of the phallogocentric discourse that victimised and marginalised her (Winterson 2012: 12), as a metaphor for the text which gives voice to the subaltern women that were hegemonically marginalised and silenced by the dominant patriarchy. Most importantly, the novel does this by showing how witchcraft is simply a superstition, as having no scenes of actual magic in its narrative. Instead, it shows how Potts exploits the female sex by accusing them of

witchcraft to fulfil his political aims, in addition to presenting a gender fluid Alice Nutter. The ugly and evil witch that *The Lancashire Witches* (1848) presented, therefore, manages to take its contemporary definition of "*a symbol of independent female authority and resistance to male domination*" through Winterson's *The Daylight Gate* (Hutton 2018: x).

The tale of the weird, wayward, and wicked witches that had begun within literatures written in English, like Shakespeare's three witches in *Macbeth*, seems to have become an icon of female power. The literary texts that also deal with the subjects of witchcraft and the figure of the witch in later periods also underline the female oppression behind the whole concept through a modern approach. Published not long before *The Lancashire Witches* (1848), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) shows how the witch figure was a tool that the Puritan society used to brand and victimise 'immoral' people that showed unacceptable behaviour, where even the concept of love was seen as wicked. Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (1953), for example, emphasizes how the female body was yet again victimised through accusations stemming from religion and rumours during Salem witch trials. Most recently Madeline Miller's novel *Circe* (2018), features the notorious mythological witch Circe telling her own story, where she is banished for her witchcraft. Instead of casting her as an evil antagonist, however, the novel tries to give voice to her by turning her banishment into an independent self-discovery.

Since "*the early modern beliefs and trials can indeed be better understood when worldwide parallels are considered and when the roots of those ideas and events are sought in previous periods of time*" (Hutton 2018: 288), the representations within Ainsworth's novel enables the literature that comes after it to go against the grain of the patriarchal discourse that it depicts. Ultimately, the intertextual defilement of the female sex had suffered, as portrayed in Ainsworth's work, seems to enable an intertextual revisionist mythmaking, as in *The Daylight Gate*, for a revision and a rejection of the grand patriarchal narrative that branded independent and dominant women as castrating witches.

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