

Issues in Review

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Placing *The Witch of Edmonton*

Introduction: Histories and Contexts in *The Witch of Edmonton*

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*This Issues in Review invites us to think afresh about worlds turned inside out and upside down during the transformative decades of the first half of the seventeenth century. The contributions situate *The Witch of Edmonton* by focusing on marriage, women, and property; on swearing and the reformation of manners; on witchcraft, gender, and social relations; and on the role of emotions in shaping the play's meaning. Taking the play's argument as the starting point, the introduction identifies a number of themes that bring the three plots — Frank's bigamous marriage and his murder of Susan, Elizabeth Sawyer's turn to witchcraft, and Cuddy's flirtation with the supernatural — into conversation with one another. Locating its historical, spatial, and temporal contexts shows how the playwrights addressed contemporary concerns about the rapidly changing and much discussed world around them.*

The whole argument is this distich:

Forced marriage murder, murder blood requires;
Reproach revenge, revenge hell's help desires.¹

The Witch of Edmonton (Quarto Paratext, 28–30)

As Lucy Munro points out in her insightful introduction to the very welcome new Arden edition of the play, arguments are rare creatures in early modern drama. In this case, given the quarto appeared in 1658 over three decades after the play was

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first performed in 1621, we cannot even ascertain that any of the known playwrights of *The Witch of Edmonton* — Thomas Dekker, John Ford, and William Rowley — wrote it.² Nevertheless, even were it someone else or a later addition, the argument is intriguing for what it includes and perhaps even more so, what it excludes. ‘Forced marriage murder, murder blood requires’ clearly speaks to the main plot of the play, the bigamous marriage of Frank Thorney to Susan Carter. He is already married to Winifred, like Frank a servant of Sir Arthur Clarington. To free himself of this second, unwanted marriage (although the dowry and contentment of his father Old Thorney are very welcome), Frank murders Susan and blames it on others. Eventually discovered as the true murderer, Frank goes to his execution calmly and willingly.

But was his marriage ‘forced’? And if so, who did the forcing? Frank seems to have no doubt: his love for Winifred, her being with child, their exchange of vows all bind him to her. His duty to his father, however, and the family estate which is in trouble, binds him to Susan, Old Thorney’s choice for Frank even though her status is slightly beneath that of his son; her yeoman father is wealthy enough to offer her dowry in full and not on credit. Does Frank’s father force him into a bigamous marriage (one for which an act of 1604 made felony punishable by death) or is Frank forced by circumstances, by the social, cultural, and economic constraints of early seventeenth-century society?³ What turns him from the planned course of action — to flee with Winifred taking with him some or all of the dowry Susan has brought into the marriage — to murdering her?

And what of ‘murder’? Is this truly Frank’s only option, and is he alone guilty? What are we to make of Winifred’s seemingly playful deception of Susan who asks Winifred, disguised as Frank’s boy servant, to behave as a wife to him on his travels? Winifred knows that the child she bears is not Frank’s but Sir Arthur Clarington’s. This deception is revealed at the start of the play and although Winifred’s fervent refusal of Sir Arthur’s desire to continue their liaison does her immense credit, her playing the devoted wife later in the play necessitates her collusion — keeping her silence (although we well know her eloquence), when Frank confesses the murder to her, until all is lost. Her agency, limited as it is within patriarchy, is one of the most interesting, and little remarked upon, stories in the play, highlighting the devastating consequences that could arise from the way this deeply patriarchal society enabled masters to take advantage of and abuse their servants. At play’s end, Sir Arthur is disgraced, required by law to pay Winifred one thousand marks, while she is fully reconciled to the community. Yet, Winifred has colluded in her husband’s deception and in hiding her husband’s murder of his second and publicly married wife. There is blood on her

hands, too, not just on Frank's. But the devil too has a part to play: Sir Arthur speaks to Frank of the 'nimble devil / That wanted in your blood' (1.1.78–9). Blood links the two plots through the devil's work.

'Reproach revenge, revenge hell's help desires' takes readers to the sub-plot which curiously gives the play its title. It is the poor spinster Elizabeth Sawyer's desire for revenge on her neighbours that provokes her to call for the devil's assistance to obtain it. She wants revenge because they blame her for all their troubles, abuse her verbally and physically, and refuse her charity. We first encounter Elizabeth when Old Banks reproaches her for entering his grounds to gather up dead wood for fuel and then beats her after she reproaches him in turn. This act of violence is immediately followed by her being mocked by his son Cuddy Banks and his Morris dancing mates. Taking the form of a black dog, the devil seals his contract by scratching her arm and sucking her blood. What Elizabeth desires is also blood: she wants Old Banks killed but has to be content with Dog tormenting his son. Dog does much more, though, than harass and harm those on whom Elizabeth desires revenge, because Dog, by rubbing Frank, turns his desire to be rid of Susan into murderous action; and Dog, by supplying the knife, enables Frank to do the bloody deed. Susan's sister Katherine discovers the bloody knife as Dog dances and reveals the truth to her father. Old Carter brings Susan's corpse into Frank's chamber, an action true to the early modern belief that, in the presence of the murderer, the victim's body would bleed afresh. Anne Ratcliffe does not return to bleed before Elizabeth, but her deathbed identification of Elizabeth as the witch who drove her to suicide is the only direct evidence the play offers for the alleged witch's guilt. Although she too confesses, her death, unlike Frank's, allows her no reconciliation with the community.

'Revenge hell's help desires' also links the domestic murder main plot and the witchcraft sub-plot with a third, Cuddy Banks's determined pursuit of Katherine. Blaming Katherine for bewitching him, Cuddy risks death (from 1604 it was felony to consult conjurers, magicians, and witches) in order to have devilish assistance either to remove the spell or to cast one on Katherine enabling him to have her. Cuddy seeks out Elizabeth, repudiating his father's scorn for her, and through her secures Dog's help. Much comedy proceeds from the attempted seduction scene, with Cuddy chasing the Dog-conjured spirit of Katherine that ends in his pond-drenching thus inverting the treatment of scolds; Cuddy is a clown, but a serious one.⁴ His relationship with his father asks questions about paternal authority that are raised by the main plot, and in his questioning of Dog before they go their separate ways Cuddy illuminates the limits of Elizabeth's agency in the sub-plot. The playwrights signal that this issue is generational through their

character naming that brings all three plots into conversation: Frank's relationship with 'Old Thorney', Katherine's and Susan's with 'Old Carter', Cuddy with 'Old Banks', and Anne is married to 'Old' Ratcliffe.

The argument then captures the essence of the action in all three plots and draws attention to the bloody work of the devil that so troubles the villagers of Edmonton. This open-ended argument, however, is an invitation to contemplate its veracity. As the brief discussion above has indicated, all cannot be blamed on the devil because every human actor makes choices that facilitate Dog's work.⁵ Is Elizabeth responsible for the murder and mayhem that ensues because her cursing and desire for revenge on her neighbours brought the devil into their midst? Or are they at fault for acting so uncharitably and violently towards her at a time of need? Is Frank the agent of his own undoing, his greed and profligacy leading to just deserts, or is he the victim of a paternalistic society in which fathers must be obeyed and where marriages are commodified? How can we situate the play in contemporary debates about the existence of witches, about how the poor should be treated, about what constitutes good behaviour, and bad, and what to do about the latter when it troubles the souls of the living and disrupts the social fabric of the community? And how does all of this work on stage?

This Issues in Review offers new insights into *The Witch of Edmonton* by exploring the play anew in the light of recent work on witchcraft, crime, governance, and emotions in early modern England and its stage-play world. The contributors work in the fields of social and cultural history, law, political culture, theatre, and performance and are particularly concerned to bring their larger understandings of the period to bear on this significant play text. In the first contribution Tim Stretton addresses the underpinnings of the main plot: the nature of marriage and landholding between the mid-sixteenth century reformations and the period of civil war and interregnum. The play's reflection of and engagement with contemporary debates over the roles of love and affection, filial duty, and the ensuring of propertied wealth are contextualized in a new reading of the play in light of changes in the legal arrangements and practices governing inheritance and marital property and the larger social, economic, and cultural shifts that lay behind them.

While the first contribution deals primarily with the play's main plot, the second explores the relationship between the main source for the secondary witch plot — an account of Elizabeth Sawyer's trial written by Henry Goodcole — and the play text by Dekker, Rowley, and Ford. Elizabeth's cursing is the occasion for the devil's appearance in Edmonton and by newly situating the play in the context of the 'reformation of manners', particularly swearing and blasphemy,

David Dean demonstrates how the playwrights' choices as to what to include and exclude, reshaping and reconfiguring the story for performance, offered their audience an incisive social critique and did so especially through the voice of the witch, Elizabeth Sawyer.

We stay with the witchcraft plot in the third contribution from Susan Amussen which re-examines the play as social criticism and social inversion. In a world turned upside down, the playwrights not only complicate notions of what makes a witch, but question whether aged, marginalized, and disempowered women like Elizabeth Sawyer are really responsible for the social disorder that unfolds on stage. If witchcraft, she asks, is perhaps Elizabeth's only response to her lack of access to essential resources, then we must essentially move beyond the influential social tension interpretation of early modern witchcraft to explore its gendered nature and the role of the supernatural in everyday life.

If the first three contributions demonstrate how situating the play in the transformative legal, economic, cultural, and discursive changes experienced by those living in early modern England can enhance our understanding of this complex play, the final contribution by Kathryn Prince shows how the play also functions as a metaphor and a cultural imaginary. By drawing on recent theories and approaches associated with the history of emotions, she shows how anger and revenge, love and fear, ambition and lust, loneliness and friendship are central to the play's concerns with morality and accountability in an ever-changing, uncertain, and often frightening world. In seeing the staged *Edmonton* as an emotional regime, she offers an original interpretation of the devil/dog character who not only links the play's three plots but also invites a deeper understanding of the interplay between the real and the unreal, the actual and the uncanny.

Bringing four scholars to share current approaches and archival, material, theoretical, and methodological insights coincides with a trend among historians to pay attention to literary texts and among literary and drama scholars to situate literary texts in historical time and place. Thinking through not only the literary and historical contexts of the play at the time of its writing, its revival in the 1630s, printing in the 1650s, and performances through to the current day distinguishes Lucy Munro's new *Arden* edition from earlier ones and resonates with the arguments offered here.

The play's title page declares boldly: 'The Witch of Edmonton: A known true STORY. Composed into A TRAGICCOMEDY'. Given that the inspiration for the sub-plot and the title came from a very real story, that of the trial, confession, and execution of the forty-nine-year-old Elizabeth Sawyer née Cronwell, we might also see it as 'a kind of history', as the Page told Christopher Sly in

The Taming of the Shrew (Induction, 2.135). Elizabeth was found guilty of the bewitchment and murder of Agnes Ratcliffe and before her execution on 19 April 1621 she was enticed to give her confession to a minister and ordinary of Newgate prison, Henry Goodcole, who promptly published *The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer a Witch, late of Edmonton, her conviction and condemnation and death: Together with the relation of the Divels accesse to her, and their conference together*.⁶ In Elizabeth, Goodcole saw an opportunity to enhance his reputation as an epitome of the godly Calvinist magistrate, building on the success of his 1618 pamphlet telling the story of Francis Robinson who confessed his sins and died a good death, executed for counterfeiting the great seal of England.⁷ A year after *The Wonderful Discoverie* appeared, Goodcole wrote up some notes on the bewitching of Elizabeth Jennings, in which his physician wife Anne was involved; perhaps he intended another publication.⁸

Local historians have uncovered that at the age of nineteen Elizabeth Cronwell married woodcutter Edward Sawyer on 5 December 1591 at All Saints in Edmonton, north of Tottenham and south of Enfield in the county of Middlesex, some eight and a half miles from the heart of the city of London. Given his profession, probably Edward worked in William, third Lord Burghley's coppices and lived in the hamlet of Winchmore Hill that lay between upper and lower Edmonton.⁹ Burial records indicate that they had more than eleven children together. According to Goodcole, Elizabeth made a living selling brooms. This family was living on the margins, experiencing the economic crisis of the middle 1590s and the frequent downturns of the early seventeenth century due in part to dropping temperatures and failing harvests. The result was an unprecedented level of government intervention in the everyday lives of English men, women, and children. The new poor laws passed in the parliaments of 1597–8 and 1601 established systems of poor relief and the aptly named houses of correction that would last until the nineteenth century. As we shall see, parliaments also sought to regulate behaviour which not only offended God but also caused serious harm to the community. At both local and national levels, laws were sought and often approved that controlled everything from alehouses to playhouses, bread prices to wages, drunkenness to swearing, enclosures to theft. Living on the margins meant behaviours that bordered on and sometimes crossed into the criminal. The Middlesex court records reveal that in 1615 Elizabeth was found guilty of stealing sheets, a felony for which she might have suffered death had not the goods been valued at less than one shilling (either their true value or, more likely perhaps, her circumstances were such that the jury determined them to be so to ensure she escaped execution).¹⁰

The play's prologue begins with the words 'The town of Edmonton hath lent the stage'; this is a play about real community, one which may have been quite well known in court and play-going circles, and not just because of Goodcole's pamphlet. One of the most popular plays of the period, mentioned by Ben Jonson in the prologue to his *The Devil Is an Ass* and by Cuddy in our play (3.1.170–1) was *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*. Written in 1604 and frequently mounted at The Globe, it was performed at court in 1608 and again in 1612–13 to celebrate the marriage of King James I's daughter Elizabeth with the Calvinist Frederik V, Elector Palatine. Like *Macbeth*, the play was intended no doubt to flatter James who as James VI of Scotland was well known for his *Daemonologie, in Forme of a Dialogue* (1597). *The Merry Devil* told the story of Edmonton's fifteenth-century magician and alchemist Peter Fabell, whose bones were reportedly interred in the walls of All Saints.¹¹

If the Sawyers did live in Winchmore Hill, away from the nuclear villages gathered along the main roads of lower and upper Edmonton, perhaps we might say their better-off neighbours viewed their home as little better than a thatched 'hovel' (4.1.22). In real life and in the play, Edmonton is a rural Middlesex community where many inhabitants persist in old beliefs (one being that burning the thatch of a witch's house will cause her to appear), value old customs (like the Morris dance), and trust in traditional values (as the honest yeomen Old Carter insists, having no time at all for the city of London's world of credit, bonds, and recognizances). Yet an edge to what was happening to this world in the period of the play's writing (1621), performance (1621, revived in 1634), and printing (1658) would have variously shaped its reception.

Edmonton was a rural area surrounded by marshes and meadows, forests and woods, fields and hunting grounds which characterized much of the county of Middlesex. Dominant families included the Huxleys of Wyer Hall (visitors can still see the monument to their daughter Mary who died in childbirth in 1616 and the distinctive Renaissance tomb of George Huxley, erected six years after Elizabeth's execution in All Saints), the Wroths, and the Cecils, lords Burghley and earls of Salisbury. Aldermen and other London elites owned property in the county; the dean and chapter of St Paul's had land in Edmonton, and a monument for Edward Nowell, possibly the nephew of the famous dean of St Paul's Alexander Nowell (Calvinist author of a catechism in the Book of Common Prayer), was erected in All Saints in 1616 and survives.¹² Robert Wroth, a prominent member of parliament (mostly sitting as knight of the shire for Middlesex) in Elizabeth's parliaments, played a key role in the passage of the poor law in 1601; thirty years earlier he had secured the passage of a bill in 1571 that was designed to improve

the River Lea, the beginning of a profitable enterprise to bring fresh water from the River Lea to Clerkenwell, culminating in the deeply divisive New River project in which Wroth's son, also Robert, was a major participant.¹³

The new scheme interrupted common grazing rights on the marshes along the River Lea that traditionally were open to the inhabitants of Edmonton, Enfield, and Tottenham between August and April. Like the common rights to secure sustenance through poaching and to gather wood for fuel, they were fiercely defended by the inhabitants of Edmonton, Enfield, and surrounding villages and hamlets from the 1560s to the 1650s and beyond.¹⁴ Poaching and wood cutting were particularly prominent at the end of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries. In 1603 local women tried to prevent the removal of wood for the houses of the rich and when the earl of Salisbury's deputy and constables searched cottages at Winchmore Hill for illegally cut wood in 1643 they were assaulted by forty to fifty men and women.¹⁵

The playwrights' decision to have Elizabeth attacked by Old Banks for gathering 'a few rotten sticks to warm me' on his land (2.1.21) would have resonated with many in 1621, 1634, and 1658. Goodcole gave them other choices — the hurting of children or cattle for example — which they did not take; indeed when the Justice confronts the villagers assaulting Elizabeth at the start of 4.1 his attitude towards them resonates with that of a local manorial court clerk who complained during the reign of Charles II that the inhabitants of the area were 'loose, idle, disorderly'.¹⁶ Cuddy Banks is the character who is given most of the local references which situate the play in the London of the early seventeenth century. While modern audiences will not get all of the jokes, we cannot mistake Cuddy's 'By no means no hunting counter; leave that to the Enfield Chase men' (2.1.53–4), as mocking their rivals for local grazing rights by casting doubt on their hunting skills and, if 'counter' is also an illusion to the infamous London prison, their honesty. We also understand the honest Hertfordshire yeoman Old Carter's dismissive comment about city aldermen's bonds as being a dig at the new capitalist ventures associated with early Stuart London (1.2.19–21).¹⁷

If the experience of living in early modern Edmonton helps shape the play materially and textually, each of the authors contributing to this Issues in Review draw attention to other contexts of importance. Many scholars and of course editors of the play have noted resonances between *The Witch of Edmonton* and other plays about witchcraft (such as Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, Thomas Middleton's *The Witch*, and John Fletcher's *The Prophetess*) and domestic tragedies (for example Middleton's *The Yorkshire Tragedy* and George Wilkins's *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*).¹⁸ Not surprisingly, they also allude to material found

in the playwrights' other plays and works (Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and his prose texts such as *English Villainies Discovered by Lanterns and Candlelight* and Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust* for example).¹⁹ To these we must add cheap print published religious writings of the period (notably from Calvinist authors), court cases, ordinances, proclamations, bills and acts, and parliamentary debates.²⁰

Such sources offer contexts not only for the play as written in 1621, but also for its performance revival in 1634 and printing in 1658. As Munro and others have noted, the 1634 revival of the play by Queen Henrietta's Men was very likely prompted by another theatrical turn toward witch plays, including revivals of old plays and a new one by Richard Brome and Thomas Heywood that capitalized on the sensational discovery of yet another group of witches in Pendle, Lancashire.²¹ Changes to *The Witch of Edmonton* seem to have included adding the epilogue. In the 1620s the play very likely ended with the wronged yet not so innocent Winifred being the passive recipient of all the best patriarchy could offer: Old Carter's paternal generosity and kindness and the godly magistrate's final couplet urging the community to make the best of it since 'Harms past may be lamented, not redressed' (5.2.192). In 1634 Winifred has the last word, recognizing the possibility of a future with a new husband now that she is widowed. It carries with it, as Sarah Johnson notes, a certain ambiguity that reinforces what we know of her double-dealing earlier in the play.²² Goodcole also recognized that the time was ripe for another evocatively titled publication, this time about two women who had murdered their own children and a father who had raped his daughter.²³

In 1624 concealing the birth of an illegitimate child became, along with infanticide, a felony and by the 1630s prosecutions by the church courts had increased.²⁴ Bigamy, the issue that dominates the main plot, had also been newly legislated against in 1604 when it was made a felony for the first time thus raising the stakes hugely for Frank, and for Winifred and for Sir Arthur who knowingly collude by silence and by calculation.²⁵ The same parliament significantly altered the law on witchcraft (the act under which Elizabeth Sawyer was prosecuted) by making consulting a witch or conjurer a felony and those convicted faced the death penalty. In real life, if discovered, Cuddy Banks's comic seduction-centred engagement with the supernatural could have come at a heavy price. As we shall see, the 1624 parliament passed a law governing swearing, one that had been debated in the previous parliament of 1621, the year when audiences saw Elizabeth Sawyer's cursing and swearing lead to her pact with the devil. The republican government also legislated against profane swearing in the 1650s, with ordinances issued on 28 June 1650 and 30 June 1654 when it was, as much earlier legislation, associated with drunkenness.²⁶

When the quarto of the play was printed in 1658 its readers had experienced political, social, religious, and economic transformations unthinkable in 1621 and 1634. An ordinance of 10 May 1650 punished incest, adultery, and in particular made 'bawdry' a felony liable for execution on the second offence.²⁷ Bigamy was one of the accusations levied against radical groups such as the (real or imagined) Ranters who were alleged to practice bigamy and adultery, shown in one woodcut (adorning a pamphlet of 1650) indiscriminately kissing each other's bottoms while saying 'Behold our lov. to our Fellow Creature' and with couples dancing naked to fiddle music, the men sporting erections.²⁸ Among similar textual and visual accusations against Quakers, one pamphlet of 1655 associated them with 'strange and wonderful satanical apparitions' and the appearing of the devil to them 'in the likeness of a black boar, a dog with flaming eye, and a black man without a head, causing the dogs to bark, the swine to cry, and the cattle to run'.²⁹ By 1658, too, readers would have encountered more witchcraft pamphlets involving women in London, Essex, Huntingdonshire, Kent, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk, and elsewhere. Like Elizabeth Sawyer, the devil visited Joan Peterson of Wapping 'to suck her, sometimes in the likeness of a Dog'; her life and death provoked a little pamphlet war in the middle 1640s.³⁰

By 1658 the memory of a world of Morris dancing, maypoles, and Sunday pastimes was a distant one. In 1618 James I issued his Declaration or Book of Sports, allowing certain activities such as these on Sundays. His son Charles I reissued it in 1633, shortly before the play's revival on stage, with the added requirement, fully enforced, that clergy read it out from their pulpits. Given that parliament ordered its public burning in 1643, and many more activities from stage plays to horse racing were now prohibited, reading the antics of Cuddy and his fellow Morris dancers in 1658 and 1659 (before the restoration of the monarchy in 1660) must have felt like a risky exercise in nostalgia.³¹

These contexts illustrate some of those which each of the authors contributing to this Issues in Review draw upon to ask new questions about the play. What does *The Witch of Edmonton* say about the growing social inequality in early modern England? About a world which increasingly seemed to value economic gain over charitable behaviour, and where the spiritual and supernatural seemed to be sidelined by a focus on patriarchal paternalism, regulating behaviour, and legal niceties? The blurring of boundaries between financial credit and personal reputation shifts sharply into focus when the title character, Elizabeth Sawyer, gives credence to what villagers credit her with being, and finds emotional support and material power by becoming a witch. Edmonton is both an emotional regime, as Kathryn Prince contends, and reflective of a world really experienced as elucidated by

Susan Amussen, David Dean, and Tim Stretton. As such it offers more questions than answers about the devil within and the devil without, both for its time and ours. As Roberta Barker has remarked, reflecting on her 2008 Dalhousie University student production of the play, the *Witch of Edmonton*'s 'fusion of the natural and the supernatural remains a challenge and a fascination'.³²

The contributions which follow make much of the experience of those living in the times in which the play was written and performed while never losing sight of the unnatural and imagined elements and its essence as a performative text. Given that one goal of these essays is to offer some insights on how the play spoke to its own present, appropriately this introduction ends with an observation about the play's performance in our present. Barry Kyle's 1981 Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)'s staging at The Other Place emphasized the periodness of both time and space. The play opened with villagers engaged in their everyday work, carefully reconstructed period props staged the *mise-en-scène* meticulously, music from the time incorporated hymns from George Herbert and John Bunyan and a ballad about Lincolnshire witches, and the re-casting of the play's anonymous 'countrymen' in 4.1 became the villagers audiences had already met (Hamluc, Radcliffe, Rowland) to emphasize the ways social tensions encouraged witchcraft accusations, an understanding that dominated the historiography of English witchcraft in the 1970s. Gregory Doran's 2014 production at the Swan, with its minimalist set, contrasting warm and demonic blue lighting, and stark music, seems to have been informed by the historians' turn to gender, language, bodies, and psychological understandings in the past two decades.³³ This Issues in Review invites further conversations about the interplay between the real and imagined worlds of early seventeenth-century Edmonton and its inhabitants in a play that continues to excite scholars and entrance readers and audiences.³⁴

Notes

We would like to thank the editors of *Early Theatre* and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions on each of the contributions that make up this Issues in Review.

- 1 Lucy Munro (ed.), *The Witch of Edmonton by Thomas Dekker, John Ford and William Rowley*, Arden Early Modern Drama (London, 2017). All citations for the play in this Issues in Review are from this edition.
- 2 Munro, *Witch of Edmonton*, 97–8. The title-page of the quarto reads ‘William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, John Ford etc.’, causing speculation about even another author, or two.
- 3 On Frank’s self-delusion see David Atkinson, ‘Moral Knowledge and the Double Action in *The Witch of Edmonton*’, *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 25.2 (1985), 420–8, <https://doi.org/10.2307/450730>.
- 4 For implications of Cuddy’s familiarity with almanacs, see Katherine Walker, ‘Early Modern Almanacs and *The Witch of Edmonton*’, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 18.1/2 (2015) 1–25, <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/article/view/33>.
- 5 For the ambivalence surrounding motivation in the play and the role of Dog see Roberta Barker, ‘“An Honest Dog Yet”: Performing *The Witch of Edmonton*’, *Early Theatre* 12.2 (2009), <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.12.2.821>.
- 6 Henry Goodcole, *The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer a Witch, late of Edmonton, her conviction and condemnation and death: Together with the relation of the Divels access to her, and their conference together: Written by Henry Goodcole Minister of the Word of God, and her continuall visitor in the Gaole of Newgate: Published by Authority* (London, 1621). We have no clear information on when Goodcole was ordained, becoming curate at St James’s, Clerkenwell (where he had been baptized) only in 1636; see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), s.v. ‘Goodcole, Henry’, by Christopher Chapman.
- 7 Henry Goodcole, *A True Declaration of the Happy Conversion, Contrition, and Christian Preparation of Francis Robinson, Gentleman Who for counterfetting the great seale of England, was drawen, hang’d, and quartered at Charing-Crosse, on Friday last, being the thirteenth day of Nouember, 1618* (London, 1618). The next year later he published a miscellany of condemned criminals, *London’s Cry. Ascended to God and Entered into the Hearts and Ears of Men for Revenge of Bloodshedders and Burglars and Vagabonds* (London, 1620).

- 8 BL Additional Ms. 36674, ff. 134–7; Kirsten C. Uszkalo, *Being Betwitched. A True Tale of Madness, Witchcraft, and Property Development Gone Wrong* (Kirksville, Missouri, 2017).
- 9 David Pam, *Winchmore Hill. A Woodland Hamlet* (London, 2004), 4.
- 10 County of Middlesex, *Calendar to the Sessions Records. New Series. Vol. 3 1615–1616* (London, 1937), 4 and 5 September 1615; 25 and 26 June 1616, 1–23, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/middx-sessions/vol3/> pp.1-23; <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/middx-sessions/vol3/> pp.251–263; David Avery, *Heinous and Grievous Offences: Crime and Justice in the Jacobean Hundred of Edmonton* (London, 1995), 6–8; J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England* (London, 1999), 67–8.
- 11 ‘In Edmonton yet fresh unto this day, / Fixed in the wall of that old ancient church, / His monument remaineth to be seen’ (James Thorne, *Handbook to the Environs of London*, Part One (London, 1876), 165. I would like to thank local historian Joe Studman for his informative tour of the church and the Friends of All Saints, Edmonton for their hospitality.
- 12 Stephen Freeth, H. Martin Stuchfield, and Philip Whittemore, *Edmonton, Middlesex* (London, 2009).
- 13 Keith Fairclough, ‘A Successful Elizabethan Project: The River Lea Improvement Scheme’, *The Journal of Transport History* 11.2 (1990) 54–65, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.12.2.821>; Matthew Clark, ‘Resistance, Collaboration and the Early Modern «Public Transcript»’, *Cultural and Social History*, 8.3 (2011), 297–313, <https://doi.org/10.2752/147800411X13026260432951>.
- 14 David Pam, *The Fight for Common Rights in Enfield and Edmonton 1400–1600* (London, 1974).
- 15 NA, SP 14/66/63, 77; *Journal of the House of Lords* (London, 1767–1830), vol. 6 (1643), 254, 328.
- 16 E.P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters. The Origins of the Black Act* (London, 1975), 169.
- 17 Edmonton was close to the county border between Middlesex and Hertfordshire; from one of the Morris dancers, we learn the Carters live in Cheshunt (3.1.42–3). 3.1 abounds in sexual punning on local place-names in London. Old Carter’s praising of Somerton’s ‘fine convenient estate of land in West Ham’, then a village in Essex and now part of London’s east end, drew laughter in the RSC’s production of 1982 and, likely for different reasons, in 2014; in The Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive (SCLA), RSC/TS/2/2/1981/WIT1 and RSC/TS/2/2/2014/WIT1. Many thanks to the staff of the SCLA for their assistance and to the RSC for making their records available to researchers.

- 18 Munro, *Witch of Edmonton*, 8–12, 42–6; Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (eds), *The Witch of Edmonton* (Revels Student Editions, London, 1997), 6–7, 57, 58, 60; Arthur F. Kinney (ed.), *The Witch of Edmonton* (New Mermaids, London, 1998), xxi.
- 19 Corbin and Sedge, *Witch of Edmonton*, 106; Kinney, *Witch of Edmonton*, 9–11.
- 20 Influential work on cheap print in the period include Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London, 1999) and (ed.), *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (London, 2000); Francis E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars. Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700* (Ithaca, 1994); Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven, 2002). See also Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1500–1640* (Cambridge, 1993).
- 21 Munro, *Witch of Edmonton*, 52–5.
- 22 Sarah Johnson, 'Female Bodies, Speech, and Silence in *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Early Theatre* 12.1 (2009) 86–8, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.12.1>.
- 23 *Natures Cruel Step-Dames: Or, Matchlessee Monsters of the Female Sex; Elizabeth Barnes, and Anne Willis Who were executed the 26. Day of April, 1637 at Tyburne, for the unnaturall murdering of their owne Children Also, herein is contained their severall confessions, and the courts just proceedings against other notorious malefactors, with their severall offences this sessions. Further, a relation of the wicked life and impenitent death of Iohn Flood, who raped his owne childe* (London, 1637).
- 24 21 Jac. I, c. 27, *Statutes of the Realm* vol. IV (1547–1624), 1234–35; Alan Macfarlane, 'The History of Infanticide in England', 2–3, <http://www.alanmacfarlane.com/savage/A-INFANT.PDF>.
- 25 On the relationship of the bigamy and witchcraft plots, see Anthony Dawson, 'Witchcraft/Bigamy: Cultural Conflict in *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Renaissance Drama* 20.1 (1989), 77–98, <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.20.41917249>.
- 26 C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (London, 1911), 393–6, 940–1.
- 27 *Ibid.* 387–9.
- 28 *The Ranters Ranting: WITH The apprehending, examinations, and confession of Iohn Collins, I. Shakespear, Tho. Wiberton, and five more which are to answer the next Sessions. And severall songs or catches, which were sung at their meetings. Also their severall kinds of mirth and dancing. Their blasphemous opinions. Their belief concerning heaven and hell. And the reason why one of the same opinion cut off the heads of his own mother and brother. Set forth for the further discovery of this ungodly crew* (London, 1650). On whether the Ranters actually existed as a radical group see J.C. Davis, *Fear, myth and history. The Ranters and the historians* (Cambridge, 1986).

- 29 *The Quakers Dream: or the Devil's Pilgrimage in England: being an infallible relation of their several meetings, shreekings, shakings, quakings, roarings, yellings, howlings, tremblings in the bodies, and risings in the bellies: with a narrative of their several arguments, tenets, principles, and strange doctrine [sic]: the strange and wonderful satanical apparitions, and the appearing of the Devil unto them in the likeness of a black boar, a dog with flaming eye, and a black man without a head, causing the dogs to bark, the swine to cry, and the cattel to run, to the great admiration of all that shall read the same* (London, 1655).
- 30 Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (London, 2017), 190–3.
- 31 On the Morris as misrule, and how Cuddy's comments about including a witch in the dance complicates the reading of witchcraft in the play see Laura Denker and Laurie Maguire, 'The "Morris Witch" in *The Witch of Edmonton*', in N.C. Liebler (ed.), *The Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama* (Houndmills, 2002), 185–98; Meg F. Pearson, 'A Dog, a Witch, a Play: *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Early Theatre* 11.2 (2008), 96.
- 32 Barker, "An Honest Dog Yet", 174.
- 33 SCLA, RSC/SM/2/1981/46/File 1, documents related to shifting the production from The Other Place, Stratford to The Pit, Newcastle; File 4, music files, Stage Manager's Script, 60; RSC/SM/1/1981/WIT1 Prompt Book; Atkinson, 436–7.
- 34 I would like to thank the students taking my fourth year seminars on 'Witchcraft in Early Modern Britain' in 2016 for sharing their enthusiasm for researching and performing *The Witch of Edmonton*, and Laurel Rowe for our continuing discussions and re-imaginings of the play in graphic form.

