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A Dog, a Witch, a Play: *The Witch of Edmonton*

Tommy the Dog, devilish familiar to Elizabeth Sawyer, exists to destabilize. He rattles the characters within *The Witch of Edmonton*, unmoors the audience's expectations, and explodes the mechanics of the witch play genre by representing near total mobility. Dog determines how he will appear, changes his role at will, and wanders in and out of each and every plot in the play. His adaptability makes him the centrepiece of Thomas Dekker, John Ford, and William Rowley's 1621 play, and suggests that stasis, both onstage and off, may be more dangerous than the devil himself.

Dog's stunning theatrical mobility and his ability to change his role manipulates the play's genre and transforms this witch comedy into a metatheatrical commentary on societal roles. The witch genre often plays off dichotomies revolving around educated town versus illiterate country, allowing a comfortable distance to exist between London viewers and the events onstage.¹ Unleashing the protean Dog reveals how women like Sawyer and towns like Edmonton are mired, stuck, and unable to change, while Dog can adapt, grow, and leave altogether. Such alternatives are denied Sawyer in explicitly theatrical language. As a result of this focus upon change, neither witches nor devils nor bigamists end up the villains in *The Witch of Edmonton*. Stasis, the inability to change one's role, represents the real evil in this play. That evil's manifestation, Dog, uses his fluid identity to undermine perceptions of community, justice, and morality, provoking audiences to privilege the pleasure of theatricality, even at the price of integrity.

The Witch of Edmonton's witchcraft tale is, at first glance, a comic subplot within a larger domestic tragedy of bigamy and murder. Both the main plot and the witch plot, however, revolve around 'social coercion' and the terrible choices that result from these pressures, which in this play create a particularly amenable atmosphere for the devil.² Frank Thorney's storyline begins with his secret wedding to Winifred, a serving girl who is pregnant with his child, but his father's debts force Frank into a bigamous second marriage with

Susan, a merchant's daughter. Frank attempts to flee the scene with Winifred and his second wife's dowry, but the doting Susan follows him and is murdered for her pains. Though Frank attempts to conceal his role in Susan's murder with Dog's assistance, a series of supernatural revelations reveal his crime and he hangs. Elizabeth Sawyer, a character based upon the real-life woman accused of witchcraft, described in Henry Goodcole's account of her trial, faces similar difficulties and falls into damnation as well. She is recognizable as a witch based on common characteristics reported in folktales, court reports, and literary and dramatic depictions: she is angry, ugly, and alone. Yet Sawyer qualifies our perception of her by insisting that her shrewish tongue has been 'enforce[d] upon me' by the townspeople, and that her 'bad tongue' has been taught to her by their 'bad usage' (2.1.11).³ Because she is so powerless, Sawyer plays the cursing hag to achieve some agency in Edmonton. But, by having chosen 'to behave like a witch, she must become one,' for her blasphemy draws the fiendish Tommy to her in the shape of a large black dog.⁴ The two work together to avenge Sawyer against her enemies by destroying crops and perhaps even murdering her foes, but Dog almost immediately undertakes his own side-projects and leaves Sawyer alone and powerless until she too is taken by authorities and hanged.

The play's storylines are underway before Dog even appears on stage in act two, but his influence precedes him. He is the devil toward whom these seemingly dissimilar figures are driven by their social mischance. As John Cox notes, 'the main plot is not Sawyer's story but one from a higher social elevation, involving the landed gentry, so the evil that overtakes a destitute old woman is the same evil that overtakes her social betters'.⁵ These two plots featuring Frank Thorney and Elizabeth Sawyer, as well as a subplot featuring clowns and a morris dance, connect by way of our devilish hound, who wanders among the stories to wreak delighted havoc where he may. This dynamic display of agency distinguishes *The Witch of Edmonton* from other witch plays of the period. Dekker, Ford, and Rowley seem at first to create a comic world similar to plays like Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome's *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634). For example, Edmonton contains all classes of people: notorious rakes, impoverished gentlemen, clownish peasants, tyrannical fathers, and nubile young women. Young people seek the help of a witch for love potions or other mundane magics while the town elders panic at the presence of witches in their community. The witch, alone or with other witches, performs any number of tricks or set pieces, which range in theatricality from flying and metamorphosis to chanting and dancing. After deploying this

spectacle of magic, however, the standard comedy puts the community back together. The evil characters must repent and be reinserted into the community, or they must be punished and cast out, even executed. *The Witch of Edmonton* rejects this trajectory. More surprisingly, instead of employing the structure of the play's source text, which focuses on Sawyer's vengeful curses and then reasserts community through the repentance and execution of the witch, the play refocuses on the tragic aspects of Sawyer's tale and the theatrical vitality of Dog: a beast who walks, talks, and claims to be the devil himself. The result is a mutated morality play in which the allegories attempt to take over and change the lessons to suit themselves.

Elizabeth Sawyer, for example, cannot be contained within the usual categories of witch because she is not Hecate or some earth spirit. She is a real woman, whose story the playwrights take from Henry Goodcole's pamphlet relating her trial and execution.⁶ Even as the play insists upon her stasis and entrapment within Edmonton, the playwrights create a dynamic narrative and persona for her that distinguishes her from the witches who populate Edmonton's cultural consciousness. As act three opens and the morris dancers gather to rehearse, for example, Cuddy Banks, the clown, asks his colleagues, 'Have we e'er a witch in the morris?' (3.1.8). The dancers reply in the negative, and Banks retorts, 'I'll have a witch; I love a witch' (3.1.11). What Cuddy loves is the idea of a witch, the representation of evil that the morris dance exists to expel.⁷ Elizabeth Sawyer, on the other hand, is explicitly forced into the role of witch by her community and then made into an agent of the devil by Dog. Both narratives are staged, even though the process of becoming a witch is not typically staged in witch plays. Its inclusion here seems part of a larger strategy by the playwrights to undercut the popular notion of witch by exploiting the theatrical resonances of taking on the wrong role. Here we see a powerless creature forced into a role she does not truly desire, but she is unable to leave the play. Dog arrives to occupy the place of demonic agent in her stead, but he too is no ordinary devil.

Dog is a devil who will not be exorcised. Unlike the devils and vices of earlier drama, such as Mischief and Newguise in *Mankind*, who are driven from the stage by a whip-wielding Mercy, Dog cannot be driven away until he chooses to leave.⁸ Instead, the playwrights allow him to modify the form of the play, in the process nearly altering its didactic function. The play does not drive out the devil; it places him at centre stage and builds the story around him. More traditionally, as Cox asserts, Dog's considerable time on stage 'literally enacts the moral assumption — usually symbolic or metaphorical in other

plays — that a world without charity is hell'.⁹ But Dog's devilry does not only assert the importance of charity. His roaming throughout the multiple plots shows off the blatant hypocrisy and criminality inhabiting the play's community. Dog's movements expose the flaws of the play's society far more pointedly than do other plays of the genre. While Middleton's *The Witch* (c1613–16) draws attention to the improprieties and machinations of Ravenna, equating the nobles' bed-hopping with the sexual voracity of Hecate, it does not indict the entire community. Similarly, *The Late Lancashire Witches* satirizes a town that remains blissfully unaware of a coven made up of the community's women, but the play gives no sense that the community cannot be saved. *The Witch of Edmonton's* use of Dog as a social commentator who is just as articulate as the razor-tongued Elizabeth Sawyer blurs the lines between comedy, witch play, and tragedy. Most interesting, perhaps, is that Dog does not remain on the sidelines to point an accusing paw at the townspeople; he participates in both their crimes and their punishments, moving his role and the play past satire to a strange kind of ethical interrogation.

The traditional role of canines on the stage contextualizes Dog's unusual shiftiness. Dogs were 'ancient improvisatory figures', the companions of clowns and minstrels whose tricks lured in crowds and charmed coins from spectators.¹⁰ Renowned comedian Richard Tarlton, for example, used his canine companions, described in publications such as *Tarlton's Jests* (1590 and 1600), as his comic partners-in-crime. Dogs like Tarlton's who encouraged donations with their antics may recall the devils of medieval plays. These clever beasts are four-legged versions of Titivillus in *Mankynd*, who will not appear until the audience has 'pay[d] all alyke' over and above the price of admission (l. 470).¹¹ Canines and vice figures often deny easy categorization: they play, they improvise, and their animal natures provide access to those forbidden behaviors and taboos that make the best theatre. Yet even the greatest villains and the naughtiest clowns inevitably serve to reinforce the hierarchy even as they challenge it. What is comic disorder, after all, if not the safety valve used to release the pent-up frustrations of a society? *The Witch of Edmonton's* Dog reveals that there may be other answers to this question.

Dog's ability to speak enables much of his flexibility in *The Witch of Edmonton*. The lineage of such magical creatures is short, but intriguing. While earlier Tudor entertainments appear to call for live animals, such as the hawk and dog that are traded in John Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (c1515–1526), the more relevant relation of Dog is Cerberus, the classical hell-hound.¹² While Burnell the ass in the Chester cycle can speak because God inspires her, the hounds of

hell seem to speak of their own volition.¹³ In Thomas Heywood's *The Silver Age* (1613), Cerberus faces Theseus, Perithous, and Philoctetes at the gates of Hades, where he uses his ability to speak to both threaten and incite the men.¹⁴ He eggs on the heroes to attack before Hercules arrives, and taunts them into an impetuous battle so that he can feed upon them. This hound finds his foe's weakness and exploits it. Only Hercules's brute force can finally overpower him. Cerberus's persuasiveness and intuitive malice resurface in Dog. Strikingly, these two talking dogs, which are figures of both sophistry and fear, are exceptions to the traditional staging of dogs.

To further contextualize Dog's extraordinariness, we must acknowledge the admirable but unexceptional dogs who are also his kin. Shakespeare's plays, for example, assign considerable metaphoric value to dogs while keeping them firmly in the realm of the natural. We find in these examples an Elizabethan and Jacobean appreciation for various breeds that depends upon a perception of the dog as a 'model for the society of humans in the Renaissance', according to Marjorie Garber.¹⁵ A pack of hunting dogs offer their own elegant system of hierarchy: Theseus's hunters in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'bred out of the Spartan kind', may be 'slow in pursuit' but they are 'match'd in mouth like bells' (4.1.119–23).¹⁶ The Lord in *The Taming of the Shrew's* Induction debates with his huntsman the value and merit of the members of his pack, who include Merriman, Clowder, Silver, Belman, and Echo, in order to stabilize this same system (Ind.1.16–29). The master must know and promote which dogs are worthy so that order is maintained. In *The Tempest*, Prospero and Ariel torment Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban with a similar pack of spirit dogs, whose obedience and effectiveness in restoring harmony are illustrated by Prospero's order that the pack hunt the rebellious servants 'soundly' (4.1.252–8). The dogs will model stability for the rebellious servants, and replace their roaring with concord.

Shakespeare's seemingly conservative comic employment of dogs on stage exists alongside a cultural assumption that dogs, like people, may contain unseen potential.¹⁷ In a tragic vein, theatrical considerations of the canine reveal such subtle complexities. Macbeth reminds us of the variety of dog-types that existed in English culture, and his list reveals how many identities are available to a character like Dog. Macbeth berates his inefficient hired murderers using the analogy of dogs and men:

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,

Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept
 All by the name of dogs: the valued file
 Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
 The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
 According to the gift which bounteous nature
 Hath in him closed; whereby he does receive
 Particular addition from the bill
 That writes them all alike: and so of men. (3.1.92–101)

Macbeth's list illustrates the potential for instability in a solid term. All those different creatures, ranging from the treasured companion to the subtle thief, share the name of 'dog'. The name is woefully inadequate, however, as is the term 'men', for neither can suggest the gifts, both blessed and unholy, that hide within man and beast. This acknowledgment encourages attention to ways in which Dog suggests unlimited potential.

The Witch of Edmonton employs Dog's dynamic ambiguity from the very first pages of the printed edition. The creature's name is 'Dog' in the *dramatis personae* of the play; he is 'Tommy' to Elizabeth Sawyer, his witch mistress; and to Young Cuddy Banks, the play's clown, he is 'Ningle' or 'Tom'.¹⁸ Just this subtle abundance of names points to how Dog undermines the steadiness of canine identity, or of any identity, in *The Witch of Edmonton*. His blended personae, a melding of devil/dog and Tommy/Dog/Ningle, require from an audience a flexible reading and viewing that can keep up with his shifts between categories and roles. His physical appearance, which is not specifically noted in the play, may further enable this fluidity. We assume that Dog is meant to be some sort of beast. Yet some of the directions for Dog require subtle movements and emotional responses; the audience needs to see his face and his body, and Dog must *act*. This is a notable movement away from figures like Cerberus, who had a large property for a head, or even earlier devils, who likely wore large heads for both show and volume.¹⁹ Dog '*rubs*' his victims (SD 3.3.14), '*fawns and leaps*' (SD 2.1.252), '*ties*' up Frank (SD 3.3.73), '*plays the morris*' (SD 3.4.56), tickles with Sawyer (4.1.173), '*shrug[s] as it were for joy, and dances*' (SD 4.2.64), '*paw[s] softly at Frank*' (SD. 4.2.109), '*stands aloof*' (SD 5.1.79), and finally turns white before he abandons Sawyer (SD 5.1.27). The detail in these directions — joyfully shrugging and '*softly*' pawing at Frank before the latter's downfall — confirms the extent to which the play relies upon Dog's ability to be unfixed and quick on his feet, always eluding definition and changing his part. The play runs on the energy of

these shifts, powered by Dog's dynamic mutations and turns. This productive instability at times posits a new code: a theatrical ethics that reveals Dog to be the most compelling force in *Edmonton* because he can change.

The spectacle of Dog draws much of its theatrical effect from this mutability. His is an uncanny portrayal of a common dog doing uncommon things. Dog appears at first to be, like Crab in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, a comic figure, but his capacity for speech, mobility, and perhaps an upright posture withers our laughter into a sense of unease. He enters the play after Frank Thorney has already teetered into bigamy and more than 100 lines after Elizabeth Sawyer's scolding entrance. After being beaten by her neighbour for gathering sticks, Sawyer cries out against her ignorance and powerlessness and calls upon 'some power good or bad' to instruct her in revenge (2.1.114–15). Her hunger for vengeance is so great that she offers to 'go out of myself, / And give this fury leave to dwell within / This ruined cottage, ready to fall with age' (2.1.116–18). It is not her desire to be possessed, however, that summons the devil; it is her offer to 'study curses, imprecations, / Blasphemous speeches, oaths, detested oaths ... so I might work / Revenge upon this miser' (2.1.120–3). Sawyer must curse with her own tongue and seek violence against others to be worthy of anyone's attention, for good or ill. Her eloquent curses do attract interest, but it is not her neighbours' attention but that of the beast, who cries, 'Ho! Have I found thee cursing? Now thou art mine own!', the joyful exclamation featured on the frontispiece to the 1658 printed edition of the play (2.1.128). She may even determine the form of her demon when she refers to one of her abusers as 'this black cur, / That barks and bites, and sucks the very blood / Of me, and of my credit' (2.1.123–5).

Even though the speaking Dog is unusual, he may at this point still be defined within the folkloric category of a witch's familiar. Indeed, Frances Dolan tries to integrate Dog into her larger theory of 'dangerous familiars' by declaring him 'only an especially vivid manifestation of the early modern preoccupation with "familiar" threats and threatening "familiars"'.²⁰ Yet to conflate the malevolent and loquacious Dog with the various ferrets, toads, owls, and cats scattered throughout witchcraft literature and drama seems inadequate. Anthony Dawson similarly reads Dog at one point in the play as 'domesticated as a magic folk figure, a talking beast',²¹ yet a reviewer of one recent adaptation described Dog as 'terrifying', 'frightening', and 'cruel' in performance.²²

Dog is frightening because of his changeability, seen when he shifts swiftly from friend to attacker within moments of his appearance. Dog first uses his silver tongue to draw Elizabeth Sawyer to him, assuaging the woman's fear of him with skilled rhetoric: 'Come, do not fear, I love thee much too well / To hurt or fright thee. If I seem terrible, / It is to such as hate me' (2.1.131–3). Dog's description of his gentle nature hidden by a fearsome front reflects Sawyer's own plight. She is old, bent, and missing one eye, a caricature of the rural hag, and her rage feeds off her bitterness and loneliness. Like Dog, she only frightens those who hate her. He continues his seduction by appealing to her feelings of self-righteous indignation: 'I ... have seen and pitied / Thy open wrongs, and come out of my love / To give thee just revenge against thy foes' (2.1.134–6). His vengeance *will* be just, for she is truly wronged by her neighbours. Dog offers Sawyer what she craves — a friend and a champion — and her response betrays the extent of her longing: 'May I believe thee?' (2.1.137). But Dog does not stay friendly for long. When Sawyer equivocates with him, trying to sell him only 'so much of me as I can call my own', the devil emerges and threatens, 'speak [your oath], or I'll tear — ' (2.1.153). Faced with the dark Dog, likely standing on hind legs and baring his teeth at her, Sawyer chooses to preserve her body and 'see full revenge / On all that wrong me' (2.1.146–7). Dog's flexibility offers Sawyer an alibi for her witchiness: she sells her soul in self-defense.

The lines between human and animal have already been crossed in the figure of Dog — the devil played by a man playing a dog — but staging Sawyer's suckling intensifies the horror of the transgression. Sealing her covenant with Dog requires the suckling that is standard in most tales of familiars, but the staging suggests that Sawyer's arm is lapped by a creature that is neither man nor beast while sound effects rattle the firmament: '*Sucks her arm, thunder and lightning*' (SD 2.1.154). Amateur witchcraft has hardened into a contract with a devil, and a canine metaphor has become a black dog that literally sucks blood. Dog's size and his ability to stand up make him more of a vampire than a domestic animal in this moment. Like an incubus, the male demon supposed to breed with witches, Dog drinks from Sawyer and leaves her dry, as hollow as the character of witch in this play.²³ Having taken all of what Sawyer can call her own, her true self, Dog emerges from their embrace as the play's spectacular power. Sawyer is left merely to play the role of witch in Dog's malevolent drama. The character becomes the director.

Sawyer had already played the part of the witch before Dog's arrival, but she does not yet understand the consequence of changing roles. As she declares

naively before his arrival, 'Tis all one, / To be a witch as to be counted one' (2.1.125–6). This theatrical proclivity to put on a role that might give her greater social agency becomes an entrapment. Dog's deceptions and threats pressure Sawyer into consent, but then the playwrights expose the poor rewards for Sawyer's allegiance. Dog denies her first request, to kill her neighbour Old Banks. Sawyer must be satisfied with hurting his crops. Next, her first action as a witch is to make a love charm for the clown Cuddy Banks. As Arthur Kinney notes in his edition, 'she has acted the part of a witch for ridiculously low stakes'.²⁴ From this moment on, the playwrights turn our attention away from the witch for two full acts in order to return to the Frank Thorney plot and revisit the morris dancers. Elizabeth Sawyer does not appear on stage again until act four. Even this re-entrance is compelled: her accusing neighbours draw Sawyer onstage by burning the thatch from her roof.

Because we are privy to Dog's extracurricular meanderings and evildoing, Elizabeth Sawyer becomes something less than a character and something less than a spectator. Sawyer seems to have command of great magic, but she must remain secondary within her own story. The witch only hears about her work secondhand from the demon himself. She asks Dog whether 'thou struck the horse lame as I bid thee', but he has gone above and beyond his instructions. He bites a baby, ruins a maid's butter, and has 'rare sport / Among the clowns in the morris' (4.1.174–81). Dog does not share with his mistress how he facilitated a murder and ruined the lives of two men with false accusations, but the audience has seen everything. The lively characterization of the witch is undercut by her obvious powerlessness in the play. We cannot help but see and understand how much she does not know.

The play's turn away from the witch leaves Dog as the play's centre, resulting in a theatrical experience that savours confusion and shifting morality. Dog's interactions with the witch in her secondary role, for example, encourage close attention and emotional responses, because their relationship emphasizes her entrapment. The interactions between witch and devil recall the strange intimacies hinted at in the testimonies of accused witches, but *The Witch of Edmonton* stages these embraces and refuses to characterize them as either pitiful or threatening. When the town begins to turn against her in earnest, Sawyer asks Dog, 'Comfort me. Thou shalt have the teat anon', but her request elicits a response that could be playful or threatening: 'Bow, wow. I'll have it now' (4.1.166–7). The rhyme may sound teasing, but Dog will be asking for more than Sawyer's blood soon enough. Sawyer's wistful request that Dog become something more than an animal distresses even as it inspires

a degree of pity. She asks her familiar, 'Stand on thy hind-legs up. Kiss me, my Tommy, / And rub away some wrinkles on my brow' (4.1.170–1). If he obeys her, the actor playing Dog will rise up from his faux-four-legged stance and become something resembling a man. The sight of this crooked figure must recall images of Pan or of the devil himself, often portrayed with bent, goatish legs and a furry head. The testimonies from witch trials, featured in witch plays, often told of a dark man who would lie with the witches. He was apparently 'a good bedfellow' but 'his flesh felt cold' (5.5.221–6).²⁵ Sawyer's yearning for intimacy urges a similar transformation in Dog, from familiar to friend and lover. She 'tickles' with Dog (4.1.173), which is a term of affection but also a permissive direction that has inspired a number of different stagings, ranging from Sawyer rubbing Dog's stomach to the two rolling around the stage together.²⁶ Yet Dog will not change according to Sawyer's needs. His malice is needed elsewhere, and so he leaves her to pine.

Dog visits the play's main plot — Frank Thorney's bigamous love triangle — because he aims to do harm, but his enjoyment of malice seduces the audience as well. Dog moves against Frank and his second wife Susan autonomously; there has been no interaction between the witch and the Thorneys to this point. Dog speaks intimately to the audience of his nefarious plans, relishing with us the impending crime. As act three opens, Dog trots onstage and confides to the audience, 'Now for an early mischief and a sudden. / The mind's about it now. One touch from me / Soon sets the body forward' (3.3.1–3). Though Cox suggests that 'the social victims in each plot are literally driven to the devil by the dilemmas in which they find themselves', Dog's foreknowledge that Frank will commit murder undermines whatever sympathy Thorney's economic plight might evoke.²⁷ Dog's declaration that 'the mind's about it now' suggests that Frank is already thinking about killing Susan in order to be with Winifred. Dog's 'touch', the *maleficium* that was the hallmark of familiars in this tradition, seems only a mild encouragement to murder.²⁸ The audience is quickly snared in Dog's web and observes Frank's fall with no small glee. We see through Dog's eyes that Frank is up to no good, and we roll our eyes along with him as we overhear Frank's empty assurances and suggestive threats to his trusting new wife, such as when he mutters, 'You have no company, and 'tis very early; / Some hurt may betide you homewards' (3.3.8–9). Dog's movement from bullying hound to helpful accomplice amuses the audience even as it indicts Frank Thorney for his sins. While Sawyer requires sophistry and coercion to destroy her, Frank needs only a gentle nudge. Yet Dog's affability in this scene is no less menacing: his

likeable devilry and attention to the audience may distract us from the moral message against murder.

Dog's involvement in Susan Carter's murder threatens to undermine her extraordinary display of feminine virtue at her death. Upon finding her husband with his page, a cross-dressed Winifred, Susan decides to accompany Frank, and assures him that she can walk along with him on his way, for her father and father-in-law will be meeting them. Frank replies aside, 'So, I shall have more trouble' (3.3.14). Articulating his dismay this way, Frank reveals to the audience what Dog already knows: that Frank wishes he were free of his new wife. As Dog nudges him, transferring his harmful magic by touch, Frank continues his aside, saying, 'Thank you for that. Then I'll ease all at once. / 'Tis done now. What I ne'er thought on' (3.3.15–16). There appears to be real magic in Dog's caresses, even if they only magnify intentions already present. Frank may later protest that he never thought of harming his wife until the devil suggested the possibility, but he quickly resigns himself to bloodshed with unconsciously punning language. He declares to Susan that she is a whore, that he has 'espoused her dowry', not her, and stabs her while telling her that she has 'dogged' her own death (3.3.35, 39). Susan's response to Frank's violence — 'And I deserve it. / I'm glad my fate was so intelligent' — should move the audience to pity by linking her to the tradition of suffering virtuous women like Patient Grissel, but her assertion that 'some good spirit's motion' enabled her death reminds them that they have seen no good spirit watching over Susan, only Dog.

While this scene should offer an affecting example of forgiveness, the playwrights seem to privilege Dog's side when they force the audience to choose between virtue and entertainment. Susan's death speech, for example, in which she offers herself as an example of forgiveness, becomes an opportunity for a laugh. In the midst of her dying tribute to him, Frank offers the impatient interjection, 'not yet mortal? I would not linger you, / or leave you a tongue to blab' (3.3.55–6). Suddenly, Susan's only substantial speech in the play teeters on the brink of mawkishness, resembling Bottom's lingering death scene as Pyramus rather than the touching exit of a good woman wronged. Dog's presence and the dark humour of Frank's actions cheapen what might otherwise become a moment of beatitude. With the audience's pity distracted, theatricality threatens to overpower the gravity of Susan's death. Whether devilishly done or not, the scene continues to unravel in unexpected ways.

Dog continues to inject black comedy into the play's tragic main plot by helping Frank cover his tracks. In order to conceal his part in the murder,

Frank wounds himself and then ties himself up to make it appear that he has been robbed or overpowered. When he struggles with the ropes, ‘*Dog ties him*’ (SD 3.3.72). Frank’s response is unnerving: ‘So, so, I’m fast; I did not think I could / Have done so well behind me. How prosperous / And effectual mischief sometimes is’ (3.3.72–4). As Dog offers Frank enough rope to hang himself, the audience sways between amusement and heartbreak. Frank’s amazement at murder’s effectiveness is stunningly foolish, and his wonder at how easily one can kill a spouse is laughable. Dog has helped Frank achieve his goals, loyal hound that he is. Yet even as the audience may decide that Dog is simply the comic devil on Frank’s shoulder rather than an evildoer, another glimpse of the hound’s complexity jolts us. Moments after he nearly evacuates Susan’s murder of its moral grounding, Dog switches roles once more to become her agent of justice.

Dog plays a murky role in the spectacular, ghostly interlude that accompanies the uncovering of Frank’s homicide. He has participated fully in the murder and its cover-up, but now he becomes a spectacular means of revenge. Frank lies convalescing in his father-in-law’s home as the scene opens. Katherine, Frank’s sister-in-law, discovers the murder weapon in Frank’s pocket just as Dog enters. Katherine departs to tell her father of her discovery, and Dog runs off, leaving Frank alone in bed. Even though Frank has been found out, a lengthy direction offers a second, more spectacular piece of evidence proving Frank’s guilt, one that appears ordered by Dog. Frank’s dead wife returns to accuse her husband:

The Spirit of Susan his second wife comes to the bed-side. He [Frank] stares at it, and turning to the other side, it’s there too. In the meantime, Winifred as a page comes in, stands at his bed’s feet sadly. He frighted, sits upright. The Spirit vanishes.
(SD. 4.2.68)

The only other ‘spirit’ in this play is one of Dog’s minions, disguised ‘*in shape of Katherine, vizarded*’ in order to lead clown Cuddy Banks into a pond and dunk him (SD. 3.1.82). Susan’s ghost is not marked as a spirit ‘in the shape of Susan’; the apparition appears to be Susan herself, not a devil. The sport involved in duping Cuddy previously may still be in play, however. The spirit’s movements, first from one side of the bed, then to the other, could easily play for a laugh. When the ghost doesn’t have the desired effect, perhaps because Frank’s first wife Winifred suddenly appears, Dog must return to finish the job and assure Frank’s fall.

Dog's participation in exposing Frank affirms an unexpectedly principled aspect to the play's theatricality. Even though Katherine and her father are now aware of Frank's crimes, Dog further presses Frank to incriminate himself. Dog's touch — the direction calls for Dog '*pawing softly at Frank*' — seems to make Frank scream out 'The knife, the knife, the knife!' just as his father-in-law and Katherine return (4.2.108–17). Even this eruption does not end in a confession, and so Susan's body is carried on stage in a coffin to force Frank's hand, and he collapses at the sight of Susan's open, dead eyes. His bloody knife and Winifred's testimony confirm his crime, and he is carried off to jail. Surely whatever power watches over Edmonton works in mysterious ways; it leads a criminal to confess only when faced with shows like a devil dog, a ghost, and a staring corpse. This is forensic spectacle: evidence proving Frank's guilt that also proves inadequate the town's more typical justice. Without Dog and other supernatural presences, Frank might never have been exposed. Dog's capacity for role-playing seems limitless here. In an intensely ironic moment, Dog absorbs even the role of prosecutor.

Dog abandons Sawyer in the final act because he can change; he can and will move on. She cannot, and he mocks her for it. Dog's new teasing tone is heralded by his 'Bow, wow', the ersatz bark that he has used with other characters to confuse and misguide those who think him just a dog (5.1.33). He is physically playful with Sawyer as well, although a new edge to his romping emerges. As Dog preaches to the witch about 'when the Devil comes to thee as a lamb', he lunges at her, causing her to cry, 'Off, cur' (5.1.39–41). Sawyer slowly begins to take stock of Dog's new role, calling him 'thou dissembling hell-hound' while her Tommy savours his part as a shape-shifting cleric, mockingly instructing the witch that the devil 'has the back of a sheep, but the belly of an otter' (5.1.41–2). Until the final act, Dog was the witch's 'raven, on whose coal-black wings / Revenge comes flying' (5.1.8–9), but in act five, he transforms into a deadly minister with a new white coat, a visual jest he enjoys. Like Tamburlaine, Dog's spectacular brother, the devilish canine telegraphs his new role with a change of clothing. The white coat with its connotations of purity and cleanliness acts as a visual slap in the face to the witch. In full ironic frenzy, Dog asks his witch, 'Why am I white? Didst thou not pray to me?' (5.1.41–2). To manifest this bombastic crescendo, Dog surely rises from four legs to two. As he poses this final question, he seems fully upright, pointing an accusing finger, resplendent in pale judgment. The witch has prayed to a false idol and Dog as God relishes the sin while despising the sinner.

Having witnessed this incredible metamorphosis from Tommy the Dog to the devil's high priest, Sawyer is finally able to see Dog and her quicksand fate clearly. She nervously avers, 'I do not like / Thy puritan paleness' (5.1.54–5). Never is the dog more dangerous than now, when he embodies both his own extraordinary theatricality and the cultural potency of the puritan, who threatens to exile all theatricality from London. Although Dog's blackness had marked him as fiendish, his new pale coat suggests something more treacherous. The 'puritan' Dog is the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing, although here he is better described as a devil in angel's robes.²⁹ As Sawyer exclaims, 'Why to mine eyes are thou a flag of truce? / I am at peace with none; 'tis the black colour, / Or none, which I fight under' (5.1.52–4). Of course, Dog is loyal to neither flag nor mistress, only to the pacing and finale of his own twisted drama. He cues his witch, 'Thy time is come to curse, and rave, and die', but Sawyer will not hit her marks (5.1.66). This final resistance to her destined role plays as bravery; Sawyer has had to move from despair and loneliness through fear to determination, and her stamina alone merits applause. But Dog calmly stands aloof while the Countrymen come to take Sawyer to the gallows. She realizes the trap that Dog slams down upon her just before it closes.

In spite of the theatrical opportunities available in staging witchcraft, this play turns our eyes aside and beats the witch out of her cockpit (5.1.49–50). Witches are a particularly fascinating brand of spectacle in the early modern period because of the intersections between their identities on and off stage. First, witches produce spectacle with their magic. Karen Newman notices that *maleficium* has as its root *facio*, to make, to fashion, to build; the similarity between the witch's craft and the playwright's adds a dynamic reflexivity to any staging of witchery.³⁰ Witches also legibly manifest the uncertainties and anxieties of a community. They offer the 'satisfaction of figuration' to the anxious playgoer as well as to the nervous farmer concerned with a community's malaise.³¹ The mortal woman called 'witch' can be punished, even expunged, unlike the deeper problems of poverty and disenfranchisement that witches represent. Even as they offered a convenient scapegoat, witches and their theatrical representations also provided audiences with pleasure, the 'thrilled recognition of the presence of supernatural power in the material world'.³² Witchcraft makes great theatre, as can be seen by the spectacular magic found in witch plays: flying across stage, sinking below ground, transfigurations, disappearances, invisible voices, and familiar spirits. These spectacles may delight an audience even as they offer evidence proving the witch's

guilt, a phenomenon particular to plays that reference actual accused witches. Yet in spite of these theatrical possibilities, *The Witch of Edmonton* uses little, if any, witchcraft spectacularity. Dog's changeability renders Elizabeth Sawyer practically insignificant. The playwrights refuse to indict their witch even though they reveal how much the town relishes the process.

There are few options for the witch-like woman, an ironic doom considering the remarkable stage presence allowed to witch figures in the theatre. Indeed, Sawyer's own language plays with and against the inherent theatricality of her role in her society. It seems that being a witch is not something she has sought, but she has little choice in the matter. The seriousness with which Sawyer considers selling her soul illustrates her dilemma: how far must she push her performance to be taken seriously? We cannot know whether her language deliberately invokes a familiar or even a devil; as she cynically notes, her intentions hardly matter. "Tis all one, / To be a witch as to be counted one', she reasons, longing for some kind of power if she is to be so labeled (2.1.125–6).

Dog's potency is illustrated by how securely he dominates the play even in the presence of Sawyer, who is one of the most articulate social commentators in early modern drama. Elizabeth Sawyer seems at times to exemplify the typical witch figure — a solitary, shrewish woman who curses everyone in sight — but her lucid self-awareness of how she has been reduced to selling her soul complicates any easy conclusions about whether she deserves her final fate. Elizabeth Sawyer's eloquent expression of her plight and her desperate loneliness — exploited by Dog at every step — adds a disconcerting complication for audience members trying to determine their allegiances. Some argue that Sawyer 'show[s] little consciousness of the difference between right and wrong', but her awareness of the uncharitable hypocrisy required to make a witch suggests otherwise.³³ Even as she is dehumanized in the eyes of her community, she becomes more and more worthy of the audience's interest, largely as a result of her ability to see her situation and her community clearly.³⁴ The playwrights validate her as a character, but not as a witch.

Sawyer's scolding tongue alienates her from her neighbours but provides additional insight into the world in which she is mired. Her scorching words drive away even the Justice who enters the play desiring to temper Edmonton's witch craze. He turns against Sawyer only when she refuses to acknowledge his rank. When asked whether she knows to whom she speaks, she says, 'A man; perhaps, no man. Men in gay clothes whose backs are laden with titles and honours, are within far more crooked than I am, and if I be a witch, more

witch-like' (4.1.99–102). Sawyer's scathing commentary on 'city witches' in the same scene illustrates clearly how every sinner is a witch in some way (4.1.128). With dizzying detail she indicts social criminals who steal, corrupt, ruin and seduce weaker persons, especially women. The Justice stammers, 'but those work not as you do' and attempts to explain that 'the law casts not an eye on these', but Sawyer quickly retorts that no one can safely elude the label of witch (4.1.123,133). Her attack upon the 'men-witches' who tempt maidens and lose their honour finally so unnerves the men that in order to silence her they enforce her guilt.

Sawyer laughs away these attacks, calling her foes 'a pack of curs / Clapped all upon me', but this slip of the tongue reveals a sadder aspect of her situation (4.1.164–5). Dog's domesticated appearance works as well on his witch as it does on the townspeople. Even as she rails against the beasts that suck her blood, she offers a teat to Dog. The contrast is painful, particularly given Sawyer's seeming inability to distinguish between her own canine metaphors and the real demon begging at her feet. Much of Dog's influence seems to draw upon this uncanny combination: even as Dog embodies the occult, he is simultaneously a domesticated animal, the epitome of order and civilization.³⁵ Dog's true power, however, stems from his ability to take up such a role and then discard it. It seems that Dog represents a mobility that Sawyer cannot begin to understand.

The Frank Thorney plot that opens the play features different class and gender issues, but its trajectory argues that Frank's entrapment is comparable to Sawyer's. While Sawyer has been labeled a witch and arguably forced to become one, Frank is mired within the economic responsibilities of the gentry class. Frank's father, Old Thorney, has mortgaged his lands to the hilt. As he tells his son, 'If you marry / With wealthy Carter's daughter, there's a portion / Will free my land... . Otherwise, / I must be of necessity enforced / To make a present sale of all' (1.2.137–42). Frank agrees to marry Susan Carter even though he is already married to Winifred, who is pregnant with his child. Frank articulates his dilemma in startlingly visceral terms: 'When I was sold, I sold myself again / (Some knaves have done't in lands, and I in body) / For money, and I have the hire' (3.2.27–9). Frank's situation so limits him that he considers himself a prostitute, having sold himself in body. The metaphor effeminizes Frank to the point that he grows nearer in type to Elizabeth Sawyer. Both are powerless, and must sell what they have to offer. While Sawyer sells her soul, Frank sells himself.

Although Frank will not repent until he marches to the gallows, his crimes are clearly revealed in a play that seems directed by Dog. In addition to making the supernatural ethically ambiguous, the scene asserts, however ironically, how theatre can be a tool of justice. Like Hamlet with his Mousetrap or Hieronimo with his murderous masque, Dog's interlude uses Susan's ghost and the presentation of her corpse in a coffin to expose Frank's crime. Yet even as the staging works its magic, it also illuminates how static Frank has become. The movement and magic of Dog's forensic spectacles only reinforce Frank's inevitable fate. Although the exposure of this crime and Sawyer's participation in Dog's work should signal the return of a positive stability to Edmonton, they do not. Once again the play leads its audience to conclusions that are soon undermined. Dog exposes both crimes rather than implicating the community which helped to form these criminals, and a sense of unease and discomfort about these proceedings lingers until the play's epilogue.

The third piece of the story — Cuddy Banks and his plans for a morris dance — offers yet another example of Edmonton's stasis. Dog's involvement invigorates the community's ritual morris while also revealing its inadequacy as a moment of revival. Banks longs to be as theatrically potent as Dog, and he gets his wish in the Edmonton morris dance by playing the hobby horse. Cuddy Banks invites Dog to the morris and taps into the creature's power to play his part, dance, and play fiddle at once. Dog's interference changes more than the dance, however. His involvement reveals that the morris, performed to bring joy, encourage fertility, and banish darkness, can neither unify nor cleanse this community. By setting the morris on Sir Arthur Clarington's lands the play reveals how ineffective this ritual's cleansing powers have become. The man whose interference helped to ruin both Frank and Winifred welcomes the morris and assures his guests that the dancers will help to heal everyone's ill temper. That the dance follows so closely on the heels of Susan's onstage murder also creates a sense of unease. This dance can do nothing for the dead woman, and the playwrights highlight Edmonton's inability to identify true wrongdoing when the morris concludes with a constable arriving to arrest the innocent Somerton and Warbeck for Susan's murder.

The purpose of the morris is to restore harmony, but the fiddler has no music, and the tightly organized dance ends chaotically with the wrongful arrests of these men. The same direction calling for Dog to '*play the morris*' closes with '*enter a Constable and Officers*' (SD 3.4.56). Dog's intervention disorders the practiced movements of the dance, and the Officers' entrance suggests how far Dog's mischief has ranged. Banks warns his friends that

'this news of murder has slain the morris', and his violent metaphor expresses Edmonton's distress: those ceremonies and actions that would help the town renew itself and evolve have been slaughtered (3.4.72–3). Warbeck and Somerton soothe their own fears by declaring that 'nor judge nor evidence / Can bind him o'er who's freed by conscience', but their confidence may be misplaced in a town where the rituals of community have been evacuated of meaning and efficacy.

The play continues this unnerving sense of something amiss from the morris into the Dog-less judicial ending. Though the town's justices exchange Somerton and Warbeck for the real criminals, Frank Thorney and Elizabeth Sawyer, the formalities for expunging wrongdoing threaten to become as flawed as the morris dance. Both the prisoners and their friends are decidedly out of sorts. Unlike Mother Sawyer, who 'would live longer if [she] might' and goes to the scaffold snarling (5.3.44), Frank Thorney is a model penitent. Indeed, he assures his father and first wife Winifred that 'a court hath been kept here where I am found / Guilty; the difference is, my impartial judge / Is much more gracious than my faults / Are monstrous to be named, yet they are monstrous' (5.3.88–91). But this contrition seems tainted, for the same judge who 'impartially' indicts Frank also punishes Mother Sawyer, whose sentence is largely inaccurate. Even though his family finds comfort in Frank's penitence, his father-in-law Old Carter notes that 'We have lost our children both on's the wrong way, but we cannot help it' (5.3.147–8). Sir Arthur, the scoundrel nobleman who set some of the play's events in motion by abusing Winifred, escapes hanging with a fine while the young man swings 'the wrong way'.

Although the play could indeed come to an end when the witch dies, the murderer hangs, and the good Cuddy Banks shuns Dog, there remains an Epilogue delivered by Winifred, the pregnant widow. She has neither husband nor family nor employment now, even though Frank has asked his family and his in-laws to watch over her. If anyone is primed to become the next witch of Edmonton, it is she. Even without Dog's assistance the audience can see clearly this woman's vulnerability. The kind Old Carter tells Winifred to be welcome in his home, and asks his surviving daughter to 'make much of her', but Katherine Carter does not reply (5.3.166). Left alone on stage, Winifred speaks of her widowhood and her hopes of marrying again, if the free and noble tongues of gentlemen will 'speak one kind word for me' (Ep.5–6). We have seen how rare kind words can be in Edmonton, and our expectations for Winifred's fate must be low indeed. Here is another lonely woman, modest

and young for now, but facing a troubling future. Will some call her witch and teach her to realize, 'a witch? Who is not?' (4.1.116). The epilogue asks the playhouse audience to show its kindness by applauding her. Perhaps the audience can in this way reveal its own higher moral stature, but Winifred is doomed in her fictional world, as are the real women in England like Elizabeth Sawyer. The Justice's final words sum up the inadequate conclusion to the events in Edmonton: 'make of all the best. / Harms past may be lamented, not redressed' (5.3.171–2). Nothing is resolved by this ending; all Edmonton can do is mourn.

The play encourages a consideration of Dog as an agent of some kind of morality, however twisted, even as it reminds us of exactly what Dog is about. As he makes clear to Cuddy Banks in his final appearance, he has served his witch by bringing her to the gallows. Dog follows this statement with a series of explanations that appear purely didactic. He tells the clown that 'thou never art so distant / from an evil spirit, but that thy oaths, / curses and blasphemies pull him to thine elbow' (5.1.137–9). Yet even as he explicates evil to the clown, Dog reminds the audience of the role of pleasure. When Cuddy wonders why Tommy cannot become 'an honest dog' and give up the life of serving witches, killing children and cattle and spoiling crops, Dog responds, 'Why? These are all my delights, and pleasures, fool' (5.1.164–8). While never denying the relevance of morality and of social ethics, the playwrights here help to explain why Dog is so much more interesting than the other figures on stage. There is an alternative pleasure, a theatrical pleasure, in watching the devil work, and Dog is one of the greatest devils to observe. Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* has been called the first play to exploit 'the instability of traditional polarized thinking about devils'; most of the seventeenth-century plays that follow react to Marlowe's radicalism by reasserting that devils oppose community values.³⁶ However, even as Dog arguably represents the hell that thrives when charity is absent, his destabilizing influence also suggests that there is more gratification in watching a performance of evil than in living a better life. Dog is simply more engaging. This is a way to understand and avoid entrapment by the devil's seductive role playing, but we are also tempted by the play to side with him and with the theatre.

Perhaps the most confusing of Dog's characteristic is how easily he walks away from this play, in effect overleaping the boundaries of his own drama. As he tells Cuddy, Dog leaves Edmonton 'for greatness now, corrupted greatness; / There I'll shug in, and get a noble countenance' (5.1.196–7). A 2000

production of the play had Dog take his final exit through the theatre's fire exit, leaving the bounds of the play entirely to seduce new prey in the audience's own, contemporary world.³⁷ This escape accentuates the stasis Dog leaves behind. Edmonton remains as flawed as before. The town is as stuck in its role as Sawyer was. After unsettling the play and its audience for five acts, Dog steps back to show that the townspeople can spiral into sin even without his nudges. The spectacular deceiver trots away barking because he can: leaving the witch to die, the city to rot, and the audience to remain unsatisfied. It is no wonder that the play feels empty after Dog leaves: the only thing worth watching is gone, and there is no one left to blame but ourselves.

Notes

- 1 See Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (New York, 1996), 180–3.
- 2 David Nicol, 'Interrogating the Devil: Social and Demonic Pressure in *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Comparative Drama* 38.4 (Winter 2004–5), 430.
- 3 All quotations from the play are taken from the Revels edition: William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (eds) (Manchester, 1999).
- 4 Arthur F. Kinney, Introduction, Thomas Dekker, John Ford & William Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton*, Kinney (ed.) (New York, 1998), xx.
- 5 John D. Cox, *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350–1642* (Cambridge, 2000), 173.
- 6 The Elizabeth Sawyer/witch sub-plot of *The Witch of Edmonton* is drawn from Henry Goodcole's account of Sawyer's actual trial and execution in April 1621. His pamphlet, published days after her death, is entitled, 'The wonderfull discoverie of ELIZABETH SAWYER a Witch, late of Edmonton, her conuiction and condemnation and Death'. (London, 1621; STC: 12014).
- 7 Kinney notes that this witch is likely also a reference to Maid Marian, 'originally queen of the witch's coven before becoming the companion of Robin Hood and frequently played by a man in the morris dances'. Kinney, *Witch of Edmonton*, note to 3.1.8.
- 8 *Mankind, Three Late Medieval Morality Plays: Mankind, Everyman, Mundus et Infans*, G.A. Lester (ed.) (London, 1999). Consider also *The Castle of Perseverance*, in which the Virtues repulse the onslaught of the Vices using the sacraments. Abstinence de-

clares that he will beat back his attackers with the Host: 'I mene the sacrament. / That iche blysful bred'. See *Mankind* in *The Macro Plays: The Castle of Perseverance, Wisdom, Mankind*, Mark Eccles (ed.) (Oxford, 1969), ll. 806–7. Consider also *The Castle of Perseverance*, in which the Virtues repulse the onslaught of the Vices using the sacraments. Abstinence declares that he will beat back his attackers with the Host: 'I mene the sacrament. / That iche blysful bred'. See *The Castle of Perseverance* in Eccles, *Macro Plays*, ll. 2269–70. See also Cox's discussion of similar movements in non-cycle plays in his *Devil and the Sacred*, 39–59.

- 9 Cox, *Devil and Sacred*, 176.
- 10 Richard Beadle, 'Crab's Pedigree', *English Comedy*, Michael Corder, Peter Holland, and John Kerrigan (eds) (Cambridge, 1994), 13.
- 11 *Mankind*, in Eccles, *The Macro Plays*.
- 12 John Skelton, *Magnyfyccence, a goodly interlude and a mery / deuysed and made by mayster Skelton/ poet laureate late deceasyd* (London, 1533; STC: 22607).
- 13 *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, V, David Mills (ed.) (East Lansing, MI, 1992), 91–2.
- 14 Thomas Heywood, *The siluer age including. the loue of Iupiter to Alcmena: the birth of Hercules. And the rape of Proserpine. Concluding, with the arraignment of the moone* (London, 1613; STC: 13365).
- 15 Marjorie Garber, 'Shakespeare's Dogs', *Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century*, Jonathan Bate, Jill L. Levenson, and Dieter Mehl (eds) (Newark, DE, 1998), 296–7.
- 16 All citations from Shakespeare's plays are taken from *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, Stephen Orgel and A.R. Braunmuller (eds) (New York, 2002).
- 17 See John Caius's treatise *Of Englishe Dogges*, published in Latin in 1570, translated into English in 1576. Beadle, Garber, and D.T. Starnes all suggest the influence of this text on English understandings of dogs. Indeed, the *Macbeth* speech on dogs seems a direct quote from Caius. See D.T. Starnes, 'Acteon's Dogs', *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 3 (1955), 19–25.
- 18 The name 'Tom' is not uncommon for familiars. See James A. Serpell, 'Guardian Spirits or Demonic Pets: The concept of the Witch's Familiar in Early Modern England, 1530–1712', *The Animal/Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, Angela N.H. Creager and William Chester Jordan (eds) (Rochester, NY, 2002), 175.
- 19 Philip Henslowe's inventory contains a head for Cerberus. Costume heads could be constructed to amplify the speaker's voice. See Philip Butterworth, *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre* (London, 1998), particularly his discussion of *The Castle of Perseverance*. See also Mark Eccles' notes on *Mankind's* staging in Eccles, *The Macro Plays*, xlii.
- 20 Frances E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700* (Ithaca, 1994), 220.

- 21 Anthony B. Dawson, 'Witchcraft/Bigamy: Cultural Conflict in *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Renaissance Drama* 20 (1989), 92.
- 22 David Nicol, 'Review of *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 7.1/ Special Issue 8 (May 2001), 19.1–12, <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/07-1/revnicol.htm>>. Barry Kyle directed the most well-known modern production for the RSC in 1983.
- 23 Reginald Scot explains that this is how devils breed: 'The divell plaieth Succubus to the man and carrieth from him the seed of generation, which he delivereth as Incubus to the woman.' See *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584; STC: 21864), 2.19:72.
- 24 Kinney, *Witch of Edmonton*, 42, n. 256.
- 25 Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, *The Late Lancashire Witches* (London, 1634; STC: 13373).
- 26 Cf. Kinney, *Witch of Edmonton*, 83, n. 168.
- 27 Cox, *Devil and Sacred*, 173.
- 28 Others have suggested that Dog has a much greater effect upon Frank, in keeping with Frank's assertion that the murder is something that he 'ne'er thought on', but such interpretations underprivilege Dog's proven nose for evil and Frank's series of unconscious threats to Susan (3.3.9). See, for example, Nicol, 'Interrogating', 431.
- 29 For more on the associations between this scene and contemporary antitheatrical literature, see Purkiss, *Witch in History*, 188, and Dawson, 'Witchcraft/Bigamy', 79.
- 30 Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago, 1991), 66. Many others have noted the metatheatricality of witches. See, for example, Stephen Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare Bewitched', *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (eds) (Princeton, 1993), 120; Heather Hirschfeld, 'Collaborating across Generations: Thomas Heywood, Richard Brome, and the Production of *The Late Lancashire Witches*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30:2 (Spring 2000), 365; David Stymeist, "'Must I be ... made a common sink?": Witchcraft and the Theatre in *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Renaissance and Reformation* 25.2 (2001), 34; and the work of Diane Purkiss, especially *Witch in History*, 180–263.
- 31 Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare', 116.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 115.
- 33 David Atkinson, 'Moral Knowledge and the Double Action in *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Studies in English Literature* 25 (1985), 420.
- 34 Much critical work has attended to Elizabeth Sawyer and the means by which her character exposes witchcraft as a social construction. In addition to the sources mentioned above, see Viviana Commensoli, *Household Business: Domestic Plays of*

Early Modern England (Toronto, 1996), 121–32, and Lisa Hopkins, 'Ladies' Trials: Women and the Law in Three Plays of John Ford', *Cahiers Elisabethains* 56 (Oct 1999), 49–64.

35 Cf. Dawson, 'Witchcraft/Bigamy', 84.

36 Cox, *Devil and Sacred*, 2.

37 Nicol, 'Review', par. 12. The production was directed by Simon Cox at the Southwark Playhouse in 2000.