

strategies of transformation his books might offer. William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), on the other hand, makes visible the violence and ethical cost associated with even properly done skimming.

Eggert details the contortions seventeenth-century anatomists underwent to avoid growing evidence of women's role in reproduction in the fourth chapter. Anatomists found a pattern for avoidance in the work of alchemists, as both groups dreamt of ways to purify and transform matter. She uses Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596) and Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598) to consider how this avoidance came under critique. For Eggert, Spenser's male characters offer readings of reproduction and women's bodies that privilege nonsense, fantasy, or blindness. When they do, the women of the epic suffer. In Shakespeare's play, male-controlled reproduction "falls flat, its products sometimes distasteful but always untenable" (202). And yet, for Shakespeare's characters, as for seventeenth-century alchemists and anatomists, dreams finally prove more compelling than the world as it is.

In her final chapter, Eggert considers disknowledge in a utopic vein. Alchemy and literature eventually solve the crisis of late-humanism by allowing us to imagine worlds far more satisfying than those of the present (208). To chart this movement, Eggert considers Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1600–1), Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610), and Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666), three works that she presents in a line from failure to possibility. While Hamlet indulges in destructive forms of disknowledge, ignoring anything or anyone that does not fit his dream of humanistic synchronism, Jonson's characters demonstrate the delight they take in what they know to be false. In Cavendish, Eggert sees the operations of disknowledge as exactly those that make fiction possible and necessary. She argues that for Cavendish everything, from particles to people, can be imagined as creating its own story and its own theory of the way things work. This is disknowledge as world making—the conscious turn away from what is, to what is not, but might be.

Cavendish also serves to bring home one of the most powerful and flexible ideas of Eggert's book—namely that what we choose *not* to know is just as important as what we choose *to* know. Eggert's book should prove invaluable to scholars interested in how the strategies brought to bear on intractable epistemological problems translate into both intellectual stasis and change. Her work presents a fascinating look at seventeenth-century intellectual struggles and insight into how we might move beyond our own contemporary intellectual impasses.

Miranda Wilson, University of Delaware

PETER ELMER. *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 369. \$110 (cloth).
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Peter Elmer's painstakingly researched study of demonological beliefs and witchcraft trials in England, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England*, is a tour de force. Digging up an impressive array of archival and biographical information on accused, accusers, judges, preachers, and civic leaders on dozens of local cases over a century and a half, Elmer proves that the ebb and flow of trials and demonological publications in England correlated to the level of religious and political conflict on both the national and local scene. He traces his argument persuasively through the Elizabethan and Jacobean reign, 1560–1625 (chapter 2); the age of rebellion, 1625–49 (chapter 3); the Interregnum, 1649–60 (chapter 4); the Restoration, 1660–88 (chapters 5 and 6); and the Glorious Revolution and Age of Party from c. 1688 to the early decades of the eighteenth century (chapter 7). The result is an inspired

reconceptualization of the factors behind witchcraft belief, accusations, trials, and their suppression.

Relying on Stuart Clark's theory of inversion in which the devil, God's opposite, provided a means to contrast diabolical disorder with the "decorum of divine right monarchy" (5), Elmer shows how government officials invoked the threat of witchcraft only in crisis, while during periods of relative stability they ignored this threat, not wishing to cast doubt on their legitimacy. Similarly, those who inspired fear of witchcraft during periods of stability tended to be religious nonconformists on the outside of power. Witch-hunting therefore arose primarily in communities disturbed by religious conflict.

During Elizabeth's ecclesiastical reform, Catholicism was associated with magic, while solidarity for the new Protestant regime was promoted through stories of Protestant ministers delivering the diabolically possessed. Then, as Protestants turned to infighting, witch beliefs became "potentially divisive" (18), with Puritans eagerly promoting the prosecution of witches, while those who sought conformity and accommodation became increasingly skeptical, although few went as far as Reginald Scot's critique of witch beliefs, *The Discoverie of Witches* of 1584. Disputing recent suggestions that Scot was affiliated with the spiritualist group the Family of Love, Elmer reveals that Scot had been regarded as a part of the local Puritan community until 1583 or 1584, when he joined the side of the new archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift. For Elmer, Scot objected to witch-hunting because it, like the Puritans, was causing communal unrest, hence his were not "the sentiments of an extreme religious radical and Nicodemite" (23). Elmer may be correct in this, but terms such as "extreme religious radical" obscure the fact that spiritualists could also be critical of sectarianism, since for them true religion was an inward matter and disputes over dogma, ceremony, or confessional identity needless. While Scot's treatise did not immediately increase skepticism, a variety of factors, including King James I's suppression of non-treason-related witchcraft accusations, led to a waning of witch-hunting in England by 1625.

As Parliamentarians and Puritans resisted Charles I's centralizing efforts they utilized the rhetoric of witchcraft to stigmatize royalists as religious apostates, just as royalists associated religious extremism with rebellion and witchcraft. In this chiliastic atmosphere Puritans sought to craft a godly society purged of evil, and this lay behind Matthew Hopkin's infamous witch panics of East Anglia (1645–47). East Anglians had been particularly affected by the demonizing rhetoric and politicization of witchcraft, and because they had not suffered the devastation of military campaigns, their magistrates were also able to focus on godly purgation. Hopkins thus played the role of an exorcist seeking to heal the body politic and legitimate the new dispensation. Elmer has discovered that the route of his trials followed the path of the Puritan iconoclasts, and both battled royal apostates and new sectarians who like witches had renounced their original baptism. The crisis of the Civil War, with its surge of new religious movements, was the first stage in the creation of a pluralistic state which ultimately was inimical to traditional notions of witchcraft. Even so, cases of witchcraft continued to preoccupy the courts, but the crime became subsumed in the wider religious and political conflicts, while the language of demonology continued to inform polemical debate.

During and after the Interregnum, religious nonconformists encouraged witch-hunting to legitimate their claims to authority in towns paralyzed by religious conflict. Even after the Restoration, it was the nonconformists who encouraged belief in witchcraft to help preserve their providential world view, and in this they were joined by some of the Anglican latitudinarians. Yet the number of trials declined as royal judges became reluctant to encourage witchcraft accusations as they had redefined witchcraft as a metaphorical crime against the state.

As the idea and crime of witchcraft was politicized, medical, legal, and scientific discourse was adapted, too. Nonconformist "spiritual physicians" proved more likely to adopt a pluralist approach to the treatment of melancholics that included diagnosis of bewitchment and possession, while High Church colleagues were more likely to turn to natural explanations and to diagnose religious nonconformists as suffering from mental illness. Witchcraft became a

rhetorical tool in the party conflict between Tories and Whigs, yet the most deep-seated support for its reality remained within dissenting circles, while Whigs and Anglicans gravitated towards indifference. As each political crisis eroded faith in witchcraft, it was ignored or recast it as something relevant only in faraway locales.

Elmer's innovative study affirms that both local and national developments, especially religious and political conflicts, need to be incorporated in our analysis of witch-hunting. Its decline was similarly complex, and it was not tied simply to the emergence of religious pluralism, as many proponents of religious accommodation actually promoted witch-hunting as a means of unifying a community. How this compares to other regions remains to be seen; the Dutch Republic was, like England, riven by periodic religious and political divisions, yet its polemical literature generally lacks demonizing rhetoric. We therefore need to see how Elmer's inclusive approach could apply to witch-hunting and religious conflict elsewhere.

Elmer's *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England* is an outstanding blend of synthesis and archival research that is a must read for all toiling in the early modern field, and it will undoubtedly provoke a broader recasting of the place of witchcraft in European history.

Gary K. Waite, University of New Brunswick

CHRIS GIVEN-WILSON. *Henry IV*. The Yale English Monarchs Series. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. Pp. xiv, 590. \$45.00 (cloth).
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With the appearance of Chris Given-Wilson's *Henry IV*, the English Monarchs series, published by Yale since 1997, now has titles for every crowned English king from the Conquest to the Reformation, with the sole exception of Henry III (1216–72). Given-Wilson's book fills the chronological gap between Nigel Saul's *Richard II* (1997) and Christopher Allmand's *Henry V* (1992), two kings who, historically, have overshadowed the subject of the book under review here. The English Monarchs series seeks to publish authoritative biographies by accomplished senior academics; Given-Wilson, emeritus professor at the University of St. Andrews and author of numerous works, is certainly qualified on that front. *Henry IV* stands as the culmination of a long and successful career and represents a detailed and illuminating investigation of its subject.

Given-Wilson wisely begins his book with a short history of the vast Lancastrian patrimony in the north of England, for that is cause of so much that was to follow. By the late fourteenth century, it was the closest thing that England had to an autonomous, continental-style duchy—indeed, Henry of Grosmont, earl of Lancaster, became England's second-ever duke in 1351, and he was granted palatine powers for Lancashire. But Richard II (r. 1377–99) viewed the existence of the duchy, and the affinity that Grosmont's heir John of Gaunt assiduously cultivated, as a major impediment to his own kingship. So when Gaunt died in 1399, the temptation was too great: contrary to his promises, Richard seized the Lancastrian estates, thereby dispossessing Gaunt's heir, his son Henry Bolingbroke.

This move, and Richard's subsequent visit to Ireland, turned out to be tactical errors. Henry, whom Richard had exiled in 1398, returned in order to claim what was rightfully his—or so he said—and immediately reaped the benefit of the Lancastrian affinity, which rose up in favor of its new (and in its view, rightful) lord. A preference cascade ensued, with Henry collecting more and more support as he traveled through England; Richard returned from Ireland but was cornered, tricked into surrendering, and then forced to relinquish the throne to Henry, who was crowned King Henry IV on October 13, 1399. Not that the Lancastrians put it that way: Henry was very eager to publicize that Richard had *voluntarily* resigned, although after the failure of the Epiphany Rising of 1400, the former king was done away with