

## Issues in Review

---

Sarah O'Malley (contributing editor), Emily George, Andrew Loeb, Sharon Vogel Kubik

### **Witches In Space: Introduction**

Sarah O'Malley

*The introduction to this Issues in Review entitled 'Witches in Space' sets out the critical history that forms the background work on the literary geographies of early modern witchcraft. The introduction first establishes the need for such work through an illustrative case study and then attends to the foundation of scholarship in the fields of literary and cultural geography as well as witchcraft studies on which this collection of essays builds.*

Robert Eggers's 2015 *The VVitch: A New England Folktale* brought early modern witches alive for a modern audience. A critical and popular success, the film received praise from within the scholarly community of witchcraft and early modern studies as well as more widely. Malcolm Gaskill recently tweeted his appreciation and praised how skilfully Eggers 'makes the idea of witchcraft seem plausible' — and a volley of agreement appeared in his replies.<sup>1</sup> Part of the appeal of the film is its credibility: setting his story in colonial 1630s New England, Eggers has stated in numerous interviews and articles that he turned to pamphlets from the period to give *The VVitch* a sense of authenticity.<sup>2</sup> *The Vulture* praised Eggers's commitment to his research, stating that what emerged from it 'is an aggressively accurate portrait of the time period portrayed in the film and the fears it contained'.<sup>3</sup> In a whole host of ways Eggers achieves this accurate portrayal of the period, including nods to a variety of primary source materials and

---

Sarah O'Malley ([sarah.elizabeth.omalley@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.elizabeth.omalley@gmail.com)) is an independent researcher and educational developer at SOAS, University of London.

academic theories of early modern witchcraft (both generally and in a colonial North American context) that scholars will recognize from the outset. What *The VVitch* also does, however, is inherit an absence of critical attention to matters of space and place in relation to its early modern source material.

The title of Eggers's film immediately geographically locates the film in New England, but, interestingly, *The VVitch* was shot on location in Canada, which already troubles the notion of the capacity to authentically reproduce spaces indicated by the film's title. Throughout the film we see the juxtaposition, visually and through dialogue, of the ordered farm and plantation and the disordered 'wilderness' surrounding them.<sup>4</sup> At the start of the film two Native Americans can be seen entering the plantation as the exiled family are leaving, the gates shutting behind them creating a physical boundary between the plantation and wilderness beyond. After this moment no Indigenous people appear on screen again; indeed, no indigenous animals other than the anthropomorphic witch-hare do either. The film renders the New England 'wilderness' as *terra nullius* upon which the fears, anxieties, and beliefs of early modern England can be projected in a way that feels authentic. The film inherits these fears and beliefs, and their associations with wild landscapes, directly from early modern source material on witchcraft that regularly associates witches with 'wild' natural and rural locales. By uncritically redeploying this inheritance, however, the film ends up with a problematic neo-colonial projection of English beliefs and customs onto an emptied American 'wilderness' that does not offer a historically accurate portrayal of this space. Whilst the film's representation of early modern witch beliefs may be authentic, the drive to add to this authenticity through the association with a specific North American location ends up perpetuating spatial inaccuracies that reveal some of the work still to be done in understanding the relationship between witches and space in the early modern period.

The quest for an authentic representation of the past is, as Doreen Massey notes, riddled with political implications in the present.<sup>5</sup> What is of interest then, alongside the problems and discrepancies noted above, is which bits of the original narratives remain in the reproduction of spaces and subjects contained in reimaginings like Eggers's, and how they might influence a modern audience's understanding of the political, social, and ideological function of the witch throughout English history, especially its role in the production of the spatially located identities, hierarchies, and power structures that still exist today. If we work to critically unpack the function of space and place in early modern witchcraft texts, then not only will we greatly enrich our understanding of witches and witchcraft in the period, but contemporary reconstructions will be better placed to challenge some

of the ideological legacies these texts carry — the collection of essays in this Issues in Review seeks to contribute to this larger project.

Philosophers and critics, perhaps most famously Henri Lefebvre, have explored at length the ideological and social power of different spaces. The now relatively widespread understanding of space and place as a combination of materiality, subjectivity, and representation finds its origin in Lefebvre's seminal work *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre suggests a 'conceptual triad' of space made up of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space: 'the perceived, the conceived, and the lived', respectively.<sup>6</sup> The recognition of the crucial role of representation in the production of space (and place) serves as a foundation for the emergence of literary geographies, with many academics in the field drawing directly from his work or derivatives of it. In early modern literary studies specifically, Lefebvre's work has offered scholars an instructive framework for thinking through theatrical space and the relationship between real and imagined spaces.<sup>7</sup>

Whilst Lefebvre focused predominantly on space as a conceptual category, much discussion also exists on the distinction between space and place. Critics like Yi-Fu Tuan and Tim Cresswell have contributed invaluable work to conceptualizing potential distinctions between the two. As Tuan acknowledges, 'In experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place'.<sup>8</sup> His distinction, however, rests on space being connected to movement and freedom, as being more 'unfixed', as he writes: 'The ideas "space" and "place" require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa'.<sup>9</sup> In attempting to separate the two, Cresswell builds on this idea and suggests that 'Place has more subjective or individual meaning than space, it is a space that has been inhabited, affected, influenced by human beings, or animals, to make "their own", to give it meaning within the context of their being'.<sup>10</sup> In an important qualifier, Cresswell goes on to note that 'places are not always stationary. A ship, for instance, may become a special kind of place for people who share it on a long voyage, even though its location is constantly changing'.<sup>11</sup> This lack of physical fixity, but focus on fixity of emotional attachment or personal/social significance, presents an important and interesting conceptual caveat to consider, and one that may have resonance in discussions of witchcraft since texts frequently define witches as existing spatially and/or ideologically outside the 'place' of community whilst still being defined in relation to it.

Doreen Massey's thinking on space and place also influentially conceptualizes both space and place as active and ongoing processes. As she articulates, 'both concepts are incredibly mobile', and 'identities of place are always unfixed,

contested and multiple'.<sup>12</sup> This contestation is born out of the inherently political and cultural nature of space and place as sites that both produce and are produced by the socio-political climate they exist within and form part of. As Massey goes on to argue, 'The spatial organization of society ... is integral to the production of the social, and not merely its result. It is fully implicated in both history and politics'.<sup>13</sup> Just as normative ideologies may dominate the same cultural and political landscape challenged by transgressive or marginal ideologies, so material space functions in a similar way, forming part of both dominant/normative and marginalized/transgressive ideologies and behaviours. These ideas of space and place as 'unfixed, contested, and multiple', and as active participants in the construction of the socio-political environment, have the potential to unlock new ways of understanding the construction of early modern witchcraft beliefs and subjectivities. Early modern texts frequently associate the witch as a marginalized and transgressive figure with marginalized spaces and/or show the witch being ostracized from normative ones — this spatial marginalization is an idea that all of the essays in this collection explore in different ways.

The field of early modern studies has adopted, modified, and deployed the work of Lefebvre, Tuan, Cresswell, Massey, and others<sup>14</sup> for several years now, changing approaches to the study of the period in general and causing noticeable shifts in studies of literature in particular. One of the key texts of this 'spatial turn' in early modern literary studies is Julie Sanders's *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620–1650*. Sanders's work critically unpacks understandings of space and place in early modern literature and drama, and equally explores the role literature and drama played in the production of space and place in the period. Sanders argues 'that drama was one of the key means by which early modern English society strove to make sense of space', reorienting theatrical space not just as a site in which dramatic worlds were brought to life, but a site in and through which early modern playwrights and audiences understood the function of different spaces and their relationship to them.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the book Sanders demonstrates her interest in the 'complex interactions that take place between people and the spatial structures and concepts ... that shape their understanding and practice of the world' and clearly states that, 'It is absolutely my intention ... that the methods and approaches adopted here are open to appropriation and can be redeployed to look at other kinds of cultural landscape'.<sup>16</sup>

Sanders's book sets out the potential of the critical toolkit(s) offered by cultural geography to expand the field of early modern literary studies, and the study of witchcraft and witch texts are no exception. In her introduction Sanders describes what she calls 'flow theory' to frame her analysis of the connections of

‘so-called province with metropolis, domestic with public space, and homeland with colony, as well as imaginative geography with material site ... in terms of the exchange of ideas and practices, as well as literal objects and commodities’.<sup>17</sup> Flow theory would lend itself readily to work that aims to show the connections and interactions between different spaces and their evolving, malleable function in relation to the representation and understanding of early modern witchcraft. In various ways the essays here all attend to this flow of discourse, power, and identity between different real and imagined spaces associated with early modern witchcraft.

Sanders, alongside Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr, edits the Oxford University Press series ‘Early Modern Literary Geographies’. The launch of this series in 2015, with the publication of Gavin Hollis’s *The Absence of America: The London Stage, 1576–1642*, recognized the influence of literary geography in the field of early modern studies, and has done much to advance the study of space and place in the period.<sup>18</sup> Andrew Bozio’s *Thinking Through Place on the Early Modern English Stage*, released through this series in 2020, is another foundational text in the study of space in early modern English literature and drama. Published nearly ten years after Sanders’s *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama*, Bozio’s book does much to consolidate critical advances and think through the creation and function of place in early modern drama using tools from cultural geography, embodiment, and distributed cognition. Much like Sanders, Bozio does not address witchcraft or witch plays explicitly, but interestingly the book opens with a close reading of Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*. In this close reading Bozio analyzes how the play uses the supernatural to reimagine ‘what it means to exist within a place’.<sup>19</sup> Through the ‘intersection of physical and spiritual geographies’ in the world of the play, Bozio posits that Marlowe’s work invites the audience, alongside the eponymous Faustus, to consider the ‘problem of grasping one’s place within a sacred cosmology’.<sup>20</sup> Bozio’s analysis of *Doctor Faustus* draws out the early modern desire to confine or contain the more occult, devilish aspects of their spiritual life to specific, tangible places, and the difficulty of neatly doing so. This desire is something that readily emerges when analyzing early modern English witch texts through a spatial lens too — from Mother Sawyer’s entrance on stage in *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) that immediately identifies her as trespassing on private land, refusing to stay within the bounds of her place, to the blasted heath in which the weird sisters of *Macbeth* (ca 1606) appear and then vanish, seemingly defying physical attachment to place altogether. The essays in this collection explore this idea of problematic spatial containment of the supernatural in fascinating detail in different ways — from the porous textual

boundaries of margin and body text to the infiltration of rural notions of witchcraft into the 'civilized' city bounds.

Early modern scholars have also utilized to great effect theories and approaches from the fields of distributed and embodied cognition from the cognitive sciences in order to better understand the relationship between subject and space in the period. An early collection of essays that explored these ideas was *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, edited by Mary Floyd Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. Their introduction to the collection discusses the 'transactions' that occur between early modern subject and external environment, and the way these transactions can be negotiated to shape an emerging subjectivity.<sup>21</sup> They postulate a 'dispersion or distribution' model for understanding the connection between subject and environment in which:

emotion and thought are fundamentally *intersubjective*, with both bodies and environment registering their effects in ways that stretch dualism to its limits. In such a landscape, not only is subjectivity distributed across bodies and environment, but the environment itself can also be seen as exercising the kind of agency usually limited to the subject.<sup>22</sup>

The 'dispersion or distribution' model postulated by Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan allows us to see early modern identity as intimately related to space and place, and, again, to usefully translate this model to studies of early modern witches and witch texts.

Within this collection is an essay by John Sutton who, along with Evelyn Tribble and others, has written extensively in recent years on the application of theories of distributed cognition to understandings of early modern landscapes, spaces, and places.<sup>23</sup> In his essay Sutton writes of 'cognitive environments' and the complex interactions between physical infrastructure, material objects, embodied subject, and mind in the understanding of subjectivity and also in the ways people undertook tasks in different spaces.<sup>24</sup> Sutton argues that during the early modern period, when theories of the porous humoral body were still in circulation, that these 'multiple channels by which brain, body, and world interact and dynamically couple ... were unusually open, at an unusually high bandwidth'.<sup>25</sup> The understanding of early modern space and subjectivity as inherently connected and mutually influential is extremely fruitful when brought to a consideration of early modern witches and their often disruptive relationship to the spaces with which they are associated — in particular agrarian spaces and the cognitively rich environment of the home. Tribble's fascinating work on distributed cognition in

the Globe and other theatrical spaces could usefully connect such discussions of space to studies on early modern witch plays and their performances.<sup>26</sup>

Witchcraft remains a popular topic of study within the field of early modern English literature and history. James Sharpe's observation in his 2001 book *Witchcraft in Early Modern England* that 'witchcraft and witch-hunting in early modern Europe are among the most written about, yet elusive, of historical topics' still rings true for the readership of the book's second edition in 2020, and, indeed, today.<sup>27</sup> Early modern witchcraft appears frequently in popular literature and history, too. Recent years have also seen a swathe of fiction on the topic of witches (many focused on early modern witches and witchcraft) that has led to a proclamation by *The Guardian* in January 2023, that this year will be the 'high point in a growing "witch lit" trend'.<sup>28</sup> The role of space and place as critical concepts, and the influence of the critical body of work on space and place outlined above, however, is not as present in the field of early modern witchcraft studies as it is elsewhere in studies of the period. Despite this lacuna, studies of early modern witchcraft clearly attend to matters of place in the frequent distinctions made between witchcraft and witch trials in different countries, regions, and localities.

The importance of geographic location — both local and national — and the nuances this brings, were foundational to early modern witchcraft texts as well as to the critical legacy they spawned. The 'true crime' pamphlets popular at the time captured numerous witch trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and their title pages frequently highlighted the geographic location of these witches and the trials that ensued.<sup>29</sup> Some of the plays that drew on these real life trials would make their location immediately visible in the title too, two notable examples being *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) and *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634).<sup>30</sup> As Lucy Munro notes in her introduction to the 2017 Arden edition of *The Witch of Edmonton*, Edmonton 'was then a small town in Middlesex, not far from the City of London' and the play 'draws much of its power from the very ordinariness of its contexts ... witchcraft and violence in Edmonton spring out of the social pressures of everyday life in a small town'.<sup>31</sup> To contemporary pamphleteers and playwrights, and to their editors who followed, the geographic location of the witchcraft being portrayed had a clear bearing on its social impact, meaning, and manifestation. This attention to geographic location is visible, in varying ways, in much critical material on witchcraft of recent years.

A cursory search for texts attending to early modern witches or witchcraft on any academic database will immediately demonstrate the prevalence of geographically focused studies. An early example of this is Montague Summer's 1927 monograph *The Geography of Witchcraft*.<sup>32</sup> This comprehensive, if somewhat



dated, book gives a history of witchcraft in various European and American countries from ancient Greece and Rome to colonial New England. Whilst attentive to geographical differences (and similarities) in witchcraft, Summers does not consider physical or ideological spaces as actively contributing to understandings or performances of witchcraft, nor does he include many literary texts in his analyses. Another foundational study in its attentiveness to local variations in witchcraft accusations, trials, and practices was Alan MacFarlane's 1970 *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*.<sup>33</sup> This book transformed the field through its attention to local, archival sources and its central tenet that local social relations had a bearing on how witchcraft was, and should be, understood. This kind of localized study is now the norm, as alluded to above, but MacFarlane's work did much for asserting the role place plays in early modern witchcraft, even without utilizing the critical conceptions of space and place that literary or cultural geography does. A collection that bears the legacy of this geographical focus is 2013's *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, which contains thirty-two chapters, seventeen of which are focused on a specific geographic region or location.<sup>34</sup> The section on 'Themes of Witchcraft Research', however, relegates geography to a subtitle of one chapter, and the focus of that chapter remains on regional variation (in relation to economics). National and regional differences in accusations, trials, descriptions, and identities of witches are all exceedingly important and have created a wealth of information that studies can now build on by using some of the tools outlined above from the fields of cultural and literary geographies. These tools will facilitate research that offers new insights into how the landscapes, spaces, and places of different geographic locations actively shaped understandings and representations of witches and witchcraft.

Some work already attends to specific landscapes, spaces, and places and their relationship to early modern witchcraft. Diane Purkiss's seminal 1996 study *The Witch in History* offers insightful approaches to the relationships between literary and non-literary texts and also devotes a whole chapter to considering the connections between the witch and domestic space — primarily through reading the witch as a disrupter or 'threat to the domestic sphere'.<sup>35</sup> Amanda Flather's *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* briefly mentions, in a chapter on social space, the importance of homes' boundaries as sites of negotiation, and observes that women perceived to be 'overly invasive, spatially and socially, were vulnerable to accusation of witchcraft'.<sup>36</sup> Purkiss also devotes an entire section to 'Witches on Stage', offering insightful readings of the (dis)connect between theatrical representations, pamphlets, and popular beliefs about witchcraft. What Purkiss does



not do is consider the material or ideological space of the theatre or the spaces represented in early modern drama — work that could perhaps be facilitated through the conceptual frameworks of scholars like Tribble and Sutton. Once again, the groundwork exists for arguments that consider what the space of the theatre meant to early modern understandings of witches and witchcraft, and indeed, what the relationship between theatrical space, staged space(s), and witchcraft was in the period.

One extended study that does focus on the spatiality of the supernatural in relation to early modern drama and theatrical space is Kristen Poole's 2011 *Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England*.<sup>37</sup> Poole's text offers an invaluable study of the embodied nature of space and identity in relation to the supernatural and the role interaction between people and spaces plays in the understanding of both. Poole also gives attention to the theatre as a space within which early modern people could explore shifting ideas about the supernatural and its spatial realization. Despite not focusing specifically on witches or witchcraft in detail, Poole's study offers a framework for thinking through the spatial exploration of witchcraft on stage and how early modern drama attends to the spatial dynamics of witchcraft and other supernatural beliefs. Emerging work on 'witch bottles', such as Ceri Houlbrook and Julia Philips' 2023 "For All of Your Protection Needs": Tracing the "Witch Bottle" from the Early Modern Period to TikTok', Annie Thwaite's 2021 'The "Urinary Experiment": Material Evidence of Magical Healing in Early Modern England', and Ronald Hutton's 2016 edited collection *Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain: A Feeling for Magic* also present fascinating insights into the materiality of early modern witchcraft and the role physical objects and markings play in the ideologically loaded spaces of early modern witchcraft<sup>38</sup> — work that could productively be put into dialogue with that of scholars drawing from the fields of embodied and distributed cognition above, and with work such as Poole's that considers the embodied materiality of the supernatural in theatrical spaces.

The critical bodies of work outlined above are some of the areas that the three essays in this Issues in Review begin to pull together. All these essays began life as papers at a 2022 Shakespeare Association of America (SAA) seminar also titled *Witches in Space*. This intentionally playful title at once suggested the direction of the seminar whilst simultaneously encouraging a dislocation of the witch from the usual spaces and places with which they might be associated, thus prompting a consideration of how and why witches are connected to certain locations. The conversation that emerged brought together research from witchcraft studies, literary and performance studies, cultural geography, and beyond, and began to

consider how these areas of research could open new avenues of thought when brought together to query the relationship between space, place, and witchcraft in the early modern period. These papers, and the essays they have evolved into, expand our understanding of what and who an early modern witch could be, and equally, expand our understanding of the role different spaces and places played in the representation, performance, and ideological construction of early modern witchcraft.

Emily George's essay on the 'intertextual ecologies of early modern crime narratives' brings a fresh approach to the relationship between *The Witch of Edmonton* and its source material, Henry Goodcole's *The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer*.<sup>39</sup> Delving into the spatiality of text on the page and characters on the stage, this essay argues that 'considering material elements such as paratexts and typographic markings, not just plots, as part of an intertextual ecology of early modern crime narratives ... reframes the relationship between crime pamphlets and crime plays as one of mutual, reciprocal adaptation'.<sup>40</sup> In her attentiveness to the space of the page in creating at once distinct and yet overlapping voices who struggle to maintain authority over Sawyer's narrative and risk, ultimately conceding this power to Sawyer herself, George draws a compelling parallel to *The Witch of Edmonton*'s struggle to contain the malevolent power of the dog whose uncanny mobility spreads throughout the play/stage and the power Sawyer holds in lending authority to the play's narrative. In both instances, George's readings of the texts demonstrate the inescapable relationship between margin and centre and how the blurred boundary between the two reveals the opacity and 'unknowable' elements at the heart of Sawyer's story.

Andrew Loeb's essay on *The Roaring Girl* considers the 'migration of the language of witchcraft from the rural environs in which we typically find it to the urban space of London'.<sup>41</sup> Exploring how characters use the language and understanding of witchcraft to try to ostracize the unruly Moll Cutpurse from her embedded position in the cityscape of London, Loeb shows how Moll's intricate knowledge of the city, its people, and its inner workings allow her to ideologically and geographically outmanoeuvre those trying to condemn her. Throughout his essay Loeb reveals how the language of witchcraft functions uniquely in different spaces, making a powerful argument for the inherent spatiality of early modern witchcraft.

Sharon Vogel Kubik's insightful and novel reading of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* sheds new light on the play and the role that witch discourses could play in marginalizing subjects and social groups not immediately associated with the practice of witchcraft.<sup>42</sup> Positioning Falstaff's witch disguise as 'the shorthand of

local superstition',<sup>43</sup> Vogel Kubik argues that this signifier allows Mistress Page and Mistress Ford to generate a response amongst local residents that precipitates community-driven justice not forthcoming through official legal channels. Identifying that Falstaff's behaviour appears problematically transgressive only once he is clothed in his witch costume, Vogel Kubik demonstrates the role material signifiers of witchcraft play in the marginalization of people within local communities. What Vogel Kubik also highlights is the important role cross-dressing plays in the exposure of Falstaff's transgressive behaviour, an interesting intersection with the notorious cross-dressing of Moll in *The Roaring Girl*, as explored in Loeb's essay.

All the essays in this section are also attentive to the flow of people, objects, and ideas between different spaces and places, aligning very much with Julie Sanders's 'flow theory' mentioned above. With this flow comes an inevitable scrutiny and questioning of the thresholds and boundaries that separate spaces and places. Notably, this flow often blurs the physical and ideological thresholds designed to delineate and define different spaces and identities, including, in these essays, gendered identities. Moll's movement troubles her gendered identity in *The Roaring Girl*, and this blurring of binary gender is mirrored and reinforced by her 'cross-dressing'. Similarly, in George's essay the literal and figurative movement of Goodcole in his pamphlet (and the Dog in *The Witch of Edmonton*) trouble any definitive knowledge of Elizabeth Sawyer and her identity as a witch while also upsetting the gendered, hierarchical demarcation of Goodcole and Sawyer. This direct and indirect engagement with thresholds chimes with existing studies on the importance of thresholds and boundaries in early modern England in the construction of gendered hierarchical identities as well as in placing physical limitations on people's (especially women's) movement.<sup>44</sup> All these essays bring into sharp focus the performance of different gendered identities, both witch and non-witch, across social, domestic, and theatrical space in and place under scrutiny the limitations of these performances.

In a host of different ways these essays consider how space is crucial to understanding the function of early modern witchcraft and its representation on stage. From the space of the page to the cityscape of London to the material signifiers of witchcraft in the cognitive landscape of a local community, witchcraft and its literary manifestations were uniquely shaped by the spaces they were associated with and connected to. These essays, along with the rich body of existing work outlined above, offer a foundation for further study into how early modern witchcraft was shaped by the spaces and places with which it came into contact and how in turn those spaces and places were shaped by their association with witchcraft.

Attentiveness to the spatiality of early modern witchcraft texts is essential to better understanding their function in early modern society, and it is crucial to better understanding the spatial legacies and ideologies we have inherited from them. This Issues in Review gives an exciting glimpse into the work that lies ahead in the study of the literary geographies of early modern witchcraft.

## Notes

---

I would like to thank Meg Pearson for her guidance, support, and enthusiasm when *Witches in Space* first took shape as a seminar at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference in April 2022.

- 1 Malcolm Gaskill, (@malcolmgaskill), 'Just watched Robert Eggers's *The Witch* for the umpteenth time, and feeling more impressed than ever by how skillfully he makes the idea of witchcraft seem plausible, likely even, as god- and devil-fearing 17C folk are gradually overwhelmed by anxiety, conflict and domestic chaos', Twitter, 26 April 2023, 21:49, <https://twitter.com/malcolmgaskill/status/1651327728220504072>.
- 2 See for example Anton Bitel, 'Voices of the Undead: Robert Eggers on *The Witch*', *BritishFilm Institute*, 11 July 2016, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/interviews/robert-eggers-witch> and Chris O'Falt, 'How Robert Eggers Used Real Historical Accounts to Create His Horror Sensation *The Witch*', *IndieWire*, 19 February 2016, <http://www.indiewire.com/2016/02/how-robert-eggers-used-real-historical-accounts-to-create-his-horror-sensation-the-witch-67882/>.
- 3 Lauren Duca, 'How Robert Eggers Wove the Nightmares of *The Witch* Out of Historical Documents', *The Vulture*, 18 February 2016, <https://www.vulture.com/2016/02/how-robert-eggers-researched-the-witch.html>.
- 4 At the very start of the film the father of the family about to be exiled, William, asks of his plantation community, 'what went we out into this wilderness to find?'; *The VVitch: A New England Folktale*, directed by Robert Eggers (2015).
- 5 Doreen Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts', *History Workshop Journal* 39 (1995), 182–92, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/39.1.182>.
- 6 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), 33, 39.
- 7 Amongst others, Lefebvre has influenced the work of Julie Sanders and Andrew Bozio. See for example Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620–1650* (Cambridge, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511762260>, and Andrew Bozio, *Thinking Through Place on the Early Modern English Stage* (Oxford, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198846567.001.0001>.

- 8 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (London, 1979), 6.
- 9 Ibid, 6.
- 10 Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Chichester, 2015), 7.
- 11 Ibid, 13.
- 12 Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, 1994), 1, 5.
- 13 Ibid, 4.
- 14 Literary geography has been steadily emerging as a transhistorical field of study over recent years, and the work of early modern literary scholars has both contributed to and drawn from this field. Sheila Hones's recent book for Routledge's *The New Critical Idiom* series offers a useful theoretical introduction to the field of literary geography; see Sheila Hones, *Literary Geography* (London, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315778273>. Hones also acts as an editor for the journal *Literary Geographies*.
- 15 Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama*, 9.
- 16 Ibid, 9, 16.
- 17 Ibid, 12.
- 18 Gavin Hollis, *The Absence of America: The London Stage, 1576–1642* (Oxford, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198734321.001.0001>.
- 19 Bozio, *Thinking Through Place*, 2.
- 20 Ibid, 2, 1.
- 21 Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr, 'Introduction: Inhabiting the Body, Inhabiting the World', in *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*, ed. Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr (Basingstoke, 2007), 1–13, 3, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230593022\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230593022_1).
- 22 Ibid, 6. Italics in original.
- 23 See for example David McInnis, *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137035363>; Laurie Johnson, John Sutton, and Evelyn Tribble, eds, *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre: The Early Modern Body-Mind* (London, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203796160>; Evelyn Tribble, "The Chain of Memory": Distributed Cognition in Early Modern England', *Scan Journal* 2.2 (2005), [http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal\\_id=53](http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=53); and Evelyn Tribble, 'Distributing Cognition in the Globe', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56.2 (2005), 135–55, <https://doi.org/10.1353/shq.2005.0065>.
- 24 John Sutton, 'Spongy Brains and Material Memories', in *Environment and Embodiment*, ed. Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan, Jr, 14–34, 28, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230593022\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230593022_2).
- 25 Ibid, 15.

- 26 Tribble, 'Distributing Cognition in the Globe'.
- 27 James Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Early Modern England*, 2nd edn (London, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429300318>.
- 28 Vanessa Thorpe, 'Spellbound: Why "Witch-Lit" is the Hottest New Genre on Our Bookshelves', *The Guardian*, 8 January 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/jan/08/witch-lit-hottest-new-genre-books>.
- 29 See for example Henry Goodcole, *The Wonderful Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer, a Witch, late of Edmonton* (London, 1621; STC: 12014); Thomas Potts, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster* (London, 1612; STC: 20138); *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (London, 1612; STC: 3907); and *A Detection of Damnable Driftes, Practized by Three Witches Arraigned at Chelmsforde in Essex* (London, 1579; STC: 5115).
- 30 William Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton* (London, 1658; Wing R2097); Thomas Heywood, *The Late Lancashire Witches* (London, 1634; STC: 13373). There are also several lost plays that also tie their witch to a specific geographic location such as *The Witch of Islington* (ca 1597) and *The White Witch of Westminster*. For more details see *Lost Plays Database*, ed. Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, Matthew Steggle, and Misha Teramura, <https://lostplays.folger.edu>.
- 31 Lucy Munro, 'Introduction', in Thomas Dekker, John Ford, and William Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton*, ed. Lucy Munro (London, 2017), 1–104, 1, 2.
- 32 Montague Summers, *The Geography of Witchcraft* (1927; London, 1996), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315822334>.
- 33 This book is available in a second edition with additions by James Sharpe; see Alan MacFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1999), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203063668>.
- 34 Brian P. Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxford-hb/9780199578160.001.0001>.
- 35 Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London, 1996), 96.
- 36 Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (London, 2007), 106.
- 37 Kristen Poole, *Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511977299>.
- 38 Ceri Houlbrook and Julia Phillips. "For All of Your Protection Needs": Tracing the "Witch Bottle" from the Early Modern Period to TikTok', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 18.1 (2023), 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.2023.a906600>; Annie Thwaite, 'The "Urinary Experiment": Material Evidence of Magical Healing in Early Modern England', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 16.1 (2021), 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.2021.a906600>.

- [doi.org/10.1353/mrw.2021.0014](https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.2021.0014); and Ronald Hutton, ed., *Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain* (Basingstoke, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1057/97811374444820>.
- 39 Emily George, 'The Devil at the Edge of this Book: Intertextual Ecologies of Early Modern Crime Narratives', *Early Theatre* 26.2 (2023), 147–63, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.26.2.5528>.
- 40 Ibid, 150.
- 41 Andrew Loeb, "'Can you play that?': Moll's Urban Witchcraft in *The Roaring Girl*", *Early Theatre* 26.2 (2023), 165–78, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.26.2.5516>
- 42 Sharon Vogel, "'Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel': Falstaff as Male Witch in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*", *Early Theatre* 26.2 (2023), 179–90, <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.26.2.526>.
- 43 Ibid, 180.
- 44 See, for example Robert W. Daniel and Iman Sheeha, eds, 'Special Issue 29: Door-Bolts, Thresholds, and Peep-Holes: Liminality and Domestic Spaces in Early Modern England', *Early Modern Literary Studies* (2020), 29.1, <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/issue/view/23#>, and Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Women on the Threshold', *Shakespeare Studies* 25 (1997), 50–8.



