

‘A Great or Notorious Liar’: Katherine Harrison and her Neighbours, Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1668 – 1670

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Abstract: *Katherine Harrison could not have personally known anyone as feared and hated in their own home town as she was in Wethersfield. This article aims to explain how and why this was so. Although documentation is scarce for many witch trials, there are some for which much crucial information has survived, and we can reconstruct reasonably detailed accounts of what went on. The trial of Katherine Harrison of Wethersfield, Connecticut, at the end of the 1660s is one such case. An array of factors coalesced at the right time in Wethersfield for Katherine to be accused. Her self-proclaimed magical abilities, her socio-economic background, and most of all, the inter-personal and legal conflicts that she sustained with her neighbours all combined to propel this woman into a very public discussion about witchcraft in 1668-1670. The trial of Katherine Harrison was a vital moment in the development of the legal and theological responses to witchcraft in colonial New England. The outcome was the result of a lengthy process jointly negotiated between legal and religious authorities. This was the earliest documented case in which New England magistrates trying witchcraft sought and received explicit instruction from Puritan ministers on the validity of spectral evidence and the interface between folk magic and witchcraft – implications that still resonated at the more recognised Salem witch trials almost twenty-five years later. The case also reveals the social dynamics that caused much ambiguity and confusion in this early modern village about an acceptable use of the occult. Finally, it is a striking example of an early modern accused witch whose circumstances coincided with many of the culpable aspects of the witch stereotype – female, widowed, financially ambiguous, socially arbitrary, and self-assured to the point of combative – who was not convicted, but who survived, due in no small part to a clergy and magistrate that intervened to effectively save her life.*

The Hartford Witch Hunt and an Unusual Woman

Massachusetts is often regarded as the epicentre of witch trials in early American history. But Connecticut too yielded more than its fair share of accused witches.



Excluding Salem, Connecticut (and the town of Hartford in particular) produced more witch trials than anywhere else in the English colonies.¹ Like Salem and other towns in Massachusetts, Hartford was established early in the colony's life and suffered much factional infighting and discontent, particularly during the 1650s. The culmination came at the end of the decade, in what was to be known as the 'Hartford controversy'.² The exact origins of the Hartford controversy are still difficult to ascertain but were of a religious nature, and would later in 1662 contribute to the local discussion of the Halfway Covenant.³ A flurry of legal battles, petitions and counter petitions tore whole towns apart, with large groups of people following ministers in moving away from their homes *en masse* for new settlements out in the wilderness. Such was the depth of feeling involved. At the same time that the Hartford controversy reached its crescendo, an intense witchcraft epidemic broke out, resulting in a major witch-hunt in Hartford in 1661-1663.⁴

Ten years prior, Katherine Harrison appears in the documentary record for the first time, as the wife of John Harrison, and we can reconstruct only very little of her life before this.⁵ She did not travel directly from England to Wethersfield, but spent roughly two years, 1651 to 1653, in Hartford.⁶ Here, she lived and worked as a servant for prominent Hartford resident, the merchant Captain John Cullick.

When Katherine arrived in Wethersfield, some time in May 1653, her life took on a more regular pattern. She married a local man, and bore three daughters in rapid succession.⁷ It is difficult to glean firm information from the available records about Katherine's extended family. She had ambiguous ties to one prominent family of early Connecticut settlers, the Gilberts, and named John, Jonathan and Josiah

Gilbert as her cousins. Later, in Katherine's witch trial, they vehemently denied any relationship.⁸

John Harrison died in August 1667, leaving his widow and their daughters a large estate of over nine hundred pounds.⁹ It has been argued that Katherine's sudden windfall gain was instrumental in the collapse of her social standing. John Harrison had made no major mark on public life in Wethersfield, held no respectable offices apart from minor roles such as town crier, fence viewer, surveyor, and constable, and had married a woman of equally common background.¹⁰ Despite this, John – and by implication, Katherine – had amassed a small fortune.

Hostility between Katherine and her neighbours grew at a startling rate following the death of her husband. The focal points of her legal battles were her trials as a witch in 1668 and 1669, but there were also three separate suits brought against Katherine during the autumn of 1668. Relations between Katherine and her neighbours had clearly been on the wane long before she was accused of witchcraft. All three non-witchcraft lawsuits concerned matters of property, and all three decisions (decided by a jury made up of fellow Wethersfield residents) went against Katherine.¹¹ During this time, as Katherine was coming into her own as a woman of property, unlike many widows in seventeenth-century New England, she did not remarry.¹²

Wethersfield's Cunning Woman

Katherine's unusual position as a 'woman alone', was made more so by another social anomaly: her reputation as a 'cunning woman'.¹³ Lay folk in the New England colonies during the seventeenth century had a wide array of folk magical

experiments to call on in times of need. Folk magic involved the use of household materials and everyday objects in ritualised techniques believed to induce supernatural forces to aid the user: 'unseen' forces or properties for physical, observable effects. As the name suggests, the utility and ubiquity of folk magic meant that anyone could engage in the techniques: no particular scholarly knowledge of the occult was necessary. Those who had a reputation for practicing folk magic, especially when self-generated, were referred to as 'cunning folk'. A cunning man or cunning woman is perhaps best thought of as an expert occult problem solver, whose abilities were imbued with symbolic significance and cultural meaning, but whose patronage was also a practical, functional response to physical and emotional crisis.

References to Katherine Harrison's healing abilities, and to her reputation for it, emerge repeatedly in her witchcraft trial. Goodwife Johnson described how, when her husband Jacob was sick, 'Goodwife Harrison did help him with diet, drink and plasters', as much a reference to non-magical folk remedies, as to something occult.¹⁴ John Harrison had also had an interest in medicine; among the considerable property that he left to Katherine and their daughters was a full cupboard of apothecary's drugs.¹⁵ Another anecdote relayed during the trial was told by a neighbour, Joan Francis. She had a sick child, and one night saw what she thought was Katherine appearing outside her house. Francis apparently said out loud, 'the Lord bless me and my child, here is Goody Harrison.'¹⁶ Francis's initial relief suggests that Katherine was a welcome presence. Yet the ritual then performed by the person Joan assumed to be Katherine was strange, and seemed to upset Francis and her husband. When the child continued to be sick, had fits, and

finally died, Francis had no doubt who was responsible.

As well as her reputation for skill in healing, Katherine was known for another ability that did not escape the authorities' attention: divination. We have tantalising clues about the practices she conducted in administering her occult services. William Warren testified that Katherine often bragged about her abilities as a fortune-teller, and how she learned them from famed English astrologer, William Lilly (1602-1681). Warren also said that Katherine read his fortune 'and she looked on my hands'.¹⁷ At least three other witnesses who worked with Katherine at Captain Cullick's house mention Katherine's alleged familiarity with Lilly in their testimony. One deponent, fifty-year-old Thomas Waples, testified in late October 1669 that she often said that 'she had read Mr Lilly's book in England'.¹⁸

William Lilly was a prominent English astrologer, and Katherine's knowledge of him would have lent her credibility. There is even a slim possibility that Katherine knew the man personally in England.¹⁹ Neither Warren nor the other deponents were specific enough to name which book of Lilly's Katherine might have read, but some inferences are possible. In his prolific career Lilly published many books, which included *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris*, a series of astrological predictions for each respective year; *Supernatural Sights and Apparitions seen in London, Interpreted with a Mathematicall Discourse* (1644); *Monarchy or no Monarchy in England* (1651); the notorious *Astrological Judgments for the year 1666* in which Lilly predicts a 'great fire' in London (for which he was later blamed); and an introduction to Latin grammar. However, Lilly wrote the book for which he was to become best known in 1659, titled *Christian Astrology Modestly Treated of in Three Books*.²⁰ A guide to the

zodiac, it was intended to be a 'populist' work, an accessible introduction to astrology, though at around 800 pages its accessibility is questionable. When those who worked alongside Katherine heard her speak of reading 'Mr Lilly's book' in England, this could very well have been the book in question.

William Lilly was well known and well connected, in England, particularly in London. By 1647, Lilly had perhaps more astrological practitioners-in-training as students and protégés than any other astrologer.²¹ During the previous century, monarchs in England cultivated relationships with highly skilled mathematicians, astrologers and alchemists. The most famous was Dr John Dee (1527-c1608), who Elizabeth I supported strongly for many years.²² Simon Forman (1552-1611) was a well-known, (but not universally admired) medical practitioner, who was also known to cast horoscopes and dabble in necromancy.²³ Another prominent 'astrologer physician' comparable to Lilly was Richard Napier (1559-1634).²⁴ William Lilly was of a later vintage but similar calibre to all of these men. It has even been argued that he filled the vacuum for an astrological 'leading-light' for the seventeenth century left by Dee in the fifteenth.²⁵ In the years following the English Civil War, practitioners like Lilly were able to reach an unprecedented audience with the easing of censorship and the explosion in print literature on astrology. Lilly's fame was built from the almanacs he wrote and his ability as an astrologer.²⁶ Astrological almanacs themselves were considered 'high' or learned magic, very different from the 'low' or folk magic of Katherine Harrison's repute. In his deposition, William Warren described Katherine as a 'common and professed fortune teller'.²⁷

Lilly's reputation, however, was unusual because, he also offered horary services.²⁸

Horary practice was the openly divinatory kind of future-telling that was frowned upon by both other astrologers and divines, and precisely the kind of service that got Katherine Harrison into trouble. Cunning folk at the village level who learnt their trade as students of more scholarly or well-known magical practitioners were not unusual in early modern England. An example is Anne Bodenham, who claimed to have learned magic while a servant to the infamous London cunning man, John Lambe. Another man, John Walsh, claimed to learn 'physic and magic' from one Sir Robert Drayton. Two other cunning folk, William Hills, brought before the Essex (England) Quarterly Court in 1651, and Anne Kingsbury from Somerset, both claimed to be pupils of William Lilly himself.²⁹ Kingsbury claimed to learn treasure-seeking techniques from Lilly and had successfully found treasure hidden in a house in Bridgewater.³⁰ This was the same combination of divination and the perception of illegitimate wealth that so plagued Katherine Harrison. Although never accused of treasure-seeking herself, the same resentment that dogged Katherine was present for many early modern women of low socio-economic backgrounds whose neighbours saw as marrying 'beyond their station': Katherine was a former servant who became a widow with land and a fortune far greater than most of her peers (male or female). A problematic relationship with wealth was thus at the interface between her neighbours' distaste for her confrontational and arbitrary personality, and unease about her divinatory abilities. If Katherine did first learn as a cunning woman from the scholarly astrologer physician William Lilly, even if only through the man's writing, she was far from his only student.³¹

Disappointed Expectations and Deception

This then is the context in which Katherine Harrison's witch trial was conducted: she

was widowed; she had extensive wealth; she was an occult healer; she was a diviner; and when she was not herself litigious, she was brought repeatedly to court, losing each time, almost always over matters of land and property.³² At every moment of adversity, Katherine met the challenge directly and energetically. But there is another aspect of Katherine's reputation in Wethersfield that becomes the crucial issue when she is tried for witchcraft: her allegedly deceitful nature.

Deceit is the major theme that drives the decline of Katherine Harrison's public standing. Much of the testimony brought against Katherine during her witch trial concerns her personality as much as her suspected *malefic* activities. She had the reputation of being a chronic liar. Thomas Waples testified in court that Katherine 'was a noted liar'.³³ Twenty-year-old Mary Hale (no relation to the 74-year-old healer from Boston of the same name) testified that Katherine was nothing but a tool of the Devil, and that 'the Devil is a liar'.³⁴ This curious mix of diabolical fantasy and local gossip was a chief source of tension in Katherine's case – her failed reputation as a member of the town alongside her failed reputation as a skilled magical practitioner. Healers were supposed to give emotional comfort as much as physical succour in times of crisis. When a healer failed, the patient or their kin believed that they had been deceived into thinking the healer's skill was something that it was not. When Katherine's skill failed, it provoked the same reaction.

The deterioration of Katherine's relationship with her neighbours shows vividly how otherwise benevolent practices could go wrong. Healing could lead to harming; fortune-telling could lead to gossip and social vulnerability. In seventeenth-century New England, so bereft of privacy and personal space, those claiming to have the

ability to reveal the future walked a dangerous path between revealing and influencing future events.³⁵ When the results were not as desired, embittered clients altered their perspective of the practitioner.

The Trial Of Katherine Harrison

When Katherine was finally brought to trial for witchcraft in 1668, it probably did not come as much of a surprise to her. Evidently she had a reputation for substandard magical skill. Her clients (themselves lay folk) went to cunning folk for a quick solution, and more importantly, a solution that was more immediately measurable than mere prayer. Katherine's results were poor. These failures, when combined with a distinctly threatening, deceptive, and above all unpredictable personality, and a series of thoroughly unpleasant experiences for her neighbours, all contributed to Katherine being accused of witchcraft. The disjointed affair of her trial lasted two full years. The legal machinations surrounding her witchcraft trial not only affected Katherine's fate, they signalled legal difficulties in the trying of witchcraft over the next three decades.

The original accusation has not survived, but it is likely that she was first accused around April 1668. The first depositions were taken in May and June of 1668, so we can put the beginning of official proceedings then.³⁶ Evidence continued to be gathered until September-October 1668 when Katherine was indicted for the first time and her trial began. Katherine was not idle while this was happening. She lodged an appeal with the Court of Assistants at this time, in which she set out in detail a series of attacks on her property. She did not name those who might have been responsible for the attacks, only those who were present to witness the

aftermath of the damage.³⁷ Perhaps, as Carol Karlsen argues, it was an attempt to placate her neighbours.³⁸ Nevertheless, Katherine was acquitted of the witchcraft charges in October 1668 and returned to Wethersfield village life.

Antagonism festered throughout that winter. On 25 May 1669, Katherine was indicted for witchcraft, with Governor John Winthrop presiding.³⁹ Katherine pleaded not guilty. The jury moved to adjourn until the next sitting of the Court of Assistants in October 1669, thus postponing their decision.⁴⁰ When the Court of Assistants returned at Hartford, they moved to convict. On 12 October 1669, the jury returned 'that they find the prisoner guilty of the indictment'.⁴¹ She was first ordered to pay all her legal fees and debts as they arose in her case. The other implication was clear: Katherine was to be put to death.

Katherine responded with a long rebuttal to the court, offering to submit to the 'ancient water test' used for detecting witches. By special order from the General Court (the supreme governing body in colonial New England), a 'Special Session' of the Court of Assistants was convened at Hartford on 30 May 1670. The court reviewed Katherine's case and overturned the decision to execute Katherine without requiring her to submit to the water test.⁴² Katherine was ordered to pay her (additional) legal fees and move from Wethersfield to Westchester, New York.⁴³ Katherine paid up immediately, and left. Those who came to testify against Katherine were angry about this last minute reprieve. Katherine now had enemies throughout Connecticut.⁴⁴

Legal And Theological Machinations

The resolution of Katherine Harrison's case was never going to be simple. Katherine was effectively driven away from Wethersfield rather than executed, but the legal and theological considerations that went into this decision are crucial. Towards the end of Katherine's trial, the presiding magistrates had serious doubts about the case, and were reluctant to convict out of hand. They referred the case with a series of accompanying questions to a group of Hartford ministers in the middle of 1669, following her second indictment of 11 May. Four questions were asked. The first was 'whether a plurality of witnesses be necessary, legally, to evidence one and the same individual fact'. The second question was 'whether the preternatural apparition of a person, legally proved, be a demonstration of familiarity with the devil'.⁴⁵ The third question was 'whether a vicious person's foretelling some future event, or revealing of a secret, be a demonstration of familiarity with the Devil', and will be considered separately, below.⁴⁶ The fourth question was 'whether harm inflicted by a person's spectre or apparition, if legally proven, was proof of diabolism'. Many witnesses claimed that Katherine's spectre caused them harm. The acceptance of spectral evidence was a particularly thorny legal issue and still had ramifications at the Salem trials twenty-three years later. The crises of conscience that these magistrates were having suggest that the debates concerning spectral evidence had already begun.

The ministers' response to the first question was that, for evidence in witch trials to have legal standing, a 'plurality of witnesses' was required to testify to the same individual event, and that 'without such a plurality, there can be no legal evidence of it'.⁴⁷ The ministers cited John 8:17-8: 'It is also written in your law, that the testimony

of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.⁴⁸ In response to the second question, concerning spectral evidence, they wrote that they did consider spectral evidence legitimate, that it did demonstrate 'familiarity with the Devil', but only as long as it was 'legally proved'. That is, a 'plurality of witnesses' was once again required. The ministers' reasoning for accepting that the appearance of a spectre proved guilt was that 'it is not the pleasure of the most high, to suffer the wicked one to make an undistinguishable representation of any innocent person in a way of doing mischief'. That is, they were willing to stake a suspect's life on their belief that God would never allow the Devil to create an afflicting spectre of an innocent person. To accept the contrary would 'utterly evacuate all human testimony'. No one could then tender evidence that a particular person was involved in witchcraft, because 'it might be said, that it was the Devil in his shape'. The implication is clear: if a spectre of a person is witnessed causing harm, their spectre must be in use at the person's express consent; God would never allow the Devil to use an innocent person's shape for 'mischief' without that consent.

In this document, these Hartford ministers negotiated a legal opinion that would satisfy their theological understanding of the law. On the one hand, arguing that the Devil in his terrible power could assume the shape of anyone, might have allowed witch accusations to multiply. John Demos has argued – and is surely correct – that the magistrates were trying to avoid returning to the kind of witch-hunt that broke out in Hartford in 1661.⁴⁹ On the other hand, if they denied spectral evidence, much of the evidence in Katherine's trial became redundant. Although trials in different geographical regions gave the Devil a highly variable level of emphasis, historians of

witch trials in early modern Western Europe and England as well as New England, have shown that convictions often resulted when there was a link between the witch's behaviour and the Devil's presence.⁵⁰ In Katherine's case, with the magistrates so reluctant to come to a firm decision, spectral evidence could provide that link. But this was not a cynical ploy on either the magistrates' or ministers' parts: each was convinced that the Devil could claim the shape of another.⁵¹ The task for them was to enshrine this in legal theory and practice in as controlled a manner as possible.

Thus, ministers tentatively accepted the validity of spectral evidence in Katherine Harrison's witch trial. However, the advice that the ministers gave must be considered in conjunction with the answer to the first question, about how many witnesses were needed for evidence to have legal standing. Puritan ministers had long taught that everything that happened in the world was the result of God's providential will. It is uncertain how else a group of Hartford ministers might have answered the question about spectral evidence. Of course the Devil could not take an innocent person's shape without God's permission, and surely God would not permit such a thing. However, another tenet of providential theology was the inherent unfathomability of God's all-knowing plan. How to account for this uncertainty? The Hartford ministers' solution was ingenious: yes, the appearance of a spectre of a person was indeed convincing evidence of malefic will, as per God's power over the Devil, but *only* if it happened in the presence of two or more witnesses, as per John 8:17: 'the testimony of two men is true'. The ministers, having lived through many witch trials themselves, knew the extreme difficulty of getting two witnesses to testify to the same spectral attack.

Having dealt with the first, second and fourth questions, I will now turn to the third question. The magistrates were essentially asking whether Katherine's reputed divinatory abilities came from the Devil. The magistrates were asking this because much of the testimony against Katherine concerned her fortune-telling abilities. If fortune-telling were removed as a spiritual crime – one less link in the chain between Katherine Harrison and the Devil – then the case against her grew thinner. But the magistrates were apprehensive about just how to determine whether a person actually has dabbled in fortune-telling, or has simply gained information about the future by other means.

Before reviewing the ministers' answer to this question and its effects, it is worth considering Katherine's position when her reputation for divination developed. In 1651-1653 she lived and worked as a servant in the Hartford house of Captain John Cullick. We have already seen what two fellow servants had to say about Katherine's time in the Cullick house. William Warren alleged that Katherine practiced chiromancy and claimed to have learnt it from William Lilly. Thomas Waples described Katherine as a 'noted liar' who claimed to have read 'Mr Lilly's book in England'.⁵² In the Cullick household Katherine evidently talked a great deal about her occult skills, and this set a pattern for her future dealings with Wethersfield residents. The source of Katherine's reputation was Katherine herself.

However, the crux of the drama in the Cullick household centred on another female servant, 34-year-old Elizabeth Smith. At the time Smith worked alongside Katherine, her name was Elizabeth Bateman.⁵³ According to Smith's angry deposition sworn at Katherine's trial in September, she had heard Katherine's claims about fortune-telling

and decided to engage the cunning woman's skill. Smith makes clear her motivation: Katherine 'would oft speak and boast of her great familiarity with Mr Lilly, one that told fortunes'.⁵⁴ The essence of the fortune that Katherine told Smith was 'that her husband's name should be Simon'.⁵⁵ Elizabeth Bateman later married a man named Simon Smith, and became Elizabeth Smith. However, there is twist to this story, provided by a third woman who was also a servant alongside Katherine and Elizabeth Smith. Mary Olcott testified that at that time, Elizabeth was involved with a William Chapman. So much so that Elizabeth 'thought she would have been married to [him]'.⁵⁶ But Katherine 'affirmed that [Elizabeth] should not be married to William', but instead, 'Elizabeth should be married to one named Simon'.⁵⁷

So Elizabeth Bateman was involved with William Chapman and they were to be married. But Katherine Harrison divined Elizabeth's future and found that she would in fact marry a man named Simon. This, Elizabeth Smith (née Bateman) did. The other crucial element to this story is that Captain Cullick was against the courtship of his servants, Bateman and Chapman. William Chapman had a complaint against him taken to the Particular Court at Hartford on 2 March 1654, for trying to marry Elizabeth without Cullick's consent. The court heard the case and decided against Chapman, who was fined five pounds, and was jailed for fourteen days. The court also noted that two other servants in the Cullick house who helped Chapman and Bateman were 'accessories to the disorder'. These were none other than Thomas Waples and William Warren.⁵⁸ Further, marriage in the colony of Connecticut could only proceed with the approval of a master.⁵⁹ Katherine knew all of this. It thus seems likely that her divination efforts in this case were a successful attempt to break up Elizabeth and William on Cullick's behalf. Later, and especially when

Katherine's reputation was in decline, Elizabeth realised this too, and was furious. In her deposition, she described Katherine as 'a Sabbath breaker, and one that told fortunes'.⁶⁰

Elizabeth had realised that Katherine had not divined her future at all: she had deceived her and manipulated her on Cullick's behalf to destroy her relationship with William Chapman. Elizabeth thus presented herself not only as a witness to Katherine's interaction with the occult, but also to Katherine as a 'great or notorious liar'.⁶¹

To return to the third question the magistrates asked the Hartford ministers concerning evidence in witchcraft trials. The ministers were asked 'whether a vicious person's foretelling some future event, or revealing a secret, be a demonstration of familiarity with the Devil'. Again, they were trying to ascertain whether the kind of divination that Elizabeth Smith, Mary Olcott, William Warren, and Thomas Waples described constituted another crucial link between Katherine and the Devil.

The ministers' answer was that a person's fortune-telling abilities 'seem to us, to argue familiarity with the Devil'. However, they set careful qualifications on this opinion, arguing that this knowledge had to be beyond 'human skill in arts' and could not be gained from 'strength of reason arguing from the course of nature', or from 'information from man'. Even 'divine revelation either mediate or immediate' did not count. The hidden knowledge that a person allegedly gained from divination had to be *proven* to come 'by information from the Devil'. Only then could 'the communication of such things, in the way of divination' be clear evidence of

diabolism.⁶² Once again, a plurality of witnesses was necessary. In the environment of gossip and hearsay in which Katherine spent so much time immersed, especially at Cullick's house, it would never have been possible to prove that Katherine's knowledge was not gained from more earthly sources.

The Hartford ministers replied with their advice on 20 October 1669. The text is unsigned, but Gershom Bulkely, the well-known Hartford divine, physician, magistrate, statesman and later author of the treatise *Will and Doom*, most likely penned the document.⁶³ The advice was written within one week of the jury giving a guilty verdict in Katherine's legal travails. Upon reading the Hartford ministers' advice, the court immediately threw out their earlier guilty verdict and moved to reconvene at the end of the following May.

The legal and theological discourse between magistrates and ministers set the tone for the resolution of not only Katherine's case, but also for many other accused witches in seventeenth-century New England. A division between the understanding of the broader populace is suggested in the counsel the magistrates sought and the testimony given during the trial. The magistrates were concerned about the spiritual source of divination, and where the line between fortune-telling and reason was drawn. The accusers and witnesses made no such distinctions – they assumed that Katherine's skill was real and misused, or at least not at all how she described it. They were far more concerned that Katherine was abusing what abilities she had and, like so much depositional evidence given in witchcraft trials in English communities, the Devil was almost never mentioned. The legal and religious authorities were concerned with questions of diabolism; the villagers with the misuse

of magical practice itself. This was arguably a contributing factor in the low rate of conviction for New England witches overall. As Richard Godbeer writes, lay folk 'tended to think in magical rather than religious terms when confronted by witchcraft.'⁶⁴

A number of the magistrates who had responsibility for deciding the final outcome of Katherine's trial were also themselves physicians with an interest in alchemical medicine. Governor John Winthrop was the chief magistrate in Katherine's trial, and his own interests in the study of alchemy and natural magic were an extension of his study of natural philosophy.⁶⁵ Authorities in New England at this time were at pains to find a definition of witchcraft that would satisfy villagers' grievances and their own intellectual pursuits. The trial of Katherine Harrison should be seen in the context of a series of witch trials during the previous decades that had caused enormous social division among citizenry and unease among magistrates who convicted the accused.⁶⁶ Winthrop's political leadership in Connecticut had an important effect in changing the official culture to that which was far more reluctant to convict accused witches, particularly in the wake of the Hartford witch-hunt.⁶⁷ When confronted with another accused witch who was turning a town in on itself, and one whose accusers claimed she had an affinity with the kind of learned scholarly occult that had long fascinated the English intellectual elite (including the chief magistrate trying her case), the trial of Katherine Harrison became the moment when fundamental aspects of defining witchcraft changed in Connecticut, and had implications well beyond.

Seven months passed between the ministers' Opinion and the Special Session of the Court of Assistants. At that Session, after having read and fully digested the

ministers' Opinion, the Court of Assistants overturned the jury's verdict. Their official response was that they 'cannot concur... to sentence her to death but do dismiss her from her imprisonment'.⁶⁸

Perhaps the court hoped to find a compromise between infuriating the townspeople by letting Katherine go without charge, and convicting her on grounds they had recently been informed were invalid. But in the end, the court appeased no one. And so a very bitter Katherine Harrison departed for Westchester, New York, never to return to Wethersfield.

From Cunning Woman to Witch

I argue that the ministers, and by extension the court, saved Katherine Harrison from death. Hers was not the only case of acquittal of witchcraft in New England that the witch's neighbours received poorly. There was, in fact, quite considerable public dissatisfaction with the way that New England courts handled witch trials. Travelling to court to give a deposition was an expensive and inconvenient affair, but people were prepared to do so when they were convinced of the accused witch's guilt.⁶⁹ Whenever a magistrate overturned a local jury's decision, a demarcation was created between elite and popular understandings of witchcraft that was often deep and bitterly resented.

If Katherine was indeed providing valuable occult services to her more heterodox neighbours, the central question that presents itself, then, is how Katherine could be transformed from an individual who provided valuable village services to a witch? Part of an answer is the way her deceitful personality conflicted with her self-

proclaimed abilities to offer help and support to those in need. Magic and witchcraft, though conceptually linked, were ideologically separate in the cosmologies of the early New England laity. But in some trials, the line between folk magical practice and witchcraft accusation is unclear.

For a transformation from magical practitioner to witch, the depositions concerning the death of Mrs Robbins, around 1662, in Hartford are illuminating. Rebecca Greensmith, one of the chief accused and executed at Hartford in 1662 named a series of accomplices, one of whom was Katherine Harrison.⁷⁰ A Hannah Robbins came forward to testify against Katherine, stating that Katherine insisted on intruding when Robbins' mother was lying sick, close to death. Twenty-four year old Robbins testified that she and her father, Mr Robbins, 'complained very much' about the presence of Katherine, and that Mr Robbins 'two or three times forewarned' her not to come to his house. Nevertheless, she 'would thrust [herself] into the company'.⁷¹ When Mr Robbins himself died, his other daughter Mary and her husband Eleazer readily claimed in open court that they long suspected Katherine Harrison of using witchcraft to kill him.⁷² Much of the tension was due to Katherine seemingly wanting to force her skills – or at least offer them uninvited – where they were not wanted.

Intrusion was likewise a theme when Katherine's reputed divination skills went awry. Samuel Martin Snr testified against Katherine in court on 25 May 1669. In his statement, he mentioned that in the previous March, he was at Katherine's house where they had a discussion about a Samuel Hale and Mr Josiah Willard. Katherine apparently said that Martin 'shall shortly see them gone both, them and theirs'. Martin asked Katherine why that was so, and she replied, 'do you not know?'

Katherine then offered, 'there was one gone the other day.' Martin asked who, and Katherine replied, 'Mr Willard: for he had been sick.'⁷³ Perhaps Katherine was warning Martin of something. Or perhaps she was using her apparent divination skill to further flaunt her healing skills, and again offer them unsolicited. But Martin interpreted this as a not-so-veiled threat. He later joined the chorus of accusations against Katherine, late in the drama, towards the end of May 1669.

Furthermore, in Elizabeth Smith's experience, Katherine's abilities did not match Katherine's claims. It appears to us that in telling Elizabeth's fortune, and informing Elizabeth that she would not marry her beloved William Chapman, but instead 'one named Simon', Katherine had a hand in directly influencing events. The fortunes she told became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Samuel Martin was worried that something similar would happen with Katherine foretelling the deaths of Samuel Hale and Josiah Willard: by foretelling an event, she was actually causing it. And this is in essence exactly what *maleficium* is: the causing of harm via malicious thoughts or hidden means.⁷⁴ The deterioration of Katherine's relationship with her neighbours demonstrates starkly how the intended aims of folk magic could so easily be reversed to have the opposite effect to that intended. Healing, the effort to gain physical comfort and cure, could result in even more harm being inflicted. Divination, the effort to gain crucial information, could lead to manipulation, lies, and the seeker ultimately knowing less.

The common thread in these depositions is the theme of control – in particular, fear of losing control, and fear of others who had an unshakeable control. When Katherine tried to offer her services to Jacob Johnson, twice unsolicited, it made the

Johnsons wary. But at first they seem to have let Katherine work as she thought best. When Jacob fell sick, the Johnsons immediately felt they knew whom to blame. When Mrs Robbins fell deathly ill, her family deeply resented Katherine attempting to walk into the bedchamber to take control of the situation. They resisted her advances. But when Mrs Robbins died (and later, Mr Robbins) there was no doubt in the family's mind as to the cause. Both Samuel Martin and Elizabeth Smith expressed similar grievances about their less than satisfactory experience with Katherine's divinatory abilities. Perhaps Katherine's intention through all of this was self-promotion. If so, she was unfortunate. But if her neighbours were justified that she was trying to intimidate them, then she likely contributed to her own downfall. The truth probably lay somewhere in between.⁷⁵

'You are Not Afraid of Me'

Whether or not Katherine was intending to intimidate her neighbours, one young woman believed so and was prepared to confront Katherine – with bizarre and diabolical consequences. Twenty-year-old Mary Hale's deposition is the longest, most vivid, and unusual of all the evidence brought against Katherine Harrison.⁷⁶

Mary begins her testimony with a rudimentary description of her experience – attacks in the night while sleeping such as 'an ugly shaped thing like a dog' jumping on her bed that 'oppressed her so as if it would have pressed the breath out of her'.⁷⁷ Mary is convinced that this 'ugly shaped thing' was actually a shape-changed Katherine Harrison: 'I clearly and distinctly know [the thing's head] to be the head of Katherine Harrison'. This went on for several nights until 19 December 1668 when the thing, evidently referring to an earlier, unrecorded incident, said to Mary: 'you said that I

would not come again, but you are not afraid of me'. Mary replied, 'no'. The voice responded, 'I will make you afraid before I have done with you' and proceeded to 'crush' and 'oppress' Mary. Mary again said she was not afraid, because God would keep her safe. The voice told Mary that it had a commission from God to kill her. Mary replied, 'the Devil is a liar from the beginning for God will not give commission to murder, therefore it must be from the Devil'. This is the only specific mention of the Devil in any of the depositional evidence brought against Katherine. In a curious turn, the voice then said to Mary before departing, 'you will make known these things abroad when I am gone, but if you promise to keep these aforesaid matters secret, I will come no more to afflict you.' Mary replied, 'I will tell it abroad' and mentioned that she had proudly done so 'divers times' already.

It is difficult to know for certain what was happening in this episode, but it does seem that Mary perceived a battle of wills between herself and Katherine Harrison. The tale is reminiscent of biblical stories in which the Devil is resisted, or the conversion narrative in which the person receiving grace describes how the Devil was overcome.⁷⁸ Mary described Katherine (or her spectre) wanting to intimidate her, to control her will, and to physically oppress her. Mary also wanted to show how she resisted and ultimately defeated Katherine's malevolent presence. Like Jesus Christ in the desert, she overcame her demon by force of will and faith in God. Katherine is, like the Devil, rendered pathetic by the end, imploring Mary 'to keep these aforesaid matters secret'. The imagery that Mary contributed to the public discussion of Katherine Harrison was compelling, and was used as definitive evidence in Katherine's trial. Even if it is the product of a twenty-year-old's fertile imagination or crafted in response to other witchcraft narratives to which she had been exposed, it

articulates the fantasy that Katherine's neighbours had: that Katherine was an ugly, oppressive, dominant force that would intrude and try to forcibly take control; a malevolent force to be resisted and overcome; and when stripped of its powers of control, a malevolent force that is ultimately pathetic.

From the public narratives developed by her neighbours and by Katherine Harrison herself, and revealed during her trial as a witch, the image that emerges is that of a woman who wanted, perhaps too much, to provide her neighbours with a service but who had that social service go 'wrong', either by accident or on purpose. If this 'failed social service' is at the heart of Katherine's trial, then she is not unique in early New England. What links many of these cases is the difficulty that the courts had in convicting the accused, and the townsfolk's resulting outrage⁷⁹

Control

If we read the trial of Katherine Harrison not of an accused witch, but of an unusual character, a justifiably aggrieved individual, a defensive neighbour, and also as a supposed magical practitioner, different themes present themselves. We see instead how dangerous it is to self-promote too much if there is not sufficient skill to warrant the reputation, particularly if, as in the case of Katherine, unusual wealth was involved. We also see the importance of personal space in a society with very little of it, and how intrusions into that space were thoroughly resented. We see perhaps most of all how damaging a reputation for lies and slander could become. Ultimately, however, we see a group of people for whom control is one of the most valuable possessions. Almost everyone wanted control. Almost anyone could feel particularly threatened if that control was taken from them, especially if the taker was someone

who did not have the authority to do so. Katherine Harrison was accused because her neighbours perceived conscious and intentional duplicity on her part, in various spheres of her life, from her wealth-creation, to her magical abilities.

This was clearly expressed in Katherine's reputation as a 'notorious liar'. This reputation as a liar played a central role in the reception of her efforts as a cunning woman. But it also was applied to her personal relationships, her interaction with neighbours. The belief in her magical abilities had a profound impact on that interaction, and was a major factor driving her toward the gallows. Underlying both the perception of her wealth and magic was the resentment of her deceptive character.

As well as a critical moment in the development of the legal theory underpinning witchcraft trials in early New England, Katherine Harrison's witch trial reveals a vital factor in the accusation of witchcraft when it was directed toward cunning folk: the fear of deception and inflamed resentment when individuals thought they were being lied to. This was particularly dangerous when the magical practice involved the already fraught arena of healing and affliction. Healers needed to project a comfort associated with predictability and stability. Diviners similarly needed to avoid projecting discomfort associated with control and deception. Divination, lying, and control were closely linked. A diviner was considered to have an almost god-like power to know the future; a liar manipulated the facts with the intention to deceive. Both qualities allowed a person to not just reveal the future, but also to control how it eventuated. Katherine Harrison's neighbours clearly believed Katherine to be deceptive, manipulative and unpredictable, in contrast to what her clients wanted

from a cunning woman. The central theme in her case was social control. The fear of control being forcibly removed encouraged a neighbour to retaliate with a particularly potent weapon in seventeenth-century New England – witchcraft accusation.

¹ See Appendix in John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004, pp. 401-9; Appendix A in Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992, pp. 235-7; Appendix A in Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic and Religion in 17th Century Massachusetts*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1984, pp. 191-203.

² Early New Englanders used the term 'controversy' to describe almost any major crisis, schism, or public show of infighting.

³ In its simplest form, the Halfway Covenant was a device by which a compromised form of church membership could be offered to New England lay folk who wanted to participate in the church, but had not yet delivered a conversion narrative. It was first developed in 1662, and provoked intense division and moral censure within the church. The primary incentive of the Halfway Covenant, though, was that partial members could have their children baptised. This was previously the exclusive right of full church members, the so-called 'visible saints'. The Halfway Covenant was ultimately a failed attempt to maintain the hold of the church on the English colonisers in the face of ever increasing market forces. This was a deeply complex social and political process, however, and not all congregations adopted the measure. The historical scholarship investigating the Halfway Covenant is vast. See (for just a fraction): Perry Miller, 'The Half-Way Covenant', *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1933, pp. 617-715; Robert G. Pope, 'New England Versus the New England Mind: The Myth of Declension', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1969, pp. 95-108; Philip F. Gura, 'Preparing the Way for Stoddard: Eleazer Mather's Serious Exhortation to Northampton', *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 2, 1984, pp. 240-9; Mark A. Peterson, 'The Plymouth Church and the Evolution of Puritan Religious Culture', *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 4, 1993, pp. 570-93; Michael P. Winship, 'Were There Any Puritans in New England?', *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 2001, pp. 127-9; David M. Scobey, 'Revising the Errand: New England's Ways and the Puritan Sense of the Past', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 1984, pp. 4-31; J. M. Burnsted, 'Revivalism and Separatism in New England: The First Society of Norwich, Connecticut, as a Case Study', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1967, pp. 589-604; Edmund S. Morgan, 'New England Puritanism: Another Approach', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1961, pp. 236-42.

⁴ 'The Samuel Wyllys Papers: Depositions on Cases of Witchcraft, Assault, Theft, Drunkenness and Other Crimes Tried in Connecticut, 1643 - 1728', Documents 1-5, Connecticut State Library, Hartford (hereafter referred to as 'Wyllys Papers'); 'The Samuel Wyllys Papers: Depositions on Cases of Witchcraft, Assault, Theft, Drunkenness and Other Crimes Tried in Connecticut, 1643 - 1728: Supplemental Section', Documents W-1, W-6, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence (hereafter referred to as 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement'); Letter of John Whiting to Increase Mather, 4 December 1682, in *The Mather Papers*, vol. 8, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Fourth Series, The Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, 1868, pp. 466-9. See also R G Tomlinson, *Witchcraft Trials of Connecticut: The First Comprehensive, Documented History of Witchcraft Trials in Colonial Connecticut*, Bond Press Inc., Hartford, 1978, pp. 27-8; David D. Hall (ed.), *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History, 1638-1692*, Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1999, pp. 357-8.

⁵ We do not know with certainty what her maiden name was, but it was possibly Gilbert, as she refers to a cousin named Josiah with the same last name in an undated petition to John Winthrop. See 'Winthrop Papers', Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Vol. XIV, p. 8. Josiah Gilbert denied this. For detailed discussion of these matters see John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, pp. 513-4 n. 94; Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England*, Norton, New York, 1987, pp. 84, 301 n. 21.

⁶ See the below depositions of Thomas Waples, William Warren, Mary Olcott, and Elizabeth Smith.

⁷ John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 357.

⁸ Deposition of Alexander Rony and Samuel Hurlbut, in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 15. See also n. 6, above.

⁹ John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 358. In her examination of economic demography and estates assessments left to next of kin in New England during the mid seventeenth-century, Carol Karlsen distinguishes three categories of estate: a 'low' estate was approximately 200 pounds; a 'middling' or average estate was 200-500 pounds; more than 500 pounds can be considered prosperous. The inheritance left to Katherine from her husband at 929 pounds was undoubtedly large by the standards of the time. See Carol Karlsen, 'The Economic Basis of Witchcraft', in Elizabeth Reis (ed.), *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*, Rowman and Littlefield, Oxford, 2004, p. 19.

¹⁰ John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 358.

¹¹ John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 359.

¹² Carol Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* p. 86.

¹³ The 'cunning folk' (or, individually, 'cunning man' or 'cunning woman') were individuals thought to have skill with the occult in early modern English communities. They were able to heal sickness that physicians were not, could recover lost or stolen items, or prevent/counteract witchcraft affliction. Some of the most useful literature on cunning folk and popular magic has been Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*, Weidenfield and Nicolson, London, 1971, especially Chapter 8; Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*, Routledge, London, 1970, especially Chapter 8; James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1500-1750*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1996, especially pp. 65-70; Robin Briggs, 'Circling the Devil: Witch-Doctors and Magical Healers in Early Modern Lorraine', in Stuart Clark (ed.), *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*, Macmillan, New York, 2001; Willem de Blecourt, 'Cunning Women, from Healers to Fortune Tellers', in Hans Binneveld and Rudolf Dekker (eds), *Curing and Insuring: Essays on Illness in Past Times: The Netherlands, Belgium, England and Italy, 16th - 20th Centuries*, Hilversum, Verloren, 1993; and Willem de Blecourt, 'Witch Doctors, Soothsayers and Priests. On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition', *Social History*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1994. Recently Owen Davies has written a full-length monograph on the subject: Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*, Hambledon and London, New York, 2003.

¹⁴ Deposition of Goodwife Johnson in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-16.

¹⁵ Deposition of Goodwife Johnson in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-16. See also Carolyn S Langdon, 'A Complaint against Katherine Harrison, 1669', *Bulletin of the Connecticut Historical Society*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1969, p. 24; R.G. Tomlinson, *Witchcraft Trials of Connecticut*, p. 43.

¹⁶ Written testimony of Joan Francis in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-15.

¹⁷ Deposition of William Warren in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document 12. This was a technique known as chiromancy. Jon Butler lists this and other techniques (including geomancy and metoposcopy) as occupying a part of the New England 'religious spectrum'. See Jon Butler, 'Magic, Astrology and the Early American Religious Heritage, 1600-1760', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2, 1979, p. 320. To these I would add bibliomancy, cleidomancy and coscinomancy.

¹⁸ Deposition of Thomas Waples in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 7.

¹⁹ *The American Genealogist*, XLIII, p. 216, cited in John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 356.

²⁰ On *Christian Astrology*, see Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*, p. 80.

²¹ See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 360-5 for a fascinating discussion of Lilly's life, background and personal connections.

²² Benjamin Woolley, *The Queen's Conjurer: The Science and Magic of Dr Dee*, Harper, London, 2001. This is a useful introduction to the life and work of John Dee.

²³ James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 40, 44.

²⁴ See Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

²⁵ See Ann Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995, pp. 60-1.

²⁶ Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*, p. 73.

²⁷ Deposition of William Warren in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 8. Emphasis added.

²⁸ Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 29-30. Horary astrology is based on the idea that the 'hour' or formation of the sky at the time a question asked of an astrologer will influence the answer. Vast horary charts were constructed that map the stars on dates for a clients whole life that were intended to explain the meaning behind significant life events.

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- ²⁹ Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*, p. 73. See also Edmund Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived: Or Witchcraft Condemn'd in Anne Bodenham*, London, 1653, p. 1.
- ³⁰ See Appendix 1 in Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 276; Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*, p. 73.
- ³¹ Lilly spent his final days working as a physician. See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 421-2; Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth-Century Mind*, pp. 96-7.
- ³² For background on the property trials Katherine repeatedly lost, see Langdon, 'Complaint', p. 19; John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, pp. 359-60.
- ³³ Deposition of Thomas Waples in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 7.
- ³⁴ Deposition of Mary Hale in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-17. Mary is no relation to the 74-year-old healer from Boston of the same name.
- ³⁵ On the lack of privacy in early New England, see John Putnam Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 46-7.
- ³⁶ These are the depositions of Mary Kirkham, Joan Francis, John Wells and Goodwife Johnson, in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-16; 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-15; 'Wyllys Papers', Document 6; 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-16, respectively. John Putnam Demos also mentions five other depositions believed to have been taken from this time that have since been lost. John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 516.
- ³⁷ Written petition of Katherine Harrison, 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-12.
- ³⁸ Carol Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, p. 86.
- ³⁹ Indictment of Katherine Harrison: 'Court of Assistants Records', Connecticut State Library, Hartford (hereafter 'Court of Assistants') Vol. 53, pp. 1-2.
- ⁴⁰ 'Court of Assistants', vol. 53, p. 2.
- ⁴¹ 'Court of Assistants', vol. 53, pp. 4-5.
- ⁴² 'Court of Assistants', vol. 53, p. 7.
- ⁴³ See also John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 363.
- ⁴⁴ 'The Cases of Hall and Harrison' (1665), in George Lincoln Burr (ed.), *Narratives of the New England Witchcraft Cases*, C. Scribner's Sons, New York, 2002, pp. 48-9, 52; John M. Taylor, *The Witchcraft Delusion in Colonial Connecticut 1647 – 1697*, B. Franklin, New York, 1908, p. 61.
- ⁴⁵ 'The Answer of Some Ministers to the Questions Propounded to Them by the Honoured Magistrates', in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-18.
- ⁴⁶ 'The Answer of Some Ministers to the Questions Propounded to Them by the Honoured Magistrates', in 'Wyllys Papers'.
- ⁴⁷ The quotes from the following paragraph are all taken from the same document: 'The Answer of Some Ministers to the Questions Propounded to Them by the Honoured Magistrates', in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-18.
- ⁴⁸ King James version.
- ⁴⁹ John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, p. 364.
- ⁵⁰ Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, Longman, New York, 1995, pp. 35-8; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 35-8; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, pp. 75-9; Godbeer, *Devil's Dominion*, pp. 158-60.
- ⁵¹ Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1997, p. 75.
- ⁵² Deposition of Thomas Waples in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 7.
- ⁵³ I will continue to refer to her by the name *Smith*, as that was her surname when she offered her testimony.
- ⁵⁴ Deposition of Elizabeth Smith, in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-11.
- ⁵⁵ Deposition of Elizabeth Smith, in 'Wyllys Papers'.
- ⁵⁶ Deposition of Mary Olcott in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 11.
- ⁵⁷ Deposition of Mary Olcott in 'Wyllys Papers'.
- ⁵⁸ See *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639 – 1663*, Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Vol. 22, 1928, pp. 124-5. According to Thomas Waples' deposition, Cullick 'did turn Katherine out of his service for her evil conversation', though whether that was because of practicing divination or not is unclear. Given his public status, Cullick would never have been able to publicly endorse the sort of fortune-telling Katherine traded in.
- ⁵⁹ According to the Particular Court record that details the law that Chapman broke, the law stated: 'that no person whatsoever, male or female, not being at his or her own disposing that remaineth under government of parents, master, or guardians or such like, shall either make or give entertainment to any motion or suit in way of marriage without the knowledge and consent of those

they stand in such relation to, under the severe censure of the court in case of delinquency... nor shall any third person or persons inter-meddle [interfere] in making any motion to any such without the knowledge and consent of those whose government they are under the same penalty.' *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut*, p. 124.

⁶⁰ Deposition of Elizabeth Smith in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-11.

⁶¹ Deposition of Elizabeth Smith in 'Wyllys Papers'.

⁶² 'The Answer of Some Ministers to the Questions Propounded to Them by the Honoured Magistrates', in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-18.

⁶³ Gershom Bulkeley, 'Will and Doom' (1689) in Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco (eds), *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 351-8.

⁶⁴ Godbeer, *Devil's Dominion*, p. 18.

⁶⁵ See Walter Woodward, *Prospero's America: John Winthrop Jr., Alchemy, and the Creation of New England Culture, 1606-1676*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2010, *passim*, especially pp. 215-9; Carolyn Langdon, 'A Complaint Against Katherine Harrison', p. 24.

⁶⁶ Alice Young in 1648, Mary Johnson in 1648, John and Joan Carrington in 1651, Goody Bassett in 1651, Goody Knapp in c. 1653, Lydia Gilbert in 1654, and the four others in the 1661-1662 Hartford witch hunt (Mary Sanford, Rebecca and Nathaniel Greensmith, and Mary Barnes). See John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, pp. 402-5; Richard Godbeer, *Devil's Dominion*, pp. 235-7; Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, Religion*, pp. 210-6.

⁶⁷ Walter Woodward, *Prospero's America*, pp. 212-4, 216, 228-30.

⁶⁸ 'Court of Assistants Records', Vol. 53, p. 7. See also Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, Religion*, p. 110.

⁶⁹ Richard Godbeer, *Devil's Dominion*, p. 173.

⁷⁰ Confession of Rebecca Greensmith in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 1. Greensmith had also previously lived in Wethersfield. See John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, pp. 351-2 for further family connections between the Hartford witch-hunt and contemporaneous events in Wethersfield.

⁷¹ Deposition of Hannah Robbins in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-7. See also deposition of Alice Wakely in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 17.

⁷² Deposition of Eleazer Kinnerly in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 14.

⁷³ Written testimony of Samuel Martin in 'Wyllys Papers', Document 13.

⁷⁴ See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 518-9; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, Chapter 1; John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan*, Chapter 6, especially pp. 166-70.

⁷⁵ Consider Katherine's highly litigious history before, during, and after her witchcraft trial, both as a plaintiff and defendant. See also John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan* p. 433 n. 111. Barry Reay has described early modern English women who were repeatedly accused as witches, but were active agents in their ordeals (rather than random victims) as 'witch-prone'. Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England: 1550-1750*, Longman, London, 1998, pp. 130-1.

⁷⁶ Mary was the daughter of the same Samuel Hale whose death Katherine foretold.

⁷⁷ The quotes from this and the following two paragraphs come from the same source: Deposition of Mary Hale in 'Wyllys Papers: Supplement', Document W-17.

⁷⁸ For a concise discussion of the Puritan conversion narrative and its role in receiving full church membership in early New England, see Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards*, University Press of New England, London, 1995, pp. 19-22, 106-7.

⁷⁹ Much of the scholarship during the last ten years concerning witchcraft trials in early modern Europe has shown that the authorities were instrumental in *limiting* persecution. See Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, pp. 80-93, 236-9.



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