

The Demonic Book Club: Demonology, Social Discourses, and the Creation of Identity in
German Demonic Ritual Magic, 1350-1580.

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ABSTRACT

The Demonic Book Club: Demonology, Social Discourses, And The Creation Of Identity In German Demonic Ritual Magic, 1350-1580

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This thesis will approach Christian-authored works of demonic ritual magic (c1350-c1580) as narratives that offer us a window into the individual and collective identity-formation of Christians in German-speaking premodern Europe. This project is meant to address what I view as a three-pronged problem: 1) we do not always view esoteric disciplines (particularly magic) as part of the lived experience of religion in premodernity; 2) the failure to acknowledge esotericism as part of the lived experience of religion in premodernity is rooted in academic apprehensiveness about accepting esoteric texts as valid sources of knowledge about premodern religion; 3) this apprehensiveness prevents us from seeing the full value of esoteric texts—from acknowledging that they have much to tell us about the premodern social milieu, and, moreover, much to tell us about the how process of Christian identity-formation unfolded in this social context.

Part I of the dissertation will seek to contextualize my analysis. I will begin by laying out important terms and concepts, as well as the socio-cultural and religious context of premodern Germanic Europe. I will conclude Part I by developing my theoretical and methodological framework, one of cognitive narratology informed by theories of post-colonialism and alterity. Part II is where I will undertake my textual analysis. I will assert: 1) the portrayal of demonic ritual magic in these Christian-authored texts can be read as a reflection of Jewish-Christian relations during this period; 2) the way in which these texts seek to diminish the power of the Jewish magician (and, by extension, the “threat” represented by Jewish alterity *in general*) demonstrates how Christian discourse on magic became a space for grappling with social tensions, as well as a space for solidifying and validating the hegemony of the Christian identity by providing justification for the social, spiritual, and magical centrality of Christians in the premodern world. I will conclude by linking this analysis back to my overarching concern with the problematic articulated above: the academic valuation of esoteric texts.

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Quicquidem in mundo scibile est, scire semper cupiebam
~Johannes Trithemius, *Nepiachus* (1507)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Introduction to Demonology and Identity in Premodern Germanic Esoteric Texts	1
0.1 Situating the Present Study	4
0.1.1 Why German-Speaking Lands, c.1350-c.1580?	4
0.1.2 The History of the Academic Study of Western Esotericism	6
0.1.3 Esotericism in this Project	12
0.2 Division of Chapters	14
Part I: Context and Method	18
Chapter 1: Demons, Philosophies, and Magic: An Overview of Premodern Germanic Europe	18
1.1 An Overview of the Birth and Development of Western Demonology	19
1.1.1 Early Judaism	19
1.1.2 New Testament and Early Christian Literature	22
1.1.3 Rabbinic and Talmudic Demonology	24
1.1.4 Islamic Demonology	26
1.1.5 Medieval Christian Canonical Demonology	29
1.2 Philosophical Worldviews of Premodern Western Europe: An Overview.....	32
1.2.1 Scholasticism	34
1.2.2 Humanism	36
1.2.3 Renaissance Neoplatonic Thought	38
1.3 An Overview of Premodern Magic.....	41
1.3.1 Types of Premodern Magic.....	49
1.3.2 Natural Magic	50
1.3.3 Ritual Magic.....	52
1.3.4 Angelic Ritual Magic	54
1.3.5 Demonic Ritual Magic	55
1.4 A Brief Historical, Cultural, and Social Overview	59
1.5 A Brief Overview of Jewish Life in Premodern Europe.....	62
Chapter 2: Lived Religions, Cognitive Theories, and Narratology	67
2.1 Lived Religions.....	67
2.1.1 Lived Religion in Premodernity.....	70

2.2 Laying Out the Approach: Person, Culture, and Identity	73
2.2.1 The Importance of Culture.....	75
2.2.2 Social Agents	78
2.3 Approaching Lived Experiences, Identity, Religion, and Narratives	80
2.3.1 Approaching Narrative.....	83
2.3.2 Defining Narrative and Narratology	84
2.3.3 The Author-Reader Relationship.....	88
2.4 Critiques of the Approach	93
Chapter 3: Shared Space, Contested Space: Demonology, Alterity Theory and the Creation of Identity in German Demonic Ritual Magical Texts	97
3.1 Postcolonial Theory, Alterity Theory and the Creation of Identity	97
3.2 A Note on Terminology	99
3.3 Discourse and Violence: Theories of Intercultural Communication and Identity-Building	102
3.3.1 Tensions About Body and Blood.....	105
3.4 Narratology, Postcolonial and Alterity Theories	111
Part II: The Application	117
Chapter 4: Demonic Ritual Magic and Identity.....	119
4.1 <i>Liber Iuratus Honorii (Sworn Book of Honorius)</i>	119
4.1.1 Contextualizing the Work	119
4.1.2 Demonic Magic and Portrayals of Demons in the <i>Sworn Book</i>	122
4.1.3 The Jewish Influences on the <i>Sworn Book</i>	127
4.1.4 Hasidei Ashkenaz.....	128
4.1.5 Hekhalot Literature	133
4.1.6 The Hekhalot, Hasidei Ashkenaz, and the <i>Sworn Book</i> : Texts in Dialogue.....	133
4.2 <i>CLM 849: The Munich Manual of Demonic Magic</i>	138
4.2.1 Contextualizing the Work.....	138
4.2.2 Demonic Magic and Demons in <i>CLM 849</i>	142
4.2.3 The Power of Names in <i>CLM 849</i>	144
4.3 A Christian Portrayal of the Jewish Magician: <i>The Book of Abramelin</i>	147
4.3.1 Contextualizing the Work.....	147

4.3.2 Demonic Magic and Fetishization in the <i>Book of Abramelin</i>	150
4.4 Concluding Thoughts.....	152
Chapter 5: Magical Authority, Christian Kabbalah, and the Christianization of the Magical Theoretical Framework.....	155
5.1 Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516)	156
5.1.1 Demonic Magic and Portrayals of Demons in the <i>Steganographia</i>	160
5.1.2 Jewish Influences in the <i>Steganographia</i>	168
5.2 Appropriation: From Kabbalah to Christian kabbalah.....	170
5.3 Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522)	174
5.3.1 <i>De Arte Cabalistica</i>	175
5.4 Establishing Christian Dominance: Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1536)	179
5.4.1 <i>De Occulta Philosophia</i>	181
5.5 Concluding Thoughts.....	185
Conclusion: Constructing Identities with Demons	188
Bibliography	194
Addendum: Identity, Tension, and The Christian Application.....	269

AN INTRODUCTION TO DEMONOLOGY AND IDENTITY IN
PREMODERN GERMANIC ESOTERIC TEXTS

We are both the creation and the creator of our world. What we experience, how we interact, and the facets of daily existence all contribute to the creation of who we are and how we understand ourselves. These experiences are reflected in our most mundane and in our most sacred of realities. As a result, the category “narrative” holds an important place in the study of religion, and this valuation reflects an observation that is compelling in its deceptive simplicity: “human beings tell—indeed: live—stories that invite and serve them to see the world in a certain way and act accordingly.”¹ Another formulation of this observation might state that the narratives we produce not only express who we are and how we understand ourselves, but also *shape* who we are and how we understand ourselves. Accordingly, narratives represent a space where “hegemonic and subaltern voices, central and marginal stories, and docile and critical listeners constantly meet, merge, or clash.”² From the standpoint of the religious scholar, then, narratives of all kinds represent an important window into the way people in various religious traditions understand themselves and the Others they define themselves in relationship to.

As such, it is important to recognize that when narratives deal with fringe topics—that is to say, topics that do not always align with the concerns of mainstream scholarship—they are often overlooked or dismissed. The effect of such a dismissal is not something that should be taken lightly; it quiets the multitude of voices that contribute to the creation of our environment, and, by extension, the product of that environment—us. In other words, as we are forged by the very same tensions that produce the characters in our narratives, dismissing certain narratives acts to obscure our understanding of the various identities at play (and the relationships between them) within particular social environments. Esoteric narratives, the broad focus of this dissertation, represent one type of narrative that has been dismissed in this way.

The focus of this dissertation will be to look past this dismissal and examine a particular genre of esoteric writing: demonic ritual magic.³ More specifically, I will focus on Christian-

¹ R. Ruud Ganzevoort, “Religious Stories We Live By,” in *Religious Stories We Live By: Narrative Approaches in Theology and Religious Studies*, ed. R. Ruud Ganzevoort, Maaïke de Haardt, and Michael Scherer-Rath (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1.

² Ganzevoort, “Religious Stories,” 2.

³ While the term “magic” is a category with its own history and debates (which will be addressed in Chapter One), in this dissertation I will be asserting that its association with Western esotericism is largely behind the contemporary under-utilization of magical texts as source material. The choice to understand magic as a genre of Western esotericism is, furthermore, commonplace in the scholarship on Western esotericism. See: Wouter

authored works of demonic ritual magic produced in German-speaking premodern Europe, c1350-c1580.⁴ Up for consideration are: the anonymously authored *Liber Iuratus Honorii* (*Sworn Book of Honorius*), written sometime in the latter half of the fourteenth century; Johannes Trithemius' *Steganographia* (1499); the anonymously-authored *Munich Manual of Demonic Magic* (better known under its filing *Codex Latinus Monacensis* (CLM) 849), published sometime in the fifteenth century; Johannes Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517); Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De Occulta Philosophia* (1533), and the anonymously authored *Book of Abramelin*, most likely published sometime in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.⁵ I will seek to demonstrate that a careful examination of these Christian-authored works reveals a significant Jewish cultural influence, and, moreover, that the interrogation of this influence reveals important information about Christian-identity formation during this time—that is to say, information about the relationships, interests, concepts, concerns, fears, tensions and anxieties that formed the *Weltanschauung* of the premodern Germanic communities under consideration.

In all of these works we see two predominant themes. The first is Christian anxiety over the power of the Jewish magician, the second is the desire to subdue and overcome the threat this power was thought to represent—and, by extension, the threat posed by Jewish alterity in general. The pattern that emerges is one of appropriation⁶ and Christianization. For example, the demonic magic of the *Sworn Book* is demonstrably rooted in practices found in Hekhalot literature, but the *Sworn Book* itself explicitly indicates that only pious Christians have a hope of successfully practicing the demonic magic it prescribes. Likewise, the focus on exorcism that can

Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Guides for the Perplexed (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 13; Arthur Versluis and Lee Irwin, "Introduction," in *Esotericism, Religion, and Nature*, ed. Arthur Versluis et al, Association for the Study of Esotericism (Minneapolis MN: North American Academic Press, 2010), ix.

⁴ I have chosen 1580 to be the closing year as it marks the end of the Counter-Reformation (though some sources will state it was 1585). By this time the Vatican had become a unified, authoritative force that had established the Catholic Church as a relatively monolithic institution. The decrees arising from the Council of Trent (1545-1563) had also been fully implemented; these included: the establishing of the Latin Roman Rite and the Tridentine Mass; administrative reforms (including reforms to the papacy); the training of priests at recognized seminaries; the upholding of the sacraments; the defining of and support for religious orders, and, finally, the assigning of the Church as the ultimate authority on Scriptural interpretation. By this time, then, the Catholic Church had, for all intents and purposes, become the institution we recognize today. For more on the Council of Trent, please see John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁵ Detailed information on the editions I will be using will follow the formal introduction of these texts in Part II.

⁶ I would like to note that the use of the word "appropriation" should be understood here in the straightforward sense of "take (something) for one's own use," and not as carrying the critical connotations current political and social discourse imparts to the term.

be found in the *Sworn Book*—as well as the other works discussed in Chapter 4—seems to reveal a desire to exorcise the Jewish elements of magic and circumscribe the boundaries of ritual space along Christian lines.

Trithemius' *Steganographia* furthers the framing of exorcism that is present in *the Sworn Book*. According to Trithemius, the magician-cum-exorcist must be a true Christian, and the test lies in the magician's character: their intention in controlling the demon and gaining knowledge from it has to be pure. If their intent was to further the Christian faith they were a true master of the art. If not, they were practicing evil magic. The relationship between the Christian faith and magical efficacy thus went two ways: not only was Christian piety a necessary requirement for successfully practicing demonic magic, demonic magic was also understood to be a means for exploring the depths of true Christian faith. For Reuchlin, demons are outside of the accepted sphere, just as Simon the Jew—a character in *De Arte Cabalistica*—stands outside of the social sphere. Navigating this liminal boundary is therefore dangerous, something only the knowledgeable and pious Christian could hope to undertake successfully. Agrippa furthers this emphasis on knowledge in the way he links Jews to demons: both are considered by Agrippa to be of the earth, and bound to it; to transcend into the spiritual plane and achieve union with God, one must utilize Christian knowledge and faith. For Agrippa, proof of this lies (in part) with the power of sacraments, thus reflecting the social conversations about the nature and validity of the sacraments that were taking place during the years following the Reformation.

My main assertion will thus be that, within these works, the portrayal of demonic ritual magic—or, more specifically, the portrayal of how the Christian magician can and should interact with demons and other transempirical beings⁷ to achieve magical efficacy—can be read as a reflection of Jewish-Christian relations during this period. By developing a methodology rooted in cognitive narratology and theories of post-colonialism and alterity, my analysis will

⁷ In this project, I will be using “transempirical” as a general term to describe non-human intelligent beings—most notably: angels, demons, and other spirits—or to designate the plane of reality in which these beings are understood to exist. This will be less cumbersome than using “angels, demons, and other spirits.” Moreover, as I will be arguing that these beings have a concrete social, cultural and religious purpose, I have also chosen this term to ensure consistent clarity when I am discussing the significant ways in which they are real to those who form relationships with them. For more on the social reality of these beings see: Armin W. Geertz, “Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Approaches and Definitions,” in *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative*, ed. Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, Religion, Cognition and Culture (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, Ltd. 2011), 9; Laura Feldt, “Fantastic Re-Collection: Cultural vs. Autobiographical Memory in the Exodus Narrative,” in *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative*, ed. Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, Religion, Cognition and Culture (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 199.

work through the complexity of these relations, ultimately arguing that the desire to suppress the power of the Jewish magician (and, by extension, the desire to suppress the potential “threat” represented by Jewish alterity *in general*) significantly influenced the way these authors understood themselves, their faith, and the diverse socio-cultural world in which they lived. More simply put, I will be presenting an approach for understanding Christian identity-formation in this period through the lens of demonic ritual magic—a magic that cannot be understood without reference to its Jewish influences. The central aim of developing this theoretical model will be to demonstrate that, although woefully under-studied and under-utilized in contemporary academic circles (and therefore often misunderstood), magical texts (and, by extension, other types of esoteric texts) actually represent a crucially important window into the self-understanding and collective identity of the premodern Christian individual.⁸

0.1 SITUATING THE PRESENT STUDY

0.1.1 Why German-Speaking Lands, c.1350-c.1580?

This time period was one of great intellectual, social and political activity that changed the social, political, cultural and religious landscape of Europe. Notably, this time period saw: the development of new scientific methods; an increase in the prevalence of popular revolts; rising literacy rates following the advent of the moveable printing press; the publication of *Malleus Maleficarum*⁹ (which contributed to the witch persecutions of the sixteenth and

⁸ While my case study is indeed limited to German-speaking lands, the proliferation of magical texts across Christian Europe (many of them originating in or inspired by the magic of this Germanic milieu) seems to indicate that such an analysis would hold true for other Christian contexts in premodern Europe as well.

⁹ The *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*) was written in 1486 by Heinrich Kramer (a Dominican monk), and was, for a period, the standard manual for witch-hunters. Although presenting itself as the official Church position on witchcraft, we know that it was actually a controversial text in the eyes of the Papal courts: in 1490, the papal courts condemned the manual as false, and in 1538 the Spanish Inquisition suggested that the manual should be handled with caution. For more see: Albrecht Classen, “The Devil in the Early Modern World and in Sixteenth-Century German Literature,” in *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faust*, ed. J.M. van der Laan, and Andrew Weeks (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2013), 259; Michael D. Bailey, “The Age of Magicians: Periodization in the History of European Magic,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 3, no. 1 (2008): 21; Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts: A Global History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 130; Brian P. Levack, *Anthropological Studies of Witchcraft, Magic and Religion* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 102; George Mora, general editor, *De Praestigiis daemonum: Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991); Ivi; John Shinner, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion: 1000-1500*, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures: II (North York ON: Higher Education University of Toronto Press, 2008), 271.

seventeenth centuries¹⁰); the Reformation and Counter-Reformation; the Council of Trent; the beginnings of European colonialism; the rise of capitalism as the primary economic form in Europe. From the crises of the Late Middle Ages¹¹ to the end of the Renaissance, this period of upheaval and transition thus encapsulates a number of interesting ideas and challenges that helped shape the demonology of the German-speaking Christian communities under study. In fact, many of the changes either originated in, or had a particularly significant impact on, German speaking lands.

One such change was the German-invented moveable printing press. This invention saw German-speaking lands become an important publishing hub by the fifteenth century—so important that, by the year 1500, German printing presses produced about two-thirds of the 60,000 books that were printed in Europe.¹² This would make premodern Germanic magical thought quite influential. Many contemporaneous authors influenced one another, and the influence of their work would continue to be felt for centuries after. For example, Johannes Trithemius (1462-1516) studied with Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) and tutored Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1536), and the influence of Reuchlin and Agrippa can be found in the later work of John Dee (1527-1608/9), particularly in his magic tables. A premodern influence can also be felt in the seventeenth century work, *Lemegeton Clavicula Salomonis* (*The Lesser Key of Solomon*), and even in the twentieth-century magic of Aleister

¹⁰ No project of any ilk on premodern demonic magic would be complete without briefly addressing the concept of witches and the ensuing witch-hunts, both of which were an integral part of the social fabric of premodern German-speaking lands. This being said, this project will only be tangentially referring to witches for a number of reasons. First, most witches accused during this time were women; any sustained discussion of them would thus require an analysis involving premodern gender theory, but this is something that falls outside of the scope of the current investigation. Second, the phenomenon was reliant on accusations; I could not find of any shard of evidence of a person who, without prompting, claimed to be a witch. In other words, the similarity of the witch-trials and the extracted confessions indicates a formulaic script, rather than a self-motivated confession. Finally, the practices enshrined within the texts that I am examining were written by people who understood the rituals to occupy an orthodox space. For more on witches see: Mora, ed. *Witches, Devils and Doctors*; Stuart Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; Oxford Scholarship Online: October 2011); Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); Karen Jolly, Catharina Raudvere, and Edward Peters, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, The Middle Ages*, vol. 3 (London, Athlone, 2001); Brian P. Levack, *Anthropological Studies of Witchcraft, Magic and Religion* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992).

¹¹ An approximate 150 year period, beginning with the Great Famine of 1315, which brought much instability to Europe, including environmental disasters, various large-scale wars, and uprisings.

¹² Michael D. Bailey, "The Age of Magicians," 19; Elizabeth I. Wade, "A Fragmentary German Divination Device: Medieval Analogues and Pseudo-Lullian Tradition," in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), 87; Andrew Weeks, *German Mysticism From Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Literary and Intellectual History*, SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 117.

Crowley.¹³ In other words, the simultaneous advancements in printing, circulation, and trade both enabled and promoted the sharing of ideas and manuscripts, thus creating an important esoteric network of exchange.¹⁴

The texts I have selected to analyze demonstrate this type of exchange, and were chosen not only because of their availability,¹⁵ but also because I believe them to be fair and influential representations of what constituted premodern demonic ritual magic in German-speaking lands. However, before we can discuss the role and practice of ritual magic in premodern Europe with reference to specific texts, it will first be pertinent to provide a history of the academic study of Western esotericism. This will aid in clarifying why there is a lingering scholarly tendency to dismiss many of the categories—like magic—that fall under this large disciplinary umbrella.

0.1.2 The History of the Academic Study of Western Esotericism

Today the term “esotericism” is often associated with various New Age movements, transcendental phenomena, and contemporary forms of mysticism focused on inner spiritual betterment through meditation and ritual.¹⁶ However, this general understanding of esotericism bears little resemblance to the traditions that fall under the rubric of what scholars refer to when they speak of the “Western esotericism” that was prevalent in Latin and Germanic Europe during

¹³ Noel L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology: A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 242-243; Alison Butler, “Making Magic Modern: Nineteenth-Century Adaptations,” *The Pomegranate* 6.2 (2004): 212-230; Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 69; Wouter Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 263, 272-274, 287; Marco Pasi, “Varieties of Magical Experience: Aleister Crowley’s Views on Occult Practice,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 154, 173; Jim Reeds, “John Dee and the Magic Tables in the Book of Soya,” in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas, Religious Studies International Archives of the History of Ideas Archives (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006) 22, 26 n34-n36; Weeks, *German Mysticism*, 120-125.

¹⁴ Frank L. Borchartd, “The Magus as Renaissance Man,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 21, no. 1 (1990): 66; Daniel Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christianity, and the Economy of Secrets: 1400-1800*, trans. Jeremiah Riemer, (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 57.

¹⁵ As noted by Wouter Hanegraaff, “[s]urprisingly, there is no comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date overview of Renaissance esotericism” (*Western Esotericism*, 166). Paola Zambelli notes something similar in her work on “wandering scholastics” in *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 4-7. Consequentially, it is a challenge to find available transliterations of primary source material.

¹⁶ Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 6; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3-4; Wouter Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-4; Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, vi-vii, 1-2.

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹⁷ This scholarly understanding first appears in Jacques Matter's *Histoire du Gnosticisme* (1828).¹⁸ Here, the term is used as an anachronistic and etic category, one meant to categorize "other" philosophies—that is to say, practices and thoughts that were not congruent with the rationalistic worldview of the eighteenth century.¹⁹ As Enlightenment rationalism lay in contention with much of the premodern *Weltanschauung*, Western esotericism should thus be understood as a fantastically diverse and nuanced field, one which encompasses ideas, trends, philosophies, and practices which, as we shall see, permeated the socio-cultural fabric of Medieval and Renaissance life, spilling into politics, religion, economics, and philosophy.

It was, therefore, during the Enlightenment that the subjects we associate with esotericism first began to be discredited as legitimate topics of intellectual study.²⁰ The trend of the time was to replace old ideas and processes with new ones; to legitimize the new scientific methodology by focusing on empiricism and reason and emphasizing distinctions in opposing and separate terms.²¹ This meant that disciplines considered to be contrary to rationalism, positivism, and linear Cartesian philosophy—so, fields such as alchemy, astrology, magic,

¹⁷ For a comprehensive look at Western Esotericism within an academic setting, please see Wouter Hanegraaff, "The Emergence of the Academic Science of Magic: The Occult Philosophy in Tylor and Frazer," in *Religion in the Making: The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion*, ed. Arie L. Molendijk and Peter Pels (Leiden: Brill, 1998): 253-275; Wouter Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Wouter Hanegraaff, "The Study of Western Esotericism: New Approaches to Christian and Secular Culture," in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion I: Regional, Critical, and Historical Approaches*, ed. Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz & Randi R. Warne, Religion and Reason 42 (Walter de Gruyter: Berlin & New York 2004): 489-519; Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge*, trans. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2005); Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); *Polemic Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and Its Others*, ed. Olav Hammer and Kocku von Stuckrad, Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1994). The definitive text is perhaps Antoine Faivre's *L'ésotérisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006).

¹⁸ Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 3; Guy G. Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1.

¹⁹ Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 97; Wouter Hanegraaff, "The Trouble with Images: Anti-Image Polemic and Western Esotericism," in *Polemic Encounters*, 110, 112-13; Dayna S. Kalleres, *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity* (Oakland CA: University of California Press, 2015), 16.

²⁰ Michael D. Bailey, "The Disenchantment of Magic: Spells, Charms, and Superstition in Early European Witchcraft Literature," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (2006): 383; Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 2; Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 16-17.

²¹ Nicole Boivin, *Material Cultures, Material Minds: The Impact of Things on Human Thought, Society, and Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 15; Principe and Newman, "Some Problems," 386-388.

mysticism, and neoplatonic philosophy—began to be cast as beneath intellectual inquiry.²² No true scholar or academic (perhaps save the historian of science) would ever consider engaging a field such as alchemy when chemistry was an option. Disciplines that did not agree with the new status quo were either cast as ignorant and superstitious or quietly ignored. Alchemists became chemists. Astrology was laughed at, and any philosophies that did not align themselves with current trends were no longer seriously debated.²³

However, in the nineteenth century a new culture of anti-institutionalism arose with the Romantic critique of Enlightenment rationality.²⁴ It was a time of occult revivalism, one that rejected the superstitious framing of subjects like Mesmerism and spiritualism.²⁵ Revivalists proposed that the language used for all premodern magical and alchemical texts was in fact a code that held the secrets of true spiritual transformation. In other words, they claimed that the knowledge these types of texts contained was spiritual rather than material. As this knowledge could help one rise to a higher spiritual plane, revivalists further claimed that mainstream and secular institutions had sought to destroy it, forcing premodern esoteric practitioners to conceal their knowledge behind a shroud of secrecy and cryptography. This revival led to a wave of esoteric translations, particularly of magic and alchemy. However, these translations read as tenuous at best due to their distance from the historical, cultural, and geographical context of the original works.²⁶ As a result, perceptions and understandings of esotericism became doubly influenced: first by the Enlightenment's rejection of the various disciplines that did not meet its standards of rationalism, and then by Romanticism's attempts to reconstruct esotericism as a positive rejection of the Enlightenment's emphasis on rationalism and empiricism. This double rejection, so to speak, is what informs our current understanding of premodern esotericism.²⁷

The scholarly development of the field that eventually came to be referred to as “Western esotericism” was slow, and from the end of Romantic period to the 1950s academic interest in

²² Buckley, *At the Origins*, 97; Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 16; Principe and Newman, “Some Problems,” 386-388; Hanegraaff, *Trouble with Images*, 109; Frank Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity in Manuscripts of Ritual Magic of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, no. 1 (2007): 49-50.

²³ Bailey, “Age of Magician,” 2; Newman and Grafton, *Secrets of Nature*, 3; Principe and Newman, “Some Problems,” 386-8; Marlene and Geoffrey Rayner-Canham, *Women in Chemistry: Their Changing Roles from Alchemical Times to the Mid-Twentieth Century*, History of Modern Chemical Sciences (Danvers MA: American Chemical Society and Chemical Heritage Foundation, 1998), xiii-xiv, 1-11.

²⁴ Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge*, trans. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2005), 2.

²⁵ Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 261; Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 136-137.

²⁶ Principe and Newman, “Some Problems,” 395.

²⁷ Principe and Newman, “Some Problems,” 385.

premodern esotericism came primarily from scholars who specialized in Gnosticism, Hermeticism, or mysticism.²⁸ However, in the 1950s academics began to explore premodern esotericism with an interest in understanding the role it played in premodern society, and in 1964 Frances Yates would publish her pivotal work, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*.²⁹ Building upon earlier works by Paul Oskar Kristeller, Lynn Thorndike, and Eugenio Garin,³⁰ Yates claimed that modern science owed a great debt to Hermeticism, and even represented a continuation of its practices. While she maintained that this Renaissance philosophical tradition had been systematically suppressed by theologians in a great epistemological battle—a theory which has since been subject to much debate—the “Yates Paradigm” (as her work and theories would become known) became the catalyst for the academic study of esotericism.³¹

Increased academic interest in the field sparked in the 1980s,³² and today scholars of esotericism understand the field as an incredibly nuanced discipline that encompasses a diverse range of ideas, trends, philosophies and practices, including—but not limited to—the occult disciplines³³ of alchemy, magic, divination, and secret societies. Mysticism is sometimes also included.³⁴ Despite the diversity of these fields, most of these disciplines tend to share a transformative aspect and the promise of achieving a personal and intimate connection with the

²⁸ von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 2.

²⁹ von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 3.

³⁰ Claire Fanger, “Introduction,” in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Idea and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), 2; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 2-3. See also Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London and Chicago IL: Routledge and Kegan Paul/The University of Chicago Press, 1964); Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 volumes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923-1958); Lynn Thorndike, *The Place of Magic in the Intellectual History of Europe* (New York: N.P., 1905); Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, vol 1 (Rome: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1956); Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* (Gloucester MA: Peter Lang, 1943); Eugenio Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento: Studi e ricerche* (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1954).

³¹ von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 3.

³² Brann, *Trithemius*, 1; Fanger, “Introduction,” 2; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 3.

³³ Samuel Johnson’s dictionary (1755) defines “occult” as “secret, hidden, unknowable, undiscoverable.” As this entry indicates, early usage of the term did not necessarily carry supernatural implications. However, as both Jütte and Monod note, it was also believed that nature had occult qualities, qualities which could be revealed through natural magic or diligent study of the natural process (such as in the case of alchemy). See: Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy*, 4, 18; Paul Kléber Monod, *Solomon’s Secret Arts: The Occult in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 3-4. Accordingly, for this project, I will use the term “occult” to refer to natural secrets believed to be hidden yet discernable through magic.

³⁴ Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 13; Versluis and Irwin, “Introduction,” ix. In the present project magic and mysticism will be understood as discrete activities. Although both activities aim to achieve some type of transformative union with the divine, the major difference is that magic uses the hidden laws of nature, whereas mysticism might not always do so. In sum, not all magic practitioners are mystics, and not all mystics are magic practitioners, although the two sometimes overlap.

world, nature, and often, the divine.³⁵ There is not one singular expression of esotericism, just as there is not one singular expression of Christianity—there are esotericisms, just as there are Christianities. In other words, today premodern Western esotericism is seen less as an alternative counterculture reacting to the singular hegemony of canonical Christian theology,³⁶ and more as a part of the period’s complex and fantastically plural field of religious and cultural expression.³⁷ As this brief—albeit somewhat complicated and loaded—history indicates, both Western esotericism and its study have baggage. What is it *really*? How can we *truly* define it in premodernity? In truth we cannot do this definitively, yet several important and useful paradigms have emerged in the wake of attempts to do just that.

Of note are the Inner Tradition Paradigm, the Faivre Paradigm, the von Stuckrad Paradigm and the Hanegraaff Paradigm. The Inner Tradition Paradigm, first articulated by A.E. Waite, theorizes that all religions have a public and dogmatic (*exoteric*) component, as well as a more spiritually deep and true (*esoteric*) component. While the former was made available to the uneducated *en masse*, the latter was only revealed to a select and educated few—a chosen “inner circle.” According to Waite, what this esoteric component of religion reveals is an objectively observable dimension of reality that is fundamentally esoteric. In other words, at the very centre of all religions—and, indeed, at the very centre of all existence—there lies a hidden universal tradition that unites all direct spiritual insight (or, at the very least, feeds into it). As such, this paradigm holds that true esotericism is ahistorical, ageographical, and acultural, and is therefore

³⁵ William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton, “Introduction: The Problematic Status of Astrology and Alchemy in Premodern Europe,” in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press. 2001), 21; Versluis and Irwin, “Introduction,” x.

³⁶ Although term “theology” traditionally tends to be equated with “official” Christianity—an equation which delineates “official” Christianity from the “lay” or “popular” Christianity that often included esoteric thought—I find this framing problematic. This issue will be taken up in detail in later chapters, but three important considerations will be pertinent to relay now: 1) the distinction between “esotericism”/“magic” and “religion” was not necessarily clear then, and is thus anachronistic; 2) esoteric disciplines were integrated into the everyday worldview, and a number of Rabbinic and Church leaders were esotericists; 3) there were a variety of theologies, canonical, magical or otherwise. Some of these teachings were promoted by various institutes, others were ignored, while others were in explicit conflict with institutional teaching. To denote one as “officially theological” and the other “unofficial” (or even “magical”) would undermine the discourses that permeated the social landscape of premodern Europe and negate the lived experience of the time. I will thus be using the term “canonical theology” to denote the type of theology that: 1) was promoted by the institution in their teachings about God, 2) infers the legality we associate with the term “Christian theology,” 3) is exoteric (that is, visible and applicable to all), and, 4) is more aligned with the modern conceptualizations of what constitutes “mainstream” Christian theology.

³⁷ Hanegraaff, *Trouble with Images*, 109; Frank Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity in Manuscripts of Ritual Magic of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, no. 1 (2007): 49-50.

highly problematic.³⁸

Developed in 1992 by Antoine Faivre, the Faivre Paradigm reconceptualizes esotericism as a specific pattern of thought (*forme de pensée*) and provides a theoretical model with tools for defining, comparing, and studying various esoteric traditions in a systematic fashion.³⁹ However, while widely influential, this model is not without its problems.⁴⁰ First, and perhaps most saliently, it is based on Faivre's scholarship in Hermeticism, Christian kabbalah and Theosophy, and therefore excludes, not only Jewish and Muslim forms of esotericism, but also modern esotericism—the latter of which reinterprets and appropriates Vedic ideas (or, more specifically, certain Hindu and Buddhist practices). Finally, it ignores the fact that esotericism was an integral part of the social fabric of premodern Europe by continuing to portray it as a cultural fringe movement.

As an alternative to Faivre's model, von Stuckrad's paradigm, rooted in observations about Europe's growing pluralism, argues that esotericism is best understood as an important part of early Europe's identity-forming discourse. In other words, von Stuckrad is interested sketching out how esotericism reflects and facilitates the types of information exchanges that we know are fundamental to shaping cultural identities.⁴¹ While the framing of esotericism as a form of discourse has proven invaluable, there are some disadvantages to von Stuckrad's model—of particular note is that he never clearly identifies the criteria one should use to define esoteric discourse, leaving it unclear as to how one should go about circumscribing its boundaries.

Marrying several paradigms, Hanegraaff argues that Western esotericism is best

³⁸ Antoine Faivre, "Introduction I," in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, ed. Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), xii; Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 4-5, 10-12; Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, 10; Newman and Grafton, "Introduction: Problematic Status," 1-2.

³⁹ Faivre's Paradigm argues that a text, belief or activity is esoteric if it includes the following four components (i.e., these components are "intrinsic" to the category): 1) *Correspondences*: the notion that there is both a real and a symbolic correspondence between all things in the universe; 2) *Living Nature*: the notion that everything in the universe belongs to a cosmic hierarchy and possesses its own complex life force; 3) *Imagination and Mediation*: the notion that, through the use of rituals, symbols, images, transempirical beings, and imagination, the esoteric practitioner can access levels of reality that exist between the planes of material and the transcendent worlds; 4) *Experience of transmutation*: the notion that the aforementioned rituals and activities will help the esoteric practitioner achieve their aim of transcending reality. Faivre further identifies two "secondary" components (components which may be helpful identifiers but are not intrinsic to the category): 5) *Practice of Concordance*: the belief that all religions and spiritual practices are united by some underlying principle or core essence (a kind of "spiritual string theory"); 6) *Transmission through Masters*: the idea that the teachings and techniques of a tradition must pass from master to student through initiation (Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 10-17).

⁴⁰ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 10-17; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 3-5.

⁴¹ von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 7-11.

understood as a domain of “rejected knowledge.” In other words, what counts as “esoteric” are those ideas and practices that have been relegated to “academia’s dustbin,”⁴² casualties of the intense academic specialization that arose in the eighteenth century.⁴³ Hanegraaff’s model thus understands Western esotericism as a product of the history I have sketched out above: that which is understood to fall under the umbrella of Western esotericism is that which was found to be incompatible with the ideological and intellectual trends of the Enlightenment. As with the others, this model has also drawn some critique. In particular, critics assert that this paradigm reduces the academic field of esotericism to a mere casualty of eighteenth and nineteenth century perspectives,⁴⁴ and, in doing so, flattens this historical context and alters our understanding of the phenomenon.

0.1.3 Esotericism in this Project

As this brief theoretical overview suggests,⁴⁵ defining esotericism, like defining any field of study, is tricky. For the purposes of this project, Western esotericism will be understood as a diverse set of worldviews, practices, philosophies, literature and thought.⁴⁶ What groups these

⁴² Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 13; Hanegraaff, “Trouble with Images,” 110.

⁴³ According to Hanegraaff, the construction of Western European identity in early Modernity was achieved in tension with the “Other”—the other who we do not want to be and define ourselves in opposition to. It was during this time that the white, Christian identity became hegemonic in Western Europe. By the eighteenth century, those thought patterns deemed superstitious, pagan, contrary to rationalism, or otherwise “Other” were relegated to the back room of academic study. When esoteric thought was revived in the nineteenth century, it gained prominence through its status as an academic “Other” that stood in contrast to mainstream institutions and practices. See Wouter Hanegraaff’s “Forbidden Knowledge: Anti-Esoteric Polemics and Academic Research,” *Aries* 5, no. 2 (2005): 225-254, where he argues that Western esotericism is “the historical product of a polemical discourse, the dynamics of which can be traced all the way back to the beginnings of monotheism” (226). For more on Hanegraaff’s discussion of “Grand Polemics,” see: Hammer and von Stuckrad, “Introduction: Western Esotericism and Polemics,” xi; Hanegraaff, “Trouble with Images,” 109-110.

⁴⁴ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

⁴⁵ For more on these paradigms see: Antoine Faivre, “Introduction I,” in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, ed. Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman, World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest (New York: Crossroad, 1995), xii; Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 10-17; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4; Hanegraaff, “Trouble with Images,” 109-110; Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 4-15; Wouter Hanegraaff, “Forbidden Knowledge: Anti-Esoteric Polemics and Academic Research/La Connaissance Interdite: Polémiques Anti-Ésotériques Et Recherche Académique,” *Aries* 5, no. 2 (2005): 225-254; Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy*, 4, 18; Monod, *Solomon’s Secret Arts*, 3-4, 10; Newman and Grafton, “Introduction: Problematic Status,” 1-2; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 3-11.

⁴⁶ Including but not limited to: magic, alchemy, astrology, Hermeticism, *prisca theologia*, Christian kabbalah, theosophy, Paracelsianism, certain types of mysticism, initiation societies, and Pythagoreanism.

diverse disciplines together is: 1) they are often rooted in natural philosophy,⁴⁷ 2) they frequently aim at some type of transformation focusing on the unification of the material and immaterial through the exploration and study of occult knowledge, 3) they are ways of thinking and acting that were oft-ignored and oft-rejected by scholars beginning in the eighteenth century. This position frames Western esotericism as a strand of thought that wove through Medieval and Renaissance societies (coexisting and often overlapping with science, medicine, moral philosophy and canonical theology), and therefore agrees with the general scholarly consensus that esotericism is a discipline that must be studied in light of its historical, cultural, intellectual, political and philosophical context, and not, as we saw in earlier paradigms, as some ahistorical entity.⁴⁸

As esoteric fields were a part of the very social fabric of premodernity, studying their varied nature and practices in light of this context demonstrates how truly complex, nuanced and plural premodern Western Europe really was. It reveals that this milieu included a spectrum of religious practices and understandings of the divine, as well as various and nuanced approaches to natural philosophy, art, science, medicine, moral philosophy and canonical theology.⁴⁹ In

⁴⁷ Natural philosophy is the study of nature, with an emphasis on explaining nature. A branch of philosophy that gained prominence in the eleventh/twelfth century with the rediscovery of Aristotle, Galen, and Euclid, as well as Ibn Sina and later Maimonides, natural philosophy included biology, geology, physics, astronomy, alchemy, and the modern concept of chemistry. Premodern natural philosophy was based on the Aristotelian view that one can only understand the world through its causes, elements and principles. In other words, for Aristotle, by endeavoring to understand how the world works, we can begin to understand the world itself. According to Aristotle, the world is made up a single substance, which in itself is made up of matter and form. The matter is what it is composed of, whereas the form is the shape. So, for example, a llama would be the substance. Its flesh, fur, bones—the tangible material—is the matter, and the shape of the animal is the form. A llama is a llama because of the form which gives the ball of fur, flesh, blood and bones the shape. To put it in more humanistic terms, the matter is our bodies, the form is our spirit/soul/identity which causes us to look the way we do (there is a thought that our physical form reflects our spiritual form). Adding to the form and matter that creates substance, Aristotle maintains that every thing has a nature, which he calls essence. In other words, every living entity grows from what is called *potentiality*. This is the kernel from which a being has the potential to come: a foetus has the potentiality to become an adult human, not an adult panda. To use to more traditional explanation, an oak tress has the form and matter (the substance) and essence of an oak tree. It cannot be a maple tree, no matter how hard it tries. An acorn has the potentiality to develop into an oak tree; it does not have the potentiality to develop into any other tree. Form (the “spirit”) governs the development. Acorns have the form (the “spirit”) of an oak tree and will therefore grow into an oak tree, not a maple tree. Furthermore, according to Aristotle, all material substance consists of earth, fire, water and air in varying ratios and proportions, with varying degrees of qualities of hot and cold, dry and moist. See: Lawrence Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 14; Margaret J. Osler, *Reconfiguring the World: Nature, God, and Human Understanding from the Middle Ages to Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 6-7; Robert Black, “The Philosopher and Renaissance Culture,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy* ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13, 17-18.

⁴⁸ Fanger, “Introduction,” 2; Versluis and Irwin, “Introduction,” xi.

⁴⁹ Fanger, “Introduction,” 2; Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 90-91.

other words, it reveals not only the existence of parallel (yet interdependent) paths to knowledge, but also sheds light on how these categories danced with each other, sometimes peacefully, sometimes in tension.

Looking at esoteric disciplines in this way—as disciplines that were in fact mainstream during this time—thus helps us begin to grasp the full extent of the lived experiences of this period. Esoteric disciplines were practiced because they worked. Maybe not right away, but someday, in hindsight, perhaps years after the initial ritual or the casting, they worked—otherwise these practices would have died as soon as they were devised or discovered.⁵⁰ While modern skeptics may want to frame the “success” of such rituals in mundane terms, as merely being the outcome of some exercise in subconscious or hypnotic suggestion, the result is the same: a ritual was practiced, a dream was had, and the practitioner gained desired insight as a result.

While the intense concentration prescribed by premodern esoteric rituals mirrors some of the meditative mindfulness techniques practiced today—techniques that have indeed been found to produce mental clarity⁵¹—premodern and current practices should not be conflated; the premodern worldview accepted esoteric disciplines as parts of reality, our worldview does not. Studying esotericism within the context of premodernity thus compels us to accept the limitations of our own personal worldviews and break free of the categorical restraints that we have placed on ourselves and our history. It forces us to accept this milieu on its own terms, not on the terms that we have imposed on it, and also demands that we re-evaluate what we thought we knew and consider dynamics that were previously obscured.

0.2 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

As noted above, this thesis will approach works of demonic ritual magic as narratives that offer us a window into the individual and collective identity-formation of Christians in German-speaking premodern Europe, c1350-c1580. This project is meant to address what I view as a three-pronged problem: 1) we do not always view esotericism (particularly magic) as part of the lived experience of religion in premodernity; 2) the failure to acknowledge esotericism as part of

⁵⁰ Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, 6.

⁵¹ Frank Klaassen, *The Transformation of Magic: Illicit Learned Later Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Magic in History (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2013), 11.

the lived experience of religion in premodernity is rooted in academic apprehensiveness about accepting esoteric texts as valid sources of knowledge about premodern life;⁵² 3) this apprehensiveness prevents us from seeing the value in esoteric texts; from acknowledging that they have much to tell us about the premodern social milieu, and, moreover, much to tell us about the how process of Christian identity-formation unfolded in this social context. My study will be divided into five chapters over two parts, and will be organized in a similar manner to books of premodern magic: the chapters in the first part will lay out my theoretical and methodological framework; the chapters in the second half will focus on the practical application of this framework.

Chapter One lays out the terminologies and context upon which I will build my argument. Here I will provide a general overview of demonology, magic, premodern worldviews, and the perception of Jewish communities in German-speaking lands. As esotericism and the study of magic are nascent disciplines, I believe that it is important for my terminology be defined from the outset to avoid any misunderstandings. Moreover, when looking at questions of identity, it is imperative that the socio-historical context be clear from the outset. Chapters Two and Three will focus on the theoretical and methodological frameworks guiding my project. These chapters are fairly substantial, but I feel the space allotted is fair—I want to provide a framework that can be used by others.

In the second chapter I will articulate a form of narratology that takes some inspiration from cognitive discourse, and combine this with the concept of lived religion to sketch out how demons become social actors through narrative. Here I will also provide an account of how narratives and the social actors they give rise to impact identity-formation. Chapter Two will thus speak about the link between cognitive narratology and identity-formation, with the aim of explaining how a cognitive-inspired framework can help us understand the specific identity-formation under study—that is, Christian identity-formation in the German-speaking lands of premodern Europe. Chapter Three will supplement the discussion provided in Chapter Two with a discussion of alterity and postcolonial theories. As social tensions are a primary driver in identity-formation, and as the narratives of demonic ritual magic I will be examining mirror these social tensions, these theories will help us make sense of what we see going on in the

⁵² This is not to claim that scholars of premodernity must always use esoteric sources in their research. Rather, it is to point out the lacuna in historical analyses of this period that fail to acknowledge the influence esoteric thinking had on many spheres of thought.

primary texts when we turn to our analysis in the second section.

Part II deals with the application of the theoretical framework presented in Chapters Two and Three. The main goal of this section will be to demonstrate the value in engaging with esoteric texts as valid sources of historical knowledge. This will unfold as an analysis of the ways in which the demonology of my primary sources reflects, not only the Christianization of Jewish magical knowledge, but also the desire to control the Jewish alterity and cement the Christian identity as hegemonic. The latter point has guided the way I have chosen to group the texts together in the fourth and fifth chapters: while the fourth chapter traces the move to control Jewish alterity through control of the ritual space, the fifth chapter traces the move to control Jewish alterity by controlling the intellectual space—that is, by circumscribing the theoretical perimeters of magic to privilege the Christian position.

In Chapter Four I will examine three influential works of demonic ritual magic: the anonymously authored *Liber Iuratus Honorii* (*Sworn Book of Honorius*), published sometime in the latter half of the fourteenth century; the anonymously-authored *Munich Manual of Demonic Magic* (better known under its filing, *CLM 849*), published sometime in the fifteenth century, and the pseudonymously authored *Book of Abramelin*, attributed to Abraham of Worms and most likely published sometime in the sixteenth century. I will specifically be interested in demonstrating, first, how the *Sworn Book* appropriates Jewish magical knowledge while simultaneously asserting that the only people truly qualified to wield its magic are pious Christians, and second, how this move can be read in light of the work's emphasis on exorcism. I will then continue my examination of the significance of the themes of Christian piety and exorcism in my discussion of *CLM 849*. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of the *Book of Abramelin*, where we will see how the cycle of appropriation-Christianization-exorcism culminates in the fetishization of the Jewish magician. Throughout the chapter I will be noting what inferences about Christian identity-formation can be drawn from these moves.

Chapter Five will focus on works whose portrayal of demons demonstrates a desire to control Jewish alterity by, as noted above, circumscribing the intellectual perimeters of magic to reflect Christian truths. Here I will look at the figure of Trithemius in his *Steganographia* (1499), specifically focusing on how his magical theology constructs the ideal (and most powerful) practitioner of demonic magic as the pious Christian. I will then analyze Johannes Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517) as an example of Christian kabbalah, which, as the names suggest, is

a Christianization of the Jewish tradition of kabbalah. Following this will be an examination of Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* (1532/3). Here I will demonstrate how Agrippa, through the Christianization of all forms of magical and occult knowledge, attempted to establish Christian dominance over what constituted "legitimate" magical practices, further shoring up the hegemony of Christian identity.

In order to further strengthen my argument I have included an addendum. By applying my theoretical framework to intra-Christian tensions in the sixteenth century—that is to say, by analyzing the social discourses embodied in esoteric texts with respect to the tensions that existed between the broad categories of sixteenth century Catholicism and Protestantism—we can get begin to get a sense of how magic, demons, and social discourse played a role in developing Reformation identity. For this, I will briefly look at Johann Weyer and his *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563), focusing specifically on its famed appendix, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* (1583). Here, we will see that the alterity Weyer shaped his identity in relationship to was not a Jewish one—like the texts investigated in the main body of the thesis—but rather a Catholic one. Because the focus of the social tension in *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* is an outlier to the manuscripts under investigation, I have decided to analyze the work separately.

My conclusion will reflect on how the insights garnered from my analysis link back to my overarching concern, the scholarly tendency of undervaluing the important role these types of narratives play in understanding various religious identities. My aim here will be to provide another perspective into the question of how we look at the past and decide what counts as legitimate sources of knowledge. In doing so, I will attempt to answer the call from Claire Fanger, Wouter Hanegraaff and Richard Kieckhefer to include a greater focus on esotericism in understanding the lived experiences of premodernity; the call from Bruce Lincoln for a greater interest in demonology; the call from Peter Antes and Armin Geertz to take seriously the totality of the socio-historical context framing the lived experiences of the group under study. This, I hope, will broaden the conversation on how we understand and contextualize the lived experience of premodern traditions and cultures.

PART I: CONTEXT AND METHOD

CHAPTER ONE

DEMONS, PHILOSOPHIES, AND MAGIC: THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN DEMONOLOGY, PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS, MAGICS, AND AN OVERVIEW OF GERMANIC PREMODERN EUROPE

As identity, demons and ritual magic are complex categories, it will be important to begin by ensuring that my context is firmly established and the definitions of easily misinterpreted terms are explicated. This explanatory chapter will thus seek to provide the necessary clarifications without detracting from my main analysis. By demarcating the foundations of premodern worldviews and showing the various thoughts patterns, approaches, and perceptions of reality that formed the lived experience of the time, I will not only illustrate the nuanced and multifaceted worldviews that characterized premodernity, but also provide a more concise blueprint for framing the sociocultural tensions at play.

The chapter will begin with a brief overview of the development of Western demonology. More specifically, I will look at how various thought patterns, teachings, and beliefs about demons influenced one another and grew into a robust demonological system that would eventually come to shape social understandings of demons (including perceptions about their threat to human existence). Next, I will look at the major trends of thought that dominated the intellectual landscape of premodern Europe—so, scholasticism, humanism, and neoplatonic philosophy. These trends provide important insights into premodern perceptions of reality, and, accordingly, important insights into how identity was shaped. In other words, by striving to understand the dominant trends of thought at play during this era, we can begin to discuss how demons were used to mirror society's inner tensions—this will set the stage for disusing, in later chapters, how identity was constructed through these tensions. Following this I will look at how magic was conceptualized and used in premodernity. I will begin by providing a working definition of magic and exploring the major types of magic that permeated the sociocultural landscape, and end the section with a discussion of demonic ritual magic specifically. Finally, I will give a brief contextual summary of premodern German-speaking lands in order to situate the project in its socio-cultural context.

1.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN DEMONOLOGY

Stemming from the Greek word *daimōn* (δαίμων), a demon in its most basic form can be defined in a number of ways. Etymologically speaking, a *daimōn* is merely a spirit which can have good, evil or even ambivalent characteristics. In Christian sources they are generally described as occupying the realm of the Earth between Heaven and Hell.⁵³ However, despite playing a prominent role in Christian thought, practice, and daily life, demons were not a strictly Christian invention. As we shall see, understandings of demons—i.e., their roles within the tangible world, their interactions with humans and other transempirical beings,⁵⁴ as well as their larger social and religious significance—are rooted in various sources, including (but not limited to) sources from Greek, Jewish and Islamic traditions.⁵⁵

1.1.1 Early Judaism

Although the Hebrew Bible mentions demons and their role as adversaries, their presence is quite minor and the details about them are few and far between. Genesis 6:1-4 discusses the *sons* of God (Gen 6:2, NRSV, emphasis mine) who mated with mortal women and begot the Nephilim. Although these “heroes that were of old, warriors of renown” (Gen 6:4, NRSV) later came to be associated with the fallen angels that became demons, Genesis does not explicitly indicate that these “sons of God” should be understood as demons—this was the product of later interpretations of the text.⁵⁶

Satan, however, is discussed a number of times, and we get a clearer picture of this figure than we do with demons, who remain a vague species. Derived from the Hebrew word שָׂטָן, Satan simply means “adversary” or “obstructor.”⁵⁷ An example of Satan-as-adversary can be found in the first two chapters of the Book of Job. Here, Satan and God discuss Job, a healthy, wealthy,

⁵³ For example, an *agathos daimōn* (ἀγαθος δαίμων) literally means ‘good spirit,’ an entity that protects the home. See: Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 35-37, 58; Amira El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and Intelligent World of the Jinn* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 20.

⁵⁴ Please see the Introduction for a definition as well as an explanation for the use of the term.

⁵⁵ David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

⁵⁶ Norman Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc, 1975), 62; Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History*, (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 32.

⁵⁷ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 52; Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 28.

and deeply pious man (Job 1:1-5). During this heavenly council Satan suggests that to truly test the faith of Job (and therefore reveal his true nature), he must have his family, livelihood, and health taken away (Job 1:8-12). ‘Satan’ is thus described in a functionary role, as an adversary who tempts people to sin to test their faith (rather than as a means of collecting their souls).⁵⁸ Put differently, Satan here acts as a literal ‘Devil’s advocate’ in proving Job’s piety and faith in God.

It is in the Jewish apocryphal writings (*circa* second century BCE—c100 CE)⁵⁹ that we begin to see more concrete speculations about the origins and role of demons, ideas which would come to greatly influence later developments in demonology.⁶⁰ Perhaps the most influential work stemming from this period is the First Book of Enoch (completed in the first century CE),⁶¹ into which the older Book of Watchers (second century BCE) was eventually incorporated.⁶² Containing sources that would go on to inspire Jewish and later Christian demonologies, the

⁵⁸ Trevor Ling, *The Significance of Satan: New Testament Demonology and Its Contemporary Relevance* (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), 65; Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft: The Development of Christian Beliefs in Evil Spirits* (Garden City NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc, 1968), 5-6; Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 36-37.

⁵⁹ Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 61-62. While considered to be deuterocanonical rather than apocryphal, the Book of Tobit (c225-175 BCE) is also worth mentioning. It names Asmodeus (also Asmodai), who would make an appearance in later Talmudic narratives, notably *Gittin 68* and eventually become one of the princes of hell in Christian demonology (Bernard J. Bamberger, *Fallen Angels* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952), 42; Levack, *The Devil Within*, 51; Leonhard Rost, *Judaism Outside the Hebrew Canon: An Introduction to Documents*, translated by David E. Green (Nashville TN: Abingdon, 1976), 64; Joseph Dan, “Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah,” *AJS Review* 5 (1980), 31; Sara A. Ronis, “Do Not Go Out Alone at Night’: Law and Demonic Discourse in the Babylonian Talmud”, PhD Thesis, (Yale University: New Haven CT, May 2015), 32, 264-266).

⁶⁰ Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 61-62.

⁶¹ II Enoch describes the rebellion of angels, where one angel placed their throne higher than God in order to be equal to God. This angel, along with their followers, were expelled from the heavens (Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 75; David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Satan Abuse in History* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 23; Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 35). For more on the Book of Enoch, see: George W.E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation Based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2004); Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6–16,” in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, edited by Ra’anan S. Boustán and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 47–66, and James C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, edited by James C. VanderKam and William Adler, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* 3.4 (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1996): 33-101.

For a focus on the The Book of Watchers, see David P. Melvin, *The Interpreting Angel Motif in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2013), especially chapter 4; Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: the Reception of Genesis 6:1-4 in Early Jewish Literature* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2015).

⁶² Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 62-63; Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 24; Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), 24.

Book of Enoch—and the Book of Watchers in particular—interprets the “sons of God” as angels, also known as Watchers, whose lust for beautiful mortal women spawned the Nephilim (a race of giants) and caused evil to spread into the world. This caused their expulsion from God’s favour and their becoming “fallen.”⁶³

The Testament of Solomon (*circa* third century CE)⁶⁴ would also become influential source material, serving as a guide for ritual practices and exorcisms, as well as offering a description of how to control demons.⁶⁵ Building upon the narrative found in I Kings 6 and 7, the Testament of Solomon describes how Solomon used demonic forces to build the Temple, and lists: the names of numerous demons, their particular haunts, their specialties, and the angels and protective rituals that could oppose or bind them. Here, then, demons are no longer abstract, but fully fleshed out with individual characteristics and domains ascribed to them. Accordingly, the

⁶³ Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 69; George W.E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation Based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 1-3; Christopher Partridge and Eric Christianson, “Introduction” in *The Lure of the Dark Side: Satan and Western Demonology in Popular Culture*, edited by Christopher Partridge and Eric Christianson, (London: Equinox Publishing, Ltd, 2009), 6; Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 27-28; Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 32-33. Additionally, there are two lists of fallen angels: one lists their names, while the other describes the demonic specialty associated with each (for example, Azaz’el taught humanity how to make swords). It mentions the sin of lust as the direct cause of their expulsion, led by Azaz’el and Semjaza. According to the text, God sent out the four archangels (Michael, Uriel, Raphael and Gabriel) to kill the Nephilim; Aza’el was bound and thrown into darkness, awaiting judgement. Interestingly, although the Book of Watchers names Azaz’el as the one who led the fallen angels to their damnation, it is hinted that it was Satan who tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden (Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 62–63; Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 69, Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent. and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6-16” in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, edited by Ra’anan S. Boustán and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50-53, 55). This theme of evil being perpetuated by the fallen is also present and developed in The Book of Jubilees (*c*150 BCE)—which divides the history of Israel from Genesis to Moses receiving the Law on Sinai into blocks of times of forty-nine years each (called a *Jubilee*)—contains the same origin story of the Nephilim and the fallen angels, with one exception: the leader of the fallen angels is Mastema, who becomes the personification of evil. It is Mastema who is responsible for testing Abraham by encouraging him to sacrifice his son, Isaac, not God (cf. Gen. 22:1-19) (Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 74-5, 91; Levack, *The Devil Within*, 51; Russell, *Prince of Darkness*, 39).

⁶⁴ Dating the Testament of Solomon has been the subject of much debate, with some scholars claiming an earlier scholarship of first century CE to as late as the thirteenth. The majority of scholars however, propose time of composition to have taken place between the mid second to the late third century that also included earlier writings (Todd E. Klutz, *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon: Tradition, Conflict and Identity in a Late Antique Pseudepigraphon*, Library of Second Temple Studies 53 (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 34-35). For more on the Testament of Solomon, see Thomas Scott Cason, “Creature Features□: Monstrosity and the Construction of Human Identity in the ‘Testament of Solomon,’” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, no. 2 (2015): 263-279; Todd E. Klutz, *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon*; Sarah L. Schwarz, “Reconsidering the Testament of Solomon,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 16, no. 3 (May 2007): 203–37 and “Demons and Douglas: Applying Grid and Group to the Demonologies of the Testament of Solomon,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 4 (December 2012): 909–931; P.A. Torrijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

⁶⁵ Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 24-26; Klutz, *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon*, 3-4.

Testament of Solomon indicates that the key to controlling demons lies in knowing their names and properly understanding their unique attributes—this is how Solomon was able to gain dominion over the demons in the upper and lower demonic realms and compel them into helping him build the Temple.⁶⁶

1.1.2 New Testament and Early Christian Literature

While in early Judaism Satan is understood as an adversary and the key to controlling demons lies in knowing their names and unique attributes, these ideas begin to shift a bit in early Christian thinking. Here, Satan becomes an independent figure closely aligned with the personification of evil,⁶⁷ and demons are understood to be his evil minions. The earliest Christians considered demons to be bringers of illness, enemies of Jesus, and adversaries to eternal salvation. They were often discussed in reference to being exorcized, a point that is noted within New Testament literature by virtually every author.⁶⁸ Satan, aided by demons—“unclean spirits”—thus becomes a formidable foe, an enemy of Jesus and his followers who aimed to ruin not only their physical bodies, but their souls as well.⁶⁹ In the New Testament, then, Satan is more than an adversary: he is a tempter and a harbinger of evil (cf. Mt: 4:1-11). However, demons acknowledge Jesus as the more powerful force, and when he commands them they obey (cf. Mt. 3: 28-34; Mk. 5: 1-20; Lk. 8: 26-39). In the New Testament, it is thus faith in Jesus as Christ and words invoking his name that allow the faithful to exorcise demons (cf. Mt. 15: 21-28, 17:14-21; Mk. 7: 24-30, 9:14-29; Lk. 9: 37-49). This New Testament understanding provides the bedrock upon which later demonology was built.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 91; Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 27; Klutz, *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon*, 4-9.

As this project focuses on demonology in premodern Germany, which is heavily influenced by the Latin West’s understanding of demonology, I am refraining from discussing the Greek understanding of demons. For an introduction to Greek demonology, see Chapter Nine of Sze-kar Wan, *Colonizing the Supernatural: How Daimōn Became Demonized in Late Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). Richard P.H. Greenfield’s *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam: Kakert, 1988) provides a rare overview of demonology of Byzantium.

⁶⁷ Ling, *The Significance of Satan*, 1.

⁶⁸ Levack, *The Devil Within*, 52-53.

⁶⁹ Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 63.

⁷⁰ Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 63; Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 69; Katelyn Mesler, “The *Liber iuratus Honorii* and the Christian Reception of Angel Magic”, in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Idea and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, edited by Claire Fanger, (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), 120.

As Christianity became more established, a loose Christian demonology began to develop in the post-Testamental period. While some of the Graeco-Roman gods inevitably became classified as demonic, other demons came from preexisting Jewish demonological lore, which borrowed heavily from earlier Mesopotamian demonology.⁷¹ Demons were seen as numerous and dangerous, prompting many Church fathers, desert fathers,⁷² and authors belonging to non-canonical forms of Christianity to write about them. Such writers described their defining traits, warned readers of their evil agenda and the danger they posed, and provided instructions for protecting oneself from their influence. It was during this time that demons began to play a more crucial role within various cultural groups.⁷³

For example, in introducing Jewish apocryphal theories to early Christian thinking, Justin Martyr (c100-c165) expanded on the belief that demons were created through the union of angels and mortal women—it was their offspring that led humanity away from God, not the fallen angels themselves.⁷⁴ For Tertullian (c155-c240), demons brought physical weakness and illness to the world, and caused famine, pestilence, plagues, infertility, storms and other natural

⁷¹ Levack, *The Devil Within*, 53.

⁷² According to David Brakke, who focused on Christians in Egypt, particularly on the narratives of Desert Fathers, demons played a critical role in shaping the identity of the early monk as a spiritual warrior in God's army, as resisting and fighting demons allowed the monk to assert his faith and his canonical authority. By demonstrating how the discourses about demonology in Desert Fathers' era laid the foundation for the creation of the monk as an identity, Brakke shows how the monk became a spiritual soldier, protecting all Christian believers from the forces of evil. Demons thus became an integral component not only to the identity-forming not only for the monk (particularly within the monastic and canonical environment), but to the lay practitioner as well. See David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁷³ This explosion fascinated scholars in the twentieth century, spawning a number of theories. For example, in his study on the development of demonology and its unique hold on the continued evolution of Christianity in Western Latin Europe, Trevor Ling began to lay the foundation for studying demons and demonology by analyzing and attempting to interpret the role of these transempirical beings within the social and historical context of the New Testament. Ling points out that demons were an important aspect of the New Testament. Demons, according to Ling, did something and were not a "deterioration of pure faith of Yahweh"; rather they were rooted in an apocalyptic worldview. For Ling, apocalyptic demonology was a necessary feature in early Christian thought in order to work out the singular power of God, Jesus and their power over evil. However, the study is slightly problematic. Not only does it universalize Judaism, but it also follows the Weberian model of religious evolution, where Second Temple Judaism is at times implied to be somewhat 'primitive'. Cf Trevor Ling, *The Significance of Satan*, (especially 2, 3, 8, 11).

On the other hand, in the excellent and engaging study conducted by Dayna Kalleres (*City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity*), the idea of the "self" was used as an object for analyzing the human-demonic interaction and its importance in shaping Christianity. Her thesis revolves around the concept that exorcism was used as a way of understanding the very real—even tangible—nature demons played in the world. By looking at three key Christian leaders and how their urban settings shaped urban demonologies, Kalleres investigates how identity is enshrined in the body and its impact in shaping Christian identities within various urban centres.

⁷⁴ Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 105-107; Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft*, 23.

disasters. Their agenda was to turn humanity against God by sowing natural discord and causing people to doubt in the goodness of God.⁷⁵ Origen (c185-c253), on the other hand, wrote that all beings that have intelligence—angels, humans, and demons—and were all created simultaneously from the same material.⁷⁶ Here, demons, angels, and humanity are placed on an equal level. Augustine (354-430) echoes Origen by claiming that, like angels, demons have superior knowledge.⁷⁷ Moreover, through his theology of free will, Augustine averred that it was pride, and not free will, that had caused the angels to fall.⁷⁸

Narratives of exorcism are also prevalent in Early Christian literature.⁷⁹ Demons were believed to be active among Early Christians, and texts from this period reveal that there were mixed opinions regarding how easy it was for a Christian to fall under demonic influence. While numerous sources indicate that the reverent Christian of strong faith was, for the most part, protected, this stance certainly wasn't universal—other sources indicate that Christians could fall under demonic influence regardless of their faith. In any case, Jesus' victory over death gave his followers the power to cast demons out. Early Christian exorcism was relatively simple: announce the name of Jesus and pray (cf. Mt. 15: 21-28, 17:14-21; Mk. 7: 24-30, 9:14-29; Lk. 9: 37-49). However, this simple power over demonic forces began to change, and by the Middle Ages demons become much more prominent, considerably more powerful, and much more involved in the lives of humanity.⁸⁰

1.1.3 Rabbinic and Talmudic Demonology

As demonological systems developed and grew more complex, the question of who had the proper authority and expertise to safely interact with demons began to be debated. The debate that took place within Rabbinic and Talmudic literature will be important to outline—the ideas

⁷⁵ Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, 117-118.

⁷⁶ Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft*, 29-31.

⁷⁷ Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 103.

⁷⁸ Andrew Escobedo, "Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels", *ELH* 75, no. 4 (2008): 791; Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 24.

⁷⁹ Mesler, "The *Liber iuratus Honorii*", 120.

Although Brian Levack's work focuses primarily on demonic possession in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Levack's theory on the meaning behind demonic possession and exorcism is salient. Levack suggests that demonic possessions and the scripts that frames them represented a kind of theatrical performance of the prevailing religious cultures. Played out on the social stage, demonic possessions could be understood as a response to the increased defining of what is proper piety. Levack attempts—and succeeds—to take the beliefs in demons and demonic possession seriously precisely because demonic possessions was taken seriously (Brian Levack, *The Devil Within*).

⁸⁰ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 67-68; Ferguson, *Demonology in the Early Christian World*, 129-131.

that emerged here would come to be a significant influence on premodern Christian demonic ritual magic. In the Talmud demons are referred to as “evil spirits” or “injurers,” and are presented as a given and natural part of the cosmos.⁸¹ Magic is presented as a morally ambiguous force, and it is only Rabbinic experts, well-versed in Torah and Law, who are qualified to interact with demons safely and positively. Despite this qualification, many rabbinic sources still speak about how to protect oneself from demonic influences.⁸²

Intriguingly, the Babylonian Talmud also alludes to demons who are well-versed in the Torah. *Gittin 68* recounts the story of how Solomon bound the demon Ashmedai to help him locate a *shamir*, a fantastical worm that could shape stones to build the Temple. In one passage, some demons state that Ashmedai “goes up to Heaven and studies in the Academy of the sky and then comes down and studies in the Academy of the earth” (*Gittin 68a*).⁸³ The narrative explicitly states that Ashmedai spends his days studying at the Academy, learning the Law and engaging with the wisdom of the Rabbis. Ashmedai accepted the Torah and subsequently converted to Judaism, implying that through Rabbinic knowledge and power (as illustrated by the wisdom enshrined by Solomon), demons could eventually be tamed to worship God and follow the Law.

The narrative in *Gittin 68* thus underscores the authority, power, and wisdom of the Rabbis, by affirming that demons can be controlled to do the bidding of one who possesses the proper faith *and* knowledge.⁸⁴ Later premodern magical texts like the *Sworn Book of Honorius*

⁸¹ Bamberger, *Fallen Angels*, 91, 103.

For more on Rabbinic and Talmudic demonology, see: Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires: “Yetzer Hara” and the Problem of Evil in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Avigail Manekin Bamberger, “An Akkadian Demon in the Talmud: Between Šulak and Bar-Širīqa,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 44 (2013): 282-87; Ronald H. Isaacs, *Ascending Jacob’s Ladder: Jewish Views of Angels, Demons, and Evil Spirits* (Northvale NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1998); Richard Kalmin, “Holy Men, Rabbis, and Demonic Sages in Late Antiquity” in *Jewish Culture and Society under the Christian Roman Empire*, edited by Richard Kalmin and Seth Schwartz (Leuven: Peeters, 2003): 213-249

⁸² Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early World*, 92; Kimberly Stratton, “Imagining Power: Magic, Miracle, and the Social Context of Rabbinic Self-Representation”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* Vol. 73 No. 2 (Jun., 2005): 363.

For an analysis on how the rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud used demons as part of rabbinic legal discourse, see Sara A. Ronis, “Do Not Go Out Alone at Night”: Law and Demonic Discourse in the Babylonian Talmud”, who argues that the use of demons in Second Temple literature indicates an interrelationship between the authors of the text and the Sassanian milieu, and the integration of the elements within the narrative may point to what Ronis describes as the rabbinization of the demonic as part of the Babylonian Talmudic trend to rabbinize the world by subsuming the demonic within the *halakhic* worldview. Therefore, the subjugation and/or exorcism of the demonic demonstrates rabbinic anxieties in bringing the demonic within the system of *halakha*.

⁸³ <https://halakhah.com/rst/nashim/29b%20-%20Gittin%20-%2048b-90b.pdf>. Retrieved on April 2, 2019.

⁸⁴ Ronis, “Do Not Go Out Alone at Night”, 25.

(*Liber Iuratus Honorii*) would echo these same precepts, warning that the true magician must be a person who has absolute faith in God,⁸⁵ is ritually purified, and accepts that the ritual has orthodox merit.⁸⁶

1.1.4 Islamic Demonology

It should come as no surprise that Islamic influences can also be found in Jewish and Christian esoteric thought (particularly their respective demonologies)—Islam is, after all, one of the three Abrahamic traditions, and it also enjoyed a formidable presence in parts of Europe during the Crusades.⁸⁷ It will thus be worthwhile to say a few words about Islamic demonology before moving on.⁸⁸

Unlike Christianity, there is no systematic theology or hierarchy in Islamic demonology.⁸⁹ Islamic traditions include three species of transempirical beings, all of which have roots in pre-Islamic Arabia. These are: angels, jinn (singular: jinni, from the root word “to conceal”),⁹⁰ and demons (*shayatin*, singular *shaytan*).⁹¹ Not only occupied by pre-Islamic Arabs, the Arabian Peninsula was inhabited by “Arab Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, [...] and there was a constant and lively exchange between these religious communities.”⁹² Ergo, angels and demons would have been familiar entities within this cultural space, as would the concept of fallen angels. Understood to have been sent by God, fallen angels would live amongst humans

⁸⁵ And in the case of Christian conjurers, Jesus, who is God.

⁸⁶ Cf. Michael D Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), which looks at the rituals within the Hekhalot literature (especially the Sar-Torah) and its detailed magic to underscore rabbinic authority in the Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages. See especially Chapter 6 for a discussion how the magic demands an exacting ritual purity, thus establishing a distinction of excessively ritually pure practitioners.

⁸⁷ Spain is perhaps the most salient example.

⁸⁸ For more on Islamic demonology, please see: Sarit Shalev-Eyni, “Solomon, his Demons and Jongleurs: the Meeting of Islamic, Judaic and Christian Culture,” *Al-Masaq*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (September 2006): 145-160; Mustafa Öztürk, “The Tragic Story of Iblis (Satan) in the Qur’an,” *Journal of Islamic Research* Vol 2 No 2 (December 2009): 128-144. For a discussion on the nature of evil and Iblis, see: Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, “The Death and Life of the Devil's Son: A Literary Analysis of a Neglected Tradition,” *Studia Islamica* Vol. 107, No. 2 (2012): 157-183. Amira El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and Intelligent World of the Jinn* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009) discusses the jinn in Classical Islam, as it is an integral concept to the religion, especially in understanding its cosmology (12-13).

⁸⁹ Mustafa Öztürk, “The Tragic Story of Iblis (Satan) in the Qur’an,” *Journal of Islamic Research* 2, no. 2 (December 2009): 134.

⁹⁰ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 14.

⁹¹ Pierre Lory, “Sexual Intercourse Between Humans and Demons in the Islamic Tradition” in *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 50; Öztürk, “The Tragic Story of Iblis,” 134.

⁹² Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 93.

and take on human guises. They would intimately interact with people, including engaging in sexual intercourse with them. In fact, the founder of the Jurhum tribe (who controlled Mecca for a long period of time), was rumoured to be child of a fallen angel and a human woman.⁹³

The second kind of transempirical being, the jinn, is perhaps the most misunderstood. Within the Arab Muslim tradition, jinn are understood to be independent transempirical beings with free will—they are neither angels nor demons.⁹⁴ As part of the universe created before humanity, the bodies of the jinn are made of very fine material (smokeless fire and air), making it almost impossible for humans to perceive them physically. However, their interactions on the human plane can be observed by one who is trained to see.⁹⁵ Jinn mirror the human world—they follow various religions and live in tribes—and are not all evil. Like humans, jinn are intelligent beings: they have the responsibility to uphold religious law, and, as a result of their free will, are responsible for their actions and answerable to God.⁹⁶ As such, like humans, jinn can chose to do great evil, and fall sway to the enticements of Iblis and his progeny, *shayatin*.⁹⁷

There is much speculation on the origins of *shayatin*. While the Qur'an provides scant clues, most Muslim commentators claim that they were spawned by Iblis, who is often conflated with—and is called—Satan.⁹⁸ Permitted by God to exist in order to tempt humanity, Iblis is the source of much discussion, especially on his nature.⁹⁹ While some Islamic commentators maintain that Iblis was a chief in the angelic army (and as an angel, was therefore made of light), others claim that he was a jinn made of fire. According to Sūrah 17:61, Iblis was an angel who refused to bow down to Adam at the request of God. As a guardian of paradise who possessed great knowledge, Iblis would strike Adam, who would echo as his body was made of clay. In

⁹³ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 93-94. In Islamic tradition, the tribe also provided refuge to Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, and Ishmael married a Jurhamite woman.

⁹⁴ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 21-22.

⁹⁵ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 22, 49-51, 71-72, 79, 89; Cf. Sūrah 6:128-130.

⁹⁶ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 49, 57-58; Lory, "Sexual Intercourse", 51. There are some interesting parallels with Ashmedei and the Talmudic narrative of his studying Law at the Heavenly Academy (*Gittin 68a*), cf previous section.

⁹⁷ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 66. Some Muslim commentators maintain that both jinn and demons will whisper to humans in order to tempt them to sin, whereas others posit that it is Satan (that is, Iblis) who entices both humans and jinn. It is, as Al-Zein discusses, a reasoning to show that evil can arise from both humans and jinn, while emphasizing that both species are capable of good (66), thus underscoring the concept of free, a notion that is foundational in Judaism and Christianity.

⁹⁸ Öztürk, "The Tragic Story of Iblis," 128; Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, "The Death and Life of the Devil's Son: A Literary Analysis of a Neglected Tradition," *Studia Islamica* Vol. 107, No. 2 (2012): 161n12.

⁹⁹ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 108.

time, Iblis grew “arrogant and haughty. He rebelled and was ungrateful to God who transformed him into a cursed devil, *shaytan*.”¹⁰⁰

Sūrah 7:12-13, on the other hand, describes Iblis as a jinn (and therefore made of fire). When asked by God to bow down before Adam, Iblis refused to do so, claiming that as he is created of fire and Adam of clay, he is more superior than Adam.¹⁰¹ Some Muslim scholars attempted to reconcile the two separate aetiologies by stating that some angels were created out of light and others out of fire. Other commentators, however, maintained that when young, Iblis (a jinn) was rescued by angels during a battle between jinn and angels, and grew up amongst angels. It was when he refused to obey God and bow down to Adam that his jinn nature was revealed.¹⁰²

Through his sin Iblis became the image of evil and created the *shayatin*. Defined as “adversary” or “distant” (that is, distant from the mercy of God), *shayatin* are understood to be invisible beings of pure evil, dying only when Iblis dies. Additionally, as Öztürk notes, the Qur’an mostly discusses the *shayatin* in the plural form, “as a quality of both men and jinn.”¹⁰³ This suggests that the *shayatin* should not only be understood as entities of pure evil, but also as an adjective for evil characteristics, rather than separate, independent creatures.¹⁰⁴ Iblis, and the creatures he created, thus becomes the embodiment of evil and sin.

Because of their completely evil nature,¹⁰⁵ *shayatin*—unlike other beings of creation—cannot have any free will. The purpose of the *shaytan*’s existence is thus to attack humanity by causing misfortune, spreading evil, and creating witches (however, by uttering *basmala*¹⁰⁶ one could protect oneself). Additionally, a *shaytan* is incapable of harming anyone during Ramadan, as they are bound in hell (*Jahannam*) during the holy month.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 108-109, quoting Ibn ‘Arabi, *Tafsir al-qur’an al-karim* (Beirut: Dar al-yaqazah, 1968), 1:40.

¹⁰¹ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 111.

¹⁰² Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 112-113. On the other hand, Sufis maintained that Iblis’ refused to bow down to Adam because he would only prostrate himself to God alone, though some Sufi philosophers (namely Najm al-din al-Razi) suggested that this refusal was due to the fact that Iblis stole from the Divine Records, reading Adam’s fate. Iblis was therefore punished for the theft (109-110).

¹⁰³ Öztürk, “The Tragic Story of Iblis,” 135.

¹⁰⁴ Öztürk, “The Tragic Story of Iblis,” 135.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Zein, *Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 20; Öztürk, 134-135.

¹⁰⁶ A phrase, “In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”, that is uttered in order to receive blessings from God, and is used in everyday Muslim life (such as in the preparation of halal food).

¹⁰⁷ Öztürk, “The Tragic Story of Iblis,” 134-135.

1.1.5 Medieval Christian Canonical Demonology

Although Judaism and Early Christianity created the blueprints of demonology, it was only during the Middle Ages that the study and use of demons truly flourished.¹⁰⁸ Accordingly, narratives about them flourished during this time as well. The fall of angels—a topic involving the themes of free will, pride, sin, and love—became a specific topic of focus amongst Christian canonical theologians. Although Early Church Fathers disagreed on the reason for this fall and the exact sin that precipitated it, they were at least able to reach the following consensus: since God created demons, and since everything that God created was good, demons could not have been created by God as entities that embodied pure evil¹⁰⁹—ergo, they must have fallen from grace as a result of some sin.

In the twelfth century, Aristotelian thought—brought to Western Europe through the mediation of Jewish and Islamic rationalism—increased in circulation, sparking a renewed interest in demons and their powers.¹¹⁰ This renewed interest is apparent in a number of publications from this century. In his *Libri Quatuor Sententiarum* (*Four Books of Sentences*), influential thinker Peter Lombard (1100-1160) affirms that demons were created by God. However, this does not mean they are redeemable—in his second book of *Sententiarum*, distinction 7, Lombard states that once Satan and his minions fall there can be no chance for their redemption. In other words, they are eternally damned creatures whose respective natures are frozen for all of eternity with no possibility for growth.¹¹¹

Richalmus (*d*1219), another twelfth century thinker, wrote that the *crème de la crème* of demons inhabit the air and relay their instructions down to the lesser demons who populate the Earth. Here, demons are described as being filled with hostility towards humanity and God, and

¹⁰⁸ Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 1, 24; Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 26.

¹⁰⁹ For example, in the early eighth century, John of Damascus wrote *De Fide Orthodoxa*, in which he opined that demons have only the power granted by God. Though neither angels nor demons can predict the future, angels, at least, have been granted foresight, as God tells them what to say. Demons, on the other hand, have no access to God, and therefore are reliant on their keen intellect, which may at times appear as a power of prediction (Clark, *Thinking With Demons*, 41-42).

¹¹⁰ Levack, *The Devil Within*, 58.

¹¹¹ Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 60.

Lombard additionally noted that while angels and demons may seem like they can create things *ex nihilo*, the ability to create something out of something is exclusive to God. In reality, other creatures can only work with the materials God has already provided, with transempirical beings simply being able to use finer materials and manipulate them more skilfully than humans (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 21-22).

are characterized as being particularly intent on snatching the souls of priests, monks, nuns, and other holy persons.¹¹² In a similar vein, Caesarius of Heisterbach (c1180-c1240) described the demonic hierarchy as a parallel of the angelic one. Heisterbach believed that God gave demons free-reign to tempt, but with one significant proviso: they cannot actually force a person to sin.¹¹³ It is here that we can begin see how demons were used to promote the concept of free will.

The framework for the great scholastic thinkers was thus set in motion: a legion of angels became demons when they abused their divinely given free will; they were now on a quest to use humanity's free will to manipulate them and drive them to the dark side. Yet, as of the 1200s, demonology was still in its infancy. It would take fifty more years for Aquinas (1225-1274), and Bonaventure (1221-1274) to develop "thorough, systematic, comprehensive angelologies that addressed all of the major natural and metaphysical issues concerning angels"¹¹⁴—and, by extension, demons.

According to Bonaventure, because demons committed the sin of pride in their desire to be equal to God, they are condemned to torture the souls of the damned in Hell for all eternity. He asserted that the fall of demons unequivocally proved that both humans and angels possessed free will. Angels who remained faithful to God did so out of their love for God, and not out of compulsion or an inability to choose. Bonaventure's logic is as follows: if angels did not possess free will, God would have ultimately been responsible for the rebel angels' expulsion, and their sin would have been God's fault.¹¹⁵ Having accepted the doctrine of hylomorphism¹¹⁶ as

¹¹² Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 71-72.

¹¹³ Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 70.

¹¹⁴ Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 113.

¹¹⁵ Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 24, 105.

¹¹⁶ Hylomorphism (from the Greek ὕλη *hyle*, "wood" or "matter" and μορφή, *morphē*, "form", therefore literally "matter-form"), a concept first proposed by Aristotle, is the theory that every living thing (called substance) has a form (often called a "spark") and a matter. The matter is the flesh, so to speak, whereas the form is that which causes the matter to be alive. Aristotle elaborates his theory by providing what would become a well-known example: A bronze sphere and a bronze horse are both composed of the same material (that is, matter), yet are of two different shape. The bronze (matter) needs the shape of the roundness (form) in order to be a sphere. To extend this metaphor even further, the bronze of Aristotle's statue is the raw flesh of a human being. That flesh has the potentiality of a human, but it is not human. The soul (that is, the form), on the other hand, is that which animates the flesh, giving it life. The composition of soul and flesh, that is, form and matter, is what makes a human being a human being. The form and matter are not spatially separated, but rather integrated into one single substance, in this case, the human. (Theodore E. James, "Introduction", in *The Fountain of Life (Fons Vitae)* by Solomon Ibn Gabirol, translated by Harry E. Wedeck (New York: BiblioBazaar, 2008), 1; Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 94; Idit Dobbs-Weinstein, "Jewish Philosophy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A.S. McGrade, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 126-127); Gordon P. Barnes, "The Paradoxes of Hylomorphism" *The Review of Metaphysics* Vol. 56, No. 3 (Mar., 2003): 501-523).

developed by the Jewish philosopher Solomon Ibn Gabirol (c1020-1070)—then believed to be either a Muslim Arab or a Christian Arab¹¹⁷—Bonaventure believed that every living being must be composed of matter and spirit; angels and demons thus had to have elements of both, as nothing could exist without matter. Pure spirit was reserved for God alone.¹¹⁸

Aquinas, also called the Angelic Doctor, was one of the most prominent scholars to synthesize various canonical traditions and doctrines within an Aristotelian framework.¹¹⁹ An important contribution by Aquinas is his treatment of the issue of the original rank of Lucifer.¹²⁰ He writes that the sin of angels did not occur at the moment of their creation, because they would not have had time to truly understand their nature.¹²¹ In other words, although they had the gift of free will, to act spontaneously on it and choose evil right away wouldn't make sense—as God created everything to be good, demons had to at least spend a little time being good before they choose to sin.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Cathars argued that Satan was the source of all things evil, including the physical world itself. The Fourth Lateran Council (1213-1215) categorically denounced this teaching as heretical,¹²² thus reaffirming the Nicene Council's

¹¹⁷ Born in Malaga Spain and Latinized as “Avicbron”, Solomon Ibn Gabirol developed the idea that all beings are form and matter and were fully involved in one single metaphysical system. According to him, only God can exist in pure form without any matter. All creation, on the other hand, had to be comprised of both, or else it wouldn't be able to exist, causing much debate on the physical nature of angels and demons (James, “Introduction”, 7-10; Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 94–95; Jacob Klausner, “The Philosophy of the *Fons Vitae*: Jewish Pantheism,” trans. Leonard Levin in *The Fountain of Life (Fons Vitae)* by Solomon ben Judah Ibn Gabirol (Avicbron), originally translated by Alfred B. Jacob, revised by Leonard Levin (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 2005), v-xviii; William Turner, “Avicbron”, Catholic Encyclopedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02156a.htm>).

¹¹⁸ However, Bonaventure also argued that angels and demons were bodiless—though, this did not mean that they were not composed of some sort of matter. After all, demons are capable of producing progeny by “assuming the form of a woman, having sexual intercourse with a man, preserving his semen, assuming the form of a man, and depositing the now demonic semen into a woman”. For this unusual artificial insemination to occur, demons had to have some form to manipulate in order to disguise themselves as humans (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 33; Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 67).

¹¹⁹ Levack, *The Devil Within*, 58-59.

¹²⁰ Aquinas debated whether or not Lucifer was a cherub (characterized by knowledge) or a seraph (burning love for God), the two ranks often associated with the fallen angel. Aquinas continues that while pride would most likely strike the most exalted of angels (seraphim), he acknowledges that they are incompatible with the notion of sin because of their intense love for God and therefore suggests that Satan was originally a cherub (which was first proposed in Ezek. 28: 14) (Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 25).). Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, Prima Pars, Question.63, article 7, Reply to Objection I.

¹²¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Prima Pars, question 63, art. 5.

¹²² Heresy: transgressive against the Christian faith and its sacraments, as defined by the body of Christian authority.

position that God is the sole source of all good things, including the physical world.¹²³ The Fourth Lateran Council also proclaimed that fallen angels were in fact demons, that their leader was the Devil, and as everything created by God was good, any evil was the result of choice. In other words, demons exercised their free will and chose to become demons.¹²⁴ The overt and directed concern with demons as agents of pure evil that developed between c1280 and c1330 eventually evolved into a demonological belief system which justified and facilitated the persecution of witches.¹²⁵

1.2 PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEWS OF PREMODERN WESTERN EUROPE: AN OVERVIEW

Premodernity (particularly the Medieval era) is popularly perceived as a time of theological and intellectual inflexibility and stagnation, when the Catholic Church ruled over both secular and religious spheres with an iron fist, and used the threat of excommunication or being burnt alive at the stake to keep both king and commoner in line.¹²⁶ However, in order to fully appreciate the nuanced and varied thoughts that comprised the intellectual and cultural fabric of premodernity, it will be necessary to present a brief overview of the dominant philosophical approaches of this era. While today we may associate premodernity in general as being informed by scholasticism, other philosophical approaches were studied and accepted by

¹²³ Keck, *Angels and Angelology*, 22; Levack, *The Devil Within*, 59.

¹²⁴ Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology*, *The History of Civilization*, (London: Kegan Paul; 1926), 51-52.

¹²⁵ A point that was noted by Alain Boureau was a conflict of power between the secular and religious courts as well as between the pope and monarch for temporal control, coinciding with the rise of urbanization as a major source in the development of demonology in Western Europe. Through his exploration of the tension between the secular and religious powers, Boureau often focuses on the development of a scholastic Christian demonology; tremendously influential, particularly the theological blame and the deleterious consequences for the Jewish communities (Alain Boureau, *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006) 3-6, 96-99, 201-206). Walter Stephens, in his *Demon Lovers*, echoes Alain Boureau in his statement that witchcraft “was a direct outgrowth of thirteenth-century angelology and demonology”. He continues that the theory of witchcraft and demonology became a symbiotic relationship in the fifteenth century. Late Medieval and early Renaissance witchcraft was a product of thirteenth century demonology, and it was in the latter centuries that the two truly began to mutually influence each other. In this relationship surfaced a need to work through apparent contradictions in Christian doctrines, particularly those parts relating to demons. Demons—specifically, relationships with demons—became a mode to resolve these contradictions and a means to prove the existence of God (Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 27).

¹²⁶ For an amusing look at the various contemporary (mis)conceptions about premodernity, Régine Pernoud, a mediaeval historian, wrote *Pour en finir avec le Moyen Age* (1977), translated in English as *Those Terrible Middle Ages!: Debunking the Myths*. Written for a general audience, the book is nonetheless a well sourced, tongue in cheek deconstruction on a variety of prevalent “alt-facts” regarding the pre-Enlightenment era.

universities and religious and theological circles.¹²⁷ As Bejczy points out, the concept of *tolerantia*—often believed to be a product of the Enlightenment’s intent to preserve individual freedom—was not only a part of the medieval canonical doctrine, but also reflected a certain lived reality. Bejczy speculates that the idea of *tolerantia* may have represented an attempt to “bridge” canonical Catholic doctrine—which was still the subject of furious debate and intense discussion within the various theological circles¹²⁸—with the reality and everyday life of premodern societies, indicating intercultural co-existence and discourse among the various communities. While those communities and attitudes that fell outside of the strictures of canonical doctrine were often disliked and were certainly criticized or talked about, they were nevertheless tolerated.¹²⁹ In 1140, *Decretum Gratiani*, an influential collection of canon law, decreed that if “evil cannot be purged without the disturbing the peace of the Church, it should be tolerated.”¹³⁰ As Bejczy points out, “disturbing the peace of the Church” came to mean “whatever is contrary to the Christian (and papal) understanding of natural law.” Furthermore, in 1240s, Pope Innocent IV decreed that even though the pope has universal papal jurisdiction, there are some “violations” against natural law that should not be punished, as the punishment itself might be unjust. In other words, a space was created within the canonical and papal doctrinal reality for diverging worldviews and approaches to reality, indicating that the sociocultural spheres in which the institution played a role was more fluid and varied than commonly imagined.¹³¹

¹²⁷ James Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, edited by James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 36.

¹²⁸ As understood by canonical theologians who studied under the auspices of the papal Christian institution, which, it must be noted, was not filled with uniform or monolithic thought, but was rather a dynamic space that saw various theological debates (István Bejczy, “*Tolerantia*: A Medieval Concept”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, no. 3 (1997): 367). It bears repeating that there was no unified canonical theological point of view. Ruth Mazo Karras, in her study of the Medieval treatments of sexuality, reiterates that there was no consensus amongst canonical theologians on the virtues of chastity or immoral sexuality, an observation that extends to all points of canonical debates on everyday premodern existence, including in this case, magic and demons (Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (London: Routledge, 2017), 64).

¹²⁹ Interestingly enough, non-believers enjoyed some measure of tolerance. Bailey, “The Age of Magicians”, 7; Bejczy, “*Tolerantia*”, 365, 380.

¹³⁰ Bejczy, “*Tolerantia*”, 368-369. This included Jewish ritual practices.

¹³¹ This concept was also expounded by Hostiensis (c1200–1271) and Johannes Andreae (c1270–1348). Two examples of social communities that would fall under this concept would be Jewish communities and guilds of prostitutes, both which fell under the jurisdiction of *tolerantia*. While not accepted per se, “these communities were tolerated as a necessary evil, and their perceived sinful acts remained unpunished” (Bejczy, “*Tolerantia*”, 368-70). For a discussion on prostitution guilds in premodernity, please see Vern Bullough and James A Brundage, editors,

Characteristically then, debates between various approaches to Christian theology (including scholasticism, humanism, nominalism, Scotism, and medieval realism) frequently occurred in both publicly and within the papal courts. As Bejczy pointed out, if not for the idea of *tolerantia*, these discussions would never have taken place.¹³² This does not mean that all theologies, philosophies, and approaches to Christianity and/or God were uniformly accepted, rather that heretics who were seen as *actively* corrupting or attacking the core Christian doctrines were more often singled out for punishment.¹³³ If the canonical and papal circles—whose prime goal was to preserve an approach and interpretation of Christian truth as they understood it—incorporated a concept of tolerance into their ideology, and if the concept of *tolerantia* represented an attempt to bridge the ideal canonical theological reality with the lived, social, cultural reality, then logic would suggest that multiple worldviews and philosophical strands of thoughts interacted and played out within the social and intellectual space.¹³⁴

1.2.1 Scholasticism

Dominating much of the intellectual thought in much of the Middle Ages—particularly in universities, which were formally established in the late eleventh century—scholasticism is strongly associated with monastic and theological insights. However, this is perhaps an oversimplification. While Christian scholasticism did first develop within a monastic setting during the Carolingian Renaissance in the eighth century, scholasticism was an academic framework of learning that emphasized dialectic reasoning and resolving contradictions within a particular topic. This philosophical approach aimed to create order: by combining and organizing traditional writings, and applying rational analysis, it was thought one could bring about social and intellectual order and a “harmony between natural and divine laws” within chaotic congeries of information.¹³⁵

Science was seen as a study of the laws that govern the natural universe. As laws offered proof of God and were therefore a reflection of God’s divine power, theology was understood to

Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church and Leah L. Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in the Languedoc*.

¹³² Bejczy, “*Tolerantia*,” 376.

¹³³ Bailey, “The Age of Magicians,” 7; Bejczy, “*Tolerantia*,” 377; Richard Kieckhefer, “The Office of Inquisition and Medieval Heresy: The Transition from Personal to Institutional Jurisdiction,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 46 no. 1 (1995): 46.

¹³⁴ Black, “The Philosopher and Renaissance Culture,” 26.

¹³⁵ Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 34.

be “the queen of the sciences.” As nature was ordered, so too should humanity seek to organize itself. Aristotelian thought, with its emphasis on natural philosophy, order, and hierarchy, thus became a focus of study, and through its application the scholastic scholar could reveal the rational and logical order of the universe. Despite the Greek philosopher’s prominence, however, his claim that the universe was eternal was criticized by the mediaeval scholastic philosopher, who maintained only God was eternal—the universe was created.¹³⁶

In the twelfth century, Western and Central Europe expanded, and new political systems emerged. Scholasticism continued to develop and refine its pedagogical approach through the melding of Roman law with ecclesiastical norms. Debate became the preferred *modus operandi* for creating order through the reconciliation of seemingly irreconcilable thoughts. Problems were identified, objections anticipated, and their replies thought out, and answers were developed that could withstand a close and intense dissection.¹³⁷

Between c1190 and c1230, universities were highly regulated by the Church, and this was reflected in the scholastic writings that were produced at this time. Students were treated as minor clergy and placed under a licensed and proven master. Reading lists were regulated and were done publicly, under supervision. Through its control of institutions, the Church thus sought to control knowledge itself. It is perhaps unsurprising that this was a time of the so-called great heretical crackdown conducted by the Christian Church.¹³⁸ With such a focus on intellectual rigour and academic excellence, it is perhaps also unsurprising that it was during this time that the *Ars Notoria*—an angelic invocative ritual¹³⁹ text based on Solomonic magic¹⁴⁰ used to increase mental agility—gained popularity, particularly amongst university students.

¹³⁶ Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 34-35; Weeks, *German Mysticism*, 126-127.

¹³⁷ Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 32-33.

¹³⁸ Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 33-34. .

¹³⁹ I will be using the term “invocative ritual magic” as a subset of ritual magic, to describe the type of ritual magic in which the primary purpose of the ritual magic is to invoke a transempirical being. While many ritual magic either has an element of invocation, my research indicates that not all ritual magic, regardless if a transempirical being is invoked or not, has the primary aim of conjuring a transempirical being, which implies an element of superiority who is doing the conjuration, has the implications of “black” magic, and there is perception that the conjured being is physically brought into this realm, a point which cannot be illustrated. Furthermore, invocation should be contrasted with “calling upon” a transempirical being. Not all calls are invocations; occasionally a call is made simply to aid in protection, or to provide strength, but the being is not called upon to manifest in some way. In other words, if the goal of the ritual magic is to invoke a transempirical being to manifest in some way, then the ritual magic would be designated as “invocative”. Not all ritual magic is invocative, but all invocative ritual magic is ritual magic.

¹⁴⁰ Solomonic magic is the type of invocative ritual magic that is attributed to, or inspired by, Solomon, claiming that the rituals were practiced by the king. For more on Solomonic magic, see: Julien Véronèse, "God's Names and

By the fourteenth century, however, philosophy was becoming secularized, especially in Italian universities where Christian religious authorities began to loosen their hold over the curricula. Diverse philosophical innovations concerned with more than proving and creating order began to emerge. While some branches of philosophy continued in the Aristotelian tradition, others veered away from it, and some were considered to be incompatible with Christian doctrine altogether. With the rediscovery and circulations of Classical literature, and reintroduction of neoplatonic thought, humanism emerged on the scene, and scholasticism was forced to redefine itself.¹⁴¹

1.2.2 Humanism

First arising in the thirteenth and fourteenth century among Paduan lawyers, Renaissance humanism focused on Greek and Roman literature and philosophy.¹⁴² Humanists emphasized the cultivation of individual and social wisdom and piety through rhetoric, poetry, and philology, in order to become better humans and more responsible citizens. As Graeco-Romans were seen as paragons of civic duty, morality, and wisdom, humanists believed that through the proper study of their art, philosophy, and literature, one could create a pedagogical approach that would promote virtue, civic duty, and eloquence—thus producing model citizens. In other words, humanism believed that it was a study of texts, languages, rhetoric, and morality that would form the basis of proper, righteous living. The focus became, not on direct salvation, but on living well in wisdom and (especially) in piety in order to strengthen God’s favour.¹⁴³

One of the most influential foundational figures in humanism was Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), better known as Petrarch. Critiquing scholasticism’s heavy reliance on Aristotle, as well as its claim of infallibility, Petrarch argued that philosophy should not be seen as a single

Their Uses in the Books of Magic Attributed to King Solomon,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 5, no. 1 (2010): 30-50 and Stephen Clucas, “John Dee’s Angelic Conversations and the *Ars Notoria*: Renaissance Magic and Mediaeval Theurgy,” in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, Religious Studies International Archives of the History of Ideas Archives/ Internationales d'histoire des idées (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006): 231–273.

¹⁴¹ Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 38-39.

¹⁴² Jonathan Arnold, *The Great Humanists: An Introduction*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 2; John Edwards, *The Jews in Christian Europe 1400-1700*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 42; Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 30-31.

For a treatment of the relationship between humanism and science, see Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: the Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450-1800* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991). For most on Italian humanism from the perspective of humanists, see Patrick Baker, *Italian Renaissance Humanism in the Mirror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

¹⁴³ Arnold, *The Great Humanists*, 2-3; Hankins, “Introduction,” 4; William Schweiker, “Humanizing Religion,” *The Journal of Religion* 89, no. 2 (2009): 221.

point of truth but rather as a source of wisdom. One should not depend on philosophical authorities as the sole source of truth—especially if they are non-Christian—as they, Petrarch claims, are inevitably missing portions of the truth, as all humans are fallible, and therefore make mistakes. Therefore, clinging to a single source of truth—and, especially, as a single philosopher as the giver of truth—is ridiculous. The seeker should therefore study diverse sources for truth, wisdom, and inspiration, in order to strengthen one’s (Christian) piety.¹⁴⁴

By reviving Classical literature, Petrarch attempted to challenge the increasingly dominant scholastic pedagogy, which he regarded as “dogmatic, excessively technical, useless, impious and (worst of all), French”,¹⁴⁵ implicitly drawing a parallel to the University of Paris, and accusing it of impiety.¹⁴⁶ Scholasticism cannot provide a genuinely happy life, as it is concerned with the intellect rather than the will, and does not devote adequate focus to the living of a good and virtuous life. Therefore, according to Petrarch, in order to break free of the narrow confines of the scholastic approach, one should read literature in order to gain knowledge, virtue, and eloquence. Truth, for the humanist, was already embodied in Christianity, and expressed through the Christian’s commitment to the faith. Finding and embodying truth was a matter of gaining inspiration from the art, literature, philosophy, and virtuous worldview of the Classical world, in order to live a pious and moral Christian life. Through the humanist pedagogy, one could revive this lost Golden Age, and create that ancient utopia anew.¹⁴⁷

Though humanism was primarily concerned with civic affairs¹⁴⁸, it influenced religious thought and practice. While most humanist philosophers did not reject the Roman Catholic Church, humanism did help to pave the way for the Reformation through its emphasis of *ad fontes*¹⁴⁹, which became a defining characteristic of the Reformation movement.¹⁵⁰ However, while Reformers and humanists both sought to strengthen Christian piety in face of decaying

¹⁴⁴ Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 40-41.

¹⁴⁵ James Hankins, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

¹⁴⁶ It is intriguing to note that the University of Paris was the seat of not only nominalism, but also was where Jean Gerson claimed his anti-magic position, contradicting the prevalent understanding of magic at the time.

¹⁴⁷ Hankins, “Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy,” 34, 42-43.

¹⁴⁸ Creating and contributing to a civil social through public service

¹⁴⁹ Literally “[Back] to the source”; a return to the primary source.

¹⁵⁰ Arnold, *The Great Humanists*, 8-9.

morality and to loosen the Roman Catholic Church's control over education, many humanists opposed the Reformation on the grounds that the movement was, in their eyes, closed minded.¹⁵¹

According to humanist theological philosophy, Christian sources teach us the truth about God, the human soul, and the nature of creation. But while these sources can help us discover answers for existential questions, they do not affect the *humanitas*, the human quality of existence, which pertains to intelligence, human morality, human will, and human virtue through eloquence. Humanism focuses on the human being, understood as occupying a space between the earthly/animalistic nature and the heavenly/angelic natures of a human being. Therefore, through Graeco-Roman literature and thought, which exemplified this balance of *humanitas*, we can through the virtue of language, cultivate a love for ethics and goodness and an aversion towards hatred and evil. It is through proper, moral, virtuous life that we can fulfil God's will and truly live according to God's truth.¹⁵²

Like scholasticism, humanism was not merely a philosophy; it was a pedagogical approach in order to produce civic-minded citizens. It emphasized moral philosophy over metaphysics, focusing on the *trivium* of the *septem artes liberales*.¹⁵³ The study of languages gained prominence: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin were studied in order to properly understand the various texts, allowing the philologist to understand the core truth of Christian faith through linguistics. Eloquence was emphasized; as truth was considered to be beautiful, and grammar and rhetoric were believed to be the full expression of the truth, eloquence became the way that truth could be properly expressed.¹⁵⁴

1.2.3 Renaissance Neoplatonic Thought

In the late fifteenth century, humanism began to permeate esoteric thoughts, particularly after the integration with Renaissance neoplatonic thought by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) and

¹⁵¹ J.M. van der Laan, "Introduction," in *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faust*, ed. J.M. van der Laan and Andrew Weeks, (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2013), 6-7; Andrew Weeks, "The German Faustian Century," in *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faust*, ed. J.M. van der Laan, and Andrew Weeks, (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2013), 19, 20.

¹⁵² Hankins, "Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy," 32, 43-44.

¹⁵³ *Septem artes liberales*, or "the seven liberal arts." They are the seven disciplines of the medieval curriculum, composed of two groupings, the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics/logic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). While mastery of the seven subjects was essential in acquiring the necessary degree, the *quadrivium* was considered to be more difficult and was taught after the completion of the *trivium*.

¹⁵⁴ Arnold, *The Great Humanists*, 4-6.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494).¹⁵⁵ Theorizing that one is able to rise beyond the material body into the eternal, Ficino, like many other Christian neoplatonists of his time, emphasized the notion of unity between the macro and microcosms, its integration within the human soul, and its effects on the human body.¹⁵⁶

According to the neoplatonic worldview, the universe is a macrocosm comprising three realms: the super-celestial, the celestial, and the natural/earthly, which themselves represent the intellect, the soul, and the body, respectively. The super-celestial sphere transmits itself through the celestial realm via virtues into material beings, creating a path between the three realms.¹⁵⁷ On the outside of this universe sits God. All three realms are united and reflective of God's divine creation. This macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm of all things that live, with each living entity having a body, a form of intellect/instinct, and a soul/spark of life. Because humanity was created in the image of God, humans were seen as a perfect microcosm of God's creation, containing within themselves all three reflections of the universe: a body (material), a soul (celestial), and intelligence (super-celestial).¹⁵⁸ Humans have the potential to realize that unity of the three realms, because they inherently contain all three realms within themselves. Therefore, with proper applications and methods, one could uncover the secrets and the knowledge hidden by God, in order to better understand God.

Embedded in this macro-microcosm universe was a concept of intelligences/virtues, which included demons. Because the neoplatonic worldview relied on the notion of reflection (that is everything has a counterpart in another realm), each demon had a heavenly compeer.¹⁵⁹ For neoplatonists, magic was not necessarily used to control transempirical beings, but to trigger a reaction from a particular realm. Through ritual magic, one could uncover and stimulate the

¹⁵⁵ Arnold, *The Great Humanists*, 6.

For more on Renaissance neoplatonic thought, see: James D. Heiser, *Prisci Theologi and the Hermetic Reformation in the Fifteenth Century* (Malone TX: Repristination Press, 2011); Nesca A. Robb, *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Octagon Books, 1968); Hyun-Ah, Kim, "“Music of the Soul” (Anima Musica): Marsilio Ficino and the Revival of Musica Humana in Renaissance Neoplatonism,” *Reformation & Renaissance Review: Journal of the Society for Reformation Studies* 19, no. 2 (July 2017): 122–34.

¹⁵⁶ Arnold, *The Great Humanists*, 6; Brian P. Copenhaver, “How To Do Magic, and Why: Philosophical Prescriptions” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, edited by James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 137-138.

¹⁵⁷ Newman and Grafton, “Introduction,” 16.

¹⁵⁸ Gregory W. Dawes, "The Rationality of Renaissance Magic," *Parergon* 30, no. 2 (2013): 45; Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 77.

¹⁵⁹ Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science*, The Eddington Memorial Lectures Delivered at Cambridge University, November 1980, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 78-79.

virtues in the lower realms (i.e. the earthly realm, our plane of existence), thereby accessing the corresponding virtues in a higher realm. With proper practice and refinement of their technique, the sufficiently talented ritualist could potentially “ping” the proper virtues corresponding to the upper realms—thus revealing the path to knowledge or to encourage the transempirical being to reveal themselves—until a union with God could be achieved.¹⁶⁰ Neoplatonic magic became a way of understanding the divine, achieving a union with God through study and rituals by creating the ideal situation in which the powers of natures are revealed to them.¹⁶¹ Magic is then dependent on the holy trinity of: purity of the soul, the cultivation of knowledge, and the faith of the ritualist. Without this, the magician would be incapable of wielding any form of power necessary to not only perform potent magic, let alone invoke and control any demonic force.

By the fifteenth century, Italian humanism imbued with aspects of neoplatonism travelled northwards into England, France, the Low Countries and present-day Germany, where the philosophy was primarily introduced through Erasmus (1467-1536) and Rudolph Agricola (1443-1485) in the latter two regions. The regional intellectual movements developed and refined these ideas, tailoring them to their cultural understandings, and impacting their respective societies.¹⁶²

While at times certain philosophical approaches appeared to dominate the cultural environment, no one approach or understanding completely supplanted the others. Instead, we are presented with a nuanced, varied, and dynamic system of interacting with and influencing each other in an evolving kaleidoscopic cultural landscape. With the spread and circulation of neoplatonic and humanist approaches and the redefinition of scholasticism, we have an engaged intellectual plane upon which various social discourses were projected. These influences helped to shape the esoteric disciplines—particularly ritual magic, which increasingly focused on learning and engaging with revelatory powers.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Klaassen, *Transformation of Magic*, 24.

¹⁶¹ Arnold, *The Great Humanists*, 6; Copenhaver, “How To Do Magic,” 137-138, 164.

¹⁶² Klaus Arnold, “Introduction to *De Laude Scriptorum: In Praise of Scribes*,” in *De Laude Scriptorum: In Praise of Scribes* by Johannes Trithemius, ed. Klaus Arnold, trans. Roland Behrendt, (Lawrence KS: Coronado Press, 1974), 6; Arnold, *The Great Humanists*, 7, 124.

It was also during this time that scholasticism began to redefine itself in face of the evolving philosophical landscape. Scholastics refined their use of logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. Greek was being used to reevaluate Aristotle and new ethical positions were formulated (Hankins, “Introduction,” 4).

¹⁶³ Bailey, “Age of Magician,” 18-19.

1.3 AN OVERVIEW OF PREMODERN MAGIC¹⁶⁴

The scholarly study of magic—and the history of magic in the Western world in particular—presents a particularly daunting Gordian knot, as even defining the term constitutes a considerable challenge. There are so many permutations of magic and so many varied opinions about its uses that coming to a clear, concise, and universally agreed upon definition of the term is nearly impossible, and, furthermore, what differentiates it from the category of religion—especially in the period under study—is nebulous at best.¹⁶⁵ E.E. Evans-Pritchard, the famed anthropologist, once stated that the most difficult part of any cultural anthropological endeavour is translation.¹⁶⁶ When studying other cultures, particularly historical ones, it is imperative to consider whether a given culture even has the particular category we are interested in studying—in this case, magic. If the category does exist, we must then seek to understand it emically, which is to say from the perspective of the culture itself. While we know that the category of magic certainly existed in premodernity, since the Enlightenment the predominant trend in scholarship has been to approach the category etically, which here means from the post-Enlightenment perspective (and categories) of the scholars themselves.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ For scholarship on magic in general in the Western world, please see Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2001); Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les 'Images Astrologiques' au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance: Spéculations Intellectuelles et Pratiques Magiques*, Sciences, Techniques et Civilisations du Moyen Âge à l'Aube des Lumières, 6, (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002); Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages, Second Edition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Roberta Gilchrist, "Magic for the Dead? The Archaeology of Magic in Later Medieval Burials," *Medieval Archaeology*, 52:1 (2008): 119-159; Frank Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Later Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Magic in History, (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2013); Charles G. Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought*, Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences 55, (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press 1965); Paola Zambelli, *The Speculum Astronomiae and its Enigma: Astrology, Theology and Science in Albertus Magnus and his Contemporaries*, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science 135, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992); Paola Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, (Leiden and Boston: Brill., 2007); Claire Fanger, editor, *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998); Jean-Patrice Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance: Astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval (XII-XV siècle)*, Histoire ancienne et médiévale 83, (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006); Sophie Page, *Magic in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

¹⁶⁵ Stephen Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic: A Sociological Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements*, Studies in Religion, (Chapel Hill NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 10-11.

¹⁶⁶ Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2008), 3.

¹⁶⁷ In his exploration on contemporary disenchantment of magic and its ramifications for modern scholarship, Bailey remarked that the distinctive delineation between magic and religion is mostly a post-Reformation construction refined during the Enlightenment. For example, both Durkheim and Mauss declared that while religion is public and official, magic was unofficial and more importantly, private—practiced away from the public eye, a

This is a less-than-ideal state of affairs, as post-Enlightenment conceptualizations of magic are predominantly pejorative—they frame magic as being both irrational and unorthodox¹⁶⁸—and, when applied to premodernity, are decidedly anachronistic. In other words, to apply this post-Enlightenment understanding of the category is to risk misunderstanding and misrepresenting how the premoderns themselves understood it.¹⁶⁹ As Gideon Bohak puts it, it is important for us to acknowledge that practices which we would today call “magic” were not necessarily defined or perceived as such by their practitioners, and what may appear “magical” to an outsider may be seen as mundane to cultural insiders.¹⁷⁰

However, coming to grasp the premodern understanding is no easy task. To the premodern person, often magic “just was,” and each social group had their own unique understandings of what magic was, what types of magic were to be practiced by whom, and what types of magical practices were considered illicit¹⁷¹, and by whom.¹⁷² What we do know, however, is that for the premoderns the distinction between magic and religion was not as obvious as the predominant trends in post-Enlightenment thinking might lead us to believe. For example, within premodern Christianity, we know that a number of respected canonical theologians and popes supported, and may have even practiced, things such as alchemy,

hidden spirituality that one keeps to oneself (Bailey, “Disenchantment of Magic”, 384). Kieckhefer, however, rightly notes that this dichotomy is overly simplistic, asking whether prayers or counting the rosary or lighting the Shabbat candles could be considered to be “magic” according to this categorization (Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 13).

¹⁶⁸ Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 16; Jesper Sørensen, *A Cognitive Theory of Magic*, Cognitive Science of Religion Series, (Lanham MD: AltaMira Press. 2007), 2.

¹⁶⁹ Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 3.

¹⁷⁰ Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 3-5. For example, a Catholic Mass may seem magical to someone outside of or unfamiliar with Catholicism, but most Catholics would take offence to this suggestion—despite the fact that other rituals performed by Medieval Churches were indeed called “magical.” See: Daniel W. Bornstein, “Living Christianity”, in *A People’s History of Christianity: Medieval Christianity*, edited by Daniel W. Bornstein, (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 22; Sørensen, *Cognitive Theory of Magic*, 187; Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe*, (London: Hambledon and London, 2000), xviii, xxxv.

¹⁷¹ Illicit magic in this project will be defined as that particular magic in which the order of nature was rearranged by manipulating the laws of nature to create something unnatural. This was an attempt to disrupt God’s design, and therefore was a cause for concern. Many texts that prescribed apparently illicit magic dedicated lengthy passages to defend their magic as licit (complying with the natural order) as opposed to illicit (distorting nature). Not all demonic ritual magic is illicit (i.e., the purpose is not to create an unnatural entity that falls outside the natural laws of the universe). Demonic ritual magic was problematic because of its association with demons rather than being illicit (Maaikje Van der Lugt, “‘Abominable Mixtures’: The *Liber Vaccae* in the Medieval West, or the Dangers and Attractions of Natural Magic”, *Traditio* 64 (2009): 259-260).

¹⁷² Klaassen, *Transformation of Magic*, 18.

astrology, natural magic, and—if certain rumours are true—even demonic magic.¹⁷³ While *maleficia*¹⁷⁴ was broadly condemned, we also know that not all invocative demonic magic was straightforwardly understood as *maleficia*, and that it in fact relied on liturgical language, correct religious knowledge and piety.¹⁷⁵ In other words, the boundaries between these categories, like the boundaries between religion and magic in general, were not completely clear-cut. These facts thus fly in the face of the common modern assumption that magic was at constant odds with orthodox religious practice.

Indeed, far from the static, unambiguous, predictable, homogeneous collection of doctrines and practices we often imagine, premodern religion was dynamic, complex, and multi-faceted; it was shaped by many diverse voices, and was influenced by a number of different sociocultural and political trends.¹⁷⁶ In such a context, how can we distinguish religion from magic, the accepted from the unaccepted?¹⁷⁷ In truth, we cannot, at least not easily, and, as I will be arguing throughout, the effort to do—in the context of premodernity at least—may be counterproductive. Often, as Van Engen and McGuire astutely pointed out, there is still an implicit assumption that the Catholic Church was a singular institution.¹⁷⁸ While the papal courts were an authority on matters of faith, there was no Church as a completely *uniform* entity that

¹⁷³ Including Pope Silvester II (999-1003); Albertus Magnus (1200-1280); Roger Bacon (1214-1292), and Pope Boniface VIII (1235-1303) (Borchardt, “Magus as Renaissance Man”, 67-68, 70; Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, 20-21; Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, 180-185; Collins, “Albertus, Magnus or Magus?”, 2-3; Davies, *Grimoires*, 35; Kieckhefer, “Specific Rationality”, 814; Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Exploring the ‘Three-Fold World’: Faust as Alchemist, Astrologer, and Magician”, in *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faust*, edited by J.M. van der Laan, and Andrew Weeks (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2013), 245).

¹⁷⁴ I.e. “harmful magic,” that is magic that was performed with the sole intent of explicitly bringing about harm, destruction, and chaos.

¹⁷⁵ Bailey, “The Age of Magicians”, 2; Klaassen, “English Manuscripts of Magic”, 20-23; Fanger, “Medieval Ritual Magic”, vii.

¹⁷⁶ Borchardt, “Magus as Renaissance Man”, 73.

¹⁷⁷ To add further complications, the differentiation between what is considered to be “accepted” and “unaccepted” often rests with the dominant group. As we shall see, to further compound the matter, the arguments of who is able to perform magic and under what circumstances would the practice of magic be considered to be legitimate or as heresy is also often debated. The boundary between magic and religion was one that was debated amongst the various premodern social spheres, even among canonical theologians.

¹⁷⁸ Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) focuses on the contested boundaries of premodern religion (cf pages 19-44). Van Engen’s “The Future of Medieval Church History” (*Church History* 71, no. 3 (2002): 492-522) and “The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem” (*The American Historical Review* 91, no. 3 (1986): 519-52) looks at the various ways Medieval Church history was approached, particularly the emphasis on specific texts, with the latter article discussing “Christendom” and how it may have been understood in the Medieval era, which may have influenced the notion of an overarching, unified premodern Church. Also included in both articles are discussions on the mutual influences between the papal and secular governing courts.

strictly dictated religious practices.¹⁷⁹ Additionally, the term “religious” was sometimes used to denote someone who is “professionally religious”—that is one who is a member of a religious order—or as a “dutiful observance of a cult binding to God”.¹⁸⁰ It is how a person showed their duty, their loyalty, as understood and guided by the papal authority of the time. Along with the proliferation of local cults and holy places, the practices of premodern Christianity was incredibly varied.¹⁸¹

This is not to suggest that the Church—comprised of the papal courts, religious orders, and canonical theologians—were insignificant or non-influential. They held tremendous social weight, and were important social and political powers (for example, recognizing and confirming the legitimacy of a crowned monarch as having the right to rule). While the Church spoke authoritatively on Christian truth, the concept of a singular Christian religion that was practiced uniformly, united under a central governing body which controlled *all* aspects of beliefs and behaviours might not be quite applicable.¹⁸² Rather, as Young suggests, it is easier to understand

¹⁷⁹ As Talal Asad writes, "the medieval Church did not attempt to establish absolute uniformity of practice; on the contrary, its authoritative discourse was always concerned to specify differences, graduations, exceptions. What it sought was the subjection of all practice to a unified authority, to a single authentic source that could tell truth from falsehood". In other words, the practices, as long it conformed to the authority, were often tolerated, and this is perhaps why there was often a section in magical texts that explicitly explained its Christian legitimacy as understood by the Church (Talal Asad, "Religion as an Anthropological Category" in *Genealogies of Religion* (1993), 39). Van Engen, "Christian Middle Ages," 546-547; Van Engen, "Future of Medieval Church History," 517; McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 23-26; Gary Macy, "Was There a 'the Church' in the Middle Ages?" *Studies in Church History* 32 (1996): 107–116; Francis Young, *History of Exorcism: A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity*, Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 4.

¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, it must be pointed out that the clergy was not a unified social stratum. Seminaries were only established and required after the Council of Trent, and there was much inner conflict between the members of the clergy themselves. In fact, “conversion” could also be applied to recruiting candidates into the orders as well as changing one’s religion (Van Engen, "Christian Middle Ages," 546-547; Van Engen, "Future of Medieval Church History," 517-518; McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 23-26, 32, 43-44).

¹⁸¹ Our current distinction between sacred and profane, particularly in reference to time and space (i.e. a major holiday, religious services, or sacred places) is not quite applicable to premodernity. As McGuire states, “the sacred was experienced as arising *from within* profane space and everyday, mundane activity”. Sacred time, sacred space, and sacred peoples were identified not solely on belief, but also on behaviour and belonging. To place it in context, in a worldview where everything is connected, what one does, how it is done and at what particular time is just as important as the why it is done (McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 31-33).

¹⁸² McGuire noted that premodern Christianity was understood to be localized practices and beliefs (often surrounding a particular cult of saint) that identified and strengthened a social bond, while sharing certain common beliefs and practices (such as baptism, Sunday Mass (whenever possible), confession and Communion once a year during Easter, along with some prayers, most notably the Our Father and the Hail Mary). As McGuire continues, “we get a clue that ordinary people understood these practices as a central core from the testimony of a character witness for an Inquisition suspect:

‘When he is not tending the herds and is at home in winter or when it rains [...], he always goes to Mass; he always makes the sign of the cross when the Ave Maria tolls, he recites the Ave Maria, crossing himself first, he rests the oxen from their work at that time; blesses the bread and offers thanks to God after

the Church as a confederacy of “territorial churches” which influenced local liturgy, practices, and religious laws that were maintained through ecclesiastical courts, trained their priests and decided on certain canonical matters, and were loyal to the papal courts.¹⁸³ The Church existed within particularly coherent framework that consists of relationships between the individual, society, social actors, papal courts, and Christianity as understood at the time. This is why it is important to highlight the worldview of premodernity, and placing the lived experiences—which included magic—into context.

Because magic was a human activity, while miracles came from God, magic was often used as a polemic device to delineate the “Other’s” activity as not divinely endorsed.¹⁸⁴ The tenuous relationship between magic and religion could be perhaps traced to the polemics between magic and miracle.¹⁸⁵ It was not a question whether magic existed or not; instead, it was whether the event was *miraculous* (i.e., divinely authorized) or magical (i.e., human prowess, no matter how clever). The issue became first and foremost a point of divine validation.

While certain types of magic were indeed considered to be transgressive within premodern society (particularly those practices which involved the worship of beings besides God or which intended to cause harm or sow disorder), even texts with demonic content

he has eaten; when he goes to Mass he has a rosary in his hands; in church he is respectful and recites the rosary, and so *he performs all the duties of a good Christian*” (McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 26-27, emphasis mine).

What we see here is the definition of a Christian is based on a coherent—rather than a unified—framework of practices, beliefs, and behaviours. As remarked by McGuire, and as we shall see in Chapter Four with Young, pre-Reformation Christianity was not unified, and there was an incredible and varied fluidity in understanding of itself (McGuire, *Lived Religions*, 25; Young, *History of Exorcism*, 100).

¹⁸³ For example, in twelfth century East Anglia, married priests (with the full knowledge of their bishops) were a common occurrence, despite canonical rulings to the contrary (E.M. Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of Blood Libel in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 33-37); McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 33; Van Engen, “Christian Middle Ages”, 533; Young, *History of Exorcism*, 4-5).

¹⁸⁴ McGuire, *Lived Religions*, 32-32.

¹⁸⁵ Bailey, “The Age of Magicians,” 8; Borchardt, “Magus as Renaissance Man,” 67-68; Robinson, “Jacob al-Kirkisani on the Reality of Magic,” 41, 44-45. In his illuminating study on the Karaites’s conceptualizations of magic, miracles and prophets, Ira Robinson identifies “the nexus of magic and miracle,” a term which denotes a worldview where both magic and miracles coexist. According to Robinson, the category of magic certainly did exist for the Karaites, and learning to correctly identify it and distinguish it from miracle allowed Karaite religious experts to validate and/or disprove a divine claim from a false one. While miracles were understood to be events that break the laws of nature (events that are ordained by God and performed by the prophets), magic was understood to operate fully within the natural realm, and is a human rather than divine accomplishment. See: Ira Robinson, “Jacob al-Kirkisani on the Reality of Magic and the Nature of the Miraculous: A Study in Tenth-Century Karaite Rationalism” *Truth and Compassion* (1983): 41-53. Quoted material from page 41. Something similar can be seen in the Reformation debates, where the tension between magic and miracle was used to support or denounce transubstantiation and, by extension, the identity of the believer who held this as fundamental to their faith and understanding of the world.

positioned themselves as an orthodox Christian practice, and many of the authors identify themselves as clergy, or declared themselves as devout Christians.¹⁸⁶ This does not mean, however, that demonic magic was necessarily “approved” by the papal or secular courts. What this means that the practitioners of demonic ritual magic believed themselves to be pious Christians, and that such a concept (one who practices magic) was not necessarily a contradiction to Christianity at the time.

In some cases, possession of a demonic text would be considered automatic proof of heresy; other times, it would be treated as “possession with intent to practice”—and sometimes, the charge was disregarded after a summary investigation, or was ignored altogether. The position of the papal courts was dependent on the time, region, social and political circumstances, and on the whim of the current ruling pope.¹⁸⁷ A papal ban was not indicative of the lived realities of the people, regardless of the social and religious situations.¹⁸⁸

As I have mentioned, this is not to say that magic was broadly or unequivocally embraced. For every magical text, there were just as many canonical theological arguments against magic. The basic concerns in this case related to scenarios in which demons—who are part of the natural world—might be unleashed upon the world, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and that interactions with demons could cross into idolatry.¹⁸⁹ Even if the operator did not intentionally conjure up a demonic force, the *potential* of a demonic invocation was still there. For example, Augustine equated *theurgia* (what he calls angelic magic) with *goetia* (demonic magic). Because of this, Augustine was cited in many Christian anti-magic

¹⁸⁶ Davies, *Grimoires*, 22; Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 12; Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity,” 54-55, 64-65; Newman and Grafton, “Introduction”, 5.

¹⁸⁷ Bailey, “The Age of Magicians,” 2; David J. Collins, “Albertus, Magnus or Magus? Magic, Natural Philosophy, and Religious Reform in the Late Middle Ages,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2010): 3; Davies, *Grimoires*, 68; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 117-118, 154.

Despite the apparent papal bull banning most forms of magic in 1320, magical rituals were nonetheless practiced, especially those which were generally thought to be rooted within the natural realm (such as astrological, alchemical, and healing magic)—though this too, was at times, considered to be contentious by the authorities (Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, 20-21).

¹⁸⁸ A contemporary example to illustrate the point would be the Vatican’s teaching against contraceptives (cf <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/cdfdigpersbio.HTM>; www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_12021997_vademecum_en.html), especially hormonal contraceptives. However, many American Catholic women take hormonal contraceptives (<https://www.guttmacher.org/religion-and-family-planning-tables>) for a variety of reasons, including family planning. This general example illustrates the dissonance between what would be considered to be the canonical ideal and the lived reality. Just because there is a ban does not mean that the majority of American Catholics are following it and eliminating contraceptives from their lives.

¹⁸⁹ Bailey, “A Late Medieval Crises?” 634-635; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 22.

polemics, and his arguments formed the bedrock of their arguments.¹⁹⁰ For these critics, such as Thomas Aquinas¹⁹¹ and Richalmus,¹⁹² many types of magic—particularly invocative ritual magic—was seen as a dangerous activity best left to the specialists (if not avoided altogether), though exceptions were made for common¹⁹³ and healing magic.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, magic had

¹⁹⁰ Fanger, “Introduction,” 18. As primarily detailed in *City of God* (particularly Book IX and Book X), Augustine of Hippo agreed with the neoplatonists of his time that there is a need for a mediation between Heaven and Earth. As Jesus was believed to be both human and divine, this negated the need for any angelic mediation and using angels as a means for salvation. As Fanger noted, the general tone of his argument suggested that *theurgia* (implied as “divine-working”) was the neoplatonic pagan means in achieving salvation, a poor attempt to finding the equivalent to what Christians already had through Jesus; it became a worshipping of angels rather than a reverence of them (Fanger, “Introduction”, 18-19). Furthermore, according to Augustine, all magic relies on a pact with demons, which are abound in nature. Demons can manipulate the hidden laws of nature to make it appear that the results of the magical rituals are miraculous, thus leading the practitioner into idol worshipping. Cf *De divinatione daemonoum*, especially chapter 117 (Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 20).

¹⁹¹ Aquinas stated that as former angels, demons are able to use all their knowledge to craft a situation in which a person is fooled in believing that they are communicating with an angelic being. As demons populate the natural world, Aquinas had difficulty in separating natural magic’s *potential* in performing demonic magic. In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas declares that a magician cannot control a demon, and to accept help from a demon is to make a pact with them, and that even to ask for help or to request favours from them is to commit the sin of idolatry. Demons, according to Aquinas, are a powerful force that—while proving God’s love for humanity by providing free will—are nonetheless dangerous. Furthermore, Aquinas differentiates between implicit and explicit demonic magic: while astrological images draw their powers through implicit pacts with demons—as both astrology and demons are seen as belonging to the hidden natural world—demonic magic was explicit: through a deliberate invocation, the ritualist makes an intentional, conscious pact with a demon. Though both are sins, one is an unconscious act, a result of ignorance, whereas the other is both conscious and deliberate, and therefore considered the more grievous sin (Brann, *Trithemius*, 19-21; Weill-Parot’s *Les ‘Images Astrologiques’*, 223-259).

¹⁹² Richalmus presented a more ambiguous theological thought around magic: natural magic is completely permissible, as long as demons are completely avoided. Otherwise, unless one is “fortified by the grace of God,” no person relying on their own power can hope to resist a demon’s temptations. If the practitioner has faith and has been imbued with God’s strength, then they will be able to withstand the demon’s power and gain the upper hand. The strength of faith and God’s favour determined whether or not the magic was illicit, and not the use of magic itself (Brann, *Trithemius*, 19; Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, 113-123; Isabel Iribarren, “From Black Magic to Heresy: A Doctrinal Leap in the Pontificate of John XXII”, *Church History* 76, no. 1 (2007), 32-34).

¹⁹³ Common magic would often entail healing magic, charms, protective talisman, and herbal magic. It was everyday magic practiced by most segments of society. See Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, chapter four for examples on the many types of common magic, and how it became associated with witchcraft by the late fifteenth, early sixteenth centuries. Bailey’s “A Late Medieval Crises of Superstition?” looks at how superstition was defined throughout premodernity, from an “excess of religion” (633) to that encompassing various forms of magic (including common magic), mirroring clerical anxieties that grew out of the general anxieties of the time. See also: Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe: A Concise History from Antiquity to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); Edward Peters, “The Medieval Church and State on Superstition, Magic and Witchcraft: From Augustine to the Sixteenth Century,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002): 173-245; Richard Kieckhefer, “The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic”, *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 3 (1994), especially 816n14; Steven P. Marrone, “Magic and the Physical World in Thirteenth-Century Scholasticism,” *Early Science and Medicine* 14, no. 1/3 (2009): 158-85; Isabel Iribarren, “From Black Magic to Heresy: A Doctrinal Leap in the Pontificate of John XXII,” *Church History* 76, no. 1 (2007): 32-60; Dieter Harmening, *Superstition: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979).

¹⁹⁴ Aquinas conceded that natural magic, with its melding of canonical Christian theology and natural law, was neither dangerous nor contrary to the canonical Christian theological teachings and is valid for proper healing

its Christian canonical defenders as well, notably Albertus Magnus,¹⁹⁵ Roger Bacon,¹⁹⁶ and Johannes Nider.¹⁹⁷

As we can see, magic and religion were not irreconcilable activities,¹⁹⁸ but rather coexisted in part of the premodern perception of religion, a different understanding of the role of the Church in Christianity, and of the magic/miracle nexus. What we call today esotericism was ingrained in premodernity's everyday life: almanacs contained astrology, spells were used in conjunction with prayers, and talismans were worn as everyday accessories for protection. It was not a separate tradition, but rather an aspect of life.¹⁹⁹

As it will be addressed more fully in the following chapters, one outcome of the move to separate these categories according to post-Enlightenment sentiments is that contemporary scholarship on premodernity tends to relegate the importance of magic in premodern life to the periphery, and this impoverishes our picture of the period's lived reality. This contemporary trend is particularly visible in the modern valuation of the period's textual evidence: while works of canonical theology are readily identified as "official" and therefore as important pieces of

(Brann, *Trithemius*, 21; Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 15; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 184; cf Kieckhefer, "Specific Rationality", 820, 824; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 22; Weill-Parot, *Les 'Images Astrologiques'*, 230. For a more in-depth discussion on Aquinas and magic, please consult pages 223-259 of Weill-Parot's *Les 'Images Astrologiques'*).

¹⁹⁵ Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), the theologian, physician, philosopher, occultist, and later Doctor of the Church, was known for his contributions to the various esoteric disciplines. Differentiating miracles from magic, Albertus claims that while both miracles and magic are beyond human understanding, miracles operate *outside* of nature and its laws, while magic still operates *within* them. Demonic magic, therefore, belongs to the natural sphere. However, demons produce the effects of the magic in the imagination of the practitioner, instead of in the real world. In other words, demonic magic is an illusion, whereas skilled and knowledgeable practitioners of natural magic can yield genuine results in the real world (Brann, *Trithemius*, 23-25).

¹⁹⁶ Roger Bacon (1214-1292) averred that magic is a part of the natural universe that we do not understand, much like why gravity works. Conflating of natural magic with demons would therefore condemn a legitimate field of study (Brann, *Trithemius*, 23-25).

¹⁹⁷ Johannes Nider (c1380-1438) declared that ritual magic is permissible, and even appropriate when practiced by educated clerics, but should be banned from common people because of their lack of education, understanding, and sincere Christian faith. Arguing for a clerical control over the practice of ritual magic, Nider neatly sidesteps the debates by claiming that clerics are the only ones who have the power and legitimacy to practice invocative ritual magic (Bailey, "Late Medieval Crises?", 654).

¹⁹⁸ Most canonical thinkers of this time accepted some forms of magic (usually common and healing magic), but there were exceptions. Robert Holkot (d1349) stated that *all* magic, including natural magic, was without exception demonic, a belief which was incredibly unusual for this time. Similarly, Jean Gerson (1363-1429) also condemned most (if not all) forms of magics. However, Gerson also drew criticism after he proclaimed that the experiences and visions of female mystics were the product of demonic, rather than divine, influence (Brann, *Trithemius*, 26-27; Levack, *The Devil Within*, 61, 64; Mesler, "The *Liber iuratus Honorii*", 132).

¹⁹⁹ David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 7.

source material, works of esotericism are not.²⁰⁰ However, we cannot solely rely on “official” documents and traditional philological studies, as such texts inevitably mirror or validate the biases and attitudes of the religious communities and scholars who chose to preserve them.²⁰¹ For example, what a Christian canonical theologian writing for a specific audience describes is how they perceive the ideal state of their religion to be, given their own cultural, social and historical context. While this portrayal does reflect parts of the overall social reality, it more accurately offers a glimpse into the identity of this particular demographic, rather than a reflection of the lived reality as a whole.²⁰² We thus need to be careful not to paint particular perspectives as representing a homogeneous cultural truth.

1.3.1 Types of Premodern Magic

As indicated above, it is undesirable to attempt to understand premodern magic by firmly circumscribing it within the definitional boundaries of post-Enlightenment thinking. According to Jesper Sørensen, an alternative and ultimately more fruitful route is to try and understand magic as it was defined by the people who participated in it, a move which requires us to view it more generally, as a model for human activity that was neither monolithic or unified.²⁰³ To this end, it is important to acknowledge that magic was a significant part of the everyday social life and cultural landscape of the premodern era—it was a force that was understood to be just as natural as gravity. As the existence of magic was already accepted as a given, the polemics surrounding it focused on: 1) whether or not it was acceptable for Jews and Christians to practice

²⁰⁰ For example, it is quite telling that the first English translation of *CLM 849* began in 1989, with no other translation since, though Kieckhefer did pioneer the study of demonic magic (Chave-Mahir and Véronèse, *Rituel d'exorcisme ou manuel de magie?* 103-104; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 7-8; Fanger, “Christian Ritual Magic in the Middle Ages” *History Compass* 11/8 (2013), 612-613. Additionally, there is no recent English translation of either *De Occulta Philosophia*, *Steganographia*, or *De Arte Cabalistica*, and transliterations are difficult to come by (cf. Introduction and Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis).

²⁰¹ Jeppe Sinding Jensen, *The Study of Religion in a New Key: Theoretical and Philosophical Soundings in the Comparative and General Study of Religion*, Studies in Religion (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2003), 144; Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages, Second Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 16.

²⁰² While this project focuses on texts, there is a danger in hyper-focusing on texts as the only sources of valid empirical evidence. As Jensen indicated, texts have been and still are read in a number of ways and is highly culturally and historically dependent. We often attempt to singly find the “correct” or “original” thought or practice, ignoring the various overlaps, diverging ideas, and notions which fail to support our own beliefs. Even as texts themselves may appear static and unchanging (as texts themselves were often redacted or edited to fit with the contemporary worldview), their meanings are constantly (re)created in ways which serve to shape and (re)construct readers’ beliefs, schemas, and even their very identity. Only a part of that meaning is preserved in the text; the other part was lived by the writer(s) and readers of that text and their contemporaries. While texts may reflect the social identity, it is still a biased reflection (Jensen, *Study of Religion*, 144-145).

²⁰³ Sørensen, *Cognitive Theory of Magic*, 2-3.

certain (or perhaps even all) forms of magic; 2) whether magic was fundamentally beneficial or harmful; 3) who was qualified to practice it. These polemics offer us an important window into how magic was defined and understood by the people who participated in it, so I will aim to structure my exposition of premodern magic—including a brief discussion on natural, ritual, angelic, and demonic magic—in a way that highlights these concerns.

1.3.2 Natural Magic

Perhaps the most common and foundational form of magic was natural magic—it was the base magic upon which many other types of magic were built. As its name implies, this brand of magic was seen as just as much a part of nature as gravity or magnetism. By itself, it was neutral; it was intent that delineated natural magic as either “positive” or “negative”. The practice of natural magic represented a drive to understand how the universe works based on the idea that all was intrinsically connected, to uncover that knowledge, and to use that knowledge for various purposes.²⁰⁴ Doctors would use the knowledge discovered through magical practices to better care for their patients, while theologians might use natural magic to uncover divine forces and understand the nature of God.²⁰⁵

Underlying natural magic was the neoplatonic belief that that the universe was composed of both the material and the immaterial, and that it was possible for an individual to rise above their limited physical form to a higher spiritual and mental plane of existence. By marrying Aristotelian physics (that we should observe the natural world through the five senses), and by using everyday, natural objects and through proper rituals at the proper astrological times, the practitioner would be able to gain, harness, and use that power. Otherwise intangible and indiscernible, properly invoked, natural magic could reveal the hidden forces of the cosmos,

²⁰⁴ While alchemy may seem to be similar to natural magic, and is sometimes considered under the umbrella term of “natural magic”, alchemy should not be used interchangeably with natural magic. Alchemy is primarily concerned with studying the natural process, reproducing and even improving upon nature, and as we shall briefly see, is often considered to be a separate discipline, as it focuses on material transformation. Lawrence Principe’s *The Secrets of Alchemy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013) is an excellent introduction to the discipline, as is Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Face of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton’s Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Also recommended are William R. Newman’s *Atoms and Alchemy: Chymistry and the Experimental Origins of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006) and *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, edited by William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 2001).

²⁰⁵ Frank Klaassen, “English Manuscripts of Magic, 1300-1500: A Preliminary Survey”, in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, edited by Claire Fanger, (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), 7.

thereby revealing the underlying order uniting all of creation.²⁰⁶ Once these forces and the relationships between them were properly understood, they could be manipulated by the skilled natural magician for personal, intellectual, and spiritual edification.²⁰⁷

Rituals demanded a careful attention to detail; one recipe called for the invocation of divine names at an auspicious time when particular planets and constellations were aligned. The practitioner would then channel their power into the bowl, and fill the bowl with a potion, which, if imbibed, promised to grant revelatory dreams.²⁰⁸ In order to properly practice natural magic, one needed four things: the proper tools, a healthy mind, healthy spirit, and a healthy body. The body-mind-spirit connection held the key to magical success. When the body becomes unbalanced, it affects the mind, and the mind impacts the spirit, and all of this will affect one's livelihood.

The body was thought to be composed of the four elements, which influenced the flow of the four humours, which were thought to come from specific organs (liver—yellow bile; spleen—black bile; brain—phlegm and blood creates blood).²⁰⁹ It was believed that each profession lead to its own humouric imbalance, leading to poor health, and that the best way to cure this imbalance was through natural magic. Scholars, for example, tended to produce more black bile as a result of their increased mental activity, and were seen as more prone to anxiety and madness. Because their sedentary lifestyle produced phlegm, they would also become sluggish and depressed. Additionally, it was believed that brain activity dries out the body and makes it cold, thereby contributing to a melancholic temperament, leading to anxiety and even insanity.²¹⁰

The ailing scholar would consult either a practitioner or a text in natural magic to find the antidote. The scholar might consume a potion intended to purify the mind, body, and spirit; one healing tonic was designed to increase blood flow, so that the blood would travel to the heart, creating an essence that would become the spirit, which would then nourish the brain. Often, the scholar would have to adopt a new health regimen that would often include magic, particular clothes, and a change in daily habits and interactions. That prescription might consist of no naps

²⁰⁶ Copenhaver, “How to do Magic”, 137; Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, 4, 10.

²⁰⁷ Brann, *Trithemius*, 29.

²⁰⁸ Copenhaver, “How to do Magic”, 137.

²⁰⁹ Copenhaver, “How to do Magic”, 139; Lawrence Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 38; Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 62-63.

²¹⁰ Copenhaver, “How to do Magic”, 140.

in the afternoon; early morning exercise to gain energy from the sun, Mercury, and Venus; no sex on a full stomach, no thinking after a meal; more sleep; and consume only quality wine and food. In time, this would replenish the body, keeping the scholar warm and moist, sharpening their mental acuity, and keeping their spirit healthy.²¹¹

Here we see one of the ways that natural magic was practiced, through a combination of astrology, understanding the principles of the universe, and medicine. Life, the universe and everything was intrinsically interconnected. The key to practicing proper natural magic was to understand that and to control the conditions in order to produce the most positive effect.²¹²

1.3.3 Ritual Magic

Many types of ritual magic involved the participation of transempirical beings, often as a result of invocation. Because there are various types of ritual magic,²¹³ I will use the term “invocative ritual magic” to specify the type of ritual magic whose primary purpose is to invoke a transempirical being (usually either an angel or a demon) to cajole (in the case of angels) or command (as with demons) into providing information, assistance, or help of some kind. The major defining point is sharing the ritual space and interact with the transempirical being; that is, the ritual was designed to function as a calling and an opening of the door to the ritual plane.

Most operators felt they had little to fear from benevolent beings like angels and saints, as it was assumed that they would be willing to help a magician, provided that conjurer’s motives and their faith were sincere. The fallen spirit or a demon, on the other hand, was malicious, hostile, mischievous, a dark-sided being, who often would not hesitate to do harm to human beings. Conjuring such a being would quickly become a battle of strength of who is stronger. Because of that, the magician who conjures a demon or fallen angel had to be well-prepared for this cosmic battle for control—their actions and intentions had to be spiritually pure, and they had to ensure that they had the necessary words of power at their disposal.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Copenhaver, “How to do Magic”, 141-142.

²¹² Copenhaver, “How to do Magic”, 147.

²¹³ Including scholastic image magic and astrological magic, where transempirical beings are called upon as witnesses or as protectors but are not conjured or commanded to enter the ritual sphere and interact with the practitioner

²¹⁴ Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer’s Manual of the Fifteenth Century*, Magic in History (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1997), 16.

The concept of invocative ritual magic can be found in Antiquity, in a number of Jewish and other ancient texts.²¹⁵ By the twelfth century, monastic, ecclesiastic, and scholarly traditions began to overlap, creating a shared intellectual culture that would eventually conceive Christian invocative magic. Most of the rituals demanded extensive preparation that included periods of fasting, sexual abstinence, confessions, prayers, and attendance of Mass. Evocative of clerical training, most texts were written in Latin, with Hebrew and Greek phrases included, and assumed an intimate understanding of Christian liturgy.²¹⁶

One of the primary goals for invocative ritual magic was driven by a desire to attain knowledge and uncover and understand the hidden laws of nature or to intimately immerse oneself into the knowledge of the divine. The authors and the texts claim an orthodox, doctrinal, canonical legitimacy sanctioned by the God—both in the rituals and in the knowledge attained in the process. Even demonic ritual magic texts included rituals that not only invoked angelic protection, but also divine inspiration and guidance.²¹⁷

Most Christian invocative ritual magic texts are composed of two distinct parts: the introduction to the rituals, and the rituals themselves. The introduction typically provides an explanation of how the text came into being, a practical and theological rationale and justification for the rituals contained in the text, and a description of who is worthy of reading and, especially, performing these rites. Typically, this introduction would also present a careful case for the text's authenticity and canonical legitimacy, stating unequivocally that the rituals contained therein would serve to uphold the Christian faith and preserve the order of the cosmos. This introductory section could be incredibly detailed, or rather sparse, or in some cases, missing entirely.²¹⁸ The second section of a text would consist of the rituals themselves, and could be thought of as a manual, with its precise, clear magical recipes, including preparation and desired outcomes. This section especially shed light on the author's assumptions about their intended audience, projecting their shared world.²¹⁹

Whether the conjurer intended to summon angels or demons, the basic procedure remained largely the same, requiring extensive preparation and careful adherence to a magical

²¹⁵ Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 117-118.

²¹⁶ Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 117-118, 154.

²¹⁷ Klaassen, "Medieval Ritual Magic", 172-173.

²¹⁸ Klaassen, "Learning and Masculinity", 52.

²¹⁹ Klaassen, "Learning and Masculinity", 52.

recipe with specific steps to be followed before, during, and after a particular rite. While angels were often invoked for their knowledge, occasionally they were called upon to protect the conjurer from demons. While the ritualist may use natural magic to invoke angels, the true source of power for the Christian practitioner lies within Christian liturgy, Scriptures, words of power, and spiritual, mental and physical purity and were the key to a successful ritual. While the underlying process and structure of the ritual remained similar, intent and purpose differentiated the demonic rite from the angelic one.²²⁰

1.3.4 Angelic Ritual Magic

Involving devotional, mystical, and magical practices, angelic ritual magic consisted of complex rituals intended to summon angels, and ask (not command) them to bestow divine visions, celestial or earthly enlightenment, or healing, similar to how a devout Christian might beseech God, Jesus, saints, or the Virgin Mary for guidance, blessings, or comfort. Because of the complexities of the angelic ritual—which included the litany, theological musings, supplications, fasting, and prayers—angelic ritual magic was most likely to be usually performed by formally educated people well-familiar with liturgy, many of them monks, clerics, and theologians.²²¹ It was also formally educated people well-familiar with liturgy, many of them monks, clerics, and theologians who criticized and condemned the practice.²²²

²²⁰ Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 153.

²²¹ Claire Fanger, “Medieval Ritual Magic: What it is and Why We need to Know More About It” in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, edited by Claire Fanger (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), vii-viii; Claire Fanger, *Rewriting Magic: An Exegesis of the Visionary Autobiography of a Fourteenth-Century French Monk*, (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 8; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 3.

²²² Perhaps one of the most influential forms of angelic ritual magic was the *ars notoria* (translated as the “Notary Art” *notoria=notae=notes*), the rituals was eventually included in the famed mid-seventeenth century grimoire *The Lesser Key of Solomon*. Developed in the late twelfth century, probably at the University of Bologna, the *ars notoria* focused on the attainment of mental discipline in order to master the *septem artes liberales*. Tracing its mythology to Solomon (cf. II Chr. 1: 9-12; II Kings 3: 9-13), the *ars notoria* aimed to provide knowledge, language, and intellectual mastery (including an eidetic memory) through dreams and visions that would be granted to practitioners willing to invest the time and energy into elaborate rituals that included image magic, purification rites, orations, invocations, astrology, and prayers to God and the Virgin Mary. Seeking aid from angels, Christ and Mary, the *ars notoria* was a path to knowledge that entailed work and effort: devotion, fasting, and hours of study. In spite of attempts to ban it, the *ars notoria* became incredibly popular as a semi-underground text throughout much of the Middle Ages, with various editions circulating, mostly, appropriately enough, within university towns. A number of canonical theologians have discussed the collection, both favourably and unfavourably, including Abano, Aquinas, Michael Scot, de Fontana, Oresme, Dionysius the Carthusian, Emdendorfer, Vincent of Beauvais, Augustine Triumphus, and Trithemius. Despite its notoriety, actual prosecutions of those who used the text were exceedingly rare (Fanger, “Introduction”, 4; Fanger, *Rewriting Magic*, 39, 56; Klaassen, “English Manuscripts of Magic”, 14-15, 17-19).

1.3.5 Demonic Ritual Magic

We have left the realm of arguably defensible magical practices into the realm of perilous magic. Often called *necromancy* or *nigromancy*,²²³ demonic ritual magic was a “conscious, deliberate summoning of demons”.²²⁴ Demonic magic was considered to be incredibly dangerous, and often flirted with (or was actively involved in) illegal activity, making it a pressing concern for both religious and secular authorities.²²⁵

Despite its Jewish, Arabic and Graeco-Roman influences, premodern demonic ritual magic appears to be a Christian invention, with a base in liturgy and exorcism as part of the ritual.²²⁶ Unlike angelic ritual magic, demonic magic was sometimes concerned with attaining results in the physical world as well as attaining knowledge. Practitioners of demonic magic would sometimes seek to curse enemies with diseases, deformities, or ill fortune; discover hidden treasure; catch and punish thieves; uncover another’s secrets, or gaining knowledge to unlock the key to immortality.²²⁷ Demons were conjured to obey the practitioner; bound by a combination of the conjurer’s skill, piety, and the power of the name of God, Christ, Mary, and/or the angels.²²⁸

²²³ *Necromancy* (literally “divination of the dead”) and *nigromancy* (literally “black divination”) are terms that are loaded and often used interchangeably. From the Late Middle Ages, necromancy became synonymous with demonic magic. Medieval judicial records and other texts show a distinction between the terms, with *necromancy* being wholly, fully, unambiguously illicit, and *nigromancy* was a “dark grey” area, transgressive, though not completely illicit (Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 19n14; Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic*, 10-11). However, the terms are slightly misleading, as it implies that the goal of the magic is divination, and that the practitioner has distanced themselves from orthodox Christian doctrine. In fact, the names of God, Virgin Mary, Jesus, and the saints were often invoked in demonic conjurations, and the rituals were often based on legends of saints who controlled demons. The cross; prayers; holy water; holy texts, and incense were important tools in demonic magic (Davies, *Grimoires*, 22-23, 32-33; Fanger, *Rewriting Magic*, 2; Fanger, “Medieval Ritual Magic”, viii; Richard Kieckhefer, “The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic”, *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 3 (1994): 816-817). Because some texts were considered by some to be necromantic, and by others those same texts nigromantic, I will simply call all those texts that fall under the purview of ritual magic that involves demons as a main focus as “demonic ritual magic”. This, I feel, provides a neutral terminology that sidesteps the centuries-old debates, connotations and biases that surrounds the other two terms.

²²⁴ Fanger, *Rewriting Magic*, 41.

²²⁵ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 3, 10-12.

²²⁶ Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 165-175; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 115-116.

²²⁷ Klaassen, “English Manuscripts of Magic”, 20-23. Klaassen further remarked that despite the fact that the practice of demonic magic was fantastically dangerous on multiple fronts—as it could potentially unleash a hellhound capable of bringing about the destruction of the world, and could also lead to the ritualist being tried and condemned in the secular courts—a black market for demonic magic services blossomed. Aside from the usual treasure hunting, punishing enemies and cursing former lovers, there was an additional service offered: oracles through a boy.

²²⁸ Fanger, “Medieval Ritual Magic”, vii.

Demonic ritual magical texts were blessed in order to protect the user. The rituals were elaborate—often requiring specific clothes and tools, extensive and precise preparation, ritual fasts, blessing of the ritual space, and calculation of auspicious days with precise astrological formulae—and prescribed proper ways to conjure, bind and then to dismiss the demons. Most texts also included at least one section on exorcism that was apart from the exorcism that concluded the ritual. This “trouble-shooting” segment served as a precautionary measure, just in case the ritual was unsuccessful, and the wrong demon was accidentally summoned, bringing about destruction.²²⁹

Demonic invocative ritual magic was a literary enterprise: found in texts, and created and practiced by those with extensive educational training and the ability to access and understand these magical texts.²³⁰ Additionally, certain evidence suggests that a large percentage of demonic ritual magic practitioners were clerics, monks, scholars, and university students.²³¹

Sharing a liturgical pattern akin to exorcism (which calls and compels), demonic invocative ritual magic adds an additional step: here the practitioner calls the demon using the proper words, commands it and then compels it to act according to the conjurer’s wishes. This power is drawn from what Kieckhefer calls “sacred realities.”²³² A sacred reality is created during the liturgical recitation of a Church ritual; through words and rituals, it (re)creates the

Compounded in the ambiguities of attempting to understand demonic ritual magic is the fact that a number of texts spend a considerable amount of space systemically defending its rituals. That is, while the magic may involve demons, it is neither illicit (i.e., not attempting to break natural law, no matter how hidden) nor is it attempting to practice *maleficia* (that is, the aim of the magic was not to cause harm). The argumentations in order to contextualize the magic within an (Christian) orthodox framework would indicate that the authors and their readers believed that this was a legitimate practice, particularly in the ritual’s emphasis on the predication of Christian faith. While some were *maleficia*, and some were illicit, not all demonic magic were either of the two, or both.

For an example of the debates on the parameters magic and the natural laws, whether it is licit or illicit magic, see Maaïke Van der Lugt’s treatment of *Liber Vaccae* in “‘Abominable Mixtures’: The *Liber Vaccae* in the Medieval West, or the Dangers and Attractions of Natural Magic”, *Traditio* 64 (2009): 229-277, which includes operations on creating a rational animal by attempting to imitate nature, as understood through Aristotelian natural philosophy.

²²⁹ Klaassen, “English Manuscripts of Magic”, 20-22.

²³⁰ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 4. Much of our knowledge regarding demonic ritual magic could be found in texts, however only a few pre-fifteenth century texts survive today, as many were destroyed—though, we do possess fragments of texts that have since been lost. What texts of demonic ritual magic we do have is written mostly in Latin, demonstrating that their authors and intended audience were typically highly educated (Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity”, 54).

²³¹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 4; Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity”, 50, 54.

This is why, in part, demonic ritual magic was considered to be dangerous as the range of intent was wide: a demon could be invoked for any number of reasons, in spite the fact that piety was a fundamental component to its success. Kieckhefer discusses the notion of a “clerical underground” (cf chap 5, *Magic in the Middle Ages*). An intriguing premise, one that will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

²³² Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 14.

reality inhabited by the divine. Because the demon is typically more powerful than the practitioner, the practitioner must trust in the power granted through the power of the rite, their own magical skill and knowledge, and, above all, their sincere Christian faith. The ritual is more than a simple calling; it is a cosmic battle between the practitioner and a powerful evil being.²³³ The demonic ritual would most often conclude with an exorcism of the being that had been summoned.²³⁴ Both rituals necessitate the operator to be stronger than the demon—a strength that is predicated on the strength of their piety—and both exercises are considered to be dangerous. Ergo, a journey into such transgressive territory is not an exercise for the ill-prepared or the weak-of-faith.

In the wake of great social, cultural, economic, and legal changes that encouraged a rise in literacy, travel, and exchange of ideas,²³⁵ ritual magic (especially invocative magic) likewise began to evolve and spread across Latin Europe. In contrast to the earlier forms of loose recipes and practices, ritual magic began to develop a theoretical framework, and evolved into a discipline that required knowledge of Christian theology, natural philosophy, and languages.²³⁶ Despite their broad appeal within academic circles and strivings towards intellectual rigour, practices such as magic, alchemy, and astrology were not part of any university's (official) curriculum. In spite of this, magical texts circulated amongst scholars and students, leading to the formation of unofficial magic study groups.²³⁷

By the fourteenth century, demonic ritual magic flourished, despite the concerted efforts by Pope John XXII (1316-1334) to curtail such tempting activities.²³⁸ Anyone found to be in

²³³ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 14; Klaassen, "Learning and Masculinity", p. 54-55, 64-65.

²³⁴ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 14; Fanger, "Medieval Ritual Magic", viii; Klaassen, *Transformations of Magic*, 58. Please see Chapter 3 for a treatment on the central role of exorcism in Christianity and in demonic ritual magic.

²³⁵ By the twelfth century, Western and Central Europe enjoyed a certain level of stability. Kingdoms such as England, France, Hungary, and Portugal emerged. Bureaucratic institutions and economic markets developed with the help of the Jewish communities, necessitating a need for record-keeping which led to an emphasis on writing, which contributed to the overall social stability. Roman law was rediscovered, and with the founding of the judicial-focused University of Bologna, a Roman-based legal system began to spread. Canon law became more refined, and with the inclusion of ecclesiastical courts and their inquisitorial judicial system, we see the development of what Moore dubbed a "persecuting society", wherein a marginalized population is constructed and identified as a threat and persecuted (Bailey, "The Age of Magician", 9-11).

²³⁶ Bailey, "The Age of Magicians", 15; Van der Lugt, "'Abominable Mixtures'", 230; cf. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, more specifically chapter 6, which focuses on the beginnings and evolution of magic amongst the intellectual circles, specifically within universities and the types of esotericism that was considered to be appealing.

²³⁷ Van der Lugt, "'Abominable Mixtures'", 231.

²³⁸ Pope John XXII was known to disapprove of many forms of magic, particularly those involving the invocation of demons. However, as Boureau pointed out, the pope was also a transitional pontiff. Elected in his eighties in the

possession of these texts could be formally brought to trial, accused of practicing magic to usurp the papacy.²³⁹ In 1319, for example, Bernard Délicieux was accused of using demonic magic against Pope John XXII. He was cleared of the charge, but was sent to prison for possession of the text. In 1320, Matteo and Galeazzo were found guilty of practicing demonic magic against the same pope. In 1406/7, a number of clerics were accused of using demonic magic against Pope Benedict XIII and the king of France—though in an ironic twist of events, Pope Benedict XIII was charged with using demonic magic at the Council of Pisa in 1409.²⁴⁰

At the same time, there was a surge in the production and dissemination of various magical texts,²⁴¹ a trend that seems to have been tolerated by some Christian canonical theologians.²⁴² However, the fifteenth century also saw an increased tendency to link demonic magic with witchcraft, sparking debates about the legitimacy of demonic magic and other esoteric practices as vehicles for gaining knowledge, as well as a concern for the potential spiritual and physical consequences of invoking demons.²⁴³ As demons were abounded in nature and were part of the natural realm, the possibility for accidentally invoking a demon became a distinct possibility. Even schools of common and natural magic once seen as harmless became suspect, as theological and secular concerns about the implications and consequences of demonic

wake of a suspicious papal death, with several prominent magical and alchemical experts having strong ties with opposing factions and ruling families, it is conceivable that Pope John XXII was seeking to prevent his own murder-by-supernatural-means. Interestingly enough, the pope himself was at times portrayed as an Anti-Christ by various religious orders, most notably the Spiritual Franciscans, with whom, it should be noted, the Pope has a number of disagreements with (Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, 2, 22-23, 25).

²³⁹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 1-2; Robert Mathiesen, “A Thirteenth-Century Ritual to Attain the Beatific Vision from the *Sworn Book* of Honorius of Thebes”, in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, edited by Claire Fanger (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), 146.

²⁴⁰ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 1-2. This accusation illustrates to a tendency of delineating and ostracizing one’s enemy.

²⁴¹ One theory that explained the rise in esotericism’s popularity was the increased availability and affordability of books, made possible by the moveable-type printing press. Interestingly, the increase in these practices also coincided with the political and religious turmoil that marked Latin Europe. Religious and political divisions came to a head, sparking deadly conflicts like the Thirty Years War, the wars with the Ottoman Empire (which devastated Greece, the Balkans, and parts of Hungary and Romania), the Protestant Reformation, the decline of feudalism, and the rise of the nation-state system, ultimately culminating in the Enlightenment. As Tara Nummedal points out, in such times, it would be understandable that the idea of a unity of the cosmos would provide assurance that the universe was fundamentally harmonious and ordered, even if the social world was changing (Tara E. Nummedal, *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 74).

²⁴² Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinity”, 178; Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les ‘Images Astrologiques’ au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance: Spéculations Intellectuelles et Pratiques Magiques*, Sciences, Techniques et Civilisations du Moyen Âge à l’Aube des Lumières, 6, (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 592.

²⁴³ Bailey, “The Age of the Magician”, 18.

invocation grew.²⁴⁴ However, in spite of these concerns, interesting in ritual magic continued well into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁴⁵

1.4 A BRIEF HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw a shift in social understanding which ultimately gave rise to the Reformation. A century before Martin Luther sparked the Reformation, theological debates on proper piety, proper religion and proper (Christian) faith abounded, with some of them focusing particularly on demons. It was also a time of growing existential concerns, when the connection between magic and witches began to be refined, and new philosophies and conceptions of identity began to emerge.²⁴⁶ While there is no denying that the Reformation contributed to shifting attitudes towards magic and other esoteric disciplines, Bailey has correctly noted that it is dangerous—and I would add, arrogant—to delineate one single event as the sole cause for change.²⁴⁷ While the Reformation should be included as part of the conversation, it should not be the sole focus of it. The Reformation was at once a symptom of social change, an observable sign of a cultural shift and a change in collective identity, as well as a cause, rather than being simply the primary cause of the change.

The lines dividing the Medieval Eras and the Renaissance (that is, premodernity) and Early Modernity is blurry at best, and near impossible to determine in many cases.²⁴⁸ That said, the span of time between the second half of the fourteenth and the end of the sixteenth century—the time period which this project focuses on—is considered to be a major transitional period. This approximately two hundred fifty year period was marked by intellectual, social, and religious activities, which included many debates and technological developments that created a junction of thoughts, philosophies and attitudes. This nexus in turn created an arena of competing worldviews, which would then give space for (re)defining social and religious identity.

²⁴⁴ Collins, “Albertus, Magnus or Magus?”, 23-24.

²⁴⁵ Klaassen, “Medieval Ritual Magic”, 186-187; Weeks, *German Mysticism*, 123.

²⁴⁶ Bailey, “Disenchantment of Magic”, 403; Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 65.

²⁴⁷ Bailey, “Disenchantment of Magic”, 384-385.

²⁴⁸ See David Nichols, *Urban Europe: 1100-1700* (Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), vii, cf. pages 1-23 for a succinct breakdown.

It was also a time of war, violence, political disenchantment, and disruptions in trade. In 1315, a famine gripped Northern Europe. Beginning in 1346, *Yersinia pestis*, better known as the Black Death, began its sweep throughout Europe. The death toll was catastrophic by even modern standards: by 1375, the bacteria decimated over 40% of Europe's population, with some cities losing up to two-third of their inhabitants.²⁴⁹ Sparking fanaticism and panic, the outbreak became a catalyst for attacks against various groups (including Jews, Muslims, beggars, lepers, and even clerics and pilgrims) that were believed to have caused the epidemic. While in some areas, the plague was seen as divine retribution for humanity's sins, in other places, minorities (Jews in particular) were accused of deliberately poisoning the water supply.²⁵⁰ While several different groups were targeted as being responsible for the outbreak, in 1347, Jews were being widely blamed and in 1348, Pope Clement VI issued *Quamvis Perfidiam*, a papal bull condemning the anti-Jewish violence and scapegoating. By 1349, over 500 Jewish communities had been destroyed during the Erfurt Massacre, the Strasbourg Massacre, the Basel Massacre, and the Aragon Massacre, among others.²⁵¹ And yet, in some regions, this time period was also a time of great economic activity. Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ravensburg and Ulm became major printing hubs, as well as commercial and banking centres. They became trade hubs, providing a centre for imports from the Mediterranean to move westwards.²⁵²

This period was a major cultural turning point as well. As Plante mentioned, the period between the late fourteenth and the end of sixteenth centuries heralded a synthesis of medieval, Renaissance, scholastic, and humanist thought that came to define what is termed as the Modernity.²⁵³ It was a time where the medieval understanding of the individual as occupying a

²⁴⁹ Chazan, *Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 195-196; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 18, 231-232; Perry and Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, 26; Nichols, *Urban Europe*, 5.

²⁵⁰ Chazan, *Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 195-196; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 18; 231-232;

²⁵¹ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, (London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd, 1970), 131-132; Robert E. Lerner, "The Black Death and Western European Eschatological Mentalities", *The American Historical Review* 86, no. 3 (1981): 533.

²⁵² Nichols, *Urban Europe*, 16-17.

²⁵³ Julian G. Plante, Klaus Arnold, "Introduction to *De Laude Scriptorum: In Praise of Scribes*", in *De Laude Scriptorum: In Praise of Scribes* by Johannes Trithemius, edited with introduction by Klaus Arnold, translated by Roland Behrendt, (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1974), viii-ix.

static role within their community gave way to the idea of the individual having a more autonomous role and active responsibility toward their community.²⁵⁴

The sixteenth century was characterized by radical paradigm shifts around fundamental questions of identity (individual, social, and national), the nature and meaning of magic, doctrine, religions, authority, secular power, identity, nationality, and thinking about the natural world and the transempirical realm—particularly in the regions that would someday become modern Germany, the geographical focus of this project.²⁵⁵ The first half of the sixteenth century gave rise to a wave in various philosophies and outlooks that challenged the Catholic hegemony (such as, for example, the question of personal piety), which prompted fierce Christian dogmatic battles, where theological orthodoxy was defined and redefined in an attempt to control religions, and especially the authority to determine the Christian profile and who had a claim to dictate it.²⁵⁶

The ideas of the Reformation were able to spread in no small part thanks to the invention and refinement of the moveable printing press, sparking an information age that contributed to a destabilization of the old authorities and assumed truths through a democratization of knowledge. Though a distinct era from the Renaissance, the Reformation's *zeitgeist* shared some similarities with its predecessor, including the focus on *ad fontes*. For many Renaissance Christian humanists, this meant reading the Christian Bible alongside Graeco-Roman literature—though, for Reformists especially, the primary source of knowledge, insight, and wisdom was the Christian Bible.²⁵⁷ With intense intellectual, technological and social activities (including that which would characterize the crises of the Late Middle Ages) compressed in such a tight time period, the era became a transitional age of constant change. It would not be an exaggeration to state that this epoch marked the end of one world, and the beginning of another.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ Antoine Faivre, *Western Esotericism: A Concise History*, translated Christine Rhone, SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions, (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), 40.

²⁵⁵ van der Laan, "Introduction", 7.

²⁵⁶ Hanns-Peter Neumann, "Between Heresy and Orthodoxy: Alchemy and Piety in Late Sixteenth-Century Germany" in *Polemic Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and Its Others*, edited by Olav Hammer and Kocku von Stuckrad, Texts and Studies in Western Esotericism, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 137.

²⁵⁷ Weeks, "German Faustian Century," 19.

²⁵⁸ Weeks, *German Mysticism*, 118. This transition also marked an explosion of witch-hysteria. Environmental crises (including famines and droughts), political upheavals, wars, religious conflicts, and changes in the social hierarchy all served to feed an underlying anxiety about witchcraft, and its potential role in these cataclysms and calamities. Indeed, historical records show witch-hunts tended to increase during and immediately after times of great political, social, and religious upheaval. The fear of witches was prevalent throughout Europe, but was

1.5 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF JEWISH LIFE IN PREMODERN EUROPE

Despite the popular perception of Jews as aliens or outsiders, Rosman notes that, “Jews were in fact *of* their countries, and not just *in* them,” contributing and shaping their society as much as their Christian counterparts.²⁵⁹ For example, Jewish merchants forged a network with local producers, both Jewish and Christian. With the inclusion of servants and hired help, a hierarchy formed within these markets, with successful merchants rising to positions of authority.²⁶⁰

Markets blossomed into prosperous economic centres, which became hubs for urban growth, providing fertile soil for centres of learning and scholarship, in which Jews played a major role. The Christian and Jewish communities mixed and mingled, leading to the creation of culturally unique, dynamic, religiously heterogeneous urban centres, producing deep, complex, and nuanced relationships.²⁶¹

As minorities, Jews were often subject to the whims and judgments of the Church and the (very Christian) State, as well as their Christian neighbours.²⁶² As such, “the Jew” that we often encounter in both secular or religious Christian writings rarely—if ever—reflected the lived reality of a Jew living in premodern Europe. Indeed, as pointed out by Kruger, many writings didn’t accurately reflect the lived reality of the Christian who constructed the image of “the Jew”, as the construction was built to illustrate an idealized Christian.²⁶³

Though the institutional Christian teachings related to the Jewish people were fairly well-established, theologians were faced with navigating and reconciling some mixed and conflicting

especially fervent in German-speaking areas. As noted by scholars, witches represented disruption of the social and natural order, and as such, became “canvasses” onto which theologians, church authorities, and laypeople could project their various fears and anxieties. Because witches sought to sow chaos and disrupt the social order, they were seen as a threat by both the secular courts and the religious authorities. Through their explicit pact with the devil, witches are capable of uprooting the natural order created by God through Satan’s power (Mora, ed. *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xlvi-ly; Bailey, “Age of Magician”, 22. See the introductory chapter for more resources on witches.

²⁵⁹ Moshe Rosman, “Foreword”, in *Holy Dissent: Jewish and Christian Mystics in Eastern Europe*, edited by Glenn Dynner, (Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press, 2011), eBook, 23.

²⁶⁰ Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*, 47-48.

²⁶¹ Robert Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity in Medieval Western Christendom*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5; Aryeh Grabois, “The Hebraica Veritas and Jewish-Christian Intellectual Relations in the Twelfth Century”, *Speculum* 50, no. 4 (1975), 631-632.

²⁶² Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 4-5.

²⁶³ Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*, *Medieval Cultures*, Volume 40, (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xx-xxiii, 21.

sentiments and messages. On the one hand, Jews were the original inheritors of God's Covenant. On the other hand, Christians accused and condemned Jews for the killing of Jesus. The Jewish Diaspora was, accordingly, a justified punishment for not only rejecting but also for the accusations of killing Jesus; the Diaspora was the sign that God rejected Israel in favour of those who followed Jesus.²⁶⁴ Because they were thought of as Christ-rejecters, Jews were often depicted as natural allies of Satan, involved in the ultimate cosmic plot against Christianity.²⁶⁵

At the same time, the Jewish people's status as the recipients of God's Covenant was, at times, recognized.²⁶⁶ Prior to the thirteenth century, Jews were sometimes declared serfs of the royal treasury and granted a measure of protection from the crown—that protection, however, came at a price, as a series of taxes had to be paid in order to live, work, and exercise a measure of self-governance for a period of time (usually between three to ten years). This protection could be revoked, as seen in the number of expulsions.²⁶⁷ Life, and the guarantee of existence, hung by a thread.

There are evidence of Jewish settlements in Germanic lands dating from the Roman period, with documentations dating back to 320s CE.²⁶⁸ In 880, the church in Mainz issued an edict that respectable Christians were to keep their distance from the Jewish community—indicating that there was not only an established Jewish community in the area, but also that interactions between Jews and Christians were relatively commonplace. Very soon after, Jews were invited to settle in Worms, Regensburg, and Cologne.²⁶⁹ In 1084, the Bishop of Speyer invited Jewish families to settle, an event that was noted in both Jewish and Christian sources. Originally from Mainz, the Jewish families who settled were tasked with ensuring the economic

²⁶⁴ Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*, 3; John Y. B. Hood, *Aquinas and The Jews*, (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 3.

²⁶⁵ Edward Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 103, 104-105; Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, editors, *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 4.

²⁶⁶ Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, p. 6; Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 9. Kenneth R. Stow's *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* investigates Jewish-Christian interactions in Medieval Latin Europe by arguing that in the Early Middle Ages, Jewish life was governed by "a firmly legal and constitutional status" (4), emphasizing that wealth was not, nor should it be equated to, political clout. It was in the face of social and political instability in the later Middle Ages, that resulted in a change in legal status for Jewish communities, placing the onus primarily on the secular institutions, rather than solely on the Church.

²⁶⁷ Hood, *Aquinas and The Jews*, 20-21.

²⁶⁸ Teofilo F. Ruiz, "Jews, Muslims, and Christians", in *A People's History of Christianity: Medieval Christianity*, edited by Daniel W. Bornstein (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 266-267.

²⁶⁹ Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 89.

well-being of the town. Populated mostly by merchants, the community established a trade market and was given the right of self-governance in 1090, as confirmed in the charter.²⁷⁰

Tragically, this relative security lasted only six years. The First Crusades (1095–1099) unleashed a wave of anti-Jewish violence²⁷¹ that spread throughout Europe, with German-speaking lands (including Speyer, Worms, and Mainz) experiencing some of the deadliest attacks on Jewish communities that, despite protection extended by some bishops, saw property seizures, forcible conversions, and between 5000 and 10,000 Jews killed during this Crusade.²⁷² Consequently, by 1100, Europe became largely Christian, and Jews were seen as the last great enemy, and therefore open to persecution and expulsion. Conversion sermons, trials, the burning of Jewish holy books, blood libel accusations, and mandated identifying clothes became common across Europe.²⁷³

By the thirteenth century, Worms, Speyer, and Cologne—which were long established as important Jewish centres—grew to become prominent hubs of economic, intellectual, and social activity, developed in part by Jews who earned their living as merchants, lending money and providing capital for trade.²⁷⁴ In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council renewed its decree that Jews were prohibited from appearing in public on Good Friday. The Council also affirmed the mandate requiring Jews and Muslims to wear identifying clothes, and forbade Christians from having sexual intercourse with non-Christians.²⁷⁵

After three hundred years of economical, agricultural, and intellectual progress, a series of setbacks—including widespread economic failures, famine, wars and the Black Death—sparked a decline that came to characterize the fourteenth century. Agriculture began to fail—so

²⁷⁰ Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom: 1000-1500*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 170-174.

²⁷¹ Ira Robinson in his *A History of Antisemitism in Canada*, explores the term *antisemitism*. Though the term itself was originated in nineteenth century Germany (3), arising from a specific cultural context, the term itself is ambiguous and nuanced. Echoing Anthony Julius and Reinhard Rürup, Robinson emphasizes to keep in mind the difficulties when approaching the subject, though it is nonetheless necessary, as anti-Jewish sentiments and thought “was a defining feature of Western civilization” (6). For an engaging discussion on the difficulties and nuances, see Ira Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism in Canada*, (Waterloo ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015), 3-11.

²⁷² Chazan, *Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 175-176; Perry and Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, 2-3. Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 102-103. After the First Crusade, however, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI (1050-1106) issued a mandate that permitted Jews who underwent forced baptism to freely revert back to Judaism (Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 113-114).

²⁷³ Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 6, 103.

²⁷⁴ Hood, *Aquinas and The Jews*, 19-20, 25-26.

²⁷⁵ Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 102. Kessler points out that Omar II (717-720) declared dress codes for his Jewish and Christian subjects throughout the Caliphate.

much so that between 1315-1318, most of Northern Europe was starving, reducing the population in some areas by as much as 15%. As a result, along with the aforementioned Black Death, Jews, particularly those in Germany, suffered, with various communities being subjected to a series of attacks.²⁷⁶

After the Black Death, Latin Western Europe dove into reconstruction efforts, and—though their economic activities were limited by law—Jewish communities played a vital role in this process.²⁷⁷ Unfortunately, their economic contributions in particular served to feed pernicious stereotypes which linger even today. Between 1420-1520, many cities in the Holy Roman Empire either expelled their Jewish communities or confined them to segregated enclaves.²⁷⁸

As will be further demonstrated in later chapters, Jewish culture exerted a powerful impact on not only Christian civic life, but on esoteric and religious philosophy as well.²⁷⁹ Beginning in Italy in the fifteenth century and rapidly spreading throughout the continent, as the original language of the Bible, the Christian study of Hebrew became the *langue du jour*, with classes in language and grammar being taught in numerous major universities by 1546.²⁸⁰ Believed by many Christians to have an innate occult quality, the Hebrew language and script was widely considered the *prima lingua*, the first language in which God revealed the secrets of the universe. To understand Hebrew was to be able to reveal and understand the divine plan.²⁸¹

In premodernity, magic was practiced at all levels of society, in Jewish and Christian communities alike, and was woven seamlessly into the everyday lives and religious practices of Jews as they were into the lives and practices of Christians.²⁸² Esotericism created an interesting

²⁷⁶ Chazan, *Jews of Western Medieval Christendom*, 194-195; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 18-19.

²⁷⁷ Chazan, *Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 197.

²⁷⁸ Avner Shamir, *Christian Conceptions of Jewish Books: The Pfefferkorn Affair* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2011), 8-9; Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 7, 120-121.

²⁷⁹ Shamir, *Christian Conceptions*, 77.

²⁸⁰ Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 121-122.

²⁸¹ Edwards, *The Jews in Christian Europe*, 44; Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 29, 60.

²⁸² Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 85.

For more on Jewish magic in premodernity, please see: Gideon Bohak, “Jewish Magic in the Middle Ages,” in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present*, edited by David J. Collins, S. J., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 268–300; Edward Goldberg, *Jews and Magic in Medici Florence: The Secret World of Benedetto Blanis* (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 2011); Yuval Harari, *Jewish Magic Before the Rise of Kabbalah*, translated by Batya Stein (Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press, 2017); Moshe Idel, “Jewish Magic from the Renaissance Period to Early Modern Hasidism” in *Religion, Science*,

space for Jewish-Christian interactions, specifically in the sharing of ideas and theories.²⁸³ As we will see in the coming chapters, there was a strong perceived relationship between magic and Judaism; Christians believed that Jews were “natural guardians of magical knowledge”,²⁸⁴ naturally predisposed to having a deeper understanding of magic. Because of their perceived magical prowess, the Jewish magician was simultaneously sought after and feared.²⁸⁵

Social and cultural discourses shaped how magic was perceived and used. Magic was sometimes seen by some Jews as a way to fight anti-Jewish rhetoric, even Christianity itself.²⁸⁶ Meanwhile, some Christians feared that Jews intended to use magic to not only gain political control, but even of the universe itself.²⁸⁷ Included in that universe was the existence of demons. It was that ability to control these beings that could destroy the known world and disrupt the natural order that was dangerous. Demons therefore became more than mere reflections of internal tensions, but rather key players in the construction of identity.

and Magic in Concert and in Conflict, edited by Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989): 82-117; Daniel Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy*; David B. Ruderman, *Kabbalah, Magic and Science: The Cultural Universe of a Sixteenth-Century Jewish Physician* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Peter Schäfer, “Jewish Magic Literature in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 41 (1990): 75-91; Dov Schwartz, *Studies On Astral Magic In Medieval Jewish Thought*, Brill Reference Library of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

²⁸³ Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 86-87; for an interesting scholarly treatment of an example of this interaction, please see Bernd Roling (“The Complete Nature of Christ: Sources and Structures of a Christological Theurgy in the Works of Johannes Reuchlin,” in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* edited by Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, (Leuven, etc: Peeters, 2002): 231-266.

²⁸⁴ Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 85.

²⁸⁵ Joshua Trachtenberg and Moshe Idel, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion*, (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 1, 4.

²⁸⁶ Moshe Idel, “Jewish Magic,” 90, 97-98; Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 86.

²⁸⁷ Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 86.

CHAPTER TWO
LIVED RELIGIONS, COGNITIVE THEORIES AND NARRATOLOGY

The aim of the following chapter will be to outline the theories and methods I will be drawing from in my analysis. I will begin with a discussion of “lived religion,” aiming to explain why this concept is particularly useful in addressing the scholarly aversion to using esoteric texts as a resource for understanding premodern life. I will then move on to explain why I believe cognitive narratology offers a basis for addressing the link between esoteric demonology and Christian identity-formation in the period under study. More specifically, I will explain how cognitive narratology has excellent resources for helping us 1) understand how demons become social actors through narrative, and 2) how narratives and the social actors they give rise to impact identity formation.

2.1 LIVED RELIGIONS

Throughout the present work I have, with deliberation and consistency, referred to premodern religions (and the various esoteric ideas and practices they inform and draw from) as “lived experiences.”²⁸⁸ While this term may seem to be fairly self-explanatory—i.e., to say that religion is a “lived experience” is to presuppose that religious ways of being are rooted in lived experience, like all other ways of being—its use here has some important theoretical and methodological considerations that must now be made explicit.

Since the term’s inception in the late twentieth century,²⁸⁹ the concept of “lived religion” has been used to address some important criticisms regarding an unfortunate tendency in religious studies: the tendency of differentiating between “popular” and “official” forms of religion, and imparting lesser academic value to the “popular” forms than the “official.” A perfect example is the traditional trend of over-relying on “official” types of textual evidence—i.e. works of canonical theology and legal manuscripts—while excluding more “popular” works, such as esoteric texts. As noted by Robert Orsi, David Hall and others, this trend presupposes a series of strange dichotomizations: orthodoxy/heterodoxy; elite/popular; public/private;

²⁸⁸ Edwards, *The Jews in Christian Europe*, 6-7; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 45.

²⁸⁹ Derived from the French sociology of religion’s term ‘la religion vécue’ (David D. Hall, “Introduction”, in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, edited by David D. Hall, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), vii).

religion/society.²⁹⁰

I say “strange,” because, according to Robert Orsi, these dichotomizations fail to acknowledge that “the stories we tell about others exist alongside the many and varied stories they tell of themselves.”²⁹¹ In other words, thinking in these binary terms fails to acknowledge that the *lived experience* of the religious adherent forms an important piece of the puzzle when investigating a particular religion or religious phenomena. As Orsi continues, the concept of lived religion examines “the work of social agents/actors themselves as narrators and interprets (and reinterprets) of their own experiences and histories.”²⁹² As will be highlighted shortly, religious traditions are neither static nor homogeneous but rather *fluid*—the concept of “lived religion” thus helps us see how particular traditions (which are often thought of in “official” terms) inform and are informed by their embedding in varied and continuously changing social contexts (contexts which include their “popular” forms).²⁹³ The use of this term therefore insists upon the collapsing of the dichotomies listed above, and accordingly—as both Watkins and Hall suggest is preferable—insists that we view cultural and religious behaviour as wide-ranging.

In 2019 it may seem like a moot point to highlight the importance of collapsing the binaries listed above. And, indeed, the argument can be made that these categories have largely already been “collapsed” through decades of concentrated efforts to integrate a diversity of approaches into the study of religion, many of which *are* oriented towards taking both sides of each binary seriously (and therefore towards taking “lived religion” seriously). For example, in

²⁹⁰ Borchardt, “Magus as the Renaissance Man”, 73; Boureau, *Satan the Heretic*, 20-21; Davies, *Grimoires*, 22, 39-40, 68; R. Marie Griffith and Barbara Dianne Savage, “Introduction”, in *Women and Religion in the African Diaspora: Knowledge, Power, and Performance*, edited by R. Marie Griffith and Barbara Dianne Savage, (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), xvi-xvii; David D. Hall, “Introduction”, in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, edited by David D. Hall, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), ix; Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*, 5; Robert Orsi, “Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live In? Special Presidential Plenary Address, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, November 2, 2002”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 2 (2003), 2; Watkins, “‘Folklore’ and Popular Religion”, 141-143; McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 13, 20.

²⁹¹ Robert Orsi. *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*, third edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), xxxix.

²⁹² Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, xxxix.

²⁹³ If religion as a lived experience is fluid and mutable by nature, it is therefore dependent on its cultural, political and geographical context, and any shift in these will naturally result in a change in how religion is lived, built, and defined. See: See Hall, “Introduction”, xi-xii; Danièle Hervieu-Léger, “‘What Scripture Tells Me’: Spontaneity and Regulation within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal”, in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, edited by David D. Hall, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 22; Robert Orsi, “Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religions”, in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, edited by David D. Hall, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 9; Watkins, “‘Folklore’ and Popular Religion”, 141-143.

investigating religious identities,²⁹⁴ it is now accepted that approaches focused on examining “popular” ways of knowing, such as oral history, are as valid and worthwhile to this pursuit as the study of official doctrine (and, arguably, more so). However, as I am aiming to demonstrate through this dissertation, the binary of religion (“official”)/magic (“popular”)—and the traditional valuations this binary imparts—do not seem to have been collapsed in the same way, and this is something that needs to be questioned. In other words, as we know that esoteric practices—and magical practices in particular—were an important and influential part of the premodern social and religious landscape, to exclude them from investigations into premodern religious identity due to their “popular” connotations is to miss an important piece of the puzzle.

As noted above, Watkins, McGuire, and Hall suggest that one way of overcoming this type of thinking is to view cultural and religious behaviour as occurring on a spectrum. This spectral perspective—which the concept of “lived religion” relies upon—allows us to see that religion is neither uniformly expressed nor uniformly experienced. It resides not only in texts, theology and institutions, but also in rituals, materialities, literatures, ideas, practices, mythologies, and persons.²⁹⁵ Lived religion cannot be separated from everyday life because it is rooted in everyday life; it is a part of the lived space of a particular time, place, social class and cultural environment.²⁹⁶

Used here, the term “lived religion” thus problematizes one of the most perdurable scholarly perceptions of premodern magic: the idea that magic represented an alternative to (or a more popular and thus vulgarized form of) Christianity. It forces us to acknowledge that premodern Christianity was not homogeneous, was not something characterized by a monolithic divide between what was official and what was done.²⁹⁷ Put differently, the term “lived religion” reminds us that we cannot easily separate the categories of religion and magic, and also that we cannot assume these categories remained uninfluenced by the intercultural and inter-religious context in which they developed. Religion in premodernity—which included magic—was thus

²⁹⁴ Regarding the issue of identity formation specifically, it is especially important to note that, while modern sentiments tend to want to emphasize the relationship between religion and *individual* identity, in premodernity—where the religious landscape was intimately embedded into the sociocultural terrain—the focus should be on the relationship between religion and *communal* identity (Hall, *Worlds of Wonder*, 5). See also: Watkins, ““Folklore and Popular Religion””, 145.

²⁹⁵ Orsi, “What is the Study of Religion?”, 2; Hall, *Lived Religion*, viii; McGuire, *Lived Religion*, 13.

²⁹⁶ Orsi, “Everyday Miracles,” 9; Orsi, “What is the Study of Religion?” 172-174. See also: Griffith and Savage, *Women and Religion*, xii.

²⁹⁷ See Chapter One, Section 1.3 for a discussion on the varied nature of how Christianity may have been understood.

living and lived (i.e., it was *fluid*), and, as such, was an integral part of identity-building.

Esoteric texts of invocative ritual magic readily attest to the varied and dynamic reality of the premodern social landscape, and therefore provide us with an important window into the various forces that shaped premodern identities. As I have been arguing, demons represent one such force: as part of the everyday lived experience of the premodern milieu, they were not only magical “tools,” but also active, conscious beings with whom a magician could build a kind of working relationship. Through these relationships,²⁹⁸ Christian practitioners of magic would encounter and engage with non-Christian discourse, which, in turn, tells us something about the type and quality of intercultural communication that occurred during this period, as well as the various social tensions that informed identity construction therein. However, before expanding on these themes, it will first be pertinent to expand a bit further on what is involved in applying the concept of “lived religion” to premodernity.

2.1.1 Lived Religion in Premodernity

As noted above, the concept of “lived religion” only began to gain traction in the late twentieth century, and much of the existing scholarship that employs it does so to examine the lived experience of contemporary Westerners (and Americans in particular).²⁹⁹ This perhaps begs the question of whether or not it is even possible to look at the lived religions of the past; of whether or not it even makes sense to talk about “lived religion” or “lived religiosity” in pre-Enlightenment Europe. As I will argue below, it is not only possible, but more beneficial to examine the role of magic and the use of demons in premodern German-speaking Europe through this lens. While the historical nature of the study certainly tempers the sense of dynamism that accompanies the concept of lived religion, there are a number of steps we can and indeed must take to make this approach viable.

To use Kalleres’ blunt yet apt words, the first thing we must do is “overcome our identity

²⁹⁸ Perhaps the most integral aspect to grasping religion as lived—rather than uniform, timeless and static—is this relational aspect; the idea that, as Michael D. McNally notes in *Honoring Elders*, lived religion is made up of mostly cultural responses that are mapped out as a paradigmatic relationship (Michael D. McNally, *Honoring Elders: Aging, Authority, and Ojibwe Religion*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 25-26). See also Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2-3).

²⁹⁹ Two fascinating books that look at lived religion in the Western world but from a postcolonial, non-Eurocentric lens are Michael D. McNally’s *Honoring Elders: Aging, Authority and Ojibwe Religion*—which looks at the integral role of the elder in the Ojibwe communities—as well as *Women and Religions in the African Diaspora*, edited by Griffith and Savage, which focuses on the lived religious experiences of women in the African diaspora.

as Western modern subjects—products of a post-Cartesian, post-Enlightenment world and worldview.”³⁰⁰ This identity sometimes hinders scholarly thought patterns by unconsciously promulgating deeply rooted assumptions, such as the idea that medieval belief systems were homogeneous (that there was a uniformity of attitudes towards things and a lack of religious skepticism), or that the “popular” practices of the people somehow resisted the Christianizing efforts of the Church.³⁰¹ However, even if we are able to shed our preconceived biases, how is one supposed to “think like a person from the fifteenth century” without mutilating the thought? According to Eliade and Partin, this way of thinking misses the mark; it does not make sense for us try to “think like” a person from the fifteenth century, because the vastly different nature of our worlds makes this an impossible task.³⁰² However, as they further point out, this does not mean we should abandon the important task of attempting to recover forgotten or concealed knowledge by employing the strategies we do have.³⁰³ One of these strategies is the effort to map out the various social, political, historical, cultural and religious landscapes that contributed to the premodern worldview and experience. As this strategy suggests, the study of lived religion in this context is necessarily interdisciplinary.³⁰⁴

This is why, as noted above, perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to overcome when seeking to understand the relationship between lived religion and the construction of social identity in premodernity is the over-reliance on holding doctrinal texts—theological treatises, rabbinical commentaries, judicial records and other such “official” documents—as authoritative accounts of social reality.³⁰⁵ I would like to again reiterate that while such texts are indeed incredibly useful for understanding the perspective of certain demographics, the perspective they

³⁰⁰ Kalleres, *City of Demons*, 14. See also: Susan Reynolds, “Social Mentalities and the Cases of Medieval Scepticism”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1991): 25-27; John Van Engen “The Future of Medieval Church History”, *Church History* 71, no. 3 (2002), 498. Meredith B. McGuire furthers this thought by asking whether sociology “has uncritically adopted a post-Reformation ‘Protestant’ purism that excludes from our purview a large range of practices and beliefs that as, in fact, important parts of the lived religions” (McGuire, *Lived Religions*, 20). By adapting such perspective, based on a particular understanding of what religion is, we are neglecting a multitude of experiences that encompasses a tradition, which in premodernity, as I have, and will further, argue includes the existence of magic.

³⁰¹ Susan Reynolds, “Social Mentalities and the Cases of Medieval Scepticism”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1991), 25-27; John Van Engen, “The Future of Medieval Church History”, *Church History* 71, no. 3 (2002), 498.

³⁰² Mircea Eliade and Harry B. Partin, “Crisis and Renewal in History of Religions”, *History of Religions* 5, no. 1 (1965), 10.

³⁰³ Eliade and Partin, “Crisis and Renewal,” 10.

³⁰⁴ Griffith and Savage, *Women and Religion*, xi.

³⁰⁵ Reynolds, “Social Mentalities,” 28.

provide is particularized. In other words, what we begin to see through this near-singular reliance on the literature produced by the members of a particular social class is not only the promotion of the author's worldview, but also the promotion of the scholar's worldview—a view which assumes not only that this literature represents the normative worldview, but also that there only was one normative worldview. To avoid this limited perspective and inquire into the lived lives of the people—i.e., into their interactions with their sociocultural landscape—we must acknowledge that historical knowledge is multidimensional,³⁰⁶ and that understanding the lived experiences of the past thus necessitates acknowledging (and therefore mapping out) the multitude of perspectives that helped shape these societies and the texts they created.

An important part of making these maps coherent and viable is overcoming the temptation to force the contemporary understanding of premodern religions as uniform and monolithic. We have to ask ourselves, what did religion mean to the average premodern European? Van Engen provides an answer to this question in “The Future of Medieval Church History” by offering three congruent definitions of religion that were used in premodernity. The first is professed religion, so the monastic orders and the privileged status surrounding them. The second is the world of miracles, transempirical beings and shrines of healing, while the third is religion-as-law, or, more specifically, the application of law (a marriage of secular and religious law) to maintain the social order and harmony within the cosmos.³⁰⁷ In other words, if religion is a social construction and a social reality³⁰⁸ as emphasized by Orsi, then logic dictates that the religion of a particular time and era must be understood within the social fabric of that time and space, which—as Van Engen highlights—must include a consideration of the esoteric as it was undeniably an integral part of the premodern worldview,³⁰⁹ and therefore a part of the lived experience of premodern religion.

So, keeping these important circumscriptions in mind, it seems clear that talking about the lived religion of pre-Enlightenment Europe is not only coherent but desirable: as scholars we should not be flattening the dynamic plurality of this space, but rather probing its layered,

³⁰⁶ Schweitzer, “Humanizing Religion,” 226.

³⁰⁷ Van Engen, “Future of Medieval Church,” 502-503.

³⁰⁸ Robert Orsi, *History and Presence* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 62.

³⁰⁹ As Van Engen emphasizes, the premodern cultural environment was layered, nuanced, and, at times, even contradictory: shrines, apocalyptic prophecies, narratives about demons, Jewish and Christian holy places, ascetic practices, even religious skeptics and apathetic all contributed to the experience of the person, emphasizing a plurality of approaches to religious experience (Van Engen, “Future of Medieval Church History”, 508). It is this dynamic plurality that we must understand and use when approaching a particular aspect as an object for study.

nuanced—and at times even contradictory—sociocultural environment, to gain a sense of the plurality of religious experience contained therein. Having laid out the particular conceptualization of religion that will be guiding this work, it will now be time to discuss the larger framework informing my analysis.

2.2 LAYING OUT THE APPROACH: PERSON, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

I would like to begin by acknowledging that it may be viewed as controversial to use a cognitive-influenced approach.³¹⁰ This approach is often—though it must be stressed, not always—understood as being reductively empiricist, as something that attempts to explain human behaviour (particularly religious behaviour) solely through the neurological functions of the brain.³¹¹ However, I would like to demonstrate that cognitive approaches have more to offer than mere empirical reductionism: such approaches also explicitly focus on a person’s relationship with their social, cultural, and historical sphere. From the Latin *cognoscere*, or “to know, to be acquainted with,” cognition is often understood as: 1) the mental processes that interact with the “material, social, and symbolic environment;” 2) the capacity to process and make sense of that environment.³¹² It is the second definition that my theoretical model will be based on. In this project, then, the term “cognition” should thus be thought of as an organizing resource, one that both shapes and is shaped by internal networks of thoughts, feelings and visceral reactions, as well as by the external world.

In other words, as individuals, we do not filter the world passively; we actively engage and interact with it in order to understand it (and, by extension, ourselves). By interacting with the world, we transform it—both physically and culturally—and, as the world changes, so, too,

³¹⁰ The end of this chapter will address the criticisms of this approach in detail; these introductory remarks are meant to set the stage for my own discussion of why I believe the influence of cognitive approach is particularly useful for the current investigation.

³¹¹ Edward Slingeland, “Who’s Afraid of Reductionism? The Study of Religion in the Age of Cognitive Science,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 26, no. 2 (June 2008), 375-411.

³¹² Oleg Anshakov and Tamás Gergely, *Cognitive Reasoning: A Formal Approach*, Cognitive Technologies, (Heidelberg and Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 1; Jeppe Sinding Jensen, “Framing Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture Theoretically”, in *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative*, edited by Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 35.

do we.³¹³ The study of this cognitive process through the lens of narratology (as we shall see) will begin to allow us to perceive the identity-forming interactions that take place between the mind, the body, and the social and physical environment they are situated in.³¹⁴ As Edward Slingerland puts it, “this approach to the humanities starts from *an embodied mind that is always already in touch with the world.*”³¹⁵ By emphasizing the link between embodiment and how we perceive and construct reality, we are thus forced to approach religion as “lived” in the sense articulated above, and do not commit us to searching for religious meaning in purely neurological terms.

Put differently, this emphasis allows us to trace the individual’s process of active “meaning making” through the use of symbols and language.³¹⁶ Closely linked with epistemology (the origins, methodology and validity of knowledge),³¹⁷ cognitive theories posit that, if cognition is how knowledge is created and improved upon, then we should not only look at how specific knowledge is created, but also at *how that knowledge developed within its social and historical parameters.* The proposed approach thus seeks to understand the knowledge that developed a particular worldview, and also what this worldview meant to the people who formed and expressed it.³¹⁸

In sum, self-understanding is not only located in the person, but also externally in

³¹³ Frith, 17; William G. Lycan, “Consciousness”, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Science*, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Ebook, 212. As Geertz puts it, “we see and feel the world that our brains create” (“Whence Religion?”, 32-33).

³¹⁴ Mary Thomas Crane, *Shakespeare’s Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 34; Jensen, “Framing Religious Narratives”, 40; William W. McCorkle Jr and Dimitris Xygalatas, “Introduction: Social Minds, Mental Cultures—Weaving Together Cognition and Culture in the Study of Religion”, in *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, edited by Dimitris Xygalatas and William W. McCorkle Jr. Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 1.

³¹⁵ Edward Slingerland, “Who’s Afraid of Reductionism?”, 378 (emphasis mine).

³¹⁶ Donald Beecher, *Adapted Brains and Imaginary Worlds: Cognitive Science and Literature of the Renaissance*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016), 25; Richard Courtney, *Drama and Intelligence: A Cognitive Theory*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 8; Patrick Colm Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism: On Narrative, Cognitive Science, and Identity*, Theory and Interpretation of Narrative), Columbus OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2009), 5; Matti Kamppinen, “Cognitive Study of Religion and Husserlian Phenomenology: Making Better Tools for the Analysis of Cultural Systems”, in *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience*, edited by Jensine Andresen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2001), 200.

³¹⁷ Adele Abrahamsen and William Bechtel, “History and Core Themes” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Science*, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Ebook: 9; Armin W. Geertz, “Cognitive Approaches to the Study of Religion”, in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and Randi R. Warnes, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 351, 353-354; McCorkle and Xygalatas, “Introduction: Social Minds, Mental Cultures,” 1.

³¹⁸ Anshakov and Gergely, *Cognitive Reasoning*, 2.

society;³¹⁹ it is the product of the relationship between *embodiment* (mental processes that lie within the individual),³²⁰ the *embedded/external mind* (the interactions that occur between the individual and aspects of their external environment), and *enculturation* (the impact of the individual's cultural context).³²¹ Individual and collective self-understandings (or, put differently, identities) are thus dependent on a complex paradigm of relationships that mutually influence and shape each other. Put differently, the social world shapes the mind as much as the mind shapes the social world; the mind then becomes an active participant in the production of cultural knowledge.³²² While this may seem blatantly obvious—after all, it is clear that society, culture, history, etc. are all the products of human activity—the proposed theoretical approach provides us with an avenue to investigate these identity-forming processes and the relationships between them.

2.2.1 The Importance of Culture

According to Jensen, a person's self-understanding is predicated on the existence of culture, the result of generations upon generations of knowledge-making and meaning-creating.³²³ Culture—expressed through narratives, customs, symbols, and cultural models—should thus be understood as one of the deciding factors in the shaping of identity. The collective framework of culture, then, helps to shape the identities of individuals living within a particular society by providing them with the tools and schemas they need to organize and make sense of the world around them.³²⁴ In other words, in order to understand how a person in a given time

³¹⁹ Armin W. Geertz, "Introduction to Religious Narrative", in *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative*, edited by Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 1.

³²⁰ Particularly those experienced through the body.

³²¹ Armin W. Geertz, "Whence Religion? How the Brain Constructs the World and What This Might Tell Us About the Origins of Religion, Cognition and Culture", in *Origins of Religion, Cognition and Culture*, edited by Armin W. Geertz. Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 30; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 3, 5; Ann Taves, "Non-Ordinary Powers: Charism, Special Affordances and the Study of Religion", in *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, edited by Dimitris Xygalatas and William W. McCorkle Jr, Religion, Cognition and Culture (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 81.

³²² Geertz, "Introduction to Religious Narrative," 1-2.

³²³ Jensen, "Framing Religious Narrative," 44.

³²⁴ Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 21-22. See also Peter E. S. Freund Peter, Meredith B. McGuire, and Linda S. Podhurst, *Health, Illness, and the Social Body: A Critical Sociology* Fourth Edition (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, Pearson Education, Inc, 2003) especially pages 2-3 which describes how society informs the

and place saw themselves and their world, we must have a proper understanding of their *weltanschauung* in light of the larger historical and sociocultural context. We must understand that meaning-making and identity creation are core features of any lived experience (including magic), and that the creating, parsing, or construction of meaning in any form involves a dialogue between the individual and the environment.

Let me provide a general example to further illustrate this framework and how it shapes identity. Currently, Western culture largely communicates the message that men do not cry, in spite the fact that every healthy human being feels sadness. Tears and expressions of emotions are seen as hallmarks of sensitivity, a culturally feminine trait. The ability to restrain one's emotions (especially sadness) is seen as a sign of strength, which in the West is often associated with masculinity. Girls cry, boys do not; a common enough refrain echoed in film, television, theatre, literature, even amongst political discourse. A strong man, therefore, holds in his tears, or is only permitted to cry in a particular way, and only in exceptional circumstances. When a Western man is shown to be openly crying, it often causes discomfort, precisely as it goes against the cultural narrative.

Yet, despite this, much of Western classical literature depicts weeping men. Achilles' lamented and sobbed at the death of Patroclus.³²⁵ Odysseus wept when listening to Demodocus' recounting of the Fall of Troy.³²⁶ In the twelfth-century French epic poem, *The Song of Roland*, noblemen became faint from crying upon seeing their fallen comrades on the battlefield.³²⁷ Arthur wept as his knights began their quest for the Holy Grail.³²⁸ Both the Hebrew³²⁹ and Christian³³⁰ Bibles are replete with men crying and rending their clothes in grief. Once upon a time in the West, great men were expected to weep, as they had such great emotions that could not be contained.

However, the cultural narrative has slowly shifted; tears are now conspicuously absent in

individual what is a healthy body, what is an ill one, and also informs other individuals how to react an individual who does not conform to the ideal understanding of health.

³²⁵ Homer, *Iliad*, Bk XVIII. Translated by Samuel Butler (London: Prospero Books, 1970), 284.

³²⁶ Homer, *Odyssey*, Bk VIII. Translated by Samuel Butler (London: Prospero Books, 1970), 90.

³²⁷ *Song of Roland: The Legend that Turolodus Relates*, translated by Laura Moore Wright (New York: Vantage Press, 1960): ln. 1446-1447.

³²⁸ Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Introduction by Andrea Denny-Brown (New York: Race Point Publishing, 2017), 396.

³²⁹ Cf Gen. 27:38, 29:11, 42:24, 43:30, 45:2; I Sam. 20:41; II Sam. 20:41; II Kings 8:11; Neh. 1:4; Esth. 4:1; Job 16:16; Ps. 34:7; Isa. 15:2, 16:9, 22:4, 38:3.

³³⁰ Cf Mt. 26:75; Lk. 19:14, 22:62; Jn. 11:35; Acts 21:13; Rev. 5:4.

many cultural depictions of male behaviour, sending the message that men are not expected to cry. When boys engage with this cultural norm, it becomes part of their lived reality. Regardless if they shed tears, their mental reactions and lived experiences will include this relationship between themselves and the social narratives about tears and the construct of manliness. While it is inherently biological to cry, as we all feel sadness, it is cultural norms and expectations that shape how sadness is triggered, felt, processed, and expressed and impact our identity.³³¹

As a framework comprising people, institutions, material artefacts and mentalities, culture is a space that is both dynamic and collaborative: while we are all participants in its creation (a creation that is constantly evolving and changing), it also participates in creating us.³³² Personal and social identities are thus created through the interaction with cultural worlds, through the navigation of social roles and relationships.³³³ As Deacon emphasizes, this process of mutual-shaping is ongoing, largely through the languages and symbols that make up the cultural matrix.³³⁴ The network of relationships that connect people to their sociocultural environment becomes a guide in understanding both, as individual and cultural identity are symbiotically defined.³³⁵ Within the premodern context that is currently under investigation, demons were actively part of this network of relationships—as will be discussed in the following section, they were social agents, real figures with whom people could form real relationships with. Because they both shape and were shaped by the dominant culture, they can therefore provide us with unique insight into the lived experiences—and social tensions—of this particular

³³¹ Patrick Colm Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 244-245.

³³² Astrid Erll, “Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction”, in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 4.

³³³ Jan Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory”, in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 109; Alon Confino, “Memory and History of Mentalities”, in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 79; Edward Slingerland, “Cognitive Science and Religious Thought: The Case of Psychological Interiority in the *Analects*”, in *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, edited by Dimitris Xygalatas and William W. McCorkle Jr. Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 197-198.

³³⁴ Terrence William Deacon, *The Symbolic Species: The Co-Evolution of Language and the Brain*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 111; cf. Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 15.

³³⁵ Assman, “Communicative and Cultural Memory”, 113-114; Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 48; Erll, “Cultural Memory Studies,” 5-6; Siegfried J. Schmidt, “Memory and Remembrance: A Constructivist Approach,” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 193, 197.

time and place.

2.2.2 Social Agents

Before we can understand how demons were used within premodern esoteric texts, we must first discuss their larger significance: their role as social agents. Whether in the form of gods, angels, saints, demons, *devis*, Jesus, or other entities, social actors are not mere symbols, but are rather “presences that become autonomous within particular life worlds.”³³⁶ They are understood to have a realness to them—a presence that is felt—and they often play an important social role. As Andrew King states writing about the seventeenth century Scottish witch trials, the idea of demons and their perceived interactions with the human world represented “something real that generated intense physical and psychological effects.”³³⁷ In other words, people build up networks of relationships with social actors—here demons—allowing them to play a part in their lives and become involved in the expression of various tensions and conflicts. Through these relationships, they play a role in society, conditioning and helping to determine people’s feelings, reactions and behaviours.

As noted in the preceding section, we create relationships with the people, ideas, and things in our sociocultural world, based on our understanding of that world, and these relationships serve to form and reform this understanding. A devotee of the Virgin Mary, for example, will pray to her, keep her holy days, speak with her, and, perhaps more interestingly, act in accordance with their perception of the Virgin’s expectations.³³⁸ This relationship reaffirms the devotee’s identity as a Catholic. The presence of the Virgin is very real—not only to the devotee, but also to the larger religious community to which the devotee belongs. She will be used and invoked in various ways by the devotee; for example, if the devotee is a recent immigrant, they may use the Virgin Mary as a way to communicate this aspect of their identity, and their relationship with her will be integral to their shifting identity.³³⁹

Like the flesh-and-blood person, transempirical beings, as social-actors, are a part of the culture, geography and history that produced them: they are real, even if their existence cannot

³³⁶ Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115th Street*, xx-xxv; Orsi, *History and Presence*, 7, 9.

³³⁷ Andrew King, "Introduction: Angels and Demons", *Critical Survey* 23, no. 2 (2011), 5.

³³⁸ Orsi, *Madonna of the 115th Street*, xx-xxv.

³³⁹ For an in-depth look at the changing cult of the Virgin Mary, and her role as a social actor, please see Robert Orsi’s *The Madonna of the 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*, Third Edition, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

be necessarily empirically proven. More than mere reflections of the culture, they are active participants in it; they contribute to and communicate with the culture through the power given to them by the people who construct narratives and beliefs around them. They are the embodiment of the social body, producing meaning that channels and magnifies both individual and communal experiences.³⁴⁰ In other words, they are a lens of experience, meaning, and understanding; figures who construct and reconstruct identity by mediating between the various spheres of existence.³⁴¹

The significance of the actual relationship between the person and the social agent cannot be stressed enough:³⁴² social agents become a felt presence in people's lives because they are real within the experiences, rituals, and narratives that generate and shape them. Through these relationships with social agents (here transempirical beings), communities are better able to reflect on their world and create their communal identity.³⁴³ Robert Orsi demonstrates this point well in *The Madonna of 115th Street*, a study where he found that the stories people told about their relationship with the Madonna were fundamental to shaping their identities as devotees.³⁴⁴ Their relationship with her was strengthened through narratives and communal rites, and these activities served to strengthen her devotees' relationships with one another. Through communal rites and social interactions the Madonna became present, and, through this presence, social cohesion was forged and a communal identity formulated.³⁴⁵ It is this presence that is important: social agents are present through relationships with people, and therefore occupy a very real social space. In other words, they are not merely symbols, but realized beings who are agents of a particular worldview.³⁴⁶

As the examples from Orsi demonstrate, social agents are an important part of individual and communal identity formation; they indicate that religion is not merely a recipe to be followed, but is rather a framework comprising a network of relationships between humans and transempirical beings. These relationships are played out internally, within the self, and

³⁴⁰ Hervieu-Léger, "What Scriptures Tell Me," 22; McNally, *Honoring Elders*, 39.

³⁴¹ Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 61-62.

³⁴² Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 60.

³⁴³ Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 113. And indeed, Orsi goes even further in *Between Heaven and Earth*, arguing that religion is a complex network of relationships between people and religious social actors.

³⁴⁴ Orsi, *Madonna of the 115th Street*, 176.

³⁴⁵ Orsi, *Madonna of the 115th Street*, xviii-xix, 182, 206.

³⁴⁶ Orsi, *Madonna of the 115th Street*, xxi; Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 6.

externally, with other people. Now that we have a better understanding of how identity-building processes interact with various cultural forces to create meaning and shape individual and communal identities, it will now be time to shift the focus of discussion and relay how these themes play out in the approach of lived religions and cognitive narratology, the field I will be specifically rooting my methodology in.

2.3 APPROACHING LIVED EXPERIENCES, IDENTITY, RELIGION, AND NARRATIVES

Having laid out my stance on how the identity-forming synthesis of lived experience provides a useful framework for the current investigation, it will still be necessary to provide a short overview of the specific aspects of cognitive thinking that will be relevant to my analysis. As the previous discussion has demonstrated, religion is a human activity that is formed in the minds individuals as well as in the shared consciousness of society: it requires the active participation of both the individual and society in order to be sustained. Accordingly, religion is a lived experience, a communal activity that incorporates belief and behaviour into the creation of both individual and social identities.

While religion is not natural in that it is not found in nature, it is, as De Cruz and Nichols suggest, natural in the sense that it comes naturally to people.³⁴⁷ Religious lives—including beliefs, behaviour, and belonging—are in part constructed by human interactions with the sociocultural environment. By incorporating a concern for the larger cultural and historical framework allows us to better understand how a person—and by extension, their society—create meaning through these interactions.

As McCauley correctly points out, the various approaches to religion serve to complement and support each other (when, of course, their theories and findings are skillfully

³⁴⁷ Helen De Cruz and Ryan Nichols, “Introduction: Cognitive Science of Religion and Its Philosophical Implications” in *Advances in Religion, Cognitive Science, and Experimental Philosophy*, edited by Helen De Cruz and Ryan Nichols, *Advances in Experimental Philosophy*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 4. See also: Jensine Andresen, “Introduction: Towards a Cognitive Science of Religion”, in *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience*, edited by Jensine Andresen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1; Reynolds, “Social Mentalities,” 23; Thomas E. Lawson, “Psychological Perspectives on Agency,” in *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience*, edited by Jensine Andresen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 146; Kamppinen, “Cognitive Study of Religion,” 204-205.

synthesized).³⁴⁸ However, the endeavour to understand religion in its totality is simply that: an endeavour. Therefore, one cannot expect one single full, complete explanation to exist. In other words, the theories we have are simply working models that can only partially explain complex social processes like religion and identity-formation.³⁴⁹

As Wiebe points out, while empirical theories of religion are useful in explaining certain facets of religion, they do not satisfactorily explain the transempirical world or the need for transempirical beings.³⁵⁰ The question of meaning is often overlooked when focusing on the purely biological processes of religion. As our contemporary worldview often prioritizes verifiable empirical evidence, it is somewhat understandable that some cognitive theorists focus on the biological explanation that religion, and even culture, are merely products of the brain that have little causal relevance on our cognitive processes.³⁵¹ Fortunately, theorists such as Jensen, Geertz, Donald, Herman, and Fludernik have addressed these fallacies by proposing a more reciprocal model: one which acknowledges that culture and the individual symbiotically shape each other; that the creation of both the personal layer (comprising the acts, the beliefs, fears, hopes, perceptions and desires of the individual), and the cultural lens (the contents of the acts and their expression) are formed in a shared space with the social environment. To put it more succinctly: religious actions and beliefs are both at once personal and cultural, individually and publicly expressed.³⁵²

If religion includes the pursuit of knowledge about the world, and also prescribes activities that act on, reify, or attempt to (re)build that knowledge, this suggests a relationship between the material world and religion, one that is culturally and historically dictated.³⁵³ These

³⁴⁸ Robert N. McCauley, “Explanatory Pluralism and the Cognitive Science of Religion: Why Scholars in Religious Studies Should Stop Worrying About Reductionism,” in *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, edited by Dimitris Xygalatas and William W. McCorkle Jr, Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 12-13.

³⁴⁹ McCauley, “Explanatory Pluralism,” 14.

³⁵⁰ Donald Wiebe, “The Significance of the Natural Experience of a ‘Non-Natural’ World to the Question of the Origin of Religion”, in *Origins of Religion, Cognition and Culture*, edited by Armin W. Geertz, Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 140.

³⁵¹ Jeppe Sinding Jensen, “Cognition and Meaning”, in *Origins of Religion, Cognition and Culture*, edited by Armin W. Geertz, Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 241-243.

³⁵² Andresen, “Introduction: Towards a Cognitive Science of Religion”, 27-28; Kamppinen, “Cognitive Study of Religion,” 94.

³⁵³ Stewart Guthrie, “Early Cognitive Theorists of Religion: Robin Horton and his Predecessors,” in *Mental Culture: Classical Social Theory and the Cognitive Science of Religion*, edited by Dimitris Xygalatas and William W. McCorkle Jr, Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 41-42; Slingerland, “Cognitive Science and Religious Thought,” 197-198.

relationships—between adherents, social agents and adherents, and adherents and larger society—all occur within a shared reality. By addressing the social, political, historical, and psychological realities in an attempt to slowly tease apart how a society’s narratives, rituals, and beliefs influence each other (both individually and collectively), we can begin to see the creation of a system of meaning. This more nuanced approach situates and investigates lived and imagined realities, both of which enter into a symbiotic relationship to form ‘religion.’³⁵⁴

From this perspective, then, religion is mode of communication; it communicates attempts to resolve “how” and “why” questions by creating meaning.³⁵⁵ Narrative, as we shall see shortly, then becomes the link, or encryption key, in coming to understand the process between the self, and society. Narratives build bridges between individuals and their culture and society, between the lived and transempirical worlds.³⁵⁶ Through narrative, the religious world is (re)created as a reality that underlies the culture—a reality which the narrative brings to the surface. This religious reality, through the narrative, becomes a way to explore abstract questions and search for further meaning. Narratives are therefore the embodiment of the worldviews that surrounds us. They make them real. In this sense, religious narratives therefore enshrine the ideal model of identity.³⁵⁷

In addition to providing individuals with the keys to understanding the universe (and therefore shaping their own role in it), religion facilitates the formation of social bonds and provides a means for forging one’s identity—both as an individual and as a member of a larger society.³⁵⁸ As practitioners each bring their own assumptions and values to their practice of religion, this results not only in a bond between the religion and the adherent, but also in an ongoing tension between the various discourses that make up society (in this case, between

³⁵⁴ Andresen, “Introduction: Towards a Cognitive Science of Religion,” 23.

³⁵⁵ Geertz, “Religious Narrative,” 9, 16; Ilkka Pyysiäinen, “Cognition, Emotion, and Religious Experience,” in *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience*, edited by Jensine Andresen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1; Reynolds, “Social Mentalities,” 70.

³⁵⁶ Geertz, “Introduction to Religious Narrative,” 1; Laura Feldt, “Myths and Narratology—Narrative Form, Meaning and Function in the Standard Babylonian Epic of Anzû,” *Bulletin for the Study of Religion*, Bind 42, Nr. 4. s. (2013): 22.

³⁵⁷ Geertz, “Whence Religion?,” 35.

³⁵⁸ Hans Mol, a pioneer in religion and identity, laid out a theoretical approach in which religion becomes an important element in the construction of identity, and in which identity is a central component of lived experiences. Please see *Identity and the Sacred: A Sketch for a New Social-Scientific Theory of Religion* (New York: Free Press, 1977); *The Fixed and the Fickle: Religion and Identity in New Zealand* (Waterloo ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1982), and his edited collection, *Identity and Religion: International, Cross-Cultural Approaches* (London: SAGE Publications Inc, 1978).

Christians and Jews). This same tension can be observed in esoteric discourses. Esoteric texts enshrine the particular perception of the author within a particular matrix of sociocultural and historical discourses, revealing tensions that both the author and the readers engage in. As a form of knowledge production, esoteric practices (particularly ritual magic) should be understood as attempting to channel a particular understanding of the world; as attempting to filter reality through a lens they have created in tension with their environment. Esoteric narratives thus communicate ideas, worldviews, and social discourses; they are the socially-contextualized and historically-located embodiments of the mind of the author.

2.4 APPROACHING NARRATIVE

As a cultural artefact, literature is an expression of cultural imaginings, and embodies within it many social discourses, including those of the author and their intended audience.³⁵⁹ From the 1960s until the 1980s, narratives were generally approached through a structuralist perspective, and were therefore viewed as buildings comprised of linguistic “blocks”—solid, tangible, understandable, and rule-bound. A gradual shift gave rise to the post-structuralist lens, where narratives were viewed as fluid constructs actively shaped by the author, the audience, and the text’s narrator.³⁶⁰ If narratives are the nexus of the reader, author, and narrator, then the narrative must be situated in a space where the three can coherently formulate relationships. A narrative cannot exist if there is no inherent meaning, which means there must be reasons that particular narratives attempt to convey that particular meanings. In other words, no one exists in a hermetically sealed room: we create meaning through our experiences and environment. By looking at narratives, we can therefore begin to learn about particular cultural practices, attitudes, and issues.³⁶¹

As Hogan points out, some researchers remain hesitant about counting the literary body—regardless of the genre—as a valid source of information about a culture or society’s

³⁵⁹ Martha B. Helfer, *The Word Unheard: Legacies of Anti-Semitism in German Literature and Culture*, (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), xiii.

³⁶⁰ Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory* (New York: St Martin’s Press, Pgrave Macmillan, 2001), 7.

³⁶¹ Susan S. Lanser, “Sapphic Dialogics: Historical Narratology and the Sexuality of Form”, in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, edited by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, (Columbus OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 188.

thoughts and feelings, largely due to the lack of objectivity present in narratives.³⁶² However, narratives do encapsulate the world from the perspective of the lived experience of the author, and therefore do shed light on how particular societies think, discuss emotions, and frame responses to certain events. To use the terminology of cognitive science, narratives bring forth the *qualia*³⁶³ of consciousness and environmental awareness, granting insight into not just an author's experiences, but also their understanding of those experiences. According to the approach of cognitive narratology, then, the readers of narratives interpret the world created by the author as a reflection of the author's lived reality, and the act of reading invites us to share within that lived reality.³⁶⁴

2.4.1 Defining Narrative and Narratology

In *Introduction to Narrative*, Abbott defines narrative as an inevitable human activity, something we employ every day without conscious effort.³⁶⁵ Echoing this sentiment, Geertz and Jensen state that one of the most basic features of being human is recounting an event, whether or not said event is fictive, factual or other.³⁶⁶ And yet, despite its universality, attempts to define what constitutes a "narrative" have spawned a multitude of theories, approaches and methodologies, which have led to the continued development and refinement of the study of narrative (i.e., narratology), and the proliferation of multiple schools of analysis, theories, and definitions of "narrative" itself.

An Anglicization of the French *narratologie*, coined by Todorov in 1969,³⁶⁷ narratology,

³⁶² Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories*, 1-21.

³⁶³ A term often used in philosophy, *qualia* describes a moment or instance that is consciously and subjectively experienced, such as describing what a particular wine tastes at that very moment. Perhaps the most direct definition is Herman's: "What it is like" for someone to have that particular experience (David Herman, "Directions in Cognitive Narratology: Triangulating Stories, Media, and the Mind", in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, edited by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, (Columbus OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 156; David Herman, "Cognition, Emotion, and Consciousness", in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, edited by David Herman, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Ebook: 256).

³⁶⁴ Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories*, 1-21; Andy Clark, "Embodied, Embedded, and Extended Cognition" in *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Science*, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Ebook: 275; Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 5-7, 10-11; Herman, "Cognition, Emotion, and Consciousness," 255; Herman, "Directions in Cognitive Narratology", 155-157; Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 26-27, 33, 40.

³⁶⁵ Abbott, *Introduction to Narrative*, 1, 13.

³⁶⁶ Geertz and Jensen, "Introduction," 3.

³⁶⁷ Gerald Prince, "Narratology," in *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*, edited by Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994), 524.

according to McQuillan, has two unspoken tenets: 1) Narratives (however defined) are all around us, and 2) The world is saturated with narratives.³⁶⁸ While most theorists include symbols, rituals, and interpretative dance into their definitions of narrative, others—particularly those who approach the topic through the older structuralist lens—define narrative according to a precise series of events occurring in time and space based upon Aristotle’s *Dramatic Theorem* (who, some would argue, was the first true narratologist).³⁶⁹

Other theorists, such as Geertz, include the active participation of the audience in their definition of narrative, and also incorporates the teller’s creation of the space, time, and the world that the narrative attempts to establish through various techniques. Accordingly, narrative is situated culturally, and reflects and contributes to the cultural system in which the narrative grew, developed, and gained meaning.³⁷⁰ Currie argues that narratives represent identity—both communally and individually—and that identity is communicated through not only literature, but also through films, rituals, journalism, art, dance, songs, jokes, and anecdotes.³⁷¹ For Jensen, the question is whether, without communicating it, knowledge actually exists—as he states, “as a species [we] seem to be able to understand matters only when they have been turned into narrative in one form or another.”³⁷² How we experience and perceive our reality changes, and is often based on new information garnered from the narratives told and as well as the contribution by the audience. This constant shift is a collective effort, and becomes a mutual engagement through socio-cultural influences and that of the individual.³⁷³ Fludernik, on the other hand, emphasizes that narrative does not need a conventional plot—according to Fludernik, that is the definition of ‘story’—rather, it is the communication of the human experiences and the active participation of the audience that defines narrative. The consensus seems to be that narratives require, in one form or another, the engagement of an audience.³⁷⁴

So how can we define narrative for the purpose of this project? I would like to propose

³⁶⁸ Martin McQuillan, “Introduction: Aporias of Writing: Narrative and Subjectivity” in *The Narrative Reader*, edited by Martin McQuillan (London and New York, Routledge, 2000), 1-3

³⁶⁹ McQuillan, “Introduction: Aporias of Writing: Narrative and Subjectivity”, 1-3; Prince, “Narratology,” 524.

³⁷⁰ Geertz, “Religious Narratives,” 19-20, 23.

³⁷¹ Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 6.

³⁷² Jensen, “Framing Religious Narratives,” 36. A loose comparison could be made to the proverbial “if a tree falls down in a forest and no one is around to hear it, did it fall down?” In other words, Jensen asks the question is it the act of communication that makes something knowledge, as, Jensen claims, information requires to be shared in order for it to become knowledge.

³⁷³ Jensen, “Framing Religious Narratives,” 36, 41.

³⁷⁴ Monica Fludernik, *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 9, 245.

the following definition based on the narratological theories of Geertz, Abbott, Fludernik, and Jensen: narrative is the creative communication of identity, ideas, symbols, perceptions or knowledge, a communication that expresses—and thus interpretively (re)creates—a reality based on the teller’s and audience’s understanding of the world. This socially, culturally, and historically located expression of reality is recreated when it is communicated to the audience. A dance is a narrative, as it interprets the music and tells a story through movements of the body. Religious rituals and mythologies are narratives that reaffirm the existence of the sacred world. Even the most technical biological descriptions of honey badgers or sub-atomic particles transmit the scientist’s knowledge of these topics, and therefore are narratives as well.³⁷⁵

As these examples demonstrate, we must recognize that, more than merely receiving reality, we *perceive* it: everything we know and believe about reality is the result that function to filter, organize, and draw meaning from everything we experience. Our filters for understanding the world are built by our experiences and relationships with our environment. Reality is predicated, in part, by our culture’s understanding of how to interpret the world and the events which we experience.³⁷⁶ Embodied and embedded, this dynamic, never-ending dance involves the individual person and the physical and social world.³⁷⁷ For example, a devout Catholic’s perception of the Communion wafer is shaped by the Catholic dogma of transubstantiation, which becomes an integral aspect of the construction of their physical reality. To the Catholic, that object is holy—the literal body of the son of God—whereas to non-believers, it is nothing more than a dry circular wafer. The worldview and meaning communicated by transubstantiation is integrated into the creation of their reality. More than just an idea in a Catholic’s head, the wafer becomes a site where the meaning of existence is embodied.

Narrative is a human activity, containing emotions, discourses, social and historical inflections.³⁷⁸ The primary aim of the approach I am articulating is to explore the connection

³⁷⁵ Jensen, “Framing Religious Narratives,” 36-37, especially his discussion on the actualization of knowledge must take place in specific frames.

³⁷⁶ Casey O’Callaghan, “Perceptions”, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Science*, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012, Ebook, 73.

³⁷⁷ O’Callaghan, “Perceptions,” 84-85.

³⁷⁸ Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories*, 4. This is not to deny the performative aspects of narrative, which incorporate the body through the narrative’s telling. However, given our knowledge of how cognition works, we know that even these performative elements are rooted in cognitive processes. While some may find this statement reductive, it is important to remember that the cognitive theories I am drawing from do not assert that the *meaning* of narrative can be found in cognitive processes, but rather that knowledge of these processes helps us better understand the *connections* between the author, their environment, and the discourses contained therein.

between the individual author/teller (i.e., their embodied experience), their environment, and the discourses contained therein. Furthermore, it attempts to understand the ways in which culture frames how and what we know, by interpreting narratives through the lens of lived experiences.³⁷⁹ By focusing on the nexus of person-society-narrative, narrative is seen not only as a mode of expression, but, as Herman puts it, also as the means of “making sense of experience—a resource for structuring and comprehending the world.”³⁸⁰

Embedded in narratives are the perceptions of the author/teller—in particular, the awareness of other people—perceptions which take place while they attempt to navigate their understanding of the world around them.³⁸¹ Simply put, narratives are a sociocultural process; they create and sustain relationships between the individual and the sociocultural environment that produced them.³⁸² Narratives therefore provide us with clues about the social framework—about emotions, thoughts, ideas, and reactions—and also with clues about how the members of that social group understood and used the framework to shape thoughts and construct their identities.³⁸³

The language, symbols and metaphors used in narrative—and the emotions associated with them—are performative and reality-building; the choice of what is included is dictated and influenced by cultural knowledge, and through these choices social conventions are not only reinforced, but recreated and remixed. In their work on Speech-Act Theory and biblical narratives on Covenant, Alster-Elata and Salmon point out that rather than social conventions supporting language, biblical language, through the telling of the covenants, actually strengthens the social conventions which were built around the concept of the covenant.³⁸⁴ In other words, the (re)telling of the narrative brings the convention into reality, and this is exactly what we see

³⁷⁹ Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 24; Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 3-4, 24; Fludernik, *Natural Narratology*, 237.

³⁸⁰ David Herman, “Narrative Ways of Worldmaking”, in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*, edited by Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer, *Narratologia: Contributions to Narrative Theory*, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 85.

³⁸¹ Alan Palmer, “Large Intermental Units in *Middlemarch*”, in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, edited by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (Columbus OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 98-99.

³⁸² Ansgar Nünning, “Surveying Contextualist and Cultural Narratologies: Towards an Outline of Approaches, Concepts and Potentials”, in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*, edited by Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer. *Narratologia: Contributions to Narrative Theory*, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 59-61.

³⁸³ Herman, “Cognition, Emotion, and Consciousness,” 254-255.

³⁸⁴ Gerda Alster-Elata and Rachel Salmon, “Biblical Covenants as Performative Language,” in *Summoning: Ideas of the Covenant and Interpretive Theory*, edited by Ellen Spolsky, (SUNY Series in Modern Jewish Literature and Culture. Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 27.

occurring with demons in works of invocative demonic ritual magic: demons become social actors through the telling and receiving of these magical narratives, and the relationships people form with these social actors plays an important role in shaping their perceptions of reality—and, by extension, understandings of self and other.

2.4.2 The Author-Reader Relationship

As both Herman and Tyson point out in their discussion on reader-response theory, the audience plays a vitally active role in both creating and understanding the characters and their minds within the narrative.³⁸⁵ Because the audience understands the narrative within the framework of their own understanding of reality, the audience is an active participant in the creation of the narrative world.³⁸⁶ In other words, the world within the narrative, regardless of the genre, is created based on lived world. According to Palmer and Zunshine, we should understand the narrative world the same way we understand other people: by understanding the minds, motivations, and essences of the characters that inhabit the narrative world.³⁸⁷ An important part of this is acknowledging the narrator as a character.

While the texts that we are using may not necessarily have a distinct character, the narrator, channeling the thoughts of the author, should be considered a character. If a character is the projection of the author—their perspectives, emotions, and *qualia*—then the narrator is a character, even if they are not present as a separate identifiable entity.³⁸⁸ The reader's internal voice as they read the words becomes a character. This acknowledgment is important because it allows us to more fully focus on the sociocultural nuances that the teller embodies (and therefore

³⁸⁵ Herman, "Cognition, Emotion, and Consciousness," 245-246; Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 169-170. For more on reader-response theory, see: David Bleich, *Subjective Criticism* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Elizabeth Freund, *The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1987); Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

³⁸⁶ Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 50; Fludernik, *Natural Narratology*, 183; Martin Löschnigg, "Postclassical Narratology and the Theory of Autobiography", in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, edited by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, (Columbus OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 260.

³⁸⁷ Palmer and Zunshine, quoted by Jan Alber and Monica Fludernik, "Introduction", in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, edited by Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, (Columbus OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 11-2.

³⁸⁸ Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 4; Monica Fludernik, *The Fictions of Languages and the Language of Fiction: The Linguistic Representation of Speech and Consciousness*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 131; Fludernik, *Natural Narratology*, 183.

enshrines) in the narrative.³⁸⁹ The audience draws from their own experiences to create a unique subjective relationship of the text and the author, becoming a dynamic dialogue between the author (through the narrator) and the audience.³⁹⁰

The notion of audience participation in the creation of the narrative world is also echoed in the idea of knowledge creation in Pre- and Early Modern Europe. During this period science was viewed as an art form, and the literature was a means in which to produce art. Art was thus seen as the foundation of knowledge production, and much of the scientific literature of that time mirrors this thought.³⁹¹ In her intriguing study on how to read premodern scientific literature, Elisabeth Spiller remarks that, within premodernity, science revolved around creating, rather than merely constructing, knowledge.³⁹² Creation, as the word indicates, denotes a creative act; a use of imagination that extends beyond the simple use of the materials provided. Knowledge, according to Spiller, is not merely given to the audience; but rather, audiences themselves are active in the production of knowledge.³⁹³ Reading the texts becomes a creative act in that the reader actively participates in the creation of knowledge.³⁹⁴ They are active participants, co-creators, as opposed to passive receivers. Therefore, by understanding that knowledge in premodernity was predicated on the creation of art, and that the creative processing of knowledge involved the active participation of the reader, we can begin to understand how knowledge was shared and understood, and this grants insight into the specific realities of the era.³⁹⁵

If the collection of practices and beliefs we call “esotericism” is another approach to knowledge, and furthermore, if ritual magic (as we will soon see) is another an exercise in knowledge creation, then the manuscripts themselves not only embodied the minds of the authors, but also served (and still serve) as a point of interaction between the author and the audience. By actively reading and performing the rituals, the audience joins the author/narrator in the creation in the active creation and reification of knowledge. We should, therefore, not only

³⁸⁹ Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 50-51; Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 5-7.

³⁹⁰ Fludernik, *Natural Narratology*, 85, 234-235.

³⁹¹ Elisabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature: The Art of Making Knowledge, 1580-1670*, Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

³⁹² Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature*, 3.

³⁹³ Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature*, 3.

³⁹⁴ Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature*, 4.

³⁹⁵ Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature*, 4.

be reading the ritual texts as simple expressions of worldviews, but also as creative expressions of active knowledge production and identity construction. We should understand that texts-as-knowledge require the active participation of the audience; we are not merely analyzing words, we are witnessing a relationship.

As reflections of their reality, narratives are imbued with a certain power to create “story worlds,” an idea explored by Herman.³⁹⁶ When we tell narratives—in the form of a story, ritual, or dance—lived time is suspended; we enter the time, space, and culture that is built into the narrative. Built upon the dimensions of what, where, and when, narratives create a multifaceted world: narratological time and space form fundamental frameworks that are additionally shaped by the participation and perceptions of the audience.³⁹⁷ Take, for example, a ritual: rituals are scripted communal activities with a defined purpose, and include the participation of benefactors, participants, and witnesses, each of whom operate in distinct roles.³⁹⁸ Furthermore, rituals—particularly magical ones—become a means of uncovering and experiencing truth, rather than just acting as a simple reliquary for truth.³⁹⁹ Through the ritual, a participant can become intimately involved with the truth that they are seeking—they are able to touch it, be immersed in it. Through the ritual, a sacred time and a sacred space are created.

The participant carves out the space and time where the ritual world is built and communicated to the audience, who—while often appearing passive—are nevertheless actively engaged with the world that is being created and the meaning that is being reaffirmed. Even if the ritual is solitary, the audience is nevertheless present. The presence of a deity could be invoked, and as a social actor, that deity would be an active participant in the ritual. If no deities or transempirical beings are invoked, the audience is enshrined within the operator of the ritual; the ritualist becomes both the conductor and the audience of the ritual. The ritual has meaning that is performed and, more importantly, communicated. It may be to a large audience, or it may be to oneself, but as a communicative action, that meaning is both communicated *and* received.

The building of narratological worlds becomes a mental process of mapping and world-

³⁹⁶ Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, 19-20; Herman, “Narrative Ways of Worldmaking,” 71-73.

³⁹⁷ Herman, “Narrative Ways of Worldmaking,” 71-73.

³⁹⁸ Ilkka Pyysiäinen, “Believing and Doing: How Ritual Action Enhances Religious Belief”, in *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative*, edited by Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, Religion, Cognition and Culture, (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 147.

³⁹⁹ Klaassen *Transformation of Magic*, 4.

creation based on context.⁴⁰⁰ While the narratological world may only exist in our minds, the mental engagement, connection and emotion invoked are real.⁴⁰¹ A great example of this in popular culture comes from an exchange between Albus Dumbledore and Harry Potter. When Harry asks the headmaster (after being cursed) if what he's experiencing is all in his head, Dumbledore affirms that it is, before enquiring, "Why on earth should that mean that it is not real?"⁴⁰² Within the mind of the individual, culture and the material experience would meet, shaping the author and the expressions found within the narrative.⁴⁰³ The author is present, their experiences and mind become embedded within the narrative. They become a prism through which the social discourse (including the use of language, metaphors and symbols) is refracted and reflected into a narrative. In other words, a narrative, regardless of the form it takes, is more than just a cultural reality; *it is a personal reality as well, one that expresses a particular social and personal identity.*⁴⁰⁴

Eschewing the formal and rigid binary categories that mark the structuralist approach to narrative,⁴⁰⁵ cognitive narratology instead puts forward "a theory of meaning that is based on analogy, metaphor, and interrelationships between the mind and the world."⁴⁰⁶ As Hogan highlights, narratology often focuses on the particulars. By shifting through the particulars of narratives and identifying what defines them and makes them unique, we can start to gather important information about the authors and the context in which they wrote, in a much more fruitful manner than if we solely focused on commonalities. This, Hogan continues, encourages us to respond to narratives not in light of their particular themes, but rather because of how the narratives themselves relate specific memories, experiences, and worldviews,⁴⁰⁷ all of which reflect the *Weltanschauung* of the author and the environment that shaped it. By emphasizing the relationship between narrative and embodiment—that is, by emphasizing the relationship between narrative and cognition—we can see that it is the audience who constructs the

⁴⁰⁰ Herman, "Directions in Cognitive Narratology," 149.

⁴⁰¹ Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 31.

⁴⁰² J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2007), 579.

⁴⁰³ Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 15; Geertz, "Introduction to Religious Narrative," 2; Bradd Shore, *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 66.

⁴⁰⁴ This is italicized to further emphasize why I have chosen to employ a cognitive approach.

⁴⁰⁵ Fludernik, *Natural Narratology*, ix, as well as the binary approach which lived religions collapses.

⁴⁰⁶ Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 14.

⁴⁰⁷ Hogan, *The Mind and Its Stories*, 3, 68-69.

framework for understanding a particular narrative.⁴⁰⁸ Put differently, how we understand the reality of our lived world is translated into how we understand the reality of the narratological world.

As the preceding discussion suggests, narratives are also a means of communicating important information about identity. In other words, if a person processes and organizes its interactions between material, cultural and symbolic environments, then narrative becomes a mode of communicating cultural ideals, assumptions, roles and identities. As a person grows and develops, they extend their awareness into their environment, and continue to learn through their experiences and the narratives they encounter. Through their interactions with the information presented by sociocultural narratives, they become a social person, embodying the norms and identity of the particular cultural world they inhabit.⁴⁰⁹ The act of narration thus becomes an exploration of their immediate environment, of the experiences they have and share. The narrative itself extends these experiences, and with it, the knowledge, perspective and social interactions of the author/teller. Simply put, not only are narratives a means of constructing reality—based on the information given to us by both the physical/material world and the intangible/interpretative cultural world—they are also a means of understanding the various identities at play within that reality.⁴¹⁰

As I have highlighted throughout the preceding discussion, the relationship between a person's lived experience and the formation of their identity is fluid,⁴¹¹ and it is with this sense of fluidity that I will be approaching demonology. Rather than focusing on the language, form, vocabulary, and/or syntax of the narratives I will be investigating, I will instead focus on the relationships between the author, the audience, and their larger sociocultural and historical context. Due to its focus on the interconnectivity between the self and society, I believe this approach is far better suited for understanding the significance of demonology, and, by extension, its impact on identity-formation. In other words, by looking at demonology through the lens of cognitive narratology, we can see how demons become the embodiment of fears,

⁴⁰⁸ Fludernik, *Natural Narratology*, 9; Beecher, *Adapted Brains*, 4-5, 8; Ellen Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature: Literary Interpretation and the Modern Mind*, (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 3

⁴⁰⁹ Geertz, "Whence Religion?", 34-35.

⁴¹⁰ Geertz, "Religious Narrative," 10; Rukmini Bhaya Nair, "The Nature of Narrative: Schemes, Genes, Memes, Dreams and Screams!" In *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative*, edited by Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, Religion, Cognition and Culture (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, Ltd, 2011), 139, 143.

⁴¹¹ In the sense of being available for various uses.

anxieties, and tensions which (re)create individual and collective identities.

2.5 CRITIQUES OF THE APPROACH

Though I have been inspired by cognitive theories in building my approach—particularly with respect to the former’s emphasis on the fluid relationship between the person and their socio-historical environment—this approach to narrative is not without its criticism. As Spolsky discusses, many historians fill in the missing gaps and attempt to smooth out any historical inconsistencies through a reliance on ‘stored knowledge’ (that is, what is socially ‘known’ about a particular subject) in order to create a more seamless narrative.⁴¹² This poses an ethical conundrum: to whom do we owe the responsibility of historical scholarship? Is it the present—analyzing the events in light of contemporary concerns, highlighting the issues that may have potentially contributed to the present state of being, including its various anxieties? Or is it to the past itself?⁴¹³ In either case, is it possible to ever be fully divorced from the socio-political cultural climate that informs the scholar’s perspective? After all, as our understanding is formed in part through our own experiences, this critique holds that any foray in the past will inevitably be skewed by the fact that contemporary historical understandings are rooted in *our* cultural sphere and lived reality.⁴¹⁴

We do not simply process the world as a static computer; rather, we engage, develop complex relationships with our environments, and constantly communicate them to others.⁴¹⁵ If we are to approach a particular society situated in a historical time, we must ask ourselves: How would have a person thought? What were their concerns, and how did those concerns manifest themselves? How did those concerns, embedded in the social rhetoric of the time, affect the person? How did they relate to and move within their cultural landscape? How did the environment influence them, and how did they influence their environment? How did they construct, communicate, and then reconstruct their identity as a member of a social group? In order to engage with a particular aspect of a culture that highlights a particular component of

⁴¹² Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature*, 15.

⁴¹³ Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature*, 15.

⁴¹⁴ Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature*, 134.

⁴¹⁵ Andreas Lieberoth, “Religion and the Emergence of Human Imagination”, in *Origins of Religion, Cognition and Culture*, edited by Armin W. Geertz, Religion, Cognition and Culture (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2013), 175.

identity, we must engage with their understanding. If their understanding of the self was based upon a mind that is embodied (as opposed to distinct from the body), then the application of a form of cognitive narratological theory is in order. The premodern self was embodied; the culture was embodied within the embodied mind. We must therefore inquire not only into how the individual was informed by culture, but also into how the culture itself was informed by the individual's construction of their social and personal identity.

Additionally, as Spolsky notes, language often falls short in its ability to fully describe sensations.⁴¹⁶ Therefore, to claim that we fully understand the author's psyche and their experience of reality is somewhat naïve and presumptuous. I would also extend Spolsky's argument and claim that language is a poor communicator of emotions and experiences. Can even the most eloquent words fully capture what it is to fall in love, or seethe with rage, or grieve a loss? While language can help us to empathize and imagine, we can never truly know what it is like to inhabit another's skin, nor experience things foreign to us.⁴¹⁷

In this vein, how can one accurately describe what it is like to move within a particular social sphere while embodying a particular identity—a longstanding question for any historical research? How can we best describe a particular experience? How can we determine what Trithemius, for example, meant when he wrote about the deep joy of uncovering the magical procedure of communicating with transempirical being? How can we communicate the full experience of the demonic ritual? Words can only convey so much. While a particular word may evoke a similar emotion for the receiver in that particular context, it is nevertheless difficult to fully and truly understand what that word truly means. In other words, what “love” and “deep rage” means and how it is experienced and felt in a particular sociocultural context is difficult to convey.⁴¹⁸ This is especially true if we come across a reference to an activity or belief that has no

⁴¹⁶ Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature*, 5.

⁴¹⁷ This is not to suggest that we should shy away from using the tools at our disposal to try and understand these different embodiments and experiences to the best of our ability.

⁴¹⁸ Carolyn Dinshaw poses a similar question in *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre-and Postmodern* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1999) where she explores the concept of “touching through time” in her use of queer theory in her analysis of medieval literature. As Dinshaw reiterates throughout her book, we see into the past what we want to see, and we relate in relation to the norm. Her term is apt: we can touch through time, but it should be a cautious touch, with full knowledge that we may relate but not necessarily categorize. To take Dinshaw's focus, we might see queer in history, but the question becomes: did the subject of the study see themselves as queer—and what did that mean to them? It is, as Dinshaw writes, a *choosing* of history. We choose, but we must be conscious of what lens we choose and *why* we choose it (Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 1-21, 210). For more on “touching through time,” see pages 1-55 in *Getting Medieval*. This is a significant concept for the present investigation, because while I choose to write about demonic ritual magic, identity and the influence of the

modern-day counterpart. A reality wherein transempirical beings are socially accepted and understood to actively participate in everyday life, for example, will more likely than not seem alien to us. We simply cannot understand what the author of *CLM 849* experienced before, during, and after the writing of the texts, simply because we simply cannot fathom a world where summoning demons is not only part of reality, but also may be a viable option for someone sufficiently familiar with the techniques.

As I have made clear throughout, my approach to lived-experience and identity-formation is influenced by the cognitive approach's emphasis on the relationship between the embodied individual and their environment. The theories that I have drawn from represent a nascent approach to interpreting the humanities and other fields. Because there are still a myriad of dissenting theories on how the mind works, how it defines a person and how both are shaped by culture, many scholars who utilize cognitive theory (or are inspired by cognitive theory) often simply stick to describing the physical processes of the mind, rather than attempting to interpret its products.

However, as Crane emphasizes, cognitive theory offers a different, open-ended, and more flexible interdisciplinary approach to *all* of the facets of the relationship between the self and the world—including, but not limited to, the influence of culture on the individual's identity, values, sense of agency, and sense of identity.⁴¹⁹ It is this very flexibility that is needed when approaching the premodern individual's relationship with demons in the wider context of esoteric practices, and the influence of this relationship and these practices on their identity and view of the world in their time.

Now that these theoretical and methodological considerations have been laid out in general terms, it will now be time to better contextualize their use within the historical study of

changing social discourse, I do so with knowledge of my own environment: a time and space where great social and political changes are occurring, changes that will—if they have not already—profoundly impact how we understand and identify ourselves individually and collectively and thus how we understand history.

⁴¹⁹ Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain*, 15-16.

It is important to emphasize that as cognitive theories are about relationships, so are religion, esotericism, and identity building. They are symbiotic, occurring between the person and the environment they are situated in. Ergo, a multidimensional framework is ideal for understanding created realities on their own terms. Just as we would hope that future historians would not form their understandings of us based on the media attention given to the Kardashians, so too must we consult a variety of texts in order to understand the cognitive, sociocultural reality of premodernity, including texts based on premises or ideas we consider "superstitious" or "unreal". By attempting to survey as much of the landscape as possible—including the things that may be alien and incomprehensible to us today—we are better able to understand how identity was created in that time and place, through the relationships between the individual and their physical and social world, one which included symbols, discourses, tensions, institutions, people, and social actors.

esotericism, magic and demonology. This will take place in the following chapter, where I will also introduce Alterity Theory as a necessary and complimentary theoretical consideration, one which is particularly well-suited for addressing the decidedly intercultural concerns of the present investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

SHARED SPACE, CONTESTED SPACE: DEMONOLOGY, ALTERITY THEORY AND THE CREATION OF IDENTITY IN TEXTS OF GERMAN DEMONIC RITUAL MAGIC

In *Zen and the Art of Inverting Orientalism*, Jørn Borup writes:

Studying religion is not like looking through a window. It is necessary to see with glasses, to use models and maps to see religion not only as a metaphysical truth to be perceived, but as a cultural phenomenon, itself a construction, a living reality (...) Historians of religion are not supposed to reveal a ‘truth’ but to reflect on an always ongoing discourse about *their* truths—and on our own discourse.⁴²⁰

Although speaking in general terms, this quote well summarizes my preceding argument: if we are to approach esotericism as part of the lived experience of premodern religion, then invocative ritual magic and demons—both of which represent cultural constructions as living realities—offer excellent (to use Borup’s terms) maps through which to reflect on the truth of the time, as well as on our own discourse. In Chapter Two, I attempted to demonstrate in broad (yet largely general) terms why a cognitive-influenced narratological approach is particularly useful in helping us navigate these maps. I accomplished this by highlighting the resources cognitive narratology has for helping us conceptualize how demons become social actors through narrative, and how these social actors can be seen to impact identity formation. In order to speak more specifically on how cognitive theorizing can help us understand the specific identity-formation under study (i.e., Christian identity-formation in the German-speaking lands of premodern Latin Europe), it will now be time to supplement my general discussion with a discussion of alterity and postcolonial narratological theories.

3.1 POSTCOLONIAL THEORY, ALTERITY THEORY AND THE CREATION OF IDENTITY

As argued in the second chapter, texts of invocative demonic ritual magic should, for the purposes of this investigation, be viewed as a shared social space where authors and readers meet; a space where identity was both expressed and constructed. As social actors, demons become the *topos* of this social space—through them conversations about the “Self” and the “Other” take place, conversations which reflect the social tensions through which Christians

⁴²⁰ Italics mine. Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz and Randi R. Warne, “Introduction”, in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion. Volume 2: Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and Randi R. Warnes, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 5.

defined and redefined their identity. As indicated in Chapter One,⁴²¹ Christians had a complicated relationship with Jews: spurred on by the belief that both Jewish mystical thought and Hebrew (thought to be the *prima lingua*) possessed a power that held the key to unlocking occult knowledge,⁴²² as a minority group that was understood as having forsaken Christ, Jews were also seen as the period's arch-enemy. Christians thus appropriated and Christianized Jewish knowledge to try and resolve this tension, an appropriation which 1) is well-documented in demonic narratives, and 2) provides us with details on how this tension played into constructions of individual and collective constructions of Christian identity.

By focusing on alterity and postcolonial narratological theories—as a continuation of the narratological theories explored in the previous chapter—this chapter will seek to demonstrate how demonology reflects the defining and (re)building of a Christian cultural identity, one that is rooted in dialogue and tension with the Jewish communities that occupied and shared the same social space. Because I will attempt to understand narratives as products of lived experiences (which emphasizes relationships with its social, cultural, and historical environment), it is important to look at how that society is constructed, including the alterity that also builds and is integrated into the hegemonic society. In particular, I will focus on how the hegemonic society constructed their identity through tensions with the alterity. In other words, this chapter will seek to explore social identity—what defines it, what informs the religious aspect of that identity in particular, and which theoretical models best enable us to understand the social identities of people in eras and places different from our own. We will then delve into how social narratives and discourses impact and are impacted by social conflicts. I will look at cross-cultural and intra-social theories, as well as how discourses of violence were embedded in everyday life.⁴²³ Included in this portion is a discussion of the body and how anxieties and fears are both projected onto it and expressed through it—as in the case of accusations of blood libel and host

⁴²¹ See: “1.5 A Brief Overview of Jewish Life in Premodern Europe.”

⁴²² Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 60.

⁴²³ Cf. R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1988) and R. Po-Chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann, editors, *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1995); Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*, *Medieval Cultures*, Volume 40 (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); David Nirenberg's *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996) and *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, translated by Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2006).

desecration.

The discussion will then turn to alterity and postcolonial narratological theories, as informed by the scholarly foundations set out by Edward Said (postcolonial theory), Monica Fludernik (alterity theories), Laura Feldt (monstrous identities and the fantastical) and Patrick Hogan (narratology of nationalism). By looking at how the Jewish alterity (including its fetishization) was portrayed within the demonic narratives under investigation, we can see how the hegemonic perception of the Jew as “Other” was built, and, furthermore, how this move contributed to Christianity becoming the hegemonic identity of premodern German-speaking Europe.

3.2 A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

When discussing minority communities—that is, communities that are not recognized as belonging to the hegemonic majority—the term “Other” is often used as a mode of distinction. However, this mode of distinction is not always an ideal choice: the word implies the negation of “sameness,” suggests a certain level of social passivity, and, as Spivak notes, also enshrines in itself an inherent binary: “Self” and “Other.” The term *alterity*, however, conceptually diffuses that binary⁴²⁴, thereby allowing a more meaningful glimpse into the nuanced reality of a given time, culture, and place (including cultural tensions and events, social discourses and identity construction).⁴²⁵ Accordingly, “alterity” is what will be used from here on in, as this is also preferable to “subaltern,”⁴²⁶ a term commonly used in the postcolonial theory I will be drawing from.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ While this point of distinction may seem fine or even artificial, I would like to explain why I think it is a meaningful one. Simply put, the term “alterity” does not immediately connote the binary of “Self and Other” in same way the term “Other”—one half of the binary—does on its own. This conceptual pause allows room for a less directly oppositional (and therefore more nuanced) understanding of how these communities understood themselves in relation to one another.

⁴²⁵ See: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited and Introduction by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 76, 78-9, 84-88; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives”, *History and Theory* 24 (1985): 255.

⁴²⁶ Cf Spivak “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

⁴²⁷ I would just like to make a few remarks concerning my use of postcolonial theory. If we are to define “colonization” as the encounter between culturally distinct or geographically separate societies where one controls the other politically through invasion—where the dominant culture subjugates the other to validate their power and control, often from afar (See: Patrick Colm Hogan, *Colonialism and Cultural Identities: Crises of Tradition in the Anglophone Literatures of India, Africa, and the Caribbean*, (Albany NY: State University of New York Press,

Subaltern is defined as a lower social class that lacks power. The term itself suggests a lack of autonomy, social agency, and—to a certain extent—economic capital. While it is true that Jews in Christian Latin Europe possessed limited rights, and faced prejudiced social discourse and violent acts, the Jewish communities were, in spite of this, participants in their social environment, and did have a certain economic and intellectual mobility. Additionally, as scholars like Jütte and Rosman have suggested, Jewish communities during this time did enjoy some measure of autonomous self-governance, and also maintained a certain power through trade and a perceived inherent mystic knowledge and magical might—what Jütte would term “economy of secrets,” as secrets were a form of social capital.⁴²⁸ This points to a particular type of social agency. Moreover, as discussed, they were participants in society in other ways: they lived, worked, got married, and raised children alongside their Christian neighbours, and also shared a common language and a common system of symbols and understandings. Their premodernity was as an inherent part of them as their Jewishness; both elements swirled together and informed one another to shape their perspective and identity.

As this indicates—and as I have been arguing throughout—the social distinctions in Medieval and Early Modern Europe were not as obvious as we might assume; as Lochrie puts it, the category of “the norm” did not exist as we define and understand it today.⁴²⁹ For these reasons, I have opted to use the more nuanced term alterity to describe the cultural and personal interactions that occurs between ideas and people perceived as “Inside” of the hegemonic majority and those seen as existing on the “Outside.”

While premodern Latin Europe had some elements of unity, it is wrong to claim it was a homogenous, uniform, static region.⁴³⁰ Premodernity was a dynamic space, characterized by pluralism and constant change. It was a time when a new—and dominant—Christian identity was being created, challenged and redefined, and it must be emphasized that Jews were very much a part of this phenomenon.⁴³¹ Marked with tensions and violent discourse, the writings produced during this time mirrored the complicated social attitudes of this dynamic and changing

2000), 1-2)—then it is true that it does not make sense to think of the Jewish communities during this time as being “colonized,” but, as will be demonstrated, there is still much that can be drawn from this theory.

⁴²⁸ Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, viii, 2, 10, 137, 256; Rosman, “Foreword”, 23.

⁴²⁹ Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncracies: Female Sexuality Before Normal Wasn't*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xxii. Cf. Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 11, 164.

⁴³⁰ Chazan, *Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 9.

⁴³¹ Robert Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 220-221.

landscape.⁴³²

As Israel Jacob Yuval remarks, religion in premodern Europe was not focused on “preserving tradition”—a nineteenth century concept—but rather on providing a space in which to develop and engage with ideas, particularly around identity.⁴³³ Lived religion thus developed out of a conversation with its environment, incorporating the symbols, philosophies, and ideologies that surrounded it.⁴³⁴ While the boundaries concerning orthodox or “acceptable” Christianity certainly existed, they were relatively fluid, and a wide and diverse range of conversations occurred within this space. Even when new ideas seemed to be contrary to the framework, they nevertheless exerted some influence on the current consciousness on how premodern individuals constructed their identity (such as in the case of the Cathars). Religion was dynamic because the social sphere it lived in was dynamic—not only Christians, but also Jews, Muslims, and non-Orthodox Christians inhabited the space.⁴³⁵ Identity in premodern Europe was therefore constantly defined and redefined in incredibly complex ways, a process which unfolded in relation to perceptions of what constituted alterity.

In other words, as Jews moved within, and contributed to, the larger Christian-dominated society,⁴³⁶ it is undeniable that Christian influences helped shape Jewish identities,⁴³⁷ and it is also undeniable that Jewish influences helped shape Christian identities. Designating “the Jew” as the “Other” therefore not only arbitrarily creates a category—and a simplistic, dualistic one at that—but also overlooks and oversimplifies the nuances and complexities of premodernity. Furthermore, by delineating the “Other,” we are also projecting ourselves into history. Persecutions of non-Christians, non-Orthodox Christians, and non-heteronormative groups absolutely happened.⁴³⁸ But, as Elukin and Nirenberg point out, when we focus solely on

⁴³² Hammer and von Kocku, “Introduction: Western Esotericism and Polemics,” xi.

⁴³³ Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, translated by Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2006), 30.

⁴³⁴ Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 30.

⁴³⁵ Kruger, *Spectral Jew*, xxiii-xxiv.

⁴³⁶ von Stuckrad, “Christian Kabbalah and Anti-Jewish Polemics,” 15; Kruger, *The Spectral Jew*, 4-5.

⁴³⁷ Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 27.

⁴³⁸ Such as the Cathars (the Albigensian Crusades) in 1208 and the execution of the last known *prefectus* (leader or one who is adept to teach) Guillaume Bélibaste in 1321; Bogomils in the Balkans beginning in the thirteenth century until the Ottoman control in 1463; the short-lived Dulcinians (1300-1307); Waldensians (founded in 1173, excommunicated in 1184, denounced as heretics in 1215—by which over eighty Waldensians were burnt—consequent persecutions, and the eventual integration with the Reformed Church in 1532). See: Gabriel Audisio *The Waldensian Dissent: Persecution and Survival, c.1170–c.1570*, Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge:

instances of violence, we are diminishing the full participation of these communities in society and ignoring the whole, complex history of the Jewish experience as a whole.⁴³⁹

3.3 DISCOURSE AND VIOLENCE: THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND IDENTITY-BUILDING

As European cultures have been characterized by the shaping of truths through conflict and tension,⁴⁴⁰ and as the lived experiences of people create religious identity, it becomes very tenuous to try and define these religious traditions without a discussion of alterity—i.e., without a discussion of how lived experiences and perceptions of alterity impact their formation. While Jews and Christians had their separate textual and philosophical traditions, those traditions inhabited a shared space, and—despite their twisted projections, polemical writings and accusations—participated in a shared discourse.⁴⁴¹

However, despite the fact that they shared the same space, it was nevertheless an unequal sharing, much like today, in metropolis North America. Here, people from various social, economic, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds technically share the same space, but it is not an equitable sharing: women, on average, still earn less than their male counterparts; racial profiling is still prevalent; vandalism portraying antisemitic and Islamophobic sentiments are being spray-painted regularly; violence against Indigenous peoples, particularly Aboriginal women, occurs, and those who identify as homosexuals and transgendered are still discriminated against. And yet, each targeted group shares the same social space, influencing each other and the hegemonic social narrative in various ways.

Cambridge University Press, 1999); Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (Harlow: Longman, 2000); Averil Cameron, “How to Read Heresiology” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33, no. 3 (2003): 471-92; Grado G. Merlo “Heresy and Dissent” in *A People’s History of Christianity: Medieval Christianity*, edited by Daniel W. Bornstein (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press 2009): 229-263.

⁴³⁹ Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart*, 5-6; David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 3-4. Though certainly influenced by the rulings and proclamations of the papal courts, many aspects of Christian religious life were locally governed and regionally influenced. The ideal codified in papal bulls and religious discourse rarely, if ever, reflected the lived experienced of the people. Secular rulers often ignored papal proclamations, and even the popes themselves did not always uphold canon law consistently. Doctrine, practice, and identity therefore tended to diverge in intriguing ways (Hood, *Aquinas and The Jews*, 32-33; Rubin, *Christian Practice*, 1). See Chapter One for more on how Christianity may have been understood in premodernity.

⁴⁴⁰ von Stuckrad, “Christian Kabbalah and Anti-Jewish Polemics,” 17.

⁴⁴¹ David Biale, *Blood and Belief: The Circulation of a Symbol between Jews and Christians*, (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2007), 7, 83.

Contact and communication between Jews and Christians in premodernity was common, due to proximity of living closely in large urban centres. In fact, many premodern religious thinkers wrote about the too close relationships between Christians and Jews, with many papal and secular laws condemning shared communal activities.⁴⁴² With the boundaries often being rather porous, individuals often transgressed them for purposes of trade, exchange of esoteric knowledge or services, and even romance. Despite laws and regulations that aimed to govern amorous activities, intermarriages and intimate relationships were more common than often assumed.⁴⁴³ It was mainly the religious courts that sought to prohibit inter-faith marriage, and these prohibitions were sporadically enforced by secular authorities whenever accusations of such relationships or interactions were lodged.⁴⁴⁴

And yet, despite the close, even intimate, contact between members of Jewish and Christian traditions, Jewish communities suffered vitriol and violence at the hands of their Christian neighbours. From rumours of blood libel and host desecrations to outright massacres of entire Jewish communities, the violent narratives against the Jewish community was not only pervasive in the later Middle Ages, but played a central role in the creation and cultivation of premodern Christian European identity, especially in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁴⁴⁵ As such, it becomes pivotal to consider the social, geographical, cultural and political context, particularly when looking at the violence between the two groups.⁴⁴⁶ Conflict and discourses of violence traditionally provided a way to identify differences between groups, and a sense of identity emerged in the space of those differences. Scapegoating narratives pinpoint these differences in the hopes that the source of that difference will be destroyed and social cohesion will emerge. However, as David Nirenberg argues, exclusively focusing on this approach when analyzing such narratives is problematic for two reasons. First, differences between communities are reduced to matters of identity, and second, only dramatic, large-scale instances of violence are discussed, ignoring smaller instances of everyday violence.⁴⁴⁷ Instead,

⁴⁴² Robert Michael, *A History of Catholic Antisemitism: The Dark Side of the Church*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 25, 40.

⁴⁴³ Salo W. Baron, "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Civilization", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 12 (1942): 10.

⁴⁴⁴ Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 130-132.

⁴⁴⁵ Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 4.

⁴⁴⁶ Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 231.

⁴⁴⁷ Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 242-243.

Nirenberg proposes that we look at what preceded and followed these larger outbreaks of violence, to see how the everyday tensions between communities contributed to the larger outbreak of violence.⁴⁴⁸ By looking at the violence contained within these types of discourses and placing them within the larger social context framing the conversation, we can see how events of violence were framed within a larger anti-Jewish narrative—one which then contributed to the building of identity, as we shall see.

It is undisputed that discourses of violence, conflict and tension are vital to identity-formation. Tension suggests an application of force rather than just a systemic destruction. Through the continuous cultural interchanges and interplay between the premodern Jewish and Christian communities, we see tensions which not only culminated in violence—both physical and non-physical⁴⁴⁹—but also conversations and interactions which served to shape identity just as much as the violent outbursts.

It will also be important to note that I am not claiming that the tension between hegemony and alterity represents the sole factor in the construction of social or individual identity. Both social and individual identities are shaped by many interacting and interdependent internal and external factors, including geography, religion, history, politics, current events, life experiences, class and individual personality traits. What I am suggesting is that social discourses about Jewish alterity—birthed and perpetuated by Christian hegemony—was *one* contributing factor in the creation of social identity, to a degree and in a manner warranting greater discussion.

This unique discourse not only frames social identity, but also frames larger historical and cultural narratives as well. For example, the Black Death of 1348 was a cataclysmic event. The narratives surrounding it—largely focused on what caused it—were determined by the region and its culture. In some cases, Jews were blamed. In other cases, the plague was seen as God’s punishment for the sins of humanity.⁴⁵⁰ Following Nirenberg, we can see that the narratives surrounding the Black Death were in part reflections of the everyday social tensions preceding it; when Jews were blamed, it is clear that authors of these narrative—and by extension, the larger social group of which they were a part—understood themselves to be in

⁴⁴⁸ Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 249.

⁴⁴⁹ Which, I would like to point out, is often more damaging and pernicious than physical violence.

⁴⁵⁰ Chazan, *Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 195-196; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 18, 231-232; Perry and Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, 26.

tension with the Jewish alterity. As will be further elaborated on in the following section, social tensions were thus crucial components in identity-building: they invite the self to decide and reflect on how it can distinguish itself from what is causing it tension, a process which informs the identity construction of the self.

3.3.1 Tensions about Body and Blood

Perhaps one of the more heated discourses that took place in premodernity focused on the body—specifically, on the Incarnation of Jesus, how he could be both fully man and fully God. As the debates raged around this theological dogma, the body became an integral aspect of identity building amongst Christians. As the canonical theology was refined and debated amongst Christian religious thinkers, the arguments seeped into the greater cultural sphere, becoming ingrained in the social discourse, and serving as a building block in Christian identity-formation. The body became a site for debate: not only was it used as an indicator of health and character, but also as a vehicle for creating identity.⁴⁵¹ Identity became embodied within the body, and perceptions about identity were depicted in descriptions and understandings of the body, and what it did. The body became a stage on which people could talk about themselves and others—in particular, it provided Christians with another way to compare and contrast themselves with the Jewish alterity. Two corporeal narratives that emerged during this time—ones that would fuel schismatic discourses and fan the flames of physical violence—were those of host desecration and blood libel.

Today we see the rumours of host desecrations and blood libel as dangerous, antisemitic urban legends that resulted in the senseless persecution of European Jews. In the eyes of the premodern Christian, however, host desecration and blood libel were real, and posed a genuine

⁴⁵¹ Monica H. Green, “Introduction”, in *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Medieval Age*, vol 2, ed. Linda Kalof (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010), 1-2. For a look on how the Jewish body was discussed about and became a site upon which Christian anxieties were projected, please see Steven F. Kruger *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). For a discussion on how “the Other” body (described as non-white, non-male, and non-Christian) was portrayed in Italian Renaissance art, please see Patrizia Bettella’s “The Marked Body as Otherness in Renaissance Italian Culture”, in *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Renaissance* vol. 3, eds. Linda Kalof and William Bynum (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010), 149-181, and for a discussion on the portrayal of the embodied self, please see Margaret L. King’s “Renaissance Selves, Renaissance Bodies” in the same volume (227-252). Also, see Ruth Mazo Karras’ *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (London: Routledge, 2017) for an excellent and comprehensible treatment of the various—and conflicting, even amongst Christian canonical theologians—attitudes towards sexualities. Karras’ treatment emphasizes the plural attitudes that permeated the social landscape, how these attitudes crossed religious categories, highlighting sexual and gender identities that may differ from our own.

threat to both the spiritual and material world.⁴⁵² Gaining prominence in the thirteenth century and ebbing by the end of the Counter-Reformation, rumours of host desecration followed a predictable pattern: a Jew would acquire a consecrated host through nefarious means, and then—either at home or at the synagogue—proceed to stab, boil, or burn it.⁴⁵³ As per the dogma of transubstantiation,⁴⁵⁴ the host would either begin to bleed or an image of either the crucifix or the Christ Child would appear. Unable to hide the evidence, ‘the Jew’ would inevitably be caught, have their property confiscated, and be sentenced to burn at the stake.⁴⁵⁵ Narratives of host desecration therefore demonstrate how Christians used Jews as a way of externalizing the locus of theological anxieties about the nature of Jesus. In other words, it is not a coincidence that narratives of host desecration coincided with theological debates concerning the Incarnation.⁴⁵⁶

Translated into the terms of the social discourse we have been using, the canonical theological debate about the material nature of Jesus became entrenched in the conversation about Jewish alterity. As the Jewish faith denied the claim of Christ’s divinity and the doctrine of transubstantiation, both theological debates within the Christian community and tensions between the Jewish and Christian communities were channeled into rumours about host desecration, effectively serving as a platform on which to argue and redefine Christian identity.⁴⁵⁷ Narratives of bleeding communion wafers embodied the dogma of the transubstantiation and validated the Incarnation. If Jesus was not both fully human and fully God, then the host could not become the literal body of Christ, and desecrating it would presumably have no visible effect. Through the stories, the doctrine itself becomes flesh, mirroring the teachings of Jesus and his fully human/fully God status. Through such narratives, then, “the Jew” validates both the theology and the social discourse around the Incarnation and

⁴⁵² R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 5; Miri Rubin, “Imagining the Jew: The Late Medieval Eucharistic Discourse,” in *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann, (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 1995), 188-189.

⁴⁵³ Perry and Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, 20-21.

⁴⁵⁴ The Fourth Lateran Council decreed that during the Eucharist, the bread and wine offered would change into the actual body and blood of Christ. Becoming an article of faith, the actual process of how this happened was declared a mystery through the power of faith.

⁴⁵⁵ Perry and Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, 20.

⁴⁵⁶ For a study on the narratives of medieval Host desecration, please see Miri Rubin’s *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1999). According to Rubin, the narratives provide a space for “imagining transgressive behaviour” and became a way to justify violence against Jews, as well as to shore up Christian identity (108).

⁴⁵⁷ Rubin, “Imagining the Jew,” 177-180.

the dogma of transubstantiation. A true believing Christian would never dare to harm the very body of Jesus, whereas a Jew—who does not believe, who was already understood to have the sin of deicide stained on their blood—provided the perfect means of proving a theological theory and translating it into social reality.⁴⁵⁸

The rumours of blood libel were even more enduring and widespread. The first written documented case followed the death of an English youth, William of Norwich, in the twelfth century.⁴⁵⁹ A tanner's apprentice who often did business with the Norwich Jewish community, twelve-year-old William disappeared on Maundy Thursday in 1144, and his murdered body was found two days later on Holy Saturday. The Christian community very quickly accused the local Jewish community of murder and demanded a trial by the local ecclesiastical court. The Sheriff of Norwich, John de Chesney, sheltered the accused Jews in Norwich castle, and declared that since they were not Christians the ecclesiastical courts had no jurisdiction over them. When the dust finally settled several months later, the Jews were able to return to their homes.⁴⁶⁰

The event would probably have been relegated to a footnote in the history books if not for Thomas of Monmouth. While visiting Norwich a few years later—around 1150—Monmouth conducted his own investigation by interviewing converted Jews, who revealed to him the alleged truth behind the boy's death.⁴⁶¹ According to his sources, a prophecy decreed that if Jews sacrificed a Christian child every year, they would regain control over Israel—and so, in accordance with the prophecy, the Jews of Norwich had kidnapped young William to reenact the Crucifixion (even piercing his head with a crown of thorns and slicing open his side) before dumping his body in the forest. That Thomas of Monmouth had been invited to Norwich by the local bishop, who was looking to establish a local cult/pilgrimage site, is often left out of the

⁴⁵⁸ Rubin, "Imagining the Jew," 207.

⁴⁵⁹ E.M. Rose's *The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of Blood Libel in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) places the murder in its historical context. Rather than looking at the subject of the narrative, that is the Jewish community of Norwich—and by extension, Jewish communities of Europe—Rose focuses on those who spread the libels, more specifically on Thomas of Monmouth and "what certain Christians did, thought, said, and believed at a particular time, in a particular and distinct geographical, political, and religious context" (11). Rose contrasts this with various scholarly understandings that the accusations were either a "holdover" from when Romans persecuted early Christians (which, at that time, were Jewish sects and were perceived as such even after Christianity fully split from Judaism), or as part of Christian fantasies around Jewish rituals, specifically circumcision and Kosher butchering, or as a way to deprecate Jews, especially moneylenders, or as a projection of anxieties (10).

⁴⁶⁰ Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich*, 21.

⁴⁶¹ This has been disputed by a number of scholars, as many believe that this point may have been fabricated by Thomas of Monmouth (Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, 3; Langmuir, *Definition of Antisemitism*, 226).

account.⁴⁶²

The symbolism surrounding William's death combined with the circulated volumes of Monmouth's account stoked the flames of an already-smouldering resentment towards both the Jewish community and the local nobility. As Thomas of Monmouth's version circulated—first in England then across the Continent—other unsolved child murders were attributed to the Jewish community. Seven accusations occurred in the twelfth century alone, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Jews. By the fourteenth century, the charges of blood libel began to decrease (possibly due the devastation of the Black Death and to papal interventions), but in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, accusations were reignited, particularly within the German-speaking regions. By the end of the sixteenth century, trials and executions for blood libels waned.⁴⁶³

According to the blood libel accusations, Jews used the blood of Christian children not only for Passover *matzoh*, but also in poisons, love potions, magical amulets, cures for ailments like epilepsy, to sanctify rabbis, as well as in the *bris* (circumcision ritual).⁴⁶⁴ As Biale notes in his study on blood as a common trope in medieval Christian-Jewish discourse, both Jews and Christians share a belief in the covenant of blood with God, as blood was literally and figuratively the substance of life. Blood was a liminal fluid, symbolizing both life and death simultaneously, and the power over both. For Christians, this belief in the power of blood is manifested through the belief in the Eucharist. For Jews, the Covenant of the blood is connected not only through the blood of being the Chosen People and the blood of circumcision, but also through the blood of the martyrs.⁴⁶⁵ That blood was seen as mysterious and powerful also meant that it was associated with strong taboos, imbuing it with additional transgressive power.

It is telling that in accusing their Jewish neighbours of killing Christian children and using their blood to create Passover *matzoh*, premodern Christians were, in essence, doing something similar, thus projecting their own anxieties: they consumed the body and blood of Christ, but it was to be united with God, not to desecrate the divine. It is also unsurprising and instructive that, after a period of relative dormancy, the blood libel myth regained traction around the time of the Reformation, becoming particularly prevalent in those German-speaking regions that was at the heart of the movement, where the validity of transubstantiation was being hotly

⁴⁶² Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, 3; Langmuir, *Definition of Antisemitism*, 224.

⁴⁶³ Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, 3. Perry and Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, 11-12

⁴⁶⁴ Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, 2; Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich*, 3-4, 21.

⁴⁶⁵ Biale, *Blood and Belief*, 81, 83-84.

debated amongst Christians.⁴⁶⁶ This seems to confirm Nirenberg's theory that cataclysmic events should largely be understood as the culmination of preexisting tensions: as the social tensions (and resulting discourse) that led to the Reformation were already in circulation when the accusations of blood libel were reinvoked, it makes sense that these accusations were the culmination of the anxiety surrounding this tense internal discourse. In other words, the accusations painted upon the group were not inherently part of the religious dialogue; rather, the motif of the 'murderous Jew' out to disrupt and destroy Christianity—and, by extension, the majority's perception of social order—allowed Christians to work through the undercurrents of change and redefine their identity in the face of such change.⁴⁶⁷

What is remarkable about rumours of host desecration and blood libels is that both social narratives share an emphasis on the body. The recurrent motif of blood and the body not only reflected the social discourse of the theological debates about the nature of Jesus and the Eucharist, but also narratives and questions related to social and individual identity: if the body is a vehicle of identity and identity is imprinted on the body, then the *substance* of the body becomes the locus of identity, the foundation upon which it is formed. Accordingly, one of the ways of constructing Christian European identity was through the depiction of the (inevitably male) body. While Jewish men were often defined by the materiality of their bodies—as Boyarin suggests, the Jewish man in Europe was considered to be a type of woman (and therefore seen to occupy a non-masculine role)—Christian men defined themselves through reference to incorporeality.⁴⁶⁸ In other words, unlike the Jewish man (reasoned the premodern Christian) the Christian man is not tied to his flesh.⁴⁶⁹

In order to properly understand the idea of the feminized male, one must understand the

⁴⁶⁶ Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, 4.

⁴⁶⁷ It should also be noted that blood played a particularly important role in German folklore, which may further explain why blood libels were particularly prevalent in German-speaking lands (Hsia, *Myths*, 8-9).

⁴⁶⁸ Daniel Boyarin, "Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and Jewish Masculinity", in *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader*, edited by Björn Krondorfer, (London: SCM Press, 2009), 87-88. See also Clare R. Kinney, "The (Dis)embodied Heroe and the Signs of Manhood in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" in *Medieval Masculinities*, *Medieval Cultures* 7, edited by Clare A Lees (Minneapolis MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1994), 47-57 and Kruger, *The Spectral Jew*, especially "Introduction"

⁴⁶⁹ This is further reified in the emphasis of chastity and celibacy within Christian clerical and monastic circles. Not only did it ritually separate the class from common believers, but was also an exercise in overcoming the flesh. As Karras mentioned, male chastity was often viewed as a sign of "hard work", thus "could show masculine strength" (Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 49, 52-55, 61). Additionally, there have been some arguments that chastity could be viewed as a type of sexual orientation, precisely because the object of desire was for a spiritual— rather than for a human sexual—relationship (Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 69-70). See also Helen Parish, *Clerical Celibacy in the West: c1100-1700* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).

Late Medieval and Early Modern conceptualizations of the body which were often based on Galen's theory⁴⁷⁰ that the body had four humours: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm—the relative ratios of which were thought to determine whether a person was born male or female, and also to influence their temperament and general health status.⁴⁷¹ The *sanguine* personality (sociable and pleasure-seeking), was associated with blood, whereas the *choleric* (ambitious) personality was associated with yellow bile. The quiet and analytic *melancholic* was thought to possess a surplus of black bile, and the relaxed, caring, and peaceful *phlegmatic* possessed an excess of phlegm. The differences in the behaviour, temperament, and intellect of male and females were understood to be due to the way these humours were balanced in a person's body. Women were assumed to menstruate because it was thought that when they were not pregnant or lactating,⁴⁷² their bodies would begin to have too much blood, which the body would then expel in order restore humouric equilibrium. Regular menstruation therefore was actually desirable (provided a woman was not lactating or pregnant), as a buildup of blood would result in an imbalance that would make a woman too sanguine and masculine.⁴⁷³ Natural bloodletting (either in the form of menstruation, or hemorrhoidal bleeding for men) was understood as normal; something that should not be corrected as it was the body's natural way of rebalancing itself. Sometimes the body would refuse to do this naturally, and that is when the person would go to the physician, who, after examining them and consulting their horoscope, would often perform the necessary phlebotomy, that is the detoxification procedure.⁴⁷⁴

It was postulated that certain ethnicities naturally possessed a humouric imbalance that explained why they were the way they were. In the case of the Jewish ethnicity, Christian physicians posited that Jewish men experienced menstruation-esque hemorrhoidal bleeds that resulted in a buildup in black bile—a passive humour whose excess resulted in melancholy,

⁴⁷⁰ Though Galen's theory was the prevalent, and perhaps the most popular one, it was not the only one.

⁴⁷¹ Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy*, 38; Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 62-63.

⁴⁷² The ideal, healthy state of the female body.

⁴⁷³ Monica H. Green, "Bodily Essence: Bodies as Categories of Difference", in *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Medieval Age*, vol 2, edited by Linda Kalof (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010), 143-144. Indeed, as semen was believed to be the product of the blood, some viewed that regular ejaculation for men to be necessary in order to maintain the balance of humours within the body, either through nocturnal emissions, masturbation, or regular intercourse—however, the patient was advised moderation (Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 62-63).

⁴⁷⁴ Green, "Bodily Essence," 144, 152-153; Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy*, 38-39, 41.

something perceived to be a distinctly feminine trait.⁴⁷⁵ This thus effectively “feminized” the Jewish male: while his anatomy might have been male, his humouric imbalance “feminized” his temperament.

Simply put, the body is the seat of experience; it allows us to filter and make sense of the world around us. Through this filtering and meaning-making it becomes a vehicle for identity construction. In premodern Europe, Christians viewed the Jewish body as fleshly, bloody, and essentially feminine—a perception which fed into the social narratives and discourse about Jews.⁴⁷⁶ To the premodern Christian mind, then, the Jewish body was bloody: Jews were not only responsible for the death of Jesus, but also for the ritual deaths of innocent children, and their natural state was literally defined by an excess of blood. The themes of body and blood were thus pivotal markers in the creation of Christian identity and were to be observed in a number of Christian esoteric texts.

3.4 NARRATOLOGY, POSTCOLONIAL AND ALTERITY THEORIES

While we often speak of society as a single unit, there is no one social way of life; a society is comprised of many facets and working parts, each with its own rights, privileges, duties, mores, norms, and restrictions.⁴⁷⁷ Cumulatively and collectively, culture becomes a source of as well as the function of identity.⁴⁷⁸ Norms, values, symbols, common practices and traditions begin to shape the group’s identity, which then shapes the identity of the individual.⁴⁷⁹ As argued above, the lens of postcolonial theory can provide us with a tool for exploring images, words, and constructions of power, particularly as they relate to the alterity of those groups who fall outside of what may be considered as the hegemonic norm—including (but not limited to) women, Indigenous peoples, ethnic and racial minorities, immigrants and non-citizens, people with illnesses and disabilities, sexual minorities, and religious minority groups.

⁴⁷⁵ Green, “Bodily Essence,” 153. Also, see Peter Biller, “A ‘Scientific’ View of Jews from Paris around 1300,” *Micrologus* 9 (2001): 137-68. For a discussion on premodernity’s concept of menstruating men, please see Gianna Pomata, “Menstruating Men: Similarity and Differences of the Sexes in Early Modern Medicine”, in *Generation and Degeneration: Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, edited by Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2001): 109-152.

⁴⁷⁶ Boyarin, “Unheroic Conduct,” 79.

⁴⁷⁷ Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism*, 23.

⁴⁷⁸ Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, *Edward Said: The Paradox of Identity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 90.

⁴⁷⁹ Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism*, 38-39.

Though at its most basic definition it is the highlighting of European dominance on a particular colonized culture, postcolonialism is also a critiquing of a particular Euro-centric perspective onto a culture. In other words, it is both underscoring and critiquing the Christian European cultural and social interpretation as the norm.⁴⁸⁰ One of the foremost contributors of postcolonial theory, Edward Said was an interdisciplinary scholar who crossed boundaries and interrogated the intersections between various epistemologies. Trained as a literary theorist, Said was interested in exploring the conditions in which knowledge is produced, as well as the way this knowledge production unfolds.⁴⁸¹ Critiquing the hyper-specialized categorical approach to scholarship, Said concluded that texts cannot be separated from their political, cultural, and historical context, and that texts—more than a production of culture—are cultural acts that embody and reiterate (whether implicitly or explicitly) cultural discourses related to concerns of power, identity, in-groups and out-groups, and more.⁴⁸² To put it into the terms of the current discussion, for Said, texts represent the very bodies of social tensions and conversations. Reading these texts thus serves to reenact these discourses, effectively bringing them to life. Texts—and, by extension, the narratives they contain—are more than mere representations of society: they enshrine and are society. If texts are the embodiment of social discourse, then it becomes our responsibility, Said argues, to challenge the hegemonic narrative as normative,⁴⁸³ to find the various narratives that were casually set aside by previous historians, unearth them and fully (re)construct the social sphere.

One of the primary, critical aims of postcolonial theory—emphasized particularly by Said, but true of the theory in general—is the study of how identity has historically been formed through (or in relation to) the hegemonic lens of post-Enlightenment thinking. By underlining the concerns of representations, the question of who and how a particular social member is represented in various narratives is emphasized.⁴⁸⁴ Put differently, postcolonial theory is interested in examining how meaning is constructed through perceived differences between peoples, and how the voices of those perceived or cast as “outsiders” have consistently been

⁴⁸⁰ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Vintage Books, 1979), 3, 5-9, 11.

⁴⁸¹ Conor McCarthy, *Cambridge Introduction to Edward Said* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 13.

⁴⁸² Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said*, 3-4, 36.

⁴⁸³ Ranjan Ghosh, “Representations of the Intellectual: The Historian as ‘Outsider’”, in *Edward Said and the Literary, Social, and Political World*, edited by Ranjan Ghosh, Routledge Studies in Social and Political Thought, (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 193.

⁴⁸⁴ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 3.

changed/distorted, suppressed, or silenced through the dominant narrative.⁴⁸⁵ As literary artefacts that embody the world in which they were written,⁴⁸⁶ texts encapsulate not only the hegemonic narrative, but also the voices of alterity. How the voices of alterity are depicted allows for a glimpse into the relationship between alterity and what is normatively hegemonic in a given culture—in other words, how their interactions and their perceptions of one another served to shape the group and individual identities of their members.

Alterity theory emerged from postcolonial theory, and argues that alterity is part of the hegemonic, dominant community—not one that is separate or excluded from it. Alterity narratology is primarily concerned with the idea of voice, and in particular, the voice of the author, who controls the narrative. The voice is a part of the author’s subjective perspective. However, the voice of the author can only truly be understood in context, and this is in part dependent on the audience’s (receiver/reader’s) understanding of both 1) the environment in which the author is narrating, and 2) the situation in which the narrative unfolds.⁴⁸⁷ When looking at a narrative through the lens of alterity narratology, one of the major questions the scholar must ask is, “What do the non-normative voices do?” In other words, how are those perceived as “Other” still participating in the narrative? How are their voices depicted, and what function do these depictions serve? For example, in her analysis of gender in sixteenth century European literature, Susan S. Lanser notes that dialogues between or involving female characters often served as a vehicle for exploring transgressive sexualities and/or the status of women,⁴⁸⁸ and that the erotic overtones in these same-sex dialogues were most often written by men to convey who was allowed to speak publicly.⁴⁸⁹ We can similarly apply these questions to Jewish voices we find in Christian demonological esoteric texts. Doing so will help us gain insight into how Jewish voices were appropriated and used in the construction of the mainstream Christian identity.

Along with the concern for voices and how they are depicted, alterity theory and alterity

⁴⁸⁵ Shehla Burney, *Pedagogy of the Other: Edward Said, Postcolonial Theory, and Strategies for Critique*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc, 2012), 42.

⁴⁸⁶ Nicholas Harrison, “‘A Roomy Place Full of Possibility’: Said’s *Orientalism* and the Literary”, in *Edward Said and the Literary, Social, and Political World*, edited by Ranjan Ghosh, Routledge Studies in Social and Political Thought, (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 9-10.

⁴⁸⁷ Fludernik, *Fictions of Languages*, 432.

⁴⁸⁸ Lanser, “Sapphic Dialogics,” 189.

⁴⁸⁹ Lanser, “Sapphic Dialogics,” 201-202.

narratology also focus on stereotypes. Formed by the hegemonic community as a “prototype” (to borrow Hogan’s term) of those who do not conform to and therefore do not belong to that particular group, stereotypes allow the hegemonic group to form an archetypal vision or definition of themselves in tension with those who do not belong to the dominant community.⁴⁹⁰ Fludernik identifies five scenarios that can embody stereotypes: 1) colonies; 2) exoticism (under which Orientalism is subsumed); 3) exile; 4) globalization/cosmopolitanism and 5) third party.⁴⁹¹ It is the second scenario, exoticism, which is of a particular interest to us.

Exoticism can be broadly defined as an inherent quality characterized by mystery, the exotic, the erotic, and danger. In Orientalist art, scenes of “exotic” foreign people are traditionally depicted as mysterious, sensual, and shrouded in a haze of enchantment and languor. Their exoticness represents something dangerous yet exciting, an encoding somehow rooted in their ethnicity (and thus their ultimate difference relative to the hegemony). Within the exotic template, the subject is almost always feminized in some way, and, like the stereotypical *femme fatale*, they are at once alluring and dangerous.⁴⁹² The hegemony then uses that template of the exciting and forbidden to create and reify the dangerous, an exotic fantasy that they project onto alterity.⁴⁹³ Alterity then comes to embody these taboo dreams, these forbidden fantasies. Through fantastical depictions of alterity, hegemony finds a way to perform potentially transgressive acts, to delve into the forbidden fantasy without actually deviating from the perceived norms that establish their world. In this way, the hegemonic society fetishizes alterity. Fetishization becomes a way of accentuating and investing tremendous value in a stereotype. This allows the hegemonic society to identify and highlight the differences and, in doing so, assert their dominance.⁴⁹⁴ Through that assertion, the perceived differences—often labelled as “exotic”—then becomes the subject of obsession. In other words, the fetishization becomes an obsession with a particular aspect of a stereotype of alterity, which becomes a symbol of the

⁴⁹⁰ Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism*, 47-48.

⁴⁹¹ Monica Fludernik, “Cross-Mirroring of Alterity: The Colonial Scenarios and Its Psychological Legacies,” in *Linked Histories: Post-Colonial Studies in a Globalized World*, edited by Pamela McCallum and Wend Faith, (Calgary AB: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 64.

⁴⁹² Fludernik, “Cross-Mirroring,” 69.

⁴⁹³ Fludernik, “Cross-Mirroring,” 76.

⁴⁹⁴ H. Bhaba, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 66-84.

fantastical.⁴⁹⁵

The creation of a fantastic world that consciously transgresses the “boundaries of the real” can also highlight what is socially acceptable in order to strengthen social cohesion and provide additional material for constructing identity.⁴⁹⁶ Through depictions of the fantastical and the creation of what Feldt calls “monstrous identities,” these narratives are used to reflect the social identity of the hegemonic culture, and, perhaps more significantly, to explain how alterity differs from the hegemony. Monstrous beings were thus the “exteriorization of articulation”—in other words, society projects itself outward, creating a separate world (complete with its own inhabitants) in order to speak to itself about itself.⁴⁹⁷

In his study of Abraham Yagel’s treatment of the *re’em* in his seventeenth century text *Bet Ya’ar ha-levanon*, David R. Ruderman notes that the depiction of the biblical horned creature illustrated the cultural concerns of the Jewish community at the time.⁴⁹⁸ By identifying the *re’em* with the unicorn—a creature often invoked in Christian literature—Yagel not only married time-honoured knowledge with newly discovered empirical data, but also echoed the contemporary conviction that through the study of nature, one could understand God’s plan hidden in wondrous creatures and in the unusual.⁴⁹⁹ The one who could understand the creatures would be the true discoverer of the truth, someone who could claim authority over the exploration of knowledge. Creatures and phenomena that defied traditional forms of classification held the keys to even more powerful and potent secrets about the divine plan, as the basis of knowledge of the time lay in a return to and interpretation of Biblical or classical sources.⁵⁰⁰

Understanding and categorizing the truly unique—that which escaped conventional

⁴⁹⁵ For example, the “Noble Savage”. Hugh Urban, “The Yoga of Sex: Tantra, Orientalism, and Sex Magic in the Ordo Templi Orientis” in *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, edited by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 439.

⁴⁹⁶ Feldt, “Fantastic Re-Collections,” 192-193.

⁴⁹⁷ Laura Feldt, “Monstrous Identities: Narrative Strategies in *Lugale* and Some Reflections on Sumerian Religious Narrative,” in *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East: Literary and Linguistic Approaches*, edited by Fredrik Hagen, John Johnston, Wendy Monkhouse, Kathryn Piquette, John Tait and Martin Worthington, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 189, (Leuven Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies, 2011), 148.

⁴⁹⁸ David R. Ruderman, “Unicorns, Great Beasts and the Marvellous Variety of Things in the Thought of Abraham B. Hananiah Yagel”, in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus, Harvard University Center for Jewish Study (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 343-344.

⁴⁹⁹ Ruderman, “Unicorns, Great Beasts and the Marvellous Variety of Things,” 343-344, 356.

⁵⁰⁰ Ruderman, “Unicorns, Great Beasts and the Marvellous Variety of Things,” 358.

classification—meant unlocking another riddle that made up the hidden divine plan which was embedded in nature. Yagel’s equating the *re’em* with the unicorn and situating the creature in Judaism (specifically in Kabbalah) highlighted the prevalent macrocosmic/microcosmic worldview, and linked aspects of that worldview directly with Judaism.⁵⁰¹ In the process, Yagel validated the primacy of Judaism as the true source of divine knowledge. By creating fantastical worlds and monstrous beings, society was able to step outside of itself in order to reflect, discuss and eventually incorporate social issues as they constructed their own identity.

Ultimately, despite being fetishized as “exotic”—as separate from the hegemonic sphere—alterity is deeply ingrained in the social fabric. The individuals and groups that represent alterity become more than just a taboo topic—they *are* taboo, albeit a taboo that lives, occupies and is fully ingrained within the social fabric dominated by the hegemonic discourse. The fetishization of alterity⁵⁰² thus helps the hegemonic majority define its identity and space through narratives of contrast and opposition.

Though Christians and Jews in this period might have seen themselves as independent and distinct, the evidence we have at our disposal demonstrates that they were actually interdependent and deeply intertwined. If cultural identity is at the very centre of everyday life,⁵⁰³ built in part through tension, and if texts are cultural artefacts that embody the social discourses that shape cultural identity, then esoteric texts are likewise cultural artefacts that echo inter- or co-dependent identity constructions. As such, esoteric texts reflect the author’s perception of the world as they saw it, and mirror the author’s social position within the social sphere. Demons were very much part of that world, and embodied these social tensions. They are monstrous, violent, transgressive, exotic, sexualized and taboo—what better vehicle to build a social identity around than through the narratives of the very personification of conflicts? As such, it will now be time to apply these concepts to the primary texts under consideration.

⁵⁰¹ Ruderman, “Unicorns, Great Beasts and the Marvellous Variety of Things,” 358-360.

⁵⁰² While the German-speaking regions in which I am examining this particular alterity was mainly made up of Christians and Jews, Muslims and other non-Christians did live alongside Christians in other regions of premodern Latin Europe.

⁵⁰³ Hogan, *Colonialism and Cultural Identities*, xi.

PART II

THE APPLICATION: DEMONIC RITUAL MAGIC AND IDENTITY

It will now be time to turn to my primary sources. As noted in my introduction, I will be tracing the portrayal of demons over six different texts—all Christian-authored works of invocative demonic ritual magic—ranging in date from the second half of the fourteenth century into the second half of the sixteenth century and written in German-speaking lands. Not all of these texts have confirmed dates of authorship or publication (or indeed, confirmed authors), but I will attempt to discuss them as chronologically as possible⁵⁰⁴ given the information we do have, to give a sense of how Christian portrayals of demons developed over the period under study. These works⁵⁰⁵ are as follows: the anonymously authored *Liber Iuratus Honorii* (*Sworn Book of Honorius*),⁵⁰⁶ written sometime in the latter half of the fourteenth century; Johannes Trithemius' *Steganographia*⁵⁰⁷ (1499); the anonymously-authored *Munich Manual of Demonic Magic*⁵⁰⁸ (better known under its filing *Codex Latinus Monacensis (CLM) 849*), published sometime in the fifteenth century; Johannes Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabalistica*⁵⁰⁹ (1517); Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De Occulta Philosophia*⁵¹⁰ (1533), and the anonymously authored

⁵⁰⁴ I say “as possible” because I will be dividing the fourth and fifth chapters thematically, but will discuss the texts chronologically within each chapter.

⁵⁰⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of transliterated works are my own.

⁵⁰⁶ I will be using Hedegård's critical edition of *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, based on the London redaction. As of this writing, a comprehensive, peer-reviewed English translation is not in existence. See *Liber Iuratus Honorii: A Critical Edition of the Latin Version of the Sworn Book of Honorius* edited by Gösta Hedegård and Studia Latina Stockholmiensia (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2002).

⁵⁰⁷ I will be using Joseph Peterson's transliteration (*Twilit Grotto*—Esoteric Archives. CD-ROM including digital editions of several esoteric texts, printed and in manuscripts (Kasson MN, 2000), along with the reproduction of Wolfgang Ernst Heidel's edition *Steganographia quæ hucusque a nemine intellecta*, (Moguntiae: Küchler, 1676; reprinted from the original, Nabu Press, February 28, 2014). While no comprehensive English translation of this exists, a partial translation by Fiona Tait and Christopher Upton was published in limited numbers (edited by Adam McLean (Edinburgh: Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks, 1982))

⁵⁰⁸ I will be using Richard Kieckhefer's transliteration of *CLM 849*, found in the appendix of his *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancers Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1998). This is, at the moment, the standard transliteration of the Munich Manual of Demonic Magic. While Kieckhefer provides a partial translation in the context of his analysis, no complete English translation exists as of this writing.

⁵⁰⁹ Though Goodman and Goodman's translation of *De Arte Cabalistica (On the Art of the Kabbalah)* is considered to be most readily available English translation, it is, as Hanegraaff writes, “unreliable” (*Western Esotericism*, 169). Fortunately, Ehlers, Roloff and Schäfer have edited, transliterated and provided a side-by-side German translation, included in their on-going project to transliterate and translate Reuchlin's work. Therefore, I will be using the following for my analysis: Widu-Wolfgang Ehlers, Hans-Gert Roloff and Peter Schäfer, editors, *Sämtliche Werke: Bande II, 1: De Arte cabalistica libri tres/Die Kabbalistik* (Stuttgart.Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010).

⁵¹⁰ I will be relying on my own translation of Vittoria Perrone Compagni's critical edition: Agrippa, Henrich C. *De Occulta Philosophia*, edited by Vittoria Perrone Compagni (Leiden: Brill, 1992). An English translation exists,

Book of Abramelin,⁵¹¹ most likely published sometime in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

As I have argued in the preceding chapters, by emphasizing the link between embodiment and how we perceive and construct reality, the theoretical approach that I have discussed in the previous chapters demands that we approach religion as “lived” in the sense articulated in the second chapter—that is to say, as the product of human meaning-making, which function to filter, organize, and make sense of our social and material experiences (including the relationships we form with social actors). I further argued that narratives offer us a window into this process of meaning-making, as they provide us with a tangible representation of the author’s understanding of the world—which, by extension, tells us something about their intended audience and the larger sociocultural sphere of which they are both a part. Accordingly, it will be worth reemphasizing that, for the purposes of this dissertation, narratives should be understood as the creative communication of identity, ideas, symbols, perceptions and/or knowledge, a communication that expresses—and thus interpretively (re)creates—a reality based on the teller’s and audience’s understanding of the world.

The overarching aim of this section will be to demonstrate how within these narratives of invocative demonic ritual magic, the way the relationship between the Christian author/practitioner and demons is imagined reflects: 1) the Christianization of Jewish magical knowledge, 2) how the Christianization of this knowledge acted to bolster the doctrine of supersession, and 3) how this reads as a move to control the Jewish alterity and cement the Christian identity as hegemonic. As noted in the introduction, the third point has guided the way I have chosen to group the texts together in the fourth and fifth chapters: while the fourth chapter traces the move to control the Jewish alterity through control of the ritual space, the fifth chapter traces the move to control the Jewish alterity by controlling the intellectual space—that is, by circumscribing the theoretical perimeters of magic to privilege the Christian position. I will conclude the section by linking these themes to my overarching concern, the problematic scholarly tendency of undervaluing the role these types of narratives play in understanding various religious identities.

based on James Freakes’ translation (1913) with notes provided by Donald Tyson (cf *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, translated by James Freake, annotated by Donald Tyson (St. Paul, MN: Llewelyn Worldwide, 2005))

⁵¹¹ I will be using an English translation of this work: Von Worms, Abraham, *The Book of Abramelin: A New Translation*, compiled and edited by Georg Dehn, translated by Steven Guth (Lake Worth, FL: Ibis Press, 2006).

CHAPTER FOUR

DEMONIC RITUAL MAGIC AND IDENTITY

In Chapter Four I will begin my analysis with an examination of two anonymously-authored works, the *Sworn Book* and the *Munich Manual of Demonic Magic* (henceforth referred to as *CLM 849*). I will begin with the *Sworn Book*, likely the earliest text we will be examining, and a prime example of the main three points outlined above. I will specifically be interested in sketching out, first, how the *Sworn Book* appropriates Jewish magical knowledge—while simultaneously asserting that the only people truly qualified to wield its magic are pious and orthodox Christians—and second, how this act of appropriation relates to the work’s emphasis on exorcism. I will then continue my examination of the significance of the themes of Christian piety and exorcism in my discussion of *CLM 849*. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of *Book of Abramelin*, where we will see how the cycle of appropriation-Christianization-exorcism culminates in the fetishization of the Jewish magician. Throughout the chapter I will be noting what inferences about Christian identity-formation can be drawn from these moves. We will see that because the success of demonic ritual magic depended on Christian faith, it strengthened the ritualist’s identity as Christian. Because the practitioner saw themselves as pious Christians, they were able to fully understand, and thereby master, the secrets of the universe, thus magically fulfilling the Christian truths.

4.1 *LIBER IURATUS HONORII* (*SWORN BOOK OF HONORIUS*)

4.1.1 Contextualizing the Work

One of the earliest influences on later esoteric texts, the *Liber Iuratus Honorii* (henceforth referred to as the *Sworn Book*) was particularly influential in the development of German esotericism, specifically on the work of Trithemius and Agrippa.⁵¹² Part of the Solomonic magical textual genre,⁵¹³ the aim of the *Sworn Book* was to assist practitioners in the conjuration

⁵¹² Mathiesen, “A Thirteenth-Century Ritual,” 145.

⁵¹³ Hedegård calls the manuscript ‘pseudo-Solomonic’ to denote that Solomon was not, in fact, the author of the texts, whereas I chose to call it Solomonic. The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, as well as the *Ars Notoria*, along with other similar texts do not claim that Solomon wrote it, however, the narrative and/or the literary trope of Solomon—that is, his conjuring up demons in order to attain knowledge or to build the Temple—is pivotal. “Pseudo” implies that the authorship has claimed to be the person (cf. Pseudo-Dionysios, Pseudo-Augustine), whereas “Solomonic” is an

of transempirical beings through a combination of magical practice, prayers and piety, in order to gain both human and divine knowledge.⁵¹⁴ The text was attributed to “Honorius, son of Euclid, master of Thebes,” a pseudonymous author who appears to have had a passing familiarity with Hebrew, Aramaic, as well as the language of the text, Latin. Due to the inclusion of various Scriptural passages, the baptismal ritual, prayers—such as the Hail Mary, the Our Father, and Hail Holy Queen (among others)—and excerpts from Jerome and Pseudo-Augustine⁵¹⁵, we can infer that the author was familiar with liturgical and canonical literature, and may have been in the clergy (though this is debated).⁵¹⁶

While the text gained notoriety and was in circulation by the mid-fourteenth century,⁵¹⁷ discerning when the text was composed and compiled is slightly more problematic. Although we speak of the *Sworn Book* as a single text, there are in fact two separate redactions. The better-known London redaction—housed within the Sloane collection at the British Library and preserved in three manuscripts⁵¹⁸—is dated to the fourteenth century (probably during John XXII’s papacy⁵¹⁹), though elements of the manuscript may have been older.⁵²⁰ A more recently discovered version was found in the Berengario Ganell’s *Summa Sacre Magice*, most likely

adjective, describing the goal of the type of magic and a similar practice: through prayer, piety and practice, one can attain great knowledge and hopefully, wisdom, from transempirical being, as did the legends of Solomon claim.

⁵¹⁴ Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 10-11.

⁵¹⁵ A collection of sermons attributed to Augustine that was most likely written in the early fourteenth century. They seem to have been written in order to validate the Order of Saint-Augustine’s claim that the order was founded by Augustine himself. See Julia D. Staykova’s chapter, “Pseudo-Augustine and Religious Controversy in Early Modern England” in *Augustine Beyond the Book: Intermediality, Transmediality, and Reception*, edited by Karla Pollmann and Meredith J. Gill. Brill’s Series in Church History (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 147-165.

⁵¹⁶ Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 11-12; Mathiesen, “A Thirteenth-Century Ritual”, 145; Mesler “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*”, 188-189.

⁵¹⁷ For example, in 1347, in Mende, France, Étienne Pépin was accused of demonic magic, and his copy of the manuscript was used as evidence—though he claimed that he invoked an angel, a good defence measure. In 1376, Nicholas Eymeric placed it on his list of prohibited books, and the text was also listed on the ‘demonic list’ of banned manuscripts, compiled by Gerson. And yet, it was found in the library of an Augustine monastery in York, and both Trithemius and John Dee consulted the *Sworn Book*, in addition to it having a marked influence on Agrippa and Hartlieb (Mathiesen, “A Thirteenth-Century Ritual”, 145; Mesler, “The *Liber iuratus Honorii*”, 115).

⁵¹⁸ For a detailed history and interrelationship between the manuscripts, please see Hedegård’s methodical treatment in *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 13-25.

⁵¹⁹ See Chapter One, Section 3.6 for a brief note on Pope John XXII and his anti-magical stance.

⁵²⁰ Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 12-13; Mesler, “The *Liber iuratus Honorii*”, 115; Jan R. Veenstra, “Honorius and the Sigil of God: The *Liber iuratus* in Berengario Ganell’s *Summa sacre magice*”, in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Idea and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, edited by Claire Fanger (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), 151.

compiled in the fourteenth century, with a commonly accepted date of c1346.⁵²¹

The content and structure of the text are no less enigmatic. Opening with a prologue, the manuscript begins with the background of how the text came to be. After demons tricked the presiding (and nameless) pope and other high ranking officials into believing that all magic is evil, a circle of venerable magicians gathered together to preserve their knowledge in face of pending persecution, selecting Honorius with the task of ensuring the magical knowledge is guarded. With the help of an angel, Hocrohel, Honorius wrote down the secrets, compiling the knowledge into the codex. The magicians then swore an oath to preserve the mysteries, ensuring only the select few worthy of the knowledge would be able to access the rituals and incantations held within.⁵²² After this gripping prologue, the text moves on to detail various subjects over ninety-odd chapters, divided into four sections (or *opera*). The subjects cover everything from how to attain a vision of God to rituals for attaining wealth. However, as Hedegård notes, while the table of contents mentions four *opera*, the manuscript is actually divided into five, with the fifth one consisting of the author's commentary on the previous four sections. In addition, the chapter names and content do not necessarily correspond to the ones listed after the prologue, causing speculation that this may be a copy error or a mistake on part of the compiler.⁵²³

⁵²¹ After the identification of a possibly older tradition found within Berengario Ganell's *Summa Sacre Magica*, Jan R. Veenstra argues for an early dating. Veenstra's chapter on the *Sworn Book* that was discovered within Ganell's *Summa Sacra Magice* argues for a single source for the manuscript by analyzing the presentation of the rituals found within. Cf. Jan R. Veenstra, "Honorius and the Sigil of God", in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Idea and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), 151-191; Fanger, "Introduction", 7. For a discussion of the two redactions of *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, please see Katelyn Mesler "The *Liber Iuratus Honorii* and the Christian Reception of Angel Magic" and "Honorius and the Sigil of God: The *Liber Iuratus* in Berengario Ganell's *Summa sacre magice*".

⁵²² Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 25-27; Mesler "The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*", 115.

⁵²³ Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 25-27.

Hedegård provides the following section breakdown, which I have summarized: Chapter 1: Introduction. This includes the Prologue; breakdown of the content; a description of Solomonic magic; the types of spirits that can be conjured and those that cannot, and an analysis between Christian, Jewish and pagan magical practitioners; Chapter 2: How to build the Sigil of God; Chapter 3: Preparations. How to acquire permission to gain divine vision, and the associated prayers, situated in Orthodox Catholic teachings; Chapter 4: Variety of prayers and when to use them; Chapter 5: Instructions on how to use the nine prayers mentioned in chapter 4, after permission has been granted, and the "operations" of prayers; Chapter 6: How to conclude the rituals; Chapter 7: Explanations and indexing of the Second *Opera*; Chapter 8: Descriptions of planetary angels—including their names, characteristics, physical depictions, and geographical regions, as well as how to conjure and control them; Chapter 9: Explanations and indexing of the Third *Opera*; Chapter 10: Descriptions of aerial angels—including their names, characteristics, physical depictions, and geographical regions, as well as how to conjure and control them; Chapter 11: Explanations and indexing of the Fourth *Opera*; Chapter 12: Descriptions of terrestrial angels—including their names, characteristics, physical depictions, and geographical regions, as well as how to conjure and control them; Chapter 13: The Fifth *Opera*. A commentary as well as other additional prayers and other pertinent information; Chapter 14: The Epilogue (Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 29-30).

It is in the last paragraph of the whole work that we discover the true aim of the text: to see the face of God, and, as a result, receive salvation, eternal life, and a deep understanding of the universe. Presenting itself as a *summa* or “overarching magical approach to the world,” the text describes elaborate and precise rituals for invoking and commanding transempirical beings—including demons.⁵²⁴ The text prescribes fasts, abstinence, regular attendance at mass, prayer, and the cultivation of the proper diet to attain these ends. Through adherence to these specific rites, the practitioner might even be able, like the first man Adam, to see the face of God, absorbing the sacred wisdom of the universe in the process. I have chosen to include this work as, although the prescribed rituals are not exactly unique, the text addresses both the secular (i.e., legal) and Christian (i.e., ecclesiastical) status of the practice of invocative ritual magic. It is also an example of intercultural adaptation, as the *Sworn Book* took and reconfigured Jewish and Islamic⁵²⁵ magical practices and reconfigured them to resonate with a Christian audience,⁵²⁶ showing not only a cultural exchange, but also an intriguing kind of pluralistic awareness—while still, of course, outwardly maintaining that the Christian perspective is superior.

4.1.2 Demonic Magic and Portrayals of Demons in the *Sworn Book*

The information contained in the *Sworn Book*, like the information contained in the other texts I will be examining, demonstrates that, within premodernity, approaches in understanding God were multiple and varied.⁵²⁷ In other words, far from magic (even demonic magic) being understood as completely antithetical to the pursuit of divine knowledge by its practitioners,

⁵²⁴ The methods contained in this work are later echoed in Agrippa’s *De Occulta Philosophia*.

⁵²⁵ The Islamic influences are particularly noticeable in the redaction found in Ganell (Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*”, 114, 116; Veenestra, “Honorius and the Sigil of God”, 155, p189n62). It is fascinating and worth a more in-depth study. For Islamic magic, please see Liana Saif, *The Arabic Influences on Early Modern Occult Philosophy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Paola Zambelli, *Astrology and Magic from the Medieval Latin and Islamic World to Renaissance Europe: Theories and Approaches*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Salim T.S. al-Hassani, ed. *1001 Inventions: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Civilization* (Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2012); David Pingree, “The Diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts in Western Europe”, in *La diffusione della scienze islamiche nel Medio Evo europeo*, edited by Biancamaria Scaria Amoretti (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1987); the introduction of David Pingree, editor, *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghayat al-hakim*, Studies of the Warburg Institute (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1986).

⁵²⁶ Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*,” 114.

⁵²⁷ Illustrating the notion of *tolerantia*, discussed in Chapter Two. If, as mentioned, the concept denotes an attempt to bridge between Catholic canonical ideal reality with the lived reality, this also includes a fluid approach to and understanding God. Furthermore, to echo Bailey, Watkins, Borchardt, McGuire, and Van Engen in particular, the term “religion”—and what it encompassed—was understood differently in premodernity. Ergo, magic, or magical theology, to use the term that Brann uses (*Trithemius and Magical Theology*, 2-3) could be understood as exemplifying the concept of *tolerentia*.

magic, as we shall see, was sometimes understood as being complimentary to this pursuit, something evidenced by the fact that the authors and practitioners of these texts clearly understood themselves to be Christians acting in orthodox accordance with the Christian tradition. In the *Sworn Book* specifically, the text not only indicates that the practitioner must be a pious, orthodox, and morally upright Christian, but also ties the efficacy of the ritual, to conventional (and canonically approved) practices, such as attending Mass, the recitation of psalms, and the litany of saints. As Klaassen argues, this establishes the work as Christian, and potentially indicates it may have even been considered by its practitioners as a form of devotion.⁵²⁸

The Christian nature of the work is explicitly emphasized following the prologue and the division of the chapters. The first section of the work thus begins with an affirmation of the Christian faith, an affirmation that resembles the structure of a Christian prayer:

In the name of the living and true God, the Alpha and Omega,⁵²⁹ the beginning and the end, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons, one God, the giver of life, destroyer of death, who is called ‘who overcame our death and through rising, restored life, and established the New Testament.’⁵³⁰

The implication is clear: the rituals that are to follow are considered by the practitioners to be legitimately Christian, and, accordingly, must be framed within the language of canonical orthodoxy. The emphasis on situating the *Sworn Book* within Catholic canonical theology is, as Fanger, Kieckhefer, and Mesler pointed out, deliberate.⁵³¹ In other words, it is only those who accept the *Sworn Book*’s magic as being compatible with Christian orthodoxy—and are thus firmly pious Christians themselves—who are worthy of studying these rites and reaping their

⁵²⁸ Klaassen, *Transformation of Magic*, 111-112.

⁵²⁹ The text reads ‘**Alpha et Omega**’, (bold mine), the Greek *letter* for Omega. I have transliterated into “omega” to better flow with the previous word “alpha”. This is a stylistic choice rather than one rooted in philology or translation.

⁵³⁰ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Chapt. 3.

In nomine igitur illius Dei vivi et veri, qui est Alpha et Omega, principium et finis, qui est Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus, tres persone, unus deus, vite dator, mortis destructor, unde dicitur ‘qui mortem nostram moriendo destruxit et vitam resurgendo reparavit, qui Novum condidit Testamentum’. Hedegård, ed. *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 60, ln.5-6. Compare this to the liturgical prayer from Holy Saturday to Ascension Sunday: “It is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, to praise you for all our days, Lord, but on this day most gloriously, when Christ, our Paschal, was sacrificed. He is the lamb who takes away the sins of the world. **He who overcame our death and through rising, restored life**” (bold mine) (*Vere dignum et justum est, aequum et salutare, te quidem Domine omni tempore, sed in hoc potissimum die gloriosis praedicare, cum Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus. Ipse enim verus est Angus qui abstulit peccata mundi. Qui mortem nostram moriendo destruxit, et vitam resurgendo reparavit*) (bold mine). (*The Missal for the Laity, According to the use of the Holy Roman Church*, Derby: Thomas Richardson & Son, For the Catholic Book Society, 1846, 58).

⁵³¹ Kieckhefer, “Devil’s Contemplative,” 252; Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*,” 115.

rewards (the biggest one being divine knowledge about the universe).⁵³²

Though often classified as an angelic magical text, this grimoire is one of demonic as well as angelic magic. The work describes each planet as having a group of angels assigned to it, and furthermore describes the appearance and specific role of each individual angel. It also explains that each angelic group has a subcommittee of demons operating under their control, with one demonic king presiding over a small cadre of demons.⁵³³ The book asserts that both angels and demons can be invoked and controlled, but does indicate a difference between the two types of magic—that being the emphasis on the piety and intentions of the magician, and, from there, the perceived religious legitimacy of the practice.⁵³⁴

However, it is important to note that the book is not linking magical efficacy to one's role or status within the church, but to the strength of one's Christian piety. As the prologue reveals, those who are weak of faith, even those with a high status in the Church, can fall prey to demonic predations, as it is piety that gives the magician the ability to control demons. As the prologue states, when the demonic forces gathered, they corrupted "the entire world because of the frailty of humanity, [...]" including the "bishops and prelates, rooted in pride, [and] even the pope and his cardinals,"⁵³⁵ According to the author this particular weakness in faith was clearly in the demons' interest, as it renders these figures—and indeed all those weak in faith—powerless to control them. As the text indicated, it is "impossible for a perverted and unclean man to truly work this art, nor allow the spirits to constrain him, for a pure man⁵³⁶ will make

⁵³² This prayer, as just noted, echoes part of the liturgical rites from Holy Saturday to Ascension, the ritual period in which Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead and spent forty days with his disciples before ascending into heaven. This liturgy communicates the Christian's belief that, through the death of Jesus sin was washed away, and is thus meant to renew a Christian's spiritual life. This indicates not only a magical supersession theology, but also a magical Christian practice, in which exoteric Christian liturgy was practiced magically.

⁵³³ Richard Kieckhefer, "The Devil's Contemplatives: The *Liber Iuratus*, *The Liber Visionum* and the Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism", in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, edited by Claire Fanger, (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), 260-261; Mesler, "The *Liber iuratus Honorii*", 125.

⁵³⁴ Mesler, "The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*," 134.

⁵³⁵ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Prologue

Cum convenissent maligni spiritus demonia in cordibus hominum intonantes, cogitantes utilitatem fragilitatis humane poss suo corrumpere et totam mundi machinam volentes suis viribus superare, ypocrism cum invidia seminantes, pontifices et prelatos in superbia radicanes dominum papam cum cardinalibus in unum venire fecerunt, dicentes adinvicem que secuntur. Hedegård, editor, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 60, ln. 1-2.

⁵³⁶ The way the *Sworn Book* frames this "pure man" is explicitly linked to the Christian understanding of the covenant. Covenant is thus an important motif in this work, and something that is particularly significant to the present discussion, as will be explained shortly.

them answer and fulfill his requests.”⁵³⁷

This mention of the control of demons brings to mind the topic of exorcism,⁵³⁸ and I would like to briefly pause the present discussion to address it. The history of exorcism, especially within Catholicism, is complex.⁵³⁹ Within premodernity exorcism was understood as sacramental,⁵⁴⁰ and there were multiple forms and types of exorcism that were practiced by a number of Christians—including the clergy, charismatics, as well as the laity—and these could be used to treat everything from demonic possession and crises of faith, to toothaches, preventing or eliminating pest infestations and unruly animals. While not all exorcisms were necessarily conducted by priests, some came with the recommendation that it would be best if an ordained clergy member performed them, as exorcisms often required the presence of the Eucharist as part of the rite.⁵⁴¹

While many canonical theologians were fascinated by the rituals, others (notably Erasmus) did not support the activity. Additionally, there was no general consensus amongst canonical theologians on who could legitimately conduct an exorcism. Even when thinking in terms of directing those who were practicing it, there was no general consensus on the way in which it was to be conducted,⁵⁴² or the reasons that could legitimately warrant such a rite (including the question of whether the practitioner could benefit from the ritual). For example, as Young noted, Aquinas wrote that it is permissible for lay Christians to “compel demons by

⁵³⁷ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Prologue

Quia virum iniquam et immundum impossibile est per artem veraciter operari, nec spiritibus aliquibus homo obligatur, set ipsi invitii coguntur mundatis hominibus respondere et sua beneplacita penitus adimplere. Hedegård, editor, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 60, ln. 9-10.

⁵³⁸ It should be noted that there is a component of exorcism during baptism; for this project, I will be using the term exorcism to denote a separate rite rather than the integrant of a sacrament.

⁵³⁹ Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 59–60. For more detailed examples of the varied nature of premodern exorcism, please see pages 58–62 of the same book.

⁵⁴⁰ Unlike sacraments which confers the grace of the Holy Spirit and is usually administered by a priest, sacramental is an object or ritual that evokes the instance of a particular sacrament, reminding the person of its importance and grace received. Sacramentals were used for the believer’s benefits, and were encouraged by the priests and clergy to do so (Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 58-59).

⁵⁴¹ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 241-243; Francis Young, *History of Exorcism: A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity*, Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 1, 108.

⁵⁴² While there was no official standard rite of exorcism in premodernity, some rites were certainly used more often than others, and by the fourteenth century written liturgical rites were being written down (though it must be emphasized that they were not considered to be official).

adjuration, since this power was given by Christ to the Church,”⁵⁴³ though he prohibited the exorcist from receiving knowledge from demons in the process. While the Late Middle Ages saw the transition of exorcism as a rite that was most often associated with charismatics and the cults of saints to one associated with ordained priests (as exorcisms by this time often required the Eucharist), it was only in 1614 that an *official* Church liturgy of the rite of exorcism⁵⁴⁴ was composed, sanctioned and used until 1999, when the rite was officially changed by the Vatican.⁵⁴⁵

The fact that there was no official liturgical rite of exorcism (until 1614), and that the rites were used for a number of issues by both laity and clergy alike, illustrates the fluidity of premodern exorcism (which in turn further illustrates the fluidity of premodern lived religion⁵⁴⁶), and this has some interesting implications in our study of demonic magic. While invocative demonic ritual magic tends to be framed as being a practice that fell outside of the boundaries of premodern Christianity (at least orthodox premodern Christianity), the example of exorcism demonstrates that this may simply not always been the case. What we are referring here to as invocative demonic ritual magic was likely understood by its authors and practitioners to be either a form of, or akin to, exorcism—something that, while perhaps contested as noted above, was nevertheless understood to be well within the tradition of Christianity.

To relate this back to the *Sworn Book*, when the author states that it is “impossible for a perverted and unclear man to truly work this art” (i.e., the art of invoking and compelling transempirical beings, including demons), and that only “a pure man will make them answer and fulfill his requests,”⁵⁴⁷ they are not only circumscribing the boundaries of who can practice magic

⁵⁴³ Young, *History of Exorcism*, 71. Cf Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* (second part of the second part, question 90, article 2).

⁵⁴⁴ The validity of lay exorcism became a key point during the Counter-Reformation, during which the Catholic Church began to unify as a single institution (Young, *History of Exorcism*, 100).

⁵⁴⁵ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 231, 237-8, 242; Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 38-40; Young, *History of Exorcism*, 17-18, 59, 68-70 100-101, 117. For more on the history of exorcism, please see Francis Young, *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity*, Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) and Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003). F. Chave-Mahir’s *L’Exorcisme des Possédés dans l’Eglise d’Occident (Xe–XIVe siècle)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011) specifically focuses on exorcism during the Middle Ages.

⁵⁴⁶ Because, as I think it is worth emphasizing here, the term lived religion reminds us that we cannot easily separate the categories of religion and magic, and, furthermore, we cannot assume that either of these categories remain uninfluenced by the intercultural and interreligious context in which they developed.

⁵⁴⁷ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Prologue

(i.e., pious Christians of true faith),⁵⁴⁸ but also the boundaries of who cannot: apostates and non-Christians, as well as Christians of weak faith like those explicitly mentioned in the prologue.⁵⁴⁹ Once the Jewish influences in the text become clear in the next section, the fact that the author(s) and practitioners of these magical practices likely understood these practices to be within the theological realm of exorcism is particularly significant to the present discussion. As we shall see in the following sections, it is the key to untangling the murky relationship between the appropriation of Jewish themes, supersession theology, demonic ritual magic, and Christian identity-formation.

4.1.3 The Jewish Influences on the *Sworn Book*

Although I have so far highlighted the author(s)' concern for framing the book as being in line with Christian orthodoxy, deeper analysis of the *Sworn Book* suggests that the author(s) had some familiarity with Jewish magic, and may have been inspired by the older Jewish Hekhalot literature, which described rituals for receiving visions of heavenly beings, once one had attained a necessary level of moral and ritual purity.⁵⁵⁰ This is particularly evident in the way the *Sworn Book* depicts transempirical beings—including angels—as being grotesque, frightening and otherworldly, like the “frightening, angry, or even violent” descriptions of angels in *Hekhalot Rabbati*.⁵⁵¹ Therefore, in order to better understand the *Sworn Book* and its

Quia virum iniquam et immundum impossibile est per artem veraciter operari, nec spiritibus aliquibus homo obligatur, set ipsi inviti coguntur mundatis hominibus respondere et sua beneplacita penitus adimplere. Hedegård editor, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 60, ln. 9-10.

⁵⁴⁸ Mathiesen, “13th Century Ritual,” 148; Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*,” 133.

⁵⁴⁹ *Iudei in hac visione nullatenus operantur, quia per adventum Christi donum amiserunt, nec possunt in celis collocari testant Domino, qui dicit: qui baptizatus non fuerit condempnabitur, et sic in omnibus angelis imperfecte.* Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Primum Opus, ln. 20-21, 66.

⁵⁵⁰ Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1980), 172; Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 12; Kieckhefer, “Devil’s Contemplative,” 256; J.H. Laenen, *Jewish Mysticism: An Introduction*, translated by David E. Orton (Louisville KY: Westminster Knox Press, 2001), 29, 127; Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 11; Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*,” 117.

For more on Hekhalot literature, see Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism*, SUNY Series in Judaica: Hermeneutics, Mysticism, and Religion (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1992); David R. Blumenthal, *The Merkabah Tradition and the Zoharic Tradition*, vol I of *Understanding Jewish Mysticism: A Source Reader* (New York: KTAV, 1978); Rebecca Macy Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*, Harvard Theological Studies, (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1998); Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁵⁵¹ Laenen, *Jewish Mysticism*, 32; Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*,” 124-127. Certain earlier Jewish traditions depicted individualized angels, including their rank, functions, and names. For more on the earlier portrayal of angels in early Judaism, please see Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Saul M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him:*

influences, one must first understand the Hasidei Ashkenaz, as it was this community that preserved the Hekhalot literature the *Sworn Book* seems to be drawing from.

4.1.4 Hasidei Ashkenaz

Although the terms are used interchangeably, it is important to note that there is a marked difference between *piety* (*hasidut*) and *German Pietism* (Hasidei Ashkenaz). Haym Soloveitchik distinguishes between the two by stating that while the former is a form of spirituality most often found in Abrahamic traditions, the latter denotes a distinctive form of Jewish pietism that began in the twelfth century among some Jews living in the Rhineland, and which possessed a unique social and religious ideology.⁵⁵²

By the mid-twelfth century, Jewish communities in German-speaking lands (particularly the Rhineland), saw the emergence of a new spiritual community with an increased focus on mysticism and penitence. A group of Jewish thinkers and their disciples formulated both religious and social responses to what they perceived to be dire challenges that faced the pious Jew living in a world that had increasingly turned away from God.⁵⁵³ Arguing that God had two wills: one visible, one hidden—the latter only being accessible through proper penance, ritual, prayers and lifestyle—the Hasidei Ashkenaz were among the first medieval Jewish movements that sought to understand the hidden nature of God.⁵⁵⁴

Though short-lived, the movement is held by many scholars to have had an impact in

Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993).

Cf. “And at the entrance of the seventh palace all the mighty ones stand raging, frightening, powerful, hard, fearsome, and confounding, taller than mountains and sharper than hills. Their bows are drawn and they are at their faces; their swords are sharp and they are in their hands. Lightning-bolts drip and go forth from their eyeballs, and pans of fire from their nostrils, and torches of glowing coals from their mouths. They are armed (with) helmets and coats of mail, and lances and spears are hung for them on their arms for them.” (*Hekhalot Rabbati*, “The terrors at the entrance to the seventh palace (§§213–21)”, translated by James Davila, in *Hekhalot Literature in Translation: Major Texts of Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 103-104.

⁵⁵² Haym Soloveitchik, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: ‘Sefer Ḥasidim I’ and the Influence of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz”, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* New Series, Vol. 92, No. 3/4 (Jan. - Apr., 2002), 455.

⁵⁵³ Ivan G. Marcus, *Piety and Society: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1981), 11.

⁵⁵⁴ Soloveitchik, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism”, 469. It is interesting to note that contemporaneously, a Sufi-inspired pietism rose among Jews in Egypt, see Paul B. Fenton, “Abraham Maimonides (1186-1237): Founding a Mystical Dynasty”, in *Jewish Mystical Leaders and Leadership in the 13th Century*, edited by Moshe Idel and Mortimer Ostow (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998): 127-154 and “Devotional Rites in a Sufi Mode” in *Judaism in Practice: From the Middle Ages Through the Early Modern Period*, edited by Lawrence Fine (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001): 364-374.

influencing later Jewish mystical traditions, most notably Kabbalah, and undeniably shaped Western esotericism.⁵⁵⁵ However, details regarding this community are scarce.⁵⁵⁶ While we suspect that they lived amongst non-Hasidic Jews, scholars have long debated the depth and breadth of their influence on the larger German Jewish community.⁵⁵⁷

The *Sefer Hasidim* (*The Book of the Pious*)—attributed to R. Judah of Regensburg, (c1140-c1224) and expanded by R. Eleazar of Worms (c1176-c1235)—forms the bedrock of Hasidei Ashkenazic philosophy, theology, and social speculation. An anthology that contained sermons, stories and parables, the collection reinterpreted Judaism by describing the ideal Jew, an individual who pursues salvation through a concerted focus on the will of God in a world

⁵⁵⁵ Marcus, *Piety and Society*, ix.

⁵⁵⁶ If we know little about the social dynamics and beliefs about the movement, we know even less about their three main figures and leaders. R. Samuel b. Qalonymus—also known as the Holy and the Prophet—came from an influential family that settled in the Rhineland in the ninth century after leaving the Italian Peninsula, established the movement and was known as a poet, philosopher, and Tosafist (rabbis who wrote Talmudic commentaries in the form explanatory glosses between the twelfth to the mid-fifteenth centuries). His son, R. Judah of Regensburg, (c1140-c1224), also called the Pious, founded a yeshiva, wrote a number of tracts on astrology, prayers, and customs, and helped to expand the movement through the contribution of the *Sefer Hasidim* (*The Book of the Pious*). The final prominent figure associated with the movement was R. Eleazar of Worms (c1176-c1235), known as The Perfumer, and sometimes The Insignificant. A close disciple and relative of R. Judah, R. Eleazar was a prolific author, writing on Jewish law, astrology, ethics, gematria, and mystical speculations. It was after the death of R. Eleazar that the movement faded away (Marcus, *Piety and Society*, 1-2; Simon G. Kramer, *God and Man in the Sefer Hasidim*, (Skokie IL: Hebrew Theological College Press, 1966), 13; Peter Schäfer, "The Ideal of Piety of the Ashkenazi Hasidim and Its Roots in Jewish Tradition", *Jewish History* 4, no. 2 (1990), 9). See: Ephraim Kanarfogel's *Peering Through the Lattices: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press, 2000).

⁵⁵⁷ Haym Soloveitchik, "Three Themes in the 'Sefer Hasidim,'" *AJS Review* Vol. 1 (1976), 336.

The debate on how influential and widespread Hasidei Ashkenaz was (or even if such a community existed) is a matter of scholarly interest. Unfortunately, as noted by Ivan G. Marcus, we only have *Sefer Hasidim* as a point of reference, which may indicate a proof for the existence of the community, or it may be the projection of an ideal that has no basis in historical reality (cf. Joseph Dan, "Ashkenazi Hasidim, 1941–1991: Was There Really a Hasidic Movement in Medieval Germany" in *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years After*, edited by Peter Schäfer, Joseph Dan (Tübingen: Mohr 1993) who argues that the text was a blueprint for an ideal community that never came to fruition (100-101). Marcus looks at the *Sefer Hasidim* as an expression of shared cultural experiences (108). Accordingly, it is likely that the community did exist, but we cannot assume that the *Sefer Hasidim* "at all reflects the contemporary social reality" (110), especially with the lack of external (i.e., non-Pietist Jewish and Christian) sources. That said, the conclusion drawn by Marcus neatly negotiates the range of debates that while the community of Pietists may have existed, with the *Sefer Hasidim* being their social and moral manual, the text itself was most likely the author's vision of an ideal society that embodied the tensions between various Jewish communities in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries Germany (110-114). In other words, the likelihood that the community existed is probable; how this community existed, interacted with non-Pietists, and their impact on Jewish mysticism, including Kabbalah, is a subject of debate. Regardless of the question, the point of interest to this project was the community's preservations of Hekhalot literature that, as we shall shortly see, had a degree of influence in the composition of *Sworn Book*. See: Haym Soloveitchik, "Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: 'Sefer Ḥasidim I' and the Influence of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* New Series, Vol. 92, No. 3/4 (Jan. - Apr., 2002): 455-493 and Ivan G. Marcus, "The Historical Meaning of Hasidei Ashkenaz: Fact, Fiction or Cultural Self-Image? in *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years After*, edited by Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Tübingen: Mohr, 1993).

composed of the Pietists themselves, other Jews, and Christians. The text attempted to redefine social obligations, religious duties, and ethical responsibilities, and was the cornerstone upon which the community could build a social and religious utopia.⁵⁵⁸ The *Sefer Hasidim* also includes stories about demons and the wandering dead, and their punishments for their sins. Describing an idealized form of society, the *Sefer Hasidim* represent a particular worldview, that of a world plagued by evil but imbued with a hidden wisdom which, if discovered, will allow the Hasid to fulfill the Will of God.⁵⁵⁹

There is a clear difference to be seen between the members of the Hasidei Ashkenaz and the rest of the Jewish world. To the Hasidei Ashkenaz, the non-Pietist Jew had intentionally turned their back on the hidden teachings that would have allowed them to comprehend God's will. The Hasidei Ashkenaz also averred that while non-Pietist Jew had worldly power, the Hasidei Ashkenaz possessed the true, ultimate power: the right to perform religious duties, due to their righteousness and moral purity.⁵⁶⁰

The *Sefer Hasidim* unveils the vision of the movement, which was at once simple and complex. Believing that God had two wills: the explicit will that was revealed to the People of Israel and codified in the Torah, and a hidden will—enshrined and coded within the Torah by means of “ciphers” (*remazin*)—whose decryption became the *raison d'être* for the community. The Ashkenazic Hasid must uncover this hidden will through the proper rituals, prayers, study, knowledge, and the pure desire to know the divine will of God. Because the Hasid had intimate knowledge of God's divine will, they had more moral obligations than the non-Pietist Jew, and was tasked with continually striving to discover and do God's will throughout the course of their life.⁵⁶¹ To do this, the Hasid must accept a greater number of restrictions on their life in order to protect them from any potential sin, as sin would prevent the Hasid from gaining ultimate knowledge of God's will. Life, therefore, was viewed as a divine test composed of a series of trials designed to tempt and test the spiritual endurance and will of the Hasid. This difficult

⁵⁵⁸ Yitzhak F. Baer, “The Socioreligious Orientation of ‘Sefer Hasidim’” in *Binah: Studies in Jewish History, Thought and Culture Vol. 2*, edited by Joseph Dan, (New York: Praeger, 1989), 61; Judith R. Baskin, “Dolce of Worms: Women Saints in Judaism”, in *Women Saints in World Religions*, edited by Arvind Sharma (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 47.

⁵⁵⁹ Baskin, “Dolce of Worms”, 47; Kramer, *God and Man*, 27; Ivan G. Marcus, “The Social Foundations of Medieval Mysticism in Judaism”, in *Social Foundations of Judaism*, edited by Calvin Goldscheider and Jacob Neusner, Social Foundations of Judaism, (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 52-3.

⁵⁶⁰ Baer, “Socioreligious Orientation,” 61; Schäfer, “Ideal of Piety,” 11; Soloveitchik, “Three Themes,” 330.

⁵⁶¹ Marcus, *Piety and Society*, 25-27; Marcus, “Social Foundations,” 50.

lifelong divine test was believed to have been designed by God in order to weed out the impure of heart and the weak of faith, to ensure that only the most devout and pure would reap the eternal rewards and be able to live in the hidden mysteries.⁵⁶² It was the duty of the Hasid to find, understand, and engage with the infinite complexities of God's will; to continually purify oneself in this life, and to defend oneself from the corrupting influences designed to lure the Hasid from the true path.⁵⁶³ By holding fast in their faith, by passing each obstacle, by facing every divinely placed trial, the Hasid proves their loyalty to God, and is thus able to attain their salvation.

To the Ashkenazic Hasid, sin upset the balance of the cosmos and separated the believer from the wisdom and will of God. Sin was not only a matter of outward action, but inward intent as well—in other words, is not enough to observe the Laws given to Moses; the heart must also be pure as well.⁵⁶⁴ The Hasid who errs must atone for their sins through (often public) ritual and repentance. Only by completing these atonements would the sin be eradicated from the Hasid and the divine scales rebalanced.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² Marcus, "Social Foundations," 50; Marcus, *Piety and Society*, 23, 30.

⁵⁶³ Marcus, "Social Foundations," 50; Marcus, *Piety and Society*, 32.

⁵⁶⁴ Marcus, *Piety and Society*, p. 13-14, 39; Schäfer, "Ideal of Piety", p. 16; Soloveitchik "Three Themes", 324.

⁵⁶⁵ Though cursory observation might suggest that the Hasidei Ashkenaz were influenced by Christian monastic community—in that both emphasized contemplation, adherence to strict guidelines, and public penance—it cannot be assumed that one movement necessarily sought to emulate the other. It is undeniable that there were some Christian influences upon the movement—after all, Christianity was the dominant faith of the time. Additionally, the *Sefer Hasidim* paralleled a new trend within the monastic communities (notably the mendicant Dominicans and Franciscans) where the monk began to leave his monastery to preach directly to the people, encouraging a personal relationship with Jesus, and to live their lives according to the message of Christ. The message itself was not new, however; the teachings were usually orthodox. Rather, it was the way in which the message was delivered that was novel. These monastic teachings became popular in their time, and the monks encouraged their audience to adopt their ideals, as the monk considered themselves to be the quintessential Christian. Similarly, the Hasidei Ashkenaz considered themselves to be the model of the ideal Jew—one who is pious, repentant and living according to the will of God. However, this is where the similarities end. To claim that the movement is an imitation of the Christian monastic tradition due to the attention on sin and atonement undermines the complexities and the nuances of the Ashkenazic Hasid worldview. The Hasid attempts to fulfil their obligations not only to the Laws of the Torah but also to the hidden will of God. Sin is not merely a violation of God's will, but also a desecration of the balance of the world that is maintained by the will of God. That balance sustains and protects the world: if the balance is favourable, then God will continue to protect it. If the balance is disrupted, then God's wrath will be provoked. It is through the goodness of action and purity of the soul that the Hasid would be able to uncover the will of God and be able to live according to it. Furthermore, the Ashkenazic Hasid viewed all those outside of the movement—whether Jewish, Christian, or other—as impious, and unworthy of recognizing and realizing the hidden will of God. The community built their identity in tension with and within the Jewish community. Their very identity rests on the fact that they are a minority within a minority—but they are an elevated minority, because they hold the ultimate power: knowledge of the hidden will of God and the secrets to complete salvation (Baer, "Socioreligious Orientation," 60-63; Marcus, "Social Foundations," 51-52).

4.1.5 Hekhalot Literature

Mostly preserved in later Hasidei Ashkenaz writings,⁵⁶⁶ the Hekhalot (“palaces”) literature was a genre of Jewish texts focused on the attainment of knowledge and hidden power through the mastery of the Torah and its deeper powers. These secrets were jealously guarded, and because they were seen as so powerful as to be potentially dangerous, the Hekhalot’s mythology cautioned the practitioners to be wary with whom they shared the literature and its secrets, as the true acolyte had to be pious and above reproach in order to be able to gain the visions and properly use the received knowledge.⁵⁶⁷

The Hekhalot literature comprises of a “complex network of interrelated units”⁵⁶⁸ (that is, texts) that are characterized by several central themes (such as wisdom, Torah, rituals, and divine interactions), goals (including transempirical invocations; angelic answers in dreams; Torah memorizations, and heavenly tours), hymns praising God, lists of angelic and divine names, and descriptions of heaven itself.⁵⁶⁹ Depicted in fantastical terms, some texts centres on ensuring the adherent has the proper ritualistic techniques in order to undertake such a perilous pursuit as well as describing the results of the various goals, whereas others focuses on the mystical journeys to the heavenly palaces.⁵⁷⁰

Giving a precise date of the literature is difficult at best, with a wide ranging of opinions.⁵⁷¹ As mentioned before, the Hekhalot literature may have been a part of the Ashkenazic Hasid literary corpus, though many of the texts may have been edited by the group, leading to words and phrases becoming “garbled,” to use Bohak’s term.⁵⁷² With evidence from

⁵⁶⁶ See Peter Schäfer, “The Ideal of Piety of the Ashkenazi Hasidim and Its Roots in Jewish Tradition”, *Jewish History* 4, no. 2 (1990) for a discussion of the influence of the *Hekhalot Rabbati* (specifically the *Gedullah* hymns) found in *Sefer Hasidim*.

⁵⁶⁷ Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 334; Mesler “The *Liber iuratus Honorii*,” 128; Schäfer, “The Ideal of Piety,” 14; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 33.

⁵⁶⁸ Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 28. See also Schäfer, *Hidden and Manifest God*, 6-8 for a succinct discussion on how these units interrelate with each other and with the body of literature as a whole. See also Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 21-22.

⁵⁶⁹ Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 329-330; Laenen, *Jewish Mysticism*, 32; Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 64; Schäfer, *Hidden and Manifest God*, 9; Michael D. Swartz, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Later Jewish Magic and Mysticism,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 8, no. 2 (2001), 187-188; Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 4; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 33-34. For a summary and discussion on each theme and goal, see Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 64-67, 82-85.

⁵⁷⁰ Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 4-5, 117-120; Mesler, “The *Liber iuratus Honorii*,” 127; Schäfer, *Hidden and Manifest God*, 9; Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 2, 20.

⁵⁷¹ Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 10.

⁵⁷² Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 330; Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 4.

the some of the fragments found in the Cairo *Geniza*, as well as analyzing the practices, Lesses hypothesizes that some of the rituals described within had Palestinian roots (with a suggested date of fourth to fifth century CE), whereas others originated from Babylonia (possibly between the fifth-sixth century CE). These various units, to use Schäfer's term, were then gradually compiled into the corpus of literature.⁵⁷³

The literature promises that whoever understands and masters the secrets contained within will attain immeasurable benefits: Torah memorization; luck; avoidance of evil; and protection from demons, malevolent spirits, dangerous animals, and robbers. Either through direct invocation or a visit to the heavenly palaces, the practitioner would be able to learn divine secrets from an angelic being who would then reveal divine secrets. This hidden wisdom would allow the practitioner to ascend above the power and status of a mere magician who is ignorant of God's will and deeper laws by receiving the most elusive gifts of all: knowledge and knowing.⁵⁷⁴ However, before one could attempt the ritual and enjoy its successes, necessary preparations were to be undertaken. As the practitioner must be spiritually and physically pure, sexual abstinence and avoidance of women are necessary before attempting contact with a celestial being—in fact, even an accidental encounter with a menstruating woman before attempting the rites would bring about the plague.⁵⁷⁵

4.1.6 The Hekhalot, Hasidei Ashkenaz and the *Sworn Book*: Texts in Dialogue

The Hekhalot influences on the *Sworn Book* are quite noticeable, as both texts discuss attaining visions of the heavenly palaces and God's face, and also emphasize moral and ritual

⁵⁷³ Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 330; Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 55; Schäfer, *Hidden and Manifest God*, 5-8; Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 4.

⁵⁷⁴ Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, p. 332-333 Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 63-65.

See, for example, the ritual for the Sar ha-Torah as described in *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, MS. NY 8128, which includes rituals and invocations to learn the Torah and by extension, gaining its knowledge:

“Rabbi Ishmael said:

This is the praxis of wisdom and understanding;
all who practice it become wise and understanding

[...]

And may I know and may I be wise and reason and
study and not forget and learn and not neglect what
comes before me and what comes after me” (Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 109, 111; Lesses, *Ritual Practices*

to Gain Power, 86). Compare this with another passage “May I know and understand and may it be clear to me” (Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 397, translation of Schäfer's *Synopses*, §§ 501, 502-7, and 507, *Geniza Fragment G-1* (T.-S. K. 21.95.s, fol. D/19-25)).

⁵⁷⁵ Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 333-334; Fanger, “Introduction,” 8; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 164; Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 153-172; Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 11. See Chapter Three (pages 117-160) for an examination of the necessary preparation in order to perform the rituals.

purity. Both texts also share specific ritual recommendations and procedures—for example, the direction to “cleanse the body to see the celestial palace”⁵⁷⁶ and “then sleep, as to rest and not speak, and then see the heavenly palace in glory and majesty.”⁵⁷⁷ Another example is the recommendation to bury the text (“or honestly and cleanly bury it [the text] somewhere”⁵⁷⁸), an uncommon practice in the Christian sphere.⁵⁷⁹ Furthermore, the link between magical efficacy and the piety of the practitioner are central concepts in both corpus of literature.⁵⁸⁰ With regards to the *Sworn Book*, a non-pious Christian, even if they followed a ritual to the letter, would not be able to properly control any transempirical beings they summoned, and therefore would not be able to gain the visions and wisdom they desired. Similarly, as we have seen in the above discussion, in the Hasidei Ashkenaz framework, piety is just as important as the praxis of the rituals, as is the central importance of the Torah.⁵⁸¹ These influences and references, as Mesler

⁵⁷⁶ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*. Chapt XCIX. *Mundato igitur et macerato corpore volentis videre celeste palacium*. Hedegård, editor, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 108, ln. 1. Compare this with the requirement of the “adept to bathe in an ‘ever-flowing river’ and to wear clean garments” in order to obtain a vision (Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 156, citing *Papyri Graecae Magicae* 3.633-731). See also Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 222n41.

⁵⁷⁷ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*. Chapt XCIX. *Tunc dormiat et de cetero non loquatur, et sic fiet, quod videbit celeste palacium et maiestatem in gloria*. Hedegård, editor, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 114, ln. 1.

⁵⁷⁸ *Vel ipsum alicubi in vita sepeliat munde et honeste*. Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Prologue, ln. 24, 61.

⁵⁷⁹ Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*,” 117. It is also intriguing to note the parallels between the burying of the texts, and the legends surrounding the discovery of the *Zohar* in a cave, further illustrating the impact of Jewish thought on Christianity.

⁵⁸⁰ For example, the *Sefer Hasidim* (978) states that

“Whoever wants to enter the depths of *hasidut*, of the *halakhot* of the creator and his glory, cannot do so unless he is wise and understands [...]. Then will he be deemed worthy of fullness of the ‘hidden good,’ and his eye will be nourished by the splendor of the Shekhinah; ‘thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty’” (Schäfer, “Ideal of Piety”, 18-19).

Schäfer contrasts this with the prescription found in *Hekhalot*: “Because your [proper] conversation is that with your king; your [proper] talk [is that] with your Creator”. This, Schäfer continues, indicates that both the Hasid and the ritual expert consulting the *Hekhalot* “exploits his code of behavior to enable him to enter the depths of *hasidut* and the *halakhot* of his creator, and so to reach perfection, absorbed, as it were, in “conversation” with his creator” (Schäfer, “Ideal of Piety”, 18-19). What we see here is an emphasis on code of behaviour, which includes piety, in order to attain the goal of a mystical experience, a notion that is echoed throughout the *Sworn Book*.

⁵⁸¹ See, for example, the *Sar-Torah*. After the angels begged God not to teach the secrets to people, God responds with: “Do not, My attendants, do not, My servants, do not pester Me about this matter. This mystery shall go forth from My storehouse, and the secret of prudence from My treasuries. I am revealing concerning it to a beloved people, I am teaching it to a faithful seed” (§293, Davila, *Hekhalot Literature in Translation*, 193). What we see here is that not only was Israel (“beloved people”) are singled out to receive God’s secrets, but more importantly the “faithful”, that is, those who remained and continued to be a part of God’s Chosen People. In other words, those who continue to uphold God’s laws and practices—that is, being a fully participant of the God’s Covenant—become a piety-in-praxis and are entitled to the secrets (James R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People Behind the Hekhalot Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 273).

Additionally, the *Hekhalot Rabbati* mentions the importance of Torah. After the adept reaches the sixth palace, they will encounter the angel Dumī’el, who will say to him two (things):

mentions, show more than a simple nodding familiarity with Jewish esoteric practices on part of the *Sworn Book*'s Christian author.⁵⁸² They demonstrate an intercultural interaction, one that I argue becomes particularly apparent when the demons in the work are approached and understood as social actors.

As noted in Chapter Two, social actors are “presences that become autonomous within particular life worlds.”⁵⁸³ People form relationships with these presences, relationships that they understand to be very real and meaningful. As I have been arguing, an analysis of these relationships (how they are imagined, constructed, and ultimately play out) demonstrates why these presences are rightly called social *actors*: through the relationships people form with them they come to represent important and influential foci of social commentary and construction—including identity-formation, a mental process dependent upon exactly this type of social synthesis. To frame this in the terms of the present discussion, the portrayal of demons in the *Sworn Book* mirrors the Christian understanding of Jews during this time: powerful, yet potentially transgressive; a threat that needed to be contained.

For example, using divine names to control transempirical beings has its roots in the Jewish tradition of magical conjuration, a fact that simultaneously emphasizes the magical authority, power, and transgressive potential of the Jewish community. However, in the *Sworn Book*, it is primarily through the name of Christ that one can properly invoke and control transempirical beings—the Jewish source has lost some of its power.⁵⁸⁴ This move ties in with the Christian understanding of themselves as being members of a new covenant—a prevalent

Before you I testify and forewarn you that the descender does not descend to the chariot except he who has in himself these two characteristics: he is one who has read the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, and he studies traditions, midrash, laws, lore, and interpretation of laws— forbidden and permitted action—or he is one who has confirmed every negative commandment that is written in the Torah and he has kept all the prohibitions of the laws and of the customs and of the instructions which were said to Moses at Sinai (§234, Davila, *Hekhalot Literature in Translation*, 119-120).

It is only after mastering the Torah, as well as the traditions, laws, and customs, would the adept be permitted to safely continue their travels through the heavenly palaces. Again, we see a direct emphasis on keeping the proper traditions, laws, and even piety, in order to fully master the dangerous rituals, which can be compared to the precepts within the *Sworn Book* and its mandates that only the most pious and ritually pure of Christians could fully benefit from the rituals.

⁵⁸² Mesler, “The *Liber Iuratus Honorii*”, 117.

⁵⁸³ Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of the 115th Street*, xx-xxv; Orsi, *History and Presence*, 7, 9.

⁵⁸⁴ Claire Fanger, “Covenant and the Divine Name: Revisiting the *Liber iuratus* and John of Morigny’s *Liber florum*”, in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Idea and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, edited by Claire Fanger (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), 203.

motif in the *Sworn Book*—and, accordingly, it makes sense to try and understand the *Sworn Book*, through the lens of Christian supersessionist theology.

Supersessionist theology holds that the Covenant between God and Israel was superseded by a new covenant, initiated by Jesus Christ and detailed in the New Testament. If the demonology of the *Sworn Book* mirrors the Christian understanding of Jews during this time—that is to say, if demons can be understood as metaphors for the prevailing Christian assumptions about the magical and transgressive power of Jews—then, because of their “failure” to accept baptism and the new covenant ushered in by Jesus, Jews can no longer receive the visions and answers usually granted by transempirical beings. In other words, *Jews no longer have the same strength of magical power they enjoyed before their covenant was superseded*. However, to the premodern Christian practitioner, the Jewish magician, despite this diminished power, nevertheless remained dangerous: they were still able to *invoke* demons—beings that could wreak havoc on the very fabric of society—but, because of this perceived “failure,” lacked the authority to receive the divinely authorized power that would allow them to properly control the demons’ transgressive potential. According to Claire Fanger, this anxiety surrounding the potential danger of Jewish magical power is exactly why we see the theme of the Second Covenant play so prevalently in the *Sworn Book*: it (the covenant) bolsters the claim of a new invocational authority.⁵⁸⁵

These assertions will take a bit more unpacking. Magic in premodernity (including Solomonic and conjuration magic) was composed and practiced in a social space that included both Jewish and Christian knowledge. However, within that magical space, Jews were traditionally understood to be the true masters—a stereotype, Jütte notes, that persisted for centuries.⁵⁸⁶ The belief that Christians could learn and eventually improve upon (originally Jewish) techniques of invocation is aligned with the theology of supersession. What we see here is a redefinition of invocational authority—that is, who has the right to conjure and control transempirical beings. The power of the magician is not derived from their bloodline or background, but rather their Christian faith. Jews, according to the text, “would not be able to work for this vision, because they had lost their gift since the coming of Christ, nor can they attain heaven, for as the Lord says, ‘he who is not baptized is condemned’, and so will

⁵⁸⁵ Fanger, “Covenant and the Divine Name”, 193-194, 203.

⁵⁸⁶ Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 85-86.

imperfectly work all things angelic.”⁵⁸⁷ The author further cautions that, “this is the book, which knows no law except Christian, and those of other faiths will not benefit therefrom.”⁵⁸⁸ The text is thus grounded in Christian ideology, in spite of its palpable Jewish influence.

It will now be time to return to the idea of exorcism introduced above. As the link between the appropriation of Jewish themes and the theology of supersessionism has been established, it seems clear that the emphasis on exorcism—i.e., the emphasis on correctly invoking, compelling and thus controlling demons, an activity likely understood as being in line with accepted practices of exorcism—and also reads as a desire to exorcise the Jewish roots of magic. As stated, exorcism is more than a simple banishing of demons: it is an identification of that which stands in opposition to God. In other words, exorcism identifies, isolates, and controls those who are not part of the Christian faith—that is, those who are “Other.” Through exorcism, the author of the *Sworn Book* is identifying the Jewish elements of the magic, separating them, and controlling them, not only through banishment, but also by Christianizing them through emphasizing the necessity of the Eucharist⁵⁸⁹ (the believed redemptive power) within the ritual. In other words, the author is effectively exorcizing the Christian magical space from all those elements that they believe to stand in opposition of Christian truth. How, then, does this tie in with the larger theme of Christian identity-formation?

In Chapter Three, through my discussion of monstrous identities, I argued that the fetishization of alterity helps the hegemonic majority define its identity and space through narratives of contrast and opposition. Here, in the *Sworn Book*, this is exactly what we see: if, as argued above, the demonology of the *Sworn Book* can be seen as a fetishization for the prevailing Christian assumptions about the transgressive power of Jews, then the recurrent motifs

⁵⁸⁷ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Chapt 1.

Iudei in hac visione nullatenus operantur, quia per adventum Christi donum amiserunt, nec possunt in celis collocari testant Domino, qui dicit: qui baptizatus non fuerit condempnabitur, et sic in omnibus angelis imperfecte. Hedegård, editor, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 66, ln. 20-21.

⁵⁸⁸ *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, Chapt. CXL

Hic est liber, quem nulla lex habet nisi Christiana, et si habet, nil sibi prodest. Hedegård, editor, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 150, ln. 4.

⁵⁸⁹ For example, part of the first purification in preparation for the rituals, the author advises the practitioner to attend Mass, and “to say the 2nd prayer after ‘Te Igitur’ during Mass, and the 3,4,5, 7,8 prayers and let the priest, while consecrating the body of Christ, say a prayer for him so the through the grace of God, the petition is effective/2 *oracio immediate dicatur et post “Te igitur...” 3,4,5,7,8, et sic in sacrando corpus Christi petat pro operante sacerdo, ut effectum petitionum suarum per divinam gratiam assequatur”* (Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 92, ln.8 (Chapt. LII). The prayers are those listed within the *Sworn Book*, with a number of chapters dedicated to prayers for the appropriate ritual (Hedegård, *Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 31)). The priest is recruited in aiding with the protection of the magician to ensure not only a successful outcome, but also a safe one.

of Christian piety and exorcism represent a desire to construct a Christian identity that has power over this transgressive force. In *CLM 849*—the next text up for consideration—we can see the further development of these themes.

4.2 *CLM 849: THE MUNICH MANUAL OF DEMONIC MAGIC*

4.2.1 Contextualizing the Work

Although one of the more intriguing grimoires focused on demonic rituals in premodernity, the *CLM 849* is rarely studied—even after Richard Kieckhefer’s in-depth look at the manuscript in *Forbidden Rites: The Necromancer’s Manual of the Fifteenth Century*. As the title of Kieckhefer’s book suggests, *CLM 849* is a fifteenth century text of demonic ritual magic, currently housed in the Bavarian State Library. Not particularly original in its spells, incantations and narratives, the text appears to be a compilation of common techniques. However, it is one of the few surviving examples of demonic ritual magic that may have been practiced by demonic ritual magical experts, some of whom may have marketed their skills. It is also one of the few manuscripts with explicit instructions for demonic rituals.⁵⁹⁰

Most likely written by a German, *CLM 849* is mostly in Latin and consists of folios 3-108. Measuring approximately 20cm high by 14.5cm wide (8 1/4 inches high by 5 3/4 inches), the manuscripts contain incantations, exorcisms, and bewitchments, as well as various charts and images. The first two folios are missing. It is possible that the missing pages give us the proper title of the manual, the author, and/or the date the text was written—information that could help us better place and contextualize the text.⁵⁹¹ Unfortunately, all we can do is speculate about the composer. Due the use of Latin, the author was most probably educated. However, the Latin is unconventional for the time, and also contains several syntactic peculiarities and grammatical errors, which lead Kieckhefer to theorize that the author may not have been wholly comfortable with the language.⁵⁹²

Though apparently uncomfortable with Latin, the author does appear familiar with the intricacies of Christian liturgy, and their references to various liturgical forms suggest that they

⁵⁹⁰ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 3.

⁵⁹¹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 29-30.

⁵⁹² Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 24, 35. While I have studied Latin for a number of years, I am not linguist and aside from noticing some odd syntax, I cannot definitely comment on Kieckhefer’s hypothesis, and I chose to defer to his theory.

expected the readers to be equally familiar with them. Kieckhefer claims that based on these clues, the author was most likely a cleric, perhaps one from the minor orders.⁵⁹³ I'd like to offer a different perspective. That the author was educated, most likely by clerics, is undeniable; the familiarity with liturgy alone is enough to suggest this. Furthermore, based on many of the love spells for attracting women, or even for thwarting the attentions of men towards a woman, it is probable that the author was a man (or had a number of male clients, if the author freelanced their services, or even possibly a lesbian).⁵⁹⁴ This would seem to confirm that the author was educated by monks, and may have attended university.⁵⁹⁵ However, this is not unequivocal proof

⁵⁹³ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 35.

⁵⁹⁴ We have evidence that demonic ritual magical experts included women. For example, in 1429, a woman was charge and absolved for sorcery by the Bolognese secular courts (Herzig, "The Demons and the Friars", 1027n7). Furthermore, Tamar Herzig looked at the 1473 Bolognese trial of the Carmelite friar, Antonio Giacomo de' Cacciaguerra, of charges of illicit demonic magic (as well as the Carmelites' preaching that compelling demons in order to gain knowledge from them was not illicit), that were laid against him by the Dominicans. His acquittal resulted in renewed efforts in repressing demonic magic by the Dominicans in Bologna in the following decades. This was succeeded by the 1498 trial of a laywoman, Gentile Cimitri (the wife of a notary), a member of the same Carmelite demonic ritual magic circle as Cacciaguerra. This group included other laywomen, laymen (including Cimitri's son), as well as monks and ordained clerics. While contact with demons was not an automatic label of heresy, by Cimitri's trial some Bolognese politicians began to equate demonic magic with illicit and illegitimate magic. As Herzig noted, however tempting it is to paint this particular trial solely as part of the rise of the witch-hysteria, this case was most likely the result of a religious order turf war between the Carmelites and Dominicans, as the former was heavily implicated in Cimitri's trial and if it was not for the order's patrons, the Carmelite monks would have most certainly joined Cimitri at the stake (Tamar Herzig, "The Demons and the Friars: Illicit Magic and Mendicant Rivalry in Renaissance Bologna", *Renaissance Quarterly* 64 (2011): 1025-1058).

What is of particular relevance is twofold. First, women were taught and accepted by the monks who were proficient in demonic ritual magic. Second, Cacciaguerra's and the later Carmelites' patrons included powerful members of Bologna's society, patrons that Cimitri did not have. These two points indicate that not only was demonic ritual magic somewhat accepted within society, but that the demonic ritual magic circle included laity—that is, non-clerical members—and some of those members (such as women) did not attend university. As Herzig noted, though Cimitri's gender most certainly played a role, it was also a question of power and occupying a prominent space within Bolognese society. As such, while I agree that demonic ritual circles attracted a significant number of clerics, I believe that considerable work needs to be done to determine whether invocative ritual magic (and demonic ritual magic in particular) was, by late premodernity, an overwhelmingly Christian *clerical* phenomenon. With the inclusion of lawyers, physicians, and other highly educated peoples into esoteric circles, the secularization of neoplatonic thought, as well as the interaction that took place between Jewish and Christian magical communities (which includes the appropriation of Jewish thought within Christian ritual magic), it cannot be simply assumed that the author of *CLM 849* was necessarily a cleric at the time of its writing. See also Edward Goldberg, *Jews and Magic in Medici Florence: The Secret World of Benedetto Blanis* (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 2011) and Bernd Roling ("The Complete Nature of Christ: Sources and Structures of a Christological Theurgy in the Works of Johannes Reuchlin," in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, edited by Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, (Leuven, etc: Peeters, 2002):231-266, Moshe Idel, "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance" *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (1983): 186-242 for the interactions between Jewish, Christian, religious experts, and laity in esoteric writings.

⁵⁹⁵ As mentioned in Chapter Two, as the university systems was governed mostly by the Catholic Church, and as students were considered to be minor clergy, it would be understandable that the environment that in which the author was educated in would be reflected in their magical writings—a point that was mentioned by Kieckhefer in his proposal of the concept (Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 153). As Kieckhefer also mentions, what this

that the author was a cleric.

We are fairly certain the author consulted several other documents, as the manuscript includes the older *Liber Consecrationum* (*Book of Consecrations*) and a miscellany of texts that include recipes. Interestingly enough, though, the folios we do have do not contain an overarching theory that explains what the rituals are for. Rather, it is a compendium of rituals that serves various purposes (although, it is very possible that the contextualization of the rituals was in the missing folios).⁵⁹⁶ The main surviving section of the text contains forty-two magical rituals, half of which are designed to help the practitioner with secular and material goals and concerns. The text also includes the aforementioned *Liber Consecrationum*, a list of spirits (including descriptions of their physical characteristics, functions and details on their roles); a guide on astral magic; an astrological tip sheet on the best and worst days to perform and for writing magic, and a German gloss of alchemical recipes.⁵⁹⁷ Kieckhefer divides the rituals into three categories: twelve are illusionist rituals; seven are psychological rituals, and seventeen are divinatory techniques. The other six are unclassifiable within these categories, and include a demonic form of Solomonic magic⁵⁹⁸, as well as a list of everyday objects that can aid with rituals. Interestingly enough, the manual does not contain any healing rituals nor any curses to inflict injury or death.⁵⁹⁹

For obvious reasons, the history of *CLM 849* is shrouded in obscurity. Kieckhefer points out that that many of the rituals described by Johannes Hartlieb (1410-1468) in his 1458 *das buch aller verbotenen künste, des aberglaubens und der Zauberei* (*Book on all Forbidden Arts*,

merely indicates is that the authors could have attended university, during which time they were considered to be minor clergy, and their narratives reflected their education; this does not unequivocally prove—or disproves—that the author of *CLM 849*, or those who engaged in demonic ritual magic for that matter, were part of the clergy at the time of the composition, or remained as such. All that it means is at one point in their lives, whilst attending university, they were considered to be minor clergy. As such, this is why I find the notion of a “clerical underworld” to be a bit misleading, as it suggests that the operators of demonic magic were part of the clergy, as opposed to the possibility of being a one-time university student.

It must be noted that the original term “cleric” has multiple definitions, describing “anyone (...) who had been tonsured as a mark of pious intent to be ordained” (Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 153). Despite the broad definition, and the fact that Christian university students were considered to be minor clergy, I maintain that the term in itself is potentially problematic precisely it denotes members who are at that moment clerics, as well as ignoring the potential contributions to this type of magic from decidedly non-clerics (such as women).

⁵⁹⁶ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 25.

⁵⁹⁷ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 25; Klaassen, “Learning and Masculinities,” 62.

⁵⁹⁸ Please see Chapter 1, footnote 140 for a brief explanation of Solomonic magic.

⁵⁹⁹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 24, 26.

Superstition and Sorcery)⁶⁰⁰ can be found in the *Munich Manual*. Commissioned by Duke Albrecht II of Bavaria and written in German, the texts revolve around court and learned magic as opposed to common magic. Emphasizing the power of the words, Hartlieb cautioned that even uttering the wrong word could accidentally invoke demons. Describing the seven demonic arts—which mirrored the seven liberal arts of the Humanist pedagogical approach (as well as the seven subjects that make up the liberal arts that Solomonic and invocative ritual magics can help to master)—Hartlieb’s book was intended as a guide for secular authorities for dealing with witches and demonic magicians.⁶⁰¹ While it has been suggested that the text was a clever Trojan Horse for actually disseminating demonic ritual magic, *das buch* does not give much detail, and relies mostly on vague descriptions or half missing specifics, rendering it useless as a source for ritual magic.⁶⁰²

Around the same time, in 1437, Jubertus of Bavaria was tried as a witch at Briançon. Affirming that he was 60 years of age and in the employ of a Johannes Cunalis, a parish priest⁶⁰³ in Munich, Jubertus confessed that his employer had a book on demonic magic. The trial records list increasingly spectacular confessions of what his employer did with the book and the demons he summoned.⁶⁰⁴ These connections are, Kieckhefer admits, pure conjecture.⁶⁰⁵ It is an attractive theory to suggest that Hartlieb consulted the manual for his writings, or that Cunalis was an owner—if not the actual author—of the text. However, at least for Hartlieb, it is highly likely that he used other sources, as many of the described techniques could be found in other texts.⁶⁰⁶ We do not have evidence that the text that Johannes Cunalis used or that Hartlieb consulted was this particular manual. Until we know the text’s original title, we will never have this information—though it does seem that the recipes and the rituals included in *CLM 849* may be representative of a kind of a “do-it-yourself” ritual guide that inspired the ritualist to refine their

⁶⁰⁰ Richard Kieckhefer recently published a translation Johannes Hartlieb’s *buch aller verbotenen*, one of the few English translations, along with a detailed look at Hartlieb’s life, based on Eisermann and Graf’s critical edition (1989) cf. *Hazards of the Dark Arts: Advice for Medieval Princes on Witchcraft and Magic* (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017).

⁶⁰¹ Bailey, “A Late Medieval Crises?”, 644; Fanger, *Rewriting Magic*, 117; Richard Kieckhefer, *Hazards of the Dark Arts*, 1-10; Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 33-34.

⁶⁰² Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 32.

⁶⁰³ *Plebanus*: a priest who had parochial rights and was unaffiliated with a monastery or order, and thus was only answerable to his bishop.

⁶⁰⁴ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 30-32.

⁶⁰⁵ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 34.

⁶⁰⁶ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 33-34; Kieckhefer, *Hazards of the Dark Arts*, 7.

own techniques. What we do know, however, is that this text was considered transgressive, and was written by and for a particular type of magic practitioner, at a time when various social discourses and the larger cultural environment were in a state of flux.

4.2.2 Demonic Magic and Demons in *CLM 849*

As indicated above in my discussion of the *Sworn Book*, words are extremely important in demonic ritual magic. If one accidentally uses the wrong word or intonation, then the invoked spirit could not be properly controlled, and would endanger all those around the operator, wreak havoc to society, and even upset the balance of the universe itself. Most Christian premodern invocative rituals (whether demonic or not) were conducted in Latin, mirroring Church liturgy. Though the mythology states that, as fallen angels, demons know all past and present tongues, Latin, because it was believed to be the holy language for premodern Christians, draws upon the sacred power.⁶⁰⁷ The words thus create the circumstances in which the ritual can have its maximum efficiency. The emphasis on Christian liturgy therefore becomes extremely important in the various conjurations detailed in *CLM 849*. In Invocation Seven, for example, after the ritual space has been set, the operator is to kneel (bareheaded), and invoke the demons by calling out their functions and declaring:

I conjure, and exorcise and call upon the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Trinity,
and by the creatures of the heaven and the earth, visible to all and invisible,
and by the one who formed humanity by the clay of the earth,
and by the annunciation of our lord Jesus Christ,
and by his nativity,
and by his passion and death,
and by his resurrection,
and by his ascension.

I also conjure all you previously named demons
by the pious and compassionate and spotless and uncorrupted Virgin Mary, mother of our lord Jesus Christ, who died for us miserable sinners and then called us to the heaven homeland.

I also conjure you above-mentioned spirits,
by all holy men and holy women of God
and by all the apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins and widows,⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁷ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 16-17.

⁶⁰⁸ The term is *viduas*, which is translated as widows. Along with virgins, widows are sometimes called upon in exorcism. This may be in part because both virgins and widows were considered to be ministries in the ancient church structure, as a widow who chooses to dedicate her life to the service of the Church was considered to be more laudable than one who remarries. Additionally, there seems to be an early association between deaconesses and widows, perhaps suggesting that most deaconesses were widows (Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant,

and through the precious and ineffable names of the creator of all, which ties you, and which rouses fear in all of the heavens, earth and hell, namely Aa, Ely, Sother, Aonay, Cel, Sabaoth, Messyas, Alazabra, and Osian.

I also conjure and exorcise you
by the virtue and the power of all your princes, kings, lords, and your ancestors
and by your powers and your capacity and your powers
and by your dwelling, that is which is the circle that is formed,
and by all the figures present within it.
and so you, inseparable from my power, you will come to me freely without delay, in such a garb⁶⁰⁹ that will not bring me terror, subject and ready to do and to show all that I desire, and you should also do and know my power that is in heaven and on earth⁶¹⁰

This trope of exorcism is present in many of the described rituals. Some of the rituals described in *CLM 849* allude to one or more names for God, others invoke other names for Christ, or mention the Holy Trinity. In every case—as we saw in the *Sworn Book*—the objective is to properly and safely conjure, bind, command, and then banish a demonic entity. As Kieckhefer points out, it is words that create the conditions of possibility for magical efficacy.⁶¹¹ Put differently, words—and, as we shall explore more fully in the following section, names in particular—properly spoken by the appropriate mouthpiece (i.e., a pious Christian), create the necessary ritual space. Through their ritual, the ritualist thus creates what Michel Foucault called a *heterotopia*, or a space that exists within and outside time and space, and possesses

Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 307-311; Anscar J. Chupungco ed, *Sacraments and Sacramentals*, (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 245-248; Fanning, William. "Widow." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 15. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15617c.htm>)

⁶⁰⁹ *habitu* is often translated as "clothing". I have chosen the word *garb* for stylistic reasons.

⁶¹⁰ *CLM 849*, No. 7. folio 18-19

*ego, talis, vos coniuro et exorcizo et invoco per Patrem et Filiam et Spiritum Sactum, que sancta trinitas nu cupatur, et per creatorem celi et terre et visibilium omnium et invisibilium, et per illum qui hominem de limo terra formauit, et per enunciacionem domini nostri Ihesu Christi et per eius nativitatem et per euius mortem et passionem et per eius resurrexionem et per eius ascensionem. Item ego coniuro vos omnes prenomatos demones per piam et misericordissimam et intemeratam ac incorruptam virginem Mariam, matrem domini nostri Ihesu Christi, qui pro miseris peccatoribus mortem sumens nos ad celestem patriam reuocauit. Item ego coniuro vos supradictos spiritus per omnes sanctos et santas dei, et per omnes apostolos, martires, confessors, virgines, et viduas, et per hec preciosissima ac ineffabilia nomina omnium creatoris, quibus omnes ligamini, et que terrent omnia celestia, terrestria, et infernalna, scilicet. Item Ego coniuro vos et exorciza per virtutem et potenciam omnium principum, regum, dominorum, et maiorum vestrorum, et per virtute et possibilitatem ac potenciam vestram, et per habitaculum vestrum, cuius hec est forma, et per omnes figura in ipso permanentes, quatenus vos, insolubiliter a mei ptenciam alligati, ad me sine prestolacione venire debeatis, in tali habitu ut me aliqualiter non teratis subjectus et parati facere ac demonstrare mich omnia que voluero, et hoc facere debeatis et velitis per omnia que in celo et in terra morantur. . Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 212-213.*

⁶¹¹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 17.

relationships to other times and places.⁶¹² Museums, for example, exist in time, but also outside of it, because they house pieces to protect them from time.⁶¹³ Through the ritual, then, the practitioner has created a *heterotopia* of power: a space that is outside of place and time, but can affect the real world for good or ill.

Only a practitioner who is schooled (and skilled) in the appropriate knowledge and is properly pious can hope to control the transempirical forces that this ritual space brings forth and that can harm the order of the universe. By evoking the trope of exorcism, these rituals therefore not only affirm the practitioner's orthodox, canonical Christian identity, but also allow them to demonstrate their understanding of the responsibility they bear and the power they hold to perform potentially transgressive feats too dangerous and delicate for the average person. They are not practicing *maleficia*; rather, they are practicing Christian rites that can control and expel the very thing that could cause *maleficia*.

4.2.3 The Power of Names in *CLM 849*

The use of the various names of Jesus and God play an integral role in the rituals contained in *CLM 849*. Just as Jesus gave power to his followers to compel demons in his own name,⁶¹⁴ the use of the names of Jesus is particularly efficient—not just invoking the demons, but also commanding them. For example, in the ritual designed to obtain information on a fingernail, not only is the Tetragrammaton inscribed, but the operator must also invoke the names of Christ and God, the stages of Christ's life, and the angelic hierarchies before conjuring the aforementioned demons:

In the holy names of Christ: Messyas; Sother; Emmanuel; Sabaoth; Adonay; Panthon; Panthocrathon; Eloy; Theos; Hon; Vision; Salvation; Alpha and Omega; first and last; the first born; the beginning and the end; the way; truth; and wisdom; virtue; comforter; I am who I am; who is; mediator; lamb; sheep; goat; calf; serpent; kid; word; image; glory; grace; salvation; light; salt; peace; splendour; bread; fountain; vine; pastor; prophet; immortal hope; king; father; all-powerful; compassionate; eternal; complete good; trinity; unity; father; El; Elo; Eloë; Elon' Saday; Symator; Tu; Ye; Ye; prince of peace; Enstriel; spirit; fear; piety; you; unity of unity; the three godhead, and so forth, etc⁶¹⁵

⁶¹² Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986), 22-27, <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>. Retrieved December 29, 2017.

⁶¹³ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", 22-27

⁶¹⁴ cf. Mt. 10:1, 10:8; Mk. 6:7, 16:17; Lk. 9:1, 10:17; Acts. 19:11-16.

⁶¹⁵ *CLM 849*, No. 39. folio 101-102

Messyas, Sother, Emanuel, Sabaoth, Adonay, Panthon, Panthocrathon, Eloy, Theos, Hon, Visio, Saluato, Alpha et O, primus et nouissimus, primogenitus, principium et finis, via, veritas, et sapencia, virtus, paraclitus, ego sum qui sum, qui es, mediator, agnus, ouis, aries, vitulus, serpens, edus, verbum, ymago, gloria, gracia, salus, lux, sal, pax,

This emphasis on the power of the name creates an important link between compelling demons by their names and Gen 2:19-20, where God brings the animals to Adam so that he may name, and by extension, claim dominion over them. I believe the argument can be made that, through the naming of demons and the use of the names of Christ to compel them, Christian magicians are, in essence, becoming Adam and claiming dominion over the transempirical world.

In unpacking this claim it is vital to highlight that these texts consistently affirm and emphasize power in various forms. The rituals highlight the conjuration capabilities and responsibilities of the operator. If the practitioner's power to call, command, and banish demons is derived from their faith and fueled by the name and power of Christ, then these rituals serve to affirm the practitioner's identity as a faithful Christian versed in magic. The practitioner is doing more than just acquiring wealth, accumulating knowledge, or attracting a lover; they are demonstrating their (literally) God-given power to control demons and master the unseen forces of the cosmos.⁶¹⁶ *Conjuration is thus an active (re)creation of the ritual space as Christian, a declaration of Christian power, and an affirmation of a particular Christian identity.* In other words, the author and the readers are not only expressing the ideal Christian identity—that of the pious, upright Christian—they are also creating a social reality based on the understanding of themselves as Christians so powerful that they not only understand the laws of nature, but also are able to control demons (and, by extension, the transgressive forces demons represent).

By placing ritual magic within a canonical Christian framework, invoking the names of God and Jesus—in essence, following Jesus' command to compel demons in his name—the rituals in *CLM 849* serve as a lived religious experience: through the magic, the operator is bringing divine knowledge down into the world, into the controlled the ritual space, through the power of speech. If Jesus was understood as the “Incarnation of the Word,” or the “Word made flesh” (a Christian understanding that is recreated through the ritual of the transubstantiation during Mass), then for the ritual magic practitioner, the ritual can be understood as the incarnation of divine knowledge—or, perhaps more aptly, the incarnation of Christian truth. In other words, just as the Christian ritual of transubstantiation incarnates God into the profane world, the ritual magic of *CLM 849* incarnates divine knowledge—in both instances the danger

spendor, panis, fons, vitis, pastor, propheta, spes immortalis, rex, pater, omnipotens, misericors, eternus, summum bonum, trinitas, unitas, pater, El, Elo, Eloë, Eleon, Saday, Symator, Tu, Ye, Ye, pinceps pacis, Enstriel, spiritus, timor, pietas, tu, unitas unitatis, trina deitas, ut arte, etc. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 336-337.

⁶¹⁶ Cf. Ritual No. 32, *Forbidden Rites*, 276- 286, which details the ritual for a conjuration of a mirage of Satan.

of transgressive forces (either profane or spiritual) are, at least momentarily, expunged from the ritual space. We can assert that *CLM 849* becomes an example of ritual magic as a lived religion based on supersession theology.

As noted in my introduction to this chapter, in the next text up for consideration, *Book of Abramelin*, we get an excellent example of how the desire to control the ritual space in this way could culminate in the fetishization of Jewish alterity. The recurring stereotype of the “powerful Jewish magician” is reflected throughout the texts we have seen so far. However, we have also seen that this trope is not left to stand on its own: the Jewish magician may be inherently powerful, but, paradoxically, their Jewishness (the very thing that imbues them with magical power in the first place) also weakens their magical strength. What we are seeing is the prevailing Christian determination to construct an identity that is capable of superseding Jewish power in this sphere. As the ritual magic contained in our works should be understood as an expression of lived religion, then this move to control the magical sphere should be understood as yet another instance of the theology of supersession in action. With the *Book of Abramelin* we get a most explicit example of how the success of this Christian identity construction relies on not just appropriation and Christianization, but also, as I will discuss, fetishization.

4.3 A CHRISTIAN PORTRAYAL OF THE JEWISH MAGICIAN: THE *BOOK OF ABRAMELIN*⁶¹⁷

4.3.1 Contextualizing the Work

The *Book of Abramelin* (also called *Abraham the Mage*) is a text whose authorship and original date are both in question. The earliest manuscript we have, written in German, dates back to 1608—however, it is unclear whether this manuscript is, in fact, the original. The likely answer is that it is not, and some scholars suggest that the first portion of the text was written sometime between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.⁶¹⁸ Composed of four books, the *Book of Abramelin* is supposedly based on Abraham of Worms' encounter in Egypt with a mage named Abraham (or Abramelin) who revealed a system of magic to Abraham that would

⁶¹⁷ I will be using a translation of Georg Dehn's edition of *The Book of Abramelin* (compiled and edited by Georg Dehn, translated into English by Steven Guth (Lake Worth FL: Ibis Press, 2006)). Unfortunately, there is a very limited scholarship on *Book of Abramelin* (including a critical transliterated edition), a point noted by both Marco Pasi and Bernd Roling ("Varieties of Magical Experience," 154; "The Complete Nature of Christ," 245). However, like the previously analyzed texts, *Book of Abramelin* was influential in later developments of Western esotericism, most notably in Aleister Crowley's (1875-1947) Thelema system, created in 1904. Stemming from the Greek θέλημα (desire, will), Crowley's Thelema system also has a precedence in François Rabelais (1483/4-1553) "Abbé de Thélème," in the first book of his *Gargantua et Pantagruel* pentology which, in short describes an unusual abbey where the members live according to a single rule: "Do What You Will." Crowley took this rule, along with the *Book of Abramelin*, ancient Egyptian cosmology, and nineteenth century ritual magic to create a system that would be influential in twentieth century esotericism and magic-based religions, most notably Wicca. Included was Crowley's version of Abramelin's Operation; through the use of hashish (not prescribed in *Book of Abramelin*), Crowley claimed to have achieved "knowledge and conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel," the ultimate goal of the ritual. It was, as Pasi claims, "perceived by him as one of the most important magical achievements of his entire life" ("The Varieties of Magical Experience," 173). Furthermore, contained in Crowley's system is Abramelin's Oil, called "Oil of Abramelin," to be used as anointing and for other magical purposes (see: Aleister Crowley, *Magick: Book 4*, York Beach ME: S. Weiser, 1997, 60). (Shelley Rabinovitch and James Lewis, *The Encyclopedia of Modern Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism*, Citadel Press, 2004, p. 267–270; Christopher Partridge, "Aleister Crowley on Drugs," *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 7, no.2 (2016): 141.

For a discussion on the influence of *Book of Abramelin* on nineteenth and twentieth century esotericism, please see Alison Butler, "Making Magic Modern: Nineteenth-Century Adaptations," *The Pomegranate* 6.2 (2004): 212-230. For a discussion on Aleister Crowley and the Thelema system, please see Morgan Mogg, "The Heart of Thelema: Morality, Amoralism, and Immorality in Aleister Crowley's Thelemic cult" *The Pomegranate* 13, no. 2 (December 2011): 163-183; Tobias Churton, *Aleister Crowley: The Biography* (London: Watkins Publishing, 2011); Henrik Bogdan and Martin P. Starr, editors, *Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For scholarship on *Book of Abramelin*, please see Christopher Partridge's, "Aleister Crowley on Drugs," *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 7.2 (2016): 125-151 contains several key passages that refers to *Book of Abramelin* (especially 141); see also Carlos Gilly, *Die Rosenkreuzer im Spiegel der zwischen 1610 und 1660 entstandenen Handschriften und Drucke* (Amsterdam, In de Pelikan 1995): 18-19; Marco Pasi "Varieties of Magical Experience: Aleister Crowley's Views on Occult Practice," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 6, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 148-154 and Bernd Roling ("The Complete Nature of Christ: Sources and Structures of a Christological Theurgy in the Works of Johannes Reuchlin," in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Jan R. Veenstra, (Leuven, etc: Peeters, 2002), especially 245-250, which discusses the text as an example of Jewish-Christian relations in the magical space.

⁶¹⁸ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, xxv; Pasi, "Varieties of Magical Experience," 154; Roling "The Complete Nature of Christ," 246-147.

culminate in an intimate contact with one's guardian angel.⁶¹⁹ Book I is mostly autobiographical, with Abraham of Worms recounting his journey to Egypt and his encounter with the mage. Book II concentrates on what is called "mixed" Kabbalah.⁶²⁰ Book III describes how to prepare for and perform the various rituals, including invocations of angels and the Dukes of Hell. Finally Book IV describes various magic systems, particularly magic word squares, wherein each square contains letters related to the aim of a given ritual, and the initiate focuses on the letters to gain a deeper, mystical understanding and to bring to focus the specific aim for the square.⁶²¹

The text sparks many questions, the central ones of which are: Who wrote it, and who was Abraham of Worms? According to Dehn, Abraham of Worms may have been the *nom de plume* of Rabbi Jacob ben Moses haLevi Möllin, better known as MaHaRIL, whose autobiography shares many similarities with that of the pseudonymous Abraham of Worms.⁶²² Dehn concedes that Abraham of Leipzig is another possibility, as, just like Abraham of Worms, he aided the Emperor Sigismund in 1426, and may have been the very same Abraham of Leipzig recorded in the List of Jews at the Council of Constance.⁶²³ However, Dehn's claim that it was Rabbi Jacob ben Moses haLevi Möllin is controversial. Gershom Scholem's counterclaim is that the text's mysterious author, though fluent in Hebrew, was not Jewish, as his knowledge of Kabbalah was, according to Scholem, superficial at best.⁶²⁴

We must also ask ourselves, who read this text—who was its intended audience? Given that the text was written in German, it most probably was written for a predominantly Christian audience. In addition, the author demonstrates a more than passing familiarity with Christianity, in particular, when they mention:

Jesus of Nazareth—whom the Christians regard as God—with his apostles used some of this Wisdom. The best apostle was St. John; his book of Prophecy is excellent and still is available.⁶²⁵

As Dehn mentioned in his footnote, this passing reference to John refers to the assumed author of

⁶¹⁹ Pasi, "Varieties of Magical Experience," 148.

⁶²⁰ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, xxix; Roling "The Complete Nature of Christ," 246-147.

⁶²¹ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, xxix-xxxii.

⁶²² Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 271-274.

⁶²³ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 266-267.

⁶²⁴ Gershom Scholem, *Alchemy and Kabbalah*, translated by Klaus Ottmann, (Putnam CT: Spring Publications Inc. 2006), 186. Roling, however, points out that in his first treatment, Scholem identified the author as Jewish, and it was only in later editions that Scholem questions the author's identity (Roling, "The Complete Nature of Christ," 254n76)

⁶²⁵ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 111.

the last book of the New Testament, *The Book of Revelation*. The introductory verse of the *Book of Revelation* reads “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant, John” (NRSV, Rev. 1:1). While a learned rabbi might have likely known about this part of the Christian tradition, it is unusual and intriguing that the author refers to John as “St. John,”—a Christian designation—while at the same time calling Jesus “Jesus of Nazareth”. This strange mix of Christian and Jewish forms of addresses (that is, calling the author of the *Book of Revelation* a “saint,” while simultaneously referring to Jesus as “Jesus of Nazareth”) may suggest that the author was at least intimately familiar with Christianity (if not Christian themselves), and appeared to assume that their audience would be largely Christian.

The consequences of this authorial ambiguity are compelling: if we assume the text was written by a Christian author for a Christian audience in the name of a Jewish author, then the text itself is inherently transgressive. If it was written by a Jewish author, then elements of the text still indicate it was for a Christian audience. Either way, the narrator is depicted as part of the alterity, *with the author channeling the reader’s perception of what constitutes this alterity*. It is no longer merely the reworking of Jewish ideas into a Christian framework, but rather the reshaping of an entire worldview, with the inclusion of a Jewish “flavour” to lend the text an air of validity.⁶²⁶ We begin to see a conscious shift in public perception: the Jewish community is magical and taboo, but, somewhat paradoxically, it is this very “taboo-ness” that Christian authors of ritual magic grasped upon to lend their own system credibility.

That which is understood as being “taboo” is simultaneously understood as being something *powerful*. As a Polynesian loanword the exact etymology of the word’s use in English is contested, but what is agreed upon is that the word connotes both sacrality and prohibition, as well as the tension between these two poles.⁶²⁷ Accordingly, to say that “it is this very ‘taboo-ness’ that Christian authors of ritual magic grasped upon to lend their own system credibility,” is merely a different way of thinking about what I have argued above: Jews were taboo to Christians because they embodied this tension between sacrality⁶²⁸ and transgression,⁶²⁹ and we

⁶²⁶ An idea echoed in Roling, “The Complete Nature of Christ,” 246.

⁶²⁷ See: *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. “taboo,” accessed October 28th, 2018, https://www.etymonline.com/word/taboo#etymonline_v_4300.

⁶²⁸ That is to say, they are the recipients of the Covenant.

⁶²⁹ That is to say, this claim to sacrality is in opposition to Christianity, it must be forbidden.

can identify this “taboo-ness” as being a driving force in the establishment of a credible system of Christian magic, for it is only through the act of mediating this tension—i.e., contending with it—that the Christian magician was able to gain control of the magical realm. As we have seen, mediating this tension was a multi-step process that relied on a number of moves, including appropriation, Christianization, exorcism, as well as fetishization. While my discussion of the *Sworn Book* and *CLM 849* hinted at how we can see fetishization at play in this process, with *Book of Abramelin* it becomes much more explicit.

4.3.2 Demonic Magic and Fetishization in the *Book of Abramelin*

Book III, Chapter 14, for example, discusses “unredeemed spirits” (i.e., demons), as well as the words of power to use to control them: Jehovah, Adonai and Zabaoth.⁶³⁰ Again, what is interesting is the triple usage of the names, which echo the Trinity. It is only through the utterance of the three names of God that the practitioner could gain control over these “unredeemed spirits”—spirits that would otherwise tempt the initiate through the use of “seals, superstitious conjurations, signs, pentacles, and other godless atrocities,” as they are “the coins with which bothersome Satan can buy you.”⁶³¹ Due to their association with money and coins, the “unredeemed spirits” can be read as a symbolic reference to the stereotype of the Jew-as-devilous-moneylender, further underscoring the Christian perception of Jews being intrinsically tied to the material realm, even of attempting to purchase divine protection.⁶³² Moreover, the narrator instructs the reader to place the appropriate sign on a demon after their invocation of the eight dukes of hell, and have the demon swear on that sign, so that the acolyte may gain control over them.⁶³³ Compelling demons to accept this sign mirrors the dress code for Jews enforced by the Fourth Lateral Council.⁶³⁴ The demon, like the Jew, is identified by a sign that separates them from the rest of the world, and renders them instantly recognizable. If, as mentioned previously, the body is the locus of identity, then the control of the body implies control of identity. Through

⁶³⁰ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 143-144.

⁶³¹ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 144-146.

⁶³² A certain parallel could be made to Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-24), where the Samaritan magician attempted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from Peter, thereby lending his name to “simony”. Though narratives surrounding Simon were quite popular in premodernity, with some eventually being incorporated into the legend of Faust, I found little evidence of his role in demonic ritual magic. In this case, Satan is attempt to bribe the (Christian) practitioner rather than attempting to pay for salvation.

⁶³³ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 149-150.

⁶³⁴ Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 102.

the forcible placement of identifying sigils upon the body of the Jewish alterity, the dominant community is thus able to control that identity (and the taboo-ness/power it imparts), and, through this control, reaffirm their own identity as hegemonic.

Furthermore, in Book III Chapter 17 we see a warning about answering demons' questions, as the demons might provide misleading answers that could threaten or even shatter one's faith in God.⁶³⁵ The demon is necessary for the completion of the ritual, but the demon also possesses a power and a cunning that threatens the initiate—they could lead them away from God. The ritual thus becomes a potentially transgressive space: the magician has invited the demon (a monstrous being) into their ritual (sacred) space, mirroring the tension connoted by the word "taboo". The demon, according to the narrator, will question the practitioner's faith. The demon becomes, in a sense, a gateway to connecting with knowledge about God (if the practitioner can withstand the demons questioning), while at the same time being the antithesis of God (the demon could lead the practitioner away from God). However, through Christian words and acts of faith, that transgression can be overcome.

Book III Chapter 20 details a list of cautionary advice, including warnings against insulting one's guardian angel, being too intimate with the summoned spirits, and eating the wrong foods.⁶³⁶ The text also forbids sharing the secret of magic with any ruler, as "Solomon was the first to misuse it,"⁶³⁷ a possible nod to the Jewish legend where Solomon was tricked by a demon who stole his identity and then ruled in his stead for a short time. However, in many Kabbalistic and Talmudic traditions, Solomon was the receiver of a ring of power, and was able to command demons (specifically Asmodai) to build the Temple. It was precisely because of his gift of wisdom that the king was celebrated.⁶³⁸

If Talmudic and Kabbalistic traditions laud Solomon for his magical wisdom, then what is the purpose behind the warning to not share this knowledge with rulers? It is possible that the author was reflecting on the general fallibility of kings. As the narrator states, "I even gave

⁶³⁵ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 152-153.

⁶³⁶ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 161-167. There is no specific mention of the types of foods, though there is an explicit prohibition against blood and blood in the meat (166), which may refer to the biblical food law (cf Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:12, 17:11; Deut. 1:16).

It is also telling that this chapter makes explicit references to Passover, the Feasts of the Tabernacle, and Adonai ("my Lord"), often used in place of speaking the name of God out loud.

⁶³⁷ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 167.

⁶³⁸ The legend of Solomon and Ashmodai could be found in *Gittan 68*. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, "The Master of an Evil Name: Hillel Ba'al Shem and His 'Sefer ha-heshek,'" *AJS Review* 28, no. 2 (2004), 238-239.

Kaiser Sigismund the best of my spirits—but never the Work.”⁶³⁹ While it is possible, it is also unlikely. A more intriguing explanation is that the author dismissed Solomon because he was Jewish, and viewed other Jewish rulers similarly. Sigismund, according to the narrator, received the ability to use the spirits, but there was no mention on why or how he used them. Implied here is that because he was not an initiate, he could not fully invoke the transempirical beings; he was only given the use of them after they had been invoked by the narrator. Solomon, on the other hand, was given the power of the magic and, according to the narrator, misused it—though how or why, the text does not say. Through the voice of the narrator, the author insinuates that though he possessed great divine wisdom, Solomon’s inability to wield magic properly was tied to his Jewishness, as only a belief in Jesus could bestow real wisdom and true power. As these examples have demonstrated, through the appropriation and fetishization of the figure of the Jewish magician, Christian magicians have mediated the “taboo-ness” of this figure and asserted the credibility of their own magic—and the credibility of their identity as the true inheritors to the ritual space.

4.4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As we saw in the texts just analyzed, demonic ritual magic was not only predicated on Christian faith, but also strengthened the practitioner’s Christian identity. Their magic stepped beyond regular Christian liturgical rituals; it was deeper, more dangerous, an incarnation of knowledge, an activity drawing on the hidden divine found within the occult laws of the universe. Through a combination of their knowledge, learnedness, and Christian piety, Christian magic ritualists were able to understand and control the forces that impeded a union with the divine. They saw themselves as fully and truly Christian, a Christian who not only follows the canonical dictum, but also one who is engaged with God on a hidden level that would elude most people.

The *Sworn Book* provides us with an excellent example of how this type of magic relies on the appropriation and Christianization of Jewish themes. In my discussion of this work, I have paid particular attention to how the *Sworn Book* seems to have been inspired by the Hekhalot literature of the Hasidei Ashkenaz community. The *Sworn Book* emphasizes a crucial link

⁶³⁹ Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin*, 166.

between the practitioner's piety and the ability to properly engage with the secret knowledge contained in the text, and I identify this as being the most salient link between the *Sworn Book* and Hekhalot literature. In other words, while in Hekhalot literature it is Jewish piety that acts as a precondition for ritual success, in the *Sworn Book* it is Christian piety that acts as a precondition for ritual success (success here usually being understood through the model of exorcism). I further argue that the doctrine of supersessionism helps us see how this act of appropriation and Christianization reflects the larger Christian desire to construct a collective identity that could control the transgression represented by Jewish alterity.

In *CLM 849* we see the further development of these themes, and come to see more fully how the emphasis on the piety of the practitioner not only leads to the construction of a particular Christian identity, but also to the construction of a Christian-administered ritual space. Through the rituals we see here the magician creates relationships with demons, and through this ritual-relationship dynamic, demons become real. In other words, through the (re)creation of ritual narratives, the demonic world is emphasized, and, with it, the power of the magician who is able to control the ritual space and the demons contained therein. As the knowledge and power they wielded were inherently unknowable to the average believer, the ritual operators were understood as being somewhat transgressive figures themselves. Put differently, they were, like transempirical beings, feared and respected, and were sometimes branded as practitioners of *maleficia*. However, in *CLM 849*, the author's reliance on liturgical formulations and emphasis on Christian piety as a precondition for ritual success, indicates that, while they indeed understood their extraordinary power to have a transgressive potential, they also believed that their Christian mooring allowed them to establish order and authority in a world in chaos.

In *Book of Abramelin* we see how appropriation of Jewish magic takes place through the (likely Christian) author taking on the affectations of a Jewish magician. By combining a monstrous identity (demons) with fetishization (i.e., the stereotype of the Jewish magician), we see how the ritual space of invocative demonic magic becomes a place that not only reflects the ongoing social tensions between Christians and Jews, but that, accordingly, also creates the conditions of possibility for the construction of a hegemonic Christian identity. By assuming the identity of the archetype of the Jewish magician while writing for a Christian audience, the anonymous author of this work becomes the very embodiment of supersession theology: they become the stereotype—i.e., they assume the power associated with the taboo-ness of this

stereotype—in order to contend with it and ultimately supersede it.

As noted in my introduction to this section, for the purposes of this dissertation esoteric narratives should, in part, be understood as an expression of the author's perception of reality, a perception which is the product of the relationship between embodiment (mental processes that lie within the individual), the embedded/external mind (the interactions that occur between the individual and aspects of their external environment), and enculturation (the impact of the individual's cultural context). By looking at these types of rituals in this way, we can come to see how see how the narrator—that is, the author of the texts—was shaped by their external social environment. Accordingly, the embodiment, embedded/external mind, and enculturation of the text's author are important avenues to explore when trying to understand what we encounter narratives. As the authors of the *Sworn Book*, *CLM 849*, and *Book of Abramelin* are unknown, our exploration of these avenues is limited, so it will now be time to turn to our remaining works, where I will seek to sketch out how these authors worked to circumscribe the intellectual perimeters of magic to privilege the Christian position.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAGICAL AUTHORITY, CHRISTIAN KABBALAH AND THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE MAGICAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Chapter Four we traced how the appropriation and Christianization of Jewish magical knowledge reflects the Christian desire to control the perceived transgressive power of the Jewish alterity by gaining control over the ritual space of demonic magic. This move was accomplished by applying supersession theology to the magical realm—a natural move for, as I have been arguing throughout, this realm was not necessarily distinct from the realm of lived experience, but rather a part of it. We further saw how this move to gain control over this specific ritual space relies on a particular Christian identity, that of the learned⁶⁴⁰ and pious Christian. Moreover, we saw how the link between this identity and magical efficacy supported the conditions of possibility for cementing the Christian identity as hegemonic throughout the larger sociocultural sphere. However, as noted at the end of the preceding chapter, the authorial ambiguity surrounding the *Sworn Book*, *CLM 849*, and *Book of Abramelin* acts to limit the scope of our analysis somewhat, as the theoretical lens of cognitive narratology emphasizes the importance of supplementing these types of analyses by considering the embodiment, embedded mind, and enculturation of the author.

As shall be demonstrated in my analysis of Trithemius' *Steganographia* (1499), Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabalistica* (1517), and Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* (1532/3), by examining these supplemental avenues we can begin to see even more clearly how the link between magical efficacy and a specific Christian identity (the learned and pious Christian) both shaped and was shaped by the external social environment of the author. Furthermore, we shall see how the desire to control the ritual space of magic simultaneously reads as a desire to control the intellectual/theoretical space of magic, for it was only by circumscribing the intellectual perimeters of magic to reflect Christian truth that Christians could assert the magical hegemony they strove for. Chapter Five will end with some reflections on what this assertion of magical hegemony tells us about the role of invocative magic in identity-construction in the premodern social milieu.

I have chosen to begin the chapter with a discussion of Johannes Trithemius, a figure

⁶⁴⁰ By this I mean a Christian who was formally educated (i.e., attended university) and was familiar with canonical liturgy and Latin.

who, in both learnedness and piety, seems to embody the very type of Christian identity that the works we have been examining imagine to be a precondition for magical efficacy. Through an examination of Trithemius' life and what he considered to be his *magnum opus*, the *Steganographia*, I aim to sketch out how the success of his framing of magic—as we shall see below, his thought was widely influential on both contemporaneous and later thinkers—relies on a concentrated effort to harmonize magic with Christian dogma while simultaneously asserting that magic held the potential for a deeper Christian truth than through dogma alone.

I will continue my examination of the influence of Christian kabbalah through my discussion of Johannes Reuchlin's *De Arte Cabalistica*, as well as Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De Occulta Philosophia*. Striving to demonstrate that, within Christian kabbalah, Christian magicians found a framework that bolstered their ability to harmonize Christian theology with their magic, this allowed them to: 1) assert the superiority of Christian kabbalah over Jewish Kabbalah—thus placing access to the secrets of the universe in Christian, rather than Jewish, hands—and 2), defend their practices against other Christians who understood them to be unorthodox, illicit, and harmful.

5.1 JOHANNES TRITHEMIUS (1462-1516)

Johannes Trithemius was a veritable Renaissance man: he was a Benedictine abbot, developed a unique system of cryptography, and also contributed substantially to both esoteric and German humanist thought. He also built one of the most preeminent libraries of his time—a library with a particular emphasis on esoteric (including magical) practices—which he housed in his abbey in Sponheim, a pilgrimage site for prominent thinkers like Agrippa and Paracelsus,⁶⁴¹ both of whom would become his students.

Born on February 1, 1462, by the Mosel River in Trittenheim under the name Johannes Heidenberg, he would later rename himself “Trithemius” after the place of his birth. His father died when he was still an infant, and his mother eventually remarried to a Herr Zell. When

⁶⁴¹ Born as Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541), the physician would adopt the name ‘Paracelsus’ in 1528, and sought to integrate magic into his practice. Paracelsus rooted his theories in the authority of the Bible, Christ, and the teaching of salvation. Focusing primarily on natural magic, his theory emphasized the importance of physical experience and the visible aspects of nature, in contrast to Agrippa's focus on the hidden aspects of nature. According to Paracelsus, knowledge comes from the divine, and through experience and study, one can understand the divine forces operating within nature. He would also greatly influence Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), the creator of homeopathy (Weeks, *German Mysticism*, 124-125).

Trithemius was young, he had what would become a prophetic dream that he would become a man of letters, a career that his stepfather disapproved of.⁶⁴² After studying in Trier, he attended the University of Heidelberg where he encountered humanists such as Conrad Celtis, Johann von Dalberg, and Johannes Reuchlin, the last of whom introduced him to the works of Pythagoras, tutored him in Greek and Hebrew, and introduced Trithemius to Christian kabbalah.⁶⁴³

In January of 1482, on his way home from the University to Tritenheim, Trithemius was caught in a snowstorm near Sponheim. In what some might call a twist of fate, he sought refuge at a nearby rundown Benedictine abbey, and there he chose to remain to study as a monk. A year later, he was elected abbot, an unprecedented event for someone who was virtually a novice and so young, and he quickly introduced reforms to the German Benedictine order. During this time he also began to build his library⁶⁴⁴ and establish himself as a foremost humanist thinker, eventually gaining a reputation as a great, if at times controversial, scholar.⁶⁴⁵ Unlike many humanists, Trithemius never formally completed his university education, nor did he ever make the standard humanist trek to Italy. Yet, his Sponheim Abbey—so far away from any traditional centre of culture, economics, and politics—became a respected *akademia*, an education centre and hub of intellectual humanist discourse, sought out by monks and laypeople alike. Visitors would often come to consult the library and study under the abbot, who kept a steady flow of correspondence with the prominent esoteric thinkers of his time.⁶⁴⁶

On March 25 1499, Trithemius wrote a letter to his friend, Arnold Bostius, a Carmelite monk. The letter detailed revelations he had during the course of his esoteric studies, revelations which would ultimately inspire what he believed would become his *magnum opus*. Describing the plans for this upcoming work, which he titled *Steganographia*, Trithemius wrote about the planned division of the volume. It would consist of five books. The first, *Argot*, was for

⁶⁴² Arnold, “Introduction to *De Laude*”, 1; Frank L. Borchardt, “Trithemius and the Mask of Janus” in *Traditions and Transitions: Studies in Honor of Harold Jantz*, edited by Liselotte E. Kurth, William H. McClain and Holger Homann, (Munich: Delp, 1972), 37; Brann, *Trithemius*, 5-6; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 74-75.

⁶⁴³ Arnold, “Introduction to *De Laude*”, 1; Frank Baron, *Doctor Faustus: From History to Legend* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1978), 26; Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 50.

⁶⁴⁴ By 1505 this library reputedly contained over two thousand books and codices, including old manuscripts from Augustine, Greek and Latin Homeric texts, as well as many magical treatises.

⁶⁴⁵ Arnold, “Introduction to *De Laude*”, 1-2, 4; Michael S. Batts, “Introduction to *In Praise of Scribes: De Laude Scriptorum*”, by Johannes Trithemius, translated by Elizabeth Bryson Bongie, (Vancouver: The Alcuin Society, 1977), viii; Borchardt, “Trithemius and the Mask of Janus”, 37-38; Brann, *Trithemius*, 5-6; Davies, *Grimoires*, 33, 47.

⁶⁴⁶ Arnold, “Introduction to *De Laude*”, 2-3, 6.

communicating encrypted messages. The second would describe the method of thought transference over great distances, so that only the intended recipient would receive the message. The third book was to describe how, through magic, one would be able to learn and be fully fluent in Latin in two hours. The fourth book would detail experiments on how one could convey one's thoughts directly to another person—without anyone else noticing this transmission—while the fifth book would detail the results of these experiments, a body of knowledge so great and so dangerous that Trithemius never planned to make it public.⁶⁴⁷

According to the letter, Trithemius claims that the techniques of steganography⁶⁴⁸ were revealed to him by spirits, who informed him that through the spirit-guided use of an encryption key, one could send messages over large distances.⁶⁴⁹ With a foundation that included alchemy, astrology, numerology, as well as natural and invocative magic, the text could help the diligent student uncover deep secrets that, in turn, could help them attain great divine knowledge of the universe. Highlighted in the text is the idea of Heaven and Earth being linked within the framework of the universe, as well as the promise that the detailed techniques could illuminate that framework.⁶⁵⁰ Only those who are virtuous and who possess the proper arcane knowledge can decipher the symbols and access the magical techniques within.⁶⁵¹ The text itself becomes a steganography, and the hidden message details secrets on attaining more of the divine knowledge in sending encrypted messages. It is, to paraphrase Winston Churchill, a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma—and the text is the key.

Bostius, however, died on April 4 1499, before the letter arrived. The prior of the monastery opened it, and, reading the contents, determined that Trithemius was practicing illicit demonic magic. While gossip of his magical abilities already swirled, the letter and the

⁶⁴⁷ Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 24; Brann, *Trithemius*, 85-86; Urd Leo Gantenbein, "Converging Magical Legends: Faustus, Paracelsus, and Trithemius", in *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faust*, edited by J.M. van der Laan, and Andrew Weeks, (Rochester NY: Camden House, 201), 100-101; Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 51-52.

⁶⁴⁸ In brief: the practice of sending a message, file, missive encrypted in another message. Cryptography protects the message through code, whereas steganography is a practice of physically disguising the message within an ordinary, mundane media that could be revealed only if the recipient knows how to reveal it. An example of steganography would be using invisible ink to send a message in between the lines of a book, where upon inspection it would look like an ordinary book, but the recipient would know to use the proper light to uncover the hidden message. Trithemius proposes using invocative magic as a means of hiding and then revealing the message that was hidden within the everyday form of a particular media.

⁶⁴⁹ Brann, *Trithemius*, 101; Jütte, *Age of Secrecy*, 181.

⁶⁵⁰ Brann, *Trithemius*, 5, 114; McLean, "Introduction", 7.

⁶⁵¹ Brann, *Trithemius*, 116-117.

consequent rumours tarnished Trithemius' reputation by painting him as someone who consorted with demons. He denied the charges, but the damage was done. As a result, Trithemius never fully completed *Steganographia*, having only written two and parts of the third of the proposed five books (which were only discovered and published in 1606), and instead focused on *Polygraphia* (1508), a compendium on natural magic.⁶⁵² The reputation for practicing illicit magic remained with Trithemius for the rest of his life and beyond the grave, despite his claims that he was a practitioner of natural magic—albeit one who was obsessed with words and numbers, and the secrets behind them. That infamy would stoke the fires of imaginations and fuel various legends, spawning tales about a demonic pact. The lore grew to a point that he (along with Agrippa) would be at times be conflated with the tale of Faust.⁶⁵³

In 1506, Trithemius resigned as abbot of Sponheim. There is no evidence that his resignation was tied to either his interest in esotericism or his reputation as a practitioner of illicit demonic magic, and was more likely the result of political intrigue. His patron, Philipp, the Elector Palatine, caused a number of wars between 1504 and 1505. The area surrounding the abbey was ravaged, and some speculate that this caused an angry band of monks to turn against the abbot. Another possible reason for his resignation may have been that Trithemius neglected his responsibilities to his monks while seeking the favour (and monetary support) of secular thinkers, and had failed to notice their increasing dissatisfaction at this. Regardless of the reason, Trithemius left, leaving his famed library which would be later dismantled and sold. He subsequently accepted a position at St. James, a monastery just outside of Würzburg, where he continued his scholarly pursuits.⁶⁵⁴

It was at St. James that he wrote his *De Septem Secundei sid est intelligentiis, sive Spiritibus Orbes post Deum moventibus* (*On the Seven Secondary Causes of the Intelligences of the Spirits that Govern the movements of the Orbs under God*) and *Polygraphia*, both completed in 1508.⁶⁵⁵ At St. James, Trithemius attempted to rebuild his former library. A mere decade after

⁶⁵² Arnold, "Introduction to *De Laude*," 11; Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 24-25; Brann, *Trithemius*, 92; Gantenbein, "Converging Magical Legends," 100-101.

⁶⁵³ Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 25; Gantenbein, "Converging Magical Legends," 100.

⁶⁵⁴ Arnold, "Introduction to *De Laude*," 8; Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 28; Borchardt, "Trithemius and the Mask of Janus," 38; Brann, *Trithemius*, 8.

⁶⁵⁵ *De Septem Secundei sid est intelligentiis, sive Spiritibus Orbes post Deum moventibus* (*On the Seven Secondary Causes of the Intelligences of the Spirits that Govern the movements of the Orbs under God*) is a magical treatise in the form of a letter to the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian. Combining astrology, Christian kabbalah, and angelic lore within a framework of transempirical beings associated with the planets, Trithemius divided known history into

transferring to Würzburg, on December 13, 1516, Johannes Trithemius died and was buried in the chapel of Neumünster.⁶⁵⁶

There are three points I would like to draw out from Trithemius' biography. Trithemius was extremely well-versed in both canonical Christian and esoteric thinking, and was also—as his quick succession to abbot-hood suggests—someone who is understood as an exemplar of Christian piety. These facts, as noted in my introductory remarks, frame Trithemius as a figure who seems to be the embodiment of the Christian identity that the works we have been examining imagine as a precondition for magical success: learned, and a pious Christian. The second thing of note deals with the damage to his reputation that came from the accusations that he was illicitly consorting with demons. Despite the severity of this charge, it is interesting to note that neither Trithemius nor his fellow monks seemed to perceive a conflict between his practice of magic and his Christian faith. While Trithemius dug in deeper, creating, as we shall soon see, a magical theology that would act to defend him from such charges,⁶⁵⁷ with regards to his fellow monks, if they had perceived a conflict, this would have almost certainly been indicated in the source materials we have on his resignation. The third point is that Trithemius and those around him perceived the threat of demons to be very real, a force that could not be ignored and needed to be contended with. Keeping these points in mind, I would now like to move on to an examination of his *Steganographia*.

5.1.1 Demonic Magic and Portrayals of Demons in the *Steganographia*

As with the works discussed in Chapter Four, in the *Steganographia* the practice of invocative ritual magic is framed as a potentially dangerous task, one that only a qualified

astrologically based periods, with each era lasting for 354 years and 4 months. The theory presented in *De Septem Secunde* was incorporated in several of his works on magic. According to the text, God, the first source and the original intellect, appointed the rule of the lower realm to the Seven Secondary Intelligences, with each Intelligence corresponding to and bearing the same attributes as a planet or celestial satellite: Orifiel→Saturn; Anael→Venus; Zacherial→Jupiter; Raphael→Mercury; Samael→Mars; Gabriel→Moon, and Michael→Sun. Each transempirical being with their corresponding planets would then govern for an era. Once a complete cycle of the seven eras had passed, a fresh cycle would begin. At the time of Trithemius' writing, the world was going through the third cycle. Accordingly, each era would be marked by major historical events, and the end of every era would signal great political, religious, and social shifts. Trithemius wrote that the era of Samael, Ruler of Mars—whose time would be defined by changes in laws, religion, and governments—was drawing to an end in 1525, making way for the era of Gabriel until 1879, when Michael would rule until the year 2233 (Borchardt, "Trithemius and the Mask of Janus," 45); Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 52-54; Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 52-54).

⁶⁵⁶ Arnold, "Introduction to *De Laude*," 1; Borchardt, "Trithemius and the Mask of Janus," 38; Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 50.

⁶⁵⁷ As we shall see below, Trithemius believed that the study of demonic magic was actually a necessary component of his effort to identify that which corrupts "pure" Christian magic.

magician should undertake—that is to say, a magician like Trithemius. As the very first sentence of the first chapter of the book states: “The magic presented is very difficult and dangerous. The spirits are full of pride and rebellious and will not obey the person unless they know the art.”⁶⁵⁸ The text further cautions readers that, although the spirits (i.e., transempirical beings) were created by God to be of service to humans, they can only truly be of service if one has the proper knowledge of their nature and character, for, without this, the art of engaging with them is dangerous to undertake.⁶⁵⁹

Because of the potential dangers and the transgressive nature of the knowledge encoded within, Trithemius prescribed several rules for practicing steganography in magical settings:⁶⁶⁰

Rule One: both the sender and the receiver need to be diligent and meticulous in their study.

Rule Two: Highlights the importance of secrecy; only those worthy of the knowledge may be shared with it.

Rule Three: Be familiar with all the spirits and their place within the hierarchy in order to ‘ping’ the right spirit.

Rule Four: Properly pronounce every single word, and use the right ritual for the right spirit. Do not use the ritual for one conjuration to invoke another spirit.

Rule Five: Ensure that all options for transmitting the message have been exhausted. This type of steganography should be used as the last resort.

Rule Six: Know the character and nature of the spirits.

Rule Seven: Details the conditions of the ritual: do not perform it in front of people, ensure that one is secluded. Do all to preserve the secrecy and the sanctity of the art.

Rule Eight: Use the proper character to attract the spirit.

As these rules demonstrate, precision of knowledge is important: if one’s knowledge of the ritual or the character and nature of the spirits is imprecise or inaccurate, the spirit could become unruly

⁶⁵⁸ As translated by Noel Brann in *Trithemius and Magical Theology*, 136.

Huis primi capituli est multum difficilis & periculis plena operatio, propter superbiam & rebellionem spirituum eius, qui non obediunt alicui, nisi fuerit in hac arte expertissimus.

⁶⁵⁹ Trithemius, *Steganographia*, Prologue

Nam quemadmodū aerij spiritus boni & mali à summo Deo creati in ministerium & profectum nostrum (per quorum intelligentiā omnia istius artis secreta reuelātur) sunt nobis sine numero infiniti & penitus incōprehensibiles. Heidelberg edition, 128

⁶⁶⁰ The following rules are paraphrased from Brann’s descriptions and analysis in *Trithemius and Magical Theology*, 136-139.

and cause serious injury. Proper practice therefore requires a firm knowledge in the various occult arts, including the proper alignment of the celestial bodies, the proper hours, the proper names, sigils and understandings, and proper ritual equipment.⁶⁶¹ One false step, no matter how minor or how accidental, could result not only in harming the practitioner, but also to those around them as well.⁶⁶²

For example, one of the base rituals detailed describes the practitioner taking a blank sheet, blessing it in the names of God, Jesus, the Virgin, and saints, then facing in the direction of the spirit's celestial mansion. The practitioner is to then write the letter they wish to transmit to someone, followed by a conjuration of the spirit by repeating its name until it appears. They then complete the letter, fix the spirit's seal upon it, and send it by courier to the recipient, who, upon recognizing the seal, must utter the proper closing incantations to conjure the spirits and reveal the encrypted message. If the wrong spirit is invoked, then the ritualist and the surrounding people will suffer.⁶⁶³ As this example demonstrates well, throughout the *Steganographia* there is significant ambiguity surrounding what constitutes a helpful versus a harmful spirit (i.e., transempirical being).

According to Trithemius, demons exist as a necessary test of Christian faith.⁶⁶⁴ They forsook God, and, like the most zealous converts, now seek to tempt humans to do the same, either through the possession of unwitting victims (which can be remedied through exorcism) or by offering to share their knowledge and powers with those who would conjure and associate with them.⁶⁶⁵ In other words, demons do not simply walk into human affairs accidentally; rather, humans invite demons into their lives and provide them with a “hook” through sin—especially sins of *accidia* (a combination of sloth and sorrow, *accidia* is akin to spiritual apathy) and *luxuria* (excess, including drunkenness, disordered desires, self-indulgence, and sexual excess).⁶⁶⁶ And yet, demons are not created equal: some are harmless, drifting around this earthly realm. Others can serve humanity's purposes to an extent, and a few are immensely powerful,

⁶⁶¹ Brann, *Trithemius*, 136-137, 140; Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 52.

⁶⁶² In a worst-case scenario, someone could even unwittingly unleash a diabolical creature hellbent on the complete destruction of the world.

⁶⁶³ Brann, *Trithemius*, 137-138; D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella*, (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 87.

⁶⁶⁴ Brann, *Trithemius*, 41.

⁶⁶⁵ Brann, *Trithemius*, 35.

⁶⁶⁶ Brann, *Trithemius*, 33-34.

immensely knowledgeable, and immensely dangerous.

A number of physical ailments were seen by Trithemius as symptomatic of a demonic possession, or at the very least, as increasing one's susceptibility to demonic influence. An exorcist therefore had to be sound of body as well as of sound mind. For Trithemius, it is more than Juvenal's concept of *mens sana in corpore sano*⁶⁶⁷ which characterized the premodern notion of health; rather it was *anima pura in corpore sano*⁶⁶⁸; the body must be healthy in order to preserve the healthy (Christian) soul.⁶⁶⁹ As the body was understood as the literal house of the soul, an unhealthy body would therefore be incapable of maintaining the purity of the soul without, in some form or another, corrupting it.

As seen previously, the exorcist—a role that any pious, learned Christian could embody—is able to conjure the demon and also has the power to command it. It becomes difficult to distinguish them from the witch or sorcerer, except that the exorcist is a true Christian who is fulfilling their duty to eliminate evil. Both the exorcist and sorcerer command demons and use them for various ends. The primary difference, then, is their character: the sorcerer is corrupt, whereas the exorcist is virtuous, pious, and utterly committed to upholding the Christian Catholic faith. According to Trithemius, an exorcist does not engage with demons for personal purposes, but rather to further the Christian faith.⁶⁷⁰ If the demons are used for knowledge, to understand, to strengthen faith, then the practice—admittedly still transgressive and dangerous—is legitimate, as the intent is not for personal power or material gain, but rather for spiritual enlightenment.

While demonic magic—which involved the embodiment of evil—was largely sinful, Trithemius did believe that ritual invocation (especially angelic) could be legitimate, as gaining proximity to the angels allowed the practitioner to become more like them. Angels were seen as mediators for God's power, and embodying more of their qualities was understood to give the practitioner greater advantages—on the one hand, it could give the practitioner a greater advantage in performing God's will, and on the other it could help conjure, control, and compel demons. However, Trithemius notes that not all angels are obviously benevolent; some are terrifying and terrible to behold, as well as dangerous. If, as Trithemius asserts, it is largely the

⁶⁶⁷ “A healthy mind in a healthy body.”

⁶⁶⁸ “A pure soul in a healthy body.”

⁶⁶⁹ Brann, *Trithemius*, 80-81.

⁶⁷⁰ Brann, *Trithemius*, 76-79.

intent of the practitioner that defines the legitimacy of the magic—that is, whether they are conjuring transempirical beings for personal or spiritual ends—and, moreover, there is a certain amount of ambiguity surrounding what constitutes a helpful versus a harmful transempirical being, then it is easy to see why some of Trithemius’ detractors understood the manuscript to be filled with illicit demonic magic.

Trithemius, however, strongly denied its illegitimate nature, reiterating and highlighting the *Steganographia*’s compatibility with Catholic Christian doctrine and faith—a move Brann, in his numerous studies on the abbot, refers to as the creation of a Christian magical theology.⁶⁷¹ It was through his self-comparison with Albertus Magnus—a comparison which emphasized their mutual interests in magic and defended their consultation of demonic arts—that Trithemius presented an *apologia* for the study of various types of magic (including demonic ones). This *apologia* argued that such study was essential in order to distinguish true natural magic from the corrupting demonic magic—an effort made all the more necessary by the fact that the two were beginning to intermingle.⁶⁷²

According to Trithemius, through careful study and the cultivation of knowledge, magic becomes a path to understanding and intellectually connecting to the divine—“the One,” as Trithemius called God. If God created all of existence, and if humans are a microcosm of the universe, then the combination of mental exercise and magical practices was an emulation of that divine process. While parts of this universe have been revealed to humanity, other parts have been hidden for humans to find. Accordingly, the greatest wisdom and power lay in the realm of the unseen, which could only be unlocked through the careful study and application of various magical and invocational rituals. Provided the practitioner’s heart was also pious and pure, the wisdom and power attained through these rituals would ultimately lead to communion with God. If one is malicious or evil, however, the opposite would occur.⁶⁷³

For Trithemius, magic became a mental operation for a mental transformation. It searched for the hidden, eternal order of the universe—a reflection of God—so as to spiritually and mentally transcend the material realm, and attain communion with God, from whom all order flows. The key is to uncover these laws through ritual magic, natural magic, diligent study,

⁶⁷¹ Brann, *Trithemius*, 2-3.

⁶⁷² Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, 87.

⁶⁷³ Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 24; Borchart, “Trithemius and the Mask of Janus,” 46; Brann, *Trithemius*, 3.

and Christian piety. The mind, according to Trithemius, was untethered to any substance, and therefore free to commune with the super-celestial realm—if, of course, it has learned the necessary knowledge.⁶⁷⁴ The potential for transcendence was there if one was faithful, virtuous, and pious, and was committed to study and attaining knowledge.⁶⁷⁵ The abbot believed that natural magic and magic focusing on transempirical beings was an uplifting practice, one that could raise the practitioner to the spiritual, divine truth. For Trithemius, natural magic therefore represents a more superior form of magic than the more mundane and earthly practices like alchemy.⁶⁷⁶

While the abbot was at times critical of alchemy and astrology as lesser esoteric arts, it was largely because he did not believe the practitioners were exploring the true spiritual depths of their practice. On August 24 1505, Trithemius wrote a letter to Germanus de Ganay, in which he commented on Trismegistus' *Tabula Smaragdina* (*The Emerald Tablet*).⁶⁷⁷ It was here that he linked alchemy with the purification of the soul. He often disagreed with alchemists and astrologers because (in his eyes) their focus was only on attaining external, practical, earthly results, and not on the art itself.⁶⁷⁸ This approach was thus flawed, as the external practical operations of magic are dependent on the internal, theoretical operations of the soul and gaining divinely inspired knowledge.⁶⁷⁹ A key component to natural magic was numerology.

⁶⁷⁴ Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 27.

⁶⁷⁵ Borchardt, "Trithemius and the Mask of Janus," 46.

⁶⁷⁶ Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 27-28; Borchardt, "Trithemius and the Mask of Janus," 46; Gantenbein, "Converging Magical Legends," 102.

⁶⁷⁷ Attributed to Hermes Trismegistus (Hermes, the Thrice-Greatest), the *Emerald Tablet* is considered to be one of the better known alchemical text. Connected to a Greco-Egyptian corpus of neoplatonic, astrological, magical, and philosophical writings known as *Hermetica* (from which later esoteric and philosophical Hermeticism developed, which claims that a single theology underlies all religions, and emphasizes three parts of wisdom: alchemy, astrology, and invocative magic), the *Emerald Tablet* first appears in an eighth century Arabic text. Despite its murky origin, the *Emerald Tablet* became foundational in Western alchemy and later esoteric thoughts.

Approximately a paragraph long, the *Emerald Tablet* describes the macro- and micro-cosmic relationship, and was believed to contain the secrets of the philosopher's stone (a substance which could turn base metals into gold and silver, as well as reverse the natural ageing process of the body, granting immortality). It is here that we also find the legend "as above, so below." Many famed occultists, including Trithemius, Albertus Magnus, and Isaac Newton, published commentaries and speculations on the tract (Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, 34; Principe, *The Secrets of Alchemy*, 30-33).

For more on Hermeticism, please see Florian Ebeling, *The Secret History of Hermes Trismegistus: Hermeticism from Ancient to Modern Times* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2007) and Brian Copenhaver, *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁶⁷⁸ Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 27.

⁶⁷⁹ N. H. Clulee, "Astronomia Inferior: Legacies of Johannes Trithemius and John Dee," in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*, edited by William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001), 191.

Mathematics represented cosmic order, and created a bridge between the celestial harmony and earthly realms. Magic was therefore the wisdom derived from numbers, their orders and measures.⁶⁸⁰

However, invocative magic and its products were not created equal: Trithemius differentiated four types of illusions that could be byproducts of invocative magical activity. The first—and most vile form—results from the explicit conjuration of demons. As this kind of magic indicates impure and malicious intent, the illusions that result from this type of magic act to purposefully trick people into believing falsehoods. The second type of illusion has a similar effect, but stems from implicitly conjuring demons through words, talisman, and objects—a conjuration by aid, so to speak. The third type of demonic illusion comes from magic that, on the surface, may itself be harmless, but results in harmful illusion. The fourth and final type of illusion, called *praestigium naturalis*, is seen as the natural byproduct of true magic, and is therefore compatible with Christian faith. Unfortunately for us, Trithemius does not reveal how to distinguish this type of illusion from the other three, because, as we shall see below once the work's Jewish influences become clear, this secrecy lends him magical authority.⁶⁸¹

As the descriptions above demonstrate, even if a practitioner knew to avoid the first and second forms of magic, the third type of magic, harmless on the surface, could still accidentally result in a harmful illusion if the practitioner does not embody the necessary ritual knowledge and Christian piety. This is why, as noted above, the legitimacy of the ritual ultimately lies with the practitioner; it is them—their Christian intent, faith, piety, and knowledge—and not necessarily the ritual itself that ultimately decides whether or not the rite falls within *veris catholicis et naturalibus principiis innituntur* (“within Catholic truths and natural principles”).⁶⁸² As this overview of the different potential outcomes of magical activity suggests, Trithemius, while maintaining the compatibility of magical practice with Christian doctrine, nevertheless believed that there were inherent dangers—the practice of magic was not an appropriate for just anyone.

Accordingly, Trithemius took great pains to reaffirm his piety and his devotion as a monk and a righteous Christian whose faith has never wavered, thus distancing himself from what he

⁶⁸⁰ Baron, *Doctor Faustus*, 25; Clulee, “*Astronomia Inferior*,” 193-194.

⁶⁸¹ Brann, *Trithemius*, 113.

⁶⁸² Brann, *Trithemius*, 108, 100-101.

saw as superstition and the abominable practice of *maleficia*.⁶⁸³ Cautioning the Emperor and his future readers, Trithemius states that

Some may take offence to the names, offices, ranks, differences, properties, speech, and the operations of the spirits that through the knowledge of secrets that this science has closed and opened, or may believe me to be a Necromancer (*a practitioner of illicit magic/maleficia, that is a sorcerer*) or have made a demonic pact or contract or have used superstition. I thought it necessary to protect my name and reputation from injustice, insult and injury by proclaiming of truth in a solemn protest in this prologue⁶⁸⁴

He further vows that what is contained within the text is done

without damaging the Christian faith, preserving the integrity of the ecclesiastical traditions, without superstition, without idolatry, without explicit or implicit pact with malevolent spirits; without fumigation to, adoration, veneration, worship, sacrifice, or offering to demons, and is without fault or sin, both venial and mortal⁶⁸⁵

With this prologue, Trithemius thus establishes the standard of the legitimate magician as a Christian who is strong in mind, steadfast in their faith, and discreet in their practice. The legitimate magician is also one who *knows*—who understands the hidden order, the very divine foundation from which all of reality is created.

In sum, Trithemius, as a learned and pious monk, does not think that what he is doing in his *Steganographia* is illicit.⁶⁸⁶ While he understands demons to be a real threat, he understands knowledge of demonic invocative ritual magic to aid with this threat, because he believes that only by coming to know this type of magic can he come to distinguish what constitutes the pure type of magic—in other words, this knowledge is an integral part of the overall knowledge one needs to succeed in practicing pure magic. Since Christian faith is also an integral component of

⁶⁸³ Arnold, “Introduction to *De Laude*,” 37-38; McLean, “Introduction,” 17; Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton*, 78.

⁶⁸⁴ Trithemius, *Steganographia*, Prologue.

Et ne quis huius operis lector futurus cum in processu saepe offenderit nomina, officia, ordines, differentias, proprietates, orationes, & quaslibet alias operationes spirituum, per quorum intelligentias haec secreta huius scientiae omnia clauduntur & aperiuntur; me Necromanticum & Magu, vel cum daemon pactum contraxisse, vel qualibet alia superstitione vsum, vel vntem credat vel existimet: necessarium duxi & oportunum, famam & nomen meum à tanta labe, iniuria, culpa & macula solenni protestatione in hoc prologo cum veritate vendicando praeseruare. Heidel edition, 128

⁶⁸⁵ Trithemius, *Steganographia*, Prologue

Sine iniuria Christianae fidei, cum integritate Ecclesiasticae traditionis, sine superstitione quacunque, sine idololatria, sine omni pacto malignorum spirituum explicito vel implicito; sine suffumigatione, adoratione, veneratione, cultu, sacrificio, oblatione daemonum, & sine omni culpa vel peccato tam veniali quam mortali. Heidel edition, 129

⁶⁸⁶ As mentioned, and it bears repeating, it seems as though his fellow monks agreed—considering the severity of the rumours surrounding his magical practice. If his fellow monks had perceived a conflict between his magic and Christian faith, this would have almost certainly been indicated in the source material we have on his resignation.

this success, it is necessary for him, as we have seen, to harmonize his magic with Christian canonical theology and dogma. As I have been arguing throughout, part of what constituted this perception of a demonic threat in the first place was the perception of Jewish magicians: they were powerful and knowledgeable enough to invoke demons to disastrous consequences. This is why supersession theology, as I will argue in the following sections, renders Trithemius' move to harmonize his magic with Christian canonical theology more explicit. To expand on this we will now have to turn to the Jewish influences in the work.

5.1.2 Jewish Influences in the *Steganographia*

What is of particular interest is how Trithemius used Moses as a paradigm for the ultimate magician, one who understands the necessity of secrecy:

It is the opinion of the wise, whom the Greeks call Philosopher, to conceal any discovered secrets, whether it is of nature or of art, in various forms or methods, lest the knowledge of it come to wicked people. Moses, the most renowned leader of the Israelites, concealed the descriptions of the creation of Heaven and Earth, disguising the ineffable secrets of these mysteries in simple words, which the most learned of Jews can confirm.⁶⁸⁷

Moses received the Law, but also hid it in order to preserve the sanctity of its purity, a clear nod to Kabbalah.⁶⁸⁸ By following the example of Moses, Trithemius is thus validating the necessity of the secrecy of his magic, lending it authority. This parallel with Moses therefore not only allows him to legitimate his magic, but also to imply that the secrecy he is insisting upon was mandated by God.

While Christian kabbalah, which is barely mentioned in the work, served as an underlying template for *Steganographia*,⁶⁸⁹ there is some ambiguity in Trithemius' treatment of the system. On the one hand, Trithemius writes in his prologue,

Lest these great secrets reach the ears of ignorant or wicked people, I have considered it to be my duty to shroud its mysteries, as it may instruct the unknowledgeable to understand them. I did it in such a way so that no one of those who are unskilled, no one except who is devoted to being the most studious, could fully penetrate the arcana of this new science under their own accord; unless they receive it directly from a teacher, what the Hebrews call Cabala, which is foremost among the occult mysteries.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁷ Trithemius, *Steganographia*, Prologue

Sapientes, quos Græco sermone Philosophos appellamus, si quæ vel naturæ, vel artis reperissent arcana, ne in prauorum hominum notitiam deuenirent, variis occulatasse modis atque figuris, eruditissimorum opinio est. Moysen quoque israeliticæ gentis famosissimum Ducem in descriptione creationis Coeli & Terræ ineffabilia mysteriorū arcana verbis operuisse simplicibus, doctores quique Iudæorum confirmant. Heidel edition, 125.

⁶⁸⁸ Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology*, 200.

⁶⁸⁹ Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology*, 132-133.

⁶⁹⁰ Trithemius, *Steganographia*, Prologue

And yet, further in his dedication, Trithemius explicitly states:

This deep and secret art has its own property: that it easily renders the student⁶⁹¹ incomparably more learned than the master, I would say, provided they are disposed by nature to proceed and studious in those things they have learned in the Cabalistic tradition⁶⁹²

The implications are clear. By modelling himself after the Kabbalistic understanding of Moses, Trithemius is claiming that, much like how the truth of the Law was received and hidden by Moses, only to be revealed to those who are worthy, he has received true magic, and must keep its secrets (the secrets of the universe) hidden, only to be revealed to those who are worthy. By drawing on the figure of Moses to lend his magic authority while simultaneously claiming that the only path to successfully practicing true magic lies in Christian knowledge and piety, Trithemius is thus reifying the supersession trope of the student besting the master, of Christian magic mastering and defeating its Jewish predecessor.

As with the work's taken up in Chapter Four, the magic of Trithemius fetishizes the magic of his Jewish predecessors and, through this process, comes to define the identity of the ideal Christian magician through narratives of contrast and opposition. However, the implications of Trithemius' invocation of supersession theology are different than the examples provided in Chapter Four, and are worth exploring here in a bit more detail. Unlike the works we saw in Chapter Four, with Trithemius this gesture seems much more concerned with the intellectual perimeters and the underlying theoretical template circumscribing the ritual space our other works were preoccupied with. This is not to say that Trithemius is unconcerned with control over the ritual space (he is, as much of the above discussion has demonstrated), or to say that the works that we previously discussed did not have this type of spiritual edification as their ultimate goal. What I am suggesting is that for Trithemius, his primary concern was to present what he sees as legitimate magic as a spiritual exercise for gaining the highest form of Christian knowledge.

Ne autem hoc magnum secretum in aures vulgariū imperitorum aut prauorum hominum perueniat, officij mei rationem existimaui non vltimam, ita illud, quoniam mysteria docet intelligere nescientem, mysterijs obuoluere, vt nemo futurus sit ex imperitorum numero, nemo nisi studiosissimus, qui huius scientiæ arcanum sua possit virtute perfecte & ad intentionem nostram penetrare ad plenum, nisi per receptionem à docente, quam Hebræi Cabalam, mysterijs præpositam oculatissimis, appellant. Heidel edition, 126.

⁶⁹¹ The Latin is *discipulum*, which is often translates as “disciple” of “follower,” but can also mean student.

⁶⁹² Trithemius, *Steganographia*, Prologue

Habet enim hæc profunda secretissima ars eam proprietatem, ut discipulum magistro facile reddat incomparabiliter, et ita dixerim doctiorem: modo sit à natura ad procedendum dispositus, & in his, quæ in traditione Cabalistica percepit studiosus. Heidel edition, 128.

With this move, then, we see Trithemius saying, yes, control over the ritual space is important, but this control is only a means to an even greater end: the control over the highest form of knowledge available, the divine secrets of the universe. To stake the latter claim Trithemius must contend with the perceived authority of the Jewish magician, invoking supersession theology do to so. Part of the evoking of this trope, as indicated above, involved the serious study of demonic forms of magic, for only by knowing these “corrupting” forms of magic could Trithemius, through a process of differentiation: 1) construct his understanding of the highest form of magic, 2) construct the identity that had the authority to practice this magic, 3) supersede the Jewish magician and neutralize the perceived threat they represented, and 4) placing access to the secrets of the universe in Christian, rather than Jewish, hands.

While Trithemius drives the Christian takeover of the intellectual sphere of magic through inferences to Christian kabbalah, Reuchlin and Agrippa, as we shall see, further it with the explicit Christianization of the Kabbalistic framework. As the influence of Kabbalah plays a much more explicit role in these works, before moving on to discuss them it will be pertinent to provide a short discussion of Kabbalah, and how the Jewish roots of Kabbalistic thinking made its way into Christian magic.

5.2 APPROPRIATION: FROM KABBALAH⁶⁹³ TO CHRISTIAN KABBALAH

The collection of Jewish mystical traditions that became known as Kabbalah can be identified as one of the most influential strands of thought on the development of various strands of Western esotericism.⁶⁹⁴ By the end of the twelfth, early thirteenth century, Kabbalah (translated as either “tradition” or “reception”) emerged as part of the “on going effort to systemize existing elements of Jewish theurgy, myth, and mysticism into a full-fledge response to the rationalist challenge.”⁶⁹⁵ Having an esoteric component, it an “esoteric body of

⁶⁹³ For further information on the scholarship of Kabbalah, please see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002); Rebecca Macy Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*, Harvard Theological Studies (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1998); Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York, Jewish Publication Society, 1974).

⁶⁹⁴ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 11, 13, 59-60; Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 53-55; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 31.

⁶⁹⁵ Idel, *New Perspectives*, 251, 253

speculation”⁶⁹⁶ that include an emphasis on piety, Torah learning, speculations on the use of the ten *sephirot* or emanations of the Godhead and the use of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in creation, and meditations on the relationship between creation and God.⁶⁹⁷

Kabbalah can therefore be understood as a Jewish mystical system and language for understanding and interfacing with the divine structures underlying all of creation. First appearing in Southern France and Northern Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and consisting of a wide array of forms and trends, Kabbalah attempted to explain the relationship between the divine forces.⁶⁹⁸ Four major influences converged into the complex, multifaceted phenomenon: *aggadah* and *midrashic* motifs; *Merkavah* mysticism; theosophic speculations, and neoplatonism.⁶⁹⁹ The merging of these concepts became, as Idel describes, a way of identifying and interpreting the truth and values of the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁰⁰ Kabbalah was a way to study, experience and interact with the nature and structures of the divine realm, and also a way to understand its relationship to the human realm. Kabbalah thus describes a lived experience that

⁶⁹⁶ Idel, *New Perspectives*, 253.

⁶⁹⁷ Idel, *New Perspectives*, 253, 260; Harold Bloom, “Forward,” in *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation*, by Moshe Idel, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), x; Arthur Green, “Introduction,” *The Zohar: Printzker Edition*, trans. Daniel C. Matt (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), xxxvi; Hartley Lachter, “Introduction: Reading Mysteries, The Origins of Scholarship on Jewish Mysticism,” in *Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah: New Insights and Scholarship*, ed. Frederick Greenspahn (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 5-7.

⁶⁹⁸ Arthur Green, “Introduction,” xxxvii; Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 23; Idel, *New Perspectives*, 253; Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 272, 274-275.

⁶⁹⁹ *Aggadah* is an expansion of biblical narratives set in Rabbinic times, *Halakah* (Jewish Law), rabbinic teachings, liturgy, practical mysticism, prayers, magic, and contemplation of numbers and words. *Midrash* is a Jewish exegesis that is divided into two categories: *Midrash halakha* (Law) and *Midrash Aggadah* (narratives). Attempting to reconcile apparent contradictions in Torah, *midrash* responds to theological and practical questions by seeking precedence in Torah, or seeking to connect Torah to the lived reality of the time through the use of narrative. *Theosophy* (literally “wisdom of God”) is a system in which hidden paths are used to understand, describe, and experience the divine. It is a form of knowledge that focuses on individual union with God. For more information on *midrash*, please see Jacob Neusner, *What is Midrash?* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997); <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/midrash-101/>. On *Aggadah*, please see Michael Fishbane, “The Aggadah: Fragments of Delight,” *Prooftexts* 13, no. 2 (1993): 181-90. On theosophy, please see Antoine Faivre’s *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*, translated by Christine Rhone, Studies in Western Esotericism (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2000).

⁷⁰⁰ Shahar Arzy and Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: A Neurocognitive Approach to Mystical Experiences*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 9. In their work on a neuro-cognitive approach to Kabbalah, Arzy and Idel noted that while studying the Hebrew Bible and interpreting the symbolism found within was important, Kabbalah should be looked at as a lived mystical experience, rather than as a detached, abstract doctrine or theoretical approach (9). As Wolfson states, Kabbalah described divine nature and the “quintessential human experience of that nature” (Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines*, 273).

transcends mere textual study.⁷⁰¹

The *Zohar* (loosely translated as “Illuminations” or “Splendour”) became one of the better known foundational texts of Kabbalah. Originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic, the self-presented legend has it that the *Zohar* was written by the second century Jewish thinker Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai. Receiving the mysterious and mystical teachings from his teacher—teachings which were devoted to fully understanding both the Oral and Written Torah, and also ways of understanding Divine Will—Rabbi Simeon redacted them. The text then disappeared, until (according to legend) it was discovered in the thirteenth century by Moses de Leon (who might have been the original author).⁷⁰² However, the concrete evidence indicates that the *Zohar* was most likely written in the thirteenth century, with the final redaction taking place in the mid-sixteenth century.⁷⁰³

A mystical reflection on the Torah, the *Zohar* included allusions to the ten *Sephirot*, that is, the ten spheres, emanations or aspects of the Godhead. Each emanation makes up *Ein Soph* or that which was before any emanation. Unity and harmony between the *Sephirot* becomes a central component of Kabbalah; this can be disrupted through sin and incorrect behaviour. Humanity is capable of disrupting the harmonious flow between the *Sephirot*, causing an imbalance not only within the Godhead, but also on earth. However, through knowledge of the Divine Will encoded within Torah, and also proper prayer and ritual, the Kabbalist can decipher the hidden message, uncover the divine aspects, and thus restore the harmonious balance between the *Sephirot*, and, by extension, the harmonious balance between the Godhead and humans. In other words, by emulating the unity between the *Sephirot* on the material plane, the

⁷⁰¹ There are three distinct models within premodern Kabbalah. The first, theosophical-theurgical, was centred primarily within Spanish Kabbalah, and focused on the linguistic aspect, as language is seen to reveal the divine structure. Through language—along with understanding the symbolism and the necessary knowledge—one could maintain and strengthen divine harmony, as well as influence the divine structure. The second model, the ecstatic model, uses language and texts in order to induce mystical experiences. It is more human-oriented—that is, the focus is on the cleansing of the human soul in order to receive the mystical experience from the divine. Finally, the talismanic model emphasizes the ritual use of language in magical activities in order to influence the natural world—so, according to this model, language itself is magical (Idel, *Absorbing Perfection*, 13-15; Rebecca Macy Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*, Harvard Theological Studies, (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 48-49).

⁷⁰² Louis Jacobs, *Jewish Mystical Testimonies*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 80-81; Green, “Introduction,” xxxii; Arthur Green, “Shekhinah, the Virgin Mary, and the Song of Songs: Reflections on a Kabbalistic Symbol in Its Historical Context,” *AJS Review* 26, no. 1 (2002): 25fn101, 8; Janice Rosen, “Moroccan Jewish Saint Veneration from the Maghreb to Montreal,” in *The Canadian Jewish Studies Reader*, ed. Richard Menkis and Norman Ravvin (Calgary AB: Red Deer Press, 2004), 122fn1.

⁷⁰³ Green, “Introduction,” xxxvi-xxxviii.

Kabbalist is able to provide unity in the spiritual plane.⁷⁰⁴

Kabbalah was in part a reaction against the prevalent rabbinic worldview and rationalistic philosophy of the time; it was an effort to interpret the Torah and formulate a worldview outside of the rabbinic parameters.⁷⁰⁵ It is interesting to note that Kabbalists defend their tradition as being wholly and inherently traditional. In response to claims that they worshipped multiple gods—that is, claims that the individual *Sephirah* were individual gods, as opposed to parts of the one Godhead—some Kabbalists claimed that the *Sephirot* were meant to be seen as symbols, emphasizing the centrality of texts to their approach, particularly the Torah and Talmudic writings. Although Kabbalists believed that the commandments of the Torah were to be universally followed, they also believed that these commandments held a hidden meaning that had to be discerned. Kabbalah was therefore seen as uncovering different (and deeper) insights than those available through what was considered to be traditional Judaism. So, while they made use of traditional texts, they ensured to study the texts for both literal *and* symbolic meanings.⁷⁰⁶

Though many secular and religious scholars dispute the origins of both the text and the tradition, what is of concern here is how the narratives of Kabbalah were used and shaped by later Christian esotericists, who began appropriating the tradition when a Latin translation of the *Zohar* became available.⁷⁰⁷ In the fifteenth century Kabbalah gripped the interest of a young, wealthy Italian nobleman—Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494)—whose translation of

⁷⁰⁴ The *Sephirot* includes both masculine and feminine elements. The practitioner of this mystical tradition attempts not only to understand the relationship between the *Sephirot* through the study of Torah, but also to bring the spheres together in harmony and maintain the balance through ritual and practice. Improper ritualization or behaviour not only produces a universal imbalance, but might also unleash forces of evil (Biale, *Blood and Belief*, 88; Sharot, *Messianism*, 32; Jacobs, *Jewish Mystical Testimonies*, 80-82)

⁷⁰⁵ Idel, *New Perspectives*, 253; Sharot, *Messianism*, 32

⁷⁰⁶ For example, observing the Commandments was not only a sign and symbol of divinity, but also affected divinity; the spiritual plane was affected by the lower. Acts of devotions were used to reunite God with *Shekinah*, or divine wisdom—a central aim in Kabbalah. This was often achieved on the material plane through physical acts of unification—for example, pious scholars would have sex with their wives on Fridays as a recreation of that cosmic union. The symbolic imitation of the Divine Will was therefore understood to affect the Divine interconnectedness within the *Sephirot* (Sharot, *Messianism*, 33-35).

⁷⁰⁷ von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 70. The later Latin translations of *Zohar* were done by Christians. For a brief discussion, please see Hanegraaff *Esotericism and the Academy*, especially pages 53-56. For a discussion on the seminal importance of Kabbalah in the development of premodern Christian esotericism, please see Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture*, 53-68 and Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge*, 31-43; Allison P. Coudert, “Christian Kabbalah” Introduction: Reading Mysteries, The Origins of Scholarship on Jewish Mysticism”, in *Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah: New Insights and Scholarship*, edited by Frederick Greenspahn (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 159-172.

the literature quickly impacted esotericism and magic in particular.⁷⁰⁸ One of the youngest sons in his family, Pico was destined for a career in the Church. At the age of thirteen, he studied canon law at the University of Bologna and, two years later, in 1479, began to study philosophy. After moving to the University of Padua in 1482, Pico studied under the tutelage of a Jewish philosopher, Elia del Medigo. After four years of travels and adventure—including an ill-advised affair and attempted elopement with the wife of the cousin of Lorenzo de Medici—he eventually moved to Perugia, where he studied with a number of Jewish teachers, and was ultimately introduced to Kabbalah.⁷⁰⁹

Learning Hebrew from a Sicilian Jewish convert, Flavius Mithridates, Pico began to translate the *Zohar* into Latin, along with commissioning translations from his Hebrew teacher. Like many Christian Hebraists, his desire was not so much to simply translate the text from one language into another, but rather to apply his reading of Kabbalah in order to prove a Christian truth. While Pico shared the then-popular belief that Hebrew was the most sacred language, he nevertheless rebuffed Jews for not fully understanding the true meaning of their own work. Pico's interest in Kabbalah had little to do with Judaism and more to do with appropriating and reworking Kabbalah into a Christian framework to stake the claim that not only was the fundamental Christian truth the bedrock of knowing God, but that it was also passed down secretly by Moses and contained in Christian understanding of kabbalah.⁷¹⁰

5.3 JOHANNES REUCHLIN (1455-1522)

If Pico was the germinator of Christian kabbalah, then Johannes Reuchlin was its gardener. Born in Pforzheim, where his father was an official at the local Dominican monastery, Reuchlin began his studies in Latin at the attached school. In 1470, he moved to Freiburg to study at the university, and then moved to Paris, where he studied Greek. In 1474, young Reuchlin moved yet again, transferring to the University of Basel where he gained a degree in that year and another in 1477. In 1481, he graduated from the University of Tübingen, and attained a doctorate in law in 1485 while teaching Greek. After earning his doctorate, he became

⁷⁰⁸ Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 41.

⁷⁰⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *Western Esoteric Traditions*, 42; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 71.

⁷¹⁰ Edwards, *The Jews in Christian Europe*, 50; Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism*, 28-29; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 72.

a court judge for Count Eberhard of Württemberg, where he eventually was granted a rank of a hereditary noble.⁷¹¹ In 1490, Reuchlin travelled to Italy. Here he met Pico, who introduced him to Christian kabbalah. Reuchlin subsequently began to study Hebrew, eventually publishing not only a Hebrew grammar book in 1506, but also *De Verbo Mirifico*, which expounded upon the name of Jesus through the application of Christian kabbalah.⁷¹²

After the death of the Count in 1496 and the appointment of his nephew, Count Eberhard II, Reuchlin fell out of favour with the court and was exiled to Heidelberg. This banishment, however, was short lived; in 1498, the count was deposed, and Reuchlin was invited back to Württemberg, where he lived until his retirement in 1512. In 1517, Reuchlin wrote *De Arte Cabalistica*. A development of the Christian kabbalist system first proposed by Pico, *De Arte Cabalistica* emphasized an upward transcendence to God, rather than seeking to bring the Divine “down” towards the earth and oneself.⁷¹³ In 1522, Johannes Reuchlin died in Stuttgart, possibly from jaundice.⁷¹⁴

5.3.1 *De Arte Cabalistica*

Composed as a dialogue between three individuals—a Christian, Philolaus; a Jewish Kabbalist, Simon, and a Muslim convert to Christianity, Marranus—*De Arte Cabalistica* positions Kabbalah as the original philosophy. Through the study of the Torah and the emphasis on language, the practitioner is able to move away from the baser forms of thought to the ultimate, highest form: that is, the Messiah. By understanding the letters that make up the name of the messiah, the Kabbalist is able to decipher the hidden name of God. Reuchlin’s reworking is thus a “Christological reading of Kabbalah,”⁷¹⁵ not only interpreting the Tetragrammaton in a Christo-centric way, but also re-conceptualizing Jesus as one of the *Sephirot*.⁷¹⁶

The magic presented here aims at joining the human mind to God, at paving “the way for transfiguration and unification with the divine once life has been morally cleansed.”⁷¹⁷ Magic is

⁷¹¹ Erika Rummel, *The Case Against Johann Reuchlin: Social and Religious Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), eBook, 14.

⁷¹² Rummel, *Case Against Reuchlin*, 15; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 72.

⁷¹³ von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 73.

⁷¹⁴ Rummel, *Case Against Reuchlin*, 15.

⁷¹⁵ von Stuckrad, “Christian Kabbalah and Anti-Jewish Polemics,” 13.

⁷¹⁶ von Stuckrad, “Christian Kabbalah and Anti-Jewish Polemics,” 13.

⁷¹⁷ Roling, “The Complete Nature of Christ,” 253, 261.

therefore transformative: by joining the human (here imagined as Christian) mind with God, the reader becomes transformed by being able to tap into the very source of all things: God. That power is also found in nature, so by mastering this power one could also control nature. Such clues in deciphering the secrets of God could be found, *De Arte Cabalistica* claims, by understanding the (Christian) truth embedded within Christian kabbalah.

The appropriation of Kabbalah formed the basis for a philosophical movement that is encapsulated in Christian kabbalah that set off a battle over the interpretation of tradition, knowledge, and meaning. The one who controlled the interpretation controlled and validated the truth: the innate knowledge of Divine Will and the truth of God. If one can prove the truth of God, it was thought, then their interpretation of that truth—and, by extension, their over-arching worldview and conceptualization of identity—would be unquestioned. Kabbalah then became a space for competing discourses of identity, mirroring the social conflicts and tensions of the time. Through appropriating the tradition and shaping it into a Christological framework, Reuchlin not only attempted to validate his Christian worldview, but also echoed the debates surrounding identity building that aimed to establish Christianity as the ultimate recipient of God's truth, thereby granting them social dominance.

Though Reuchlin had a level of respect for Judaism that attracted ecclesiastical attention—he even defended Jewish texts in the infamous Pfefferkorn Affair⁷¹⁸—he nevertheless read Jewish works (especially mystical ones) through the lens of supersession theology.⁷¹⁹ As such, like many others of his time, Reuchlin believed Jews had fundamentally misinterpreted the Covenant, which prophesied the arrival of Jesus as messiah. His writings were imbued with this Christocentric view, as he believed that kabbalah was a means to validating Christian truth.⁷²⁰ His ambivalence towards the Jewish community could be seen in *De Arte Cabalistica*, when Philolaus and Marranus are discussing Simon after he leaves them to prepare for the Sabbath. Marranus praises Simon's ability to teach and inspire, concluding with:

Good Heavens, a Jewish man, born, brought up, educated
and instructed by Jews! A people that the whole world
considers to barbaric, superstitious, base, abject and strangers

⁷¹⁸ Shamir, *Christian Conceptions*, 8.

⁷¹⁹ Fanger, "Introduction," 13.

⁷²⁰ Goodman and Goodman, *De Arte Cabalistica*, 15; Elliot R. Wolfson, "Language, Secrecy, and the Mysteries of Law: Theurgy and the Christian Kabbalah of Johannes Reuchlin," in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Idea and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. Claire Fanger, (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), 312-313.

to the splendours of the noble arts. Believe me, I would have stayed up all night, watching this man's face, listening to his words, if the Sabbath has not intervened!⁷²¹

Here, we see Reuchlin explicitly channeling public perceptions through a discourse that highlights Jewish alterity. In the text, Reuchlin places Simon, who represents the Jewish community, outside of the social sphere. As the other characters in the narrative describe and construct him—highlighting his Jewish identity and knowledge of mystical and spiritual matters through his ability to teach both Marranus (a Muslim convert) and Philolaus (a Pythagorean)—Simon's own voice is absent.⁷²²

In Reuchlin's portrayal, Simon is a master of secret knowledge, but, due to his blood, is inevitably destined to be surpassed by his students. The narrator hints at this when Marranus expresses astonishment at how engrossed he was in Simon's speech, despite his belief that Jews are incapable of "enlightened" learning. Simon becomes an object, a thing to talk about, a voiceless entity that is not quite of this world. The portrayal of Simon as the exotic wise man allows us to see how Reuchlin finely tuned the projection of the Jewish community through a particular lens. Simon becomes the object of the hegemonic Christian gaze, his being an ambiguous—thus dangerous and transgressive—space of both wisdom and incivility. He is dangerous because of his knowledge, his power, his Jewishness.

What is notable is that in spite of Simon's explicit claim that "it is not in part of our holy design to discuss at length those lewd and shameful demons" he nonetheless does exactly that, describing their movements as wandering "round the upper regions of fire, earth or to flit close by us in the air" and "provoking earthquakes and exciting flame-belching winds" to "vex not

⁷²¹ Reuchlin, *De Arte Cabalistica*, Book II, Folio 22-T.

Dii boni, homo Iudaeus ex Iudaeis ortus, alitus, educatus, et edoctus! Quae natio ubique gentium barbara, superstitiosa, vilis, abiecta, et a splendore omnium bonarum artium aliena est habita. Perpetuam, crede mihi, hanc noctem proclivi desyderio meo viri huius vidissem vultus, audissem verba loquentis, si non miserum hoc vesperi sabbathum intervenisset! Widu-Wolfgang Ehler, Hans-Gert Roloff and Peter Schäfer, editors, *Sämtliche Werke: Bande II, 1: De Arte cabalistica libri tres/Die Kabbalistik* (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010), 170, ln 32-39

⁷²² Reuchlin, *De Arte Cabalistica*, Book I, Folio I-C,

"Nam ad Germanorum nobile hoc emporium Francofordiense migrantibus è Thracia mercatoribus coitem me iunxi, quod acceperim hic esse Iudaeum magnae in opera cabalistica famae ac igentis existimationis, quae una facultas (ut sapae audivi doctissimos homines suavi ocio et consiliis uberrimis affluentes me praesente arbitrari) prae caeteris esse queat philosophiae Pythagoricae cognitior tanquam nihil similius. Nam esse Pythagoram omnia ferme dogmata istinc expiscatum aiunt. Iudaei illi Simon esse nomen perhibent Eleazari ex antiqua Iochaicorum prosapia quem nunc remotis mensis adoriri stat sententia"

Ehler, Roloff and Schäfer, editors, *De Arte cabalistica libri tres/Die Kabbalistik*, 38 ln. 29-39, 40, ln. 1-2.

only the human race but also the brutes, pouring out their speech without sound.”⁷²³

Additionally, the document closes with a warning:

For this is a science of the spirits, and there is no person who can discern between angels and demons, even if they are granted with the knowledge. Even such a person should not ponder on this, certainly without great fear and without cleared morals.⁷²⁴

The final paragraphs cautions Simon’s listeners—and by extension, Reuchlin’s readers—against the insufficient cultivation and application knowledge, a misstep which it warns will lead to the invocation of demons, rather than angels, and by extension a caution of overly interacting with the Jewish community.

While this warning about the accidental invocation of demons hints at not only the social controversy of the Reformation and the tensions that lead to it, it also, on a more fundamental level, indicates that the reader should be wary of knowledge derived from illegitimate or improper sources—in this case, Jews. Reuchlin, like many of his Christian contemporaries, believed that the Jewish interpretation of the Covenant and of God’s promise to Israel was fundamentally flawed. It was the Christian reading of truth—which was recognized as the true path to salvation through Jesus, the promised messiah—that was correct. Only through proper knowledge, that is Christian knowledge, could a (Christian) person find the truth. The cultivation of incorrect knowledge, on the other hand, would damage the soul, jeopardize one’s salvation, and even potentially invite the hordes of Hell. In other words, Reuchlin suggests that to gain knowledge from Jewish alterity is to court the very legions of Hell. It is also not too surprising that the two other characters, Marranus and Philolaus, are both distinctly non-Jewish: one is a

⁷²³ Reuchlin, *De Arte Cabalistica*, Book III, Folio LXXVII-K

Sed absit a sancto proposito nostro, ut multa de squalentibus et tuprissimis daemonibus illis, humani generis hostibus, quae dicuntur contrariae fortitudines, disputare pergamus, vel qui superiorum regionem pervagari putantur ignei, vel qui propinquo nobis aere oberrant, vel qui terreni terrestria territant, vel qui lacus et fluvios habitant ac saepe ipsum mare quatiunt, vel qui sub terra illos quandoque invadunt, qui puteos effodiunt et metalla, item hiatus terrae provocant, flammivomos ventos agitant, et fundamenta concutiunt, extremum, qui omnia lucis ac splendoris fugiunt inperscrutabiles et penitus tenebricosi, qui non modo genus humanum, verum etiam brutua vexant, sermones absque sonitu ingerentes. Ehlerr, Roloff and Schäfer, eds. *De Arte cabalistica libri tres/Die Kabbalistik*, 534, ln27-39, 536, ln.1-2.

⁷²⁴ Reuchlin, *De Arte Cabalistica*, Book III, Folio LXXIX-O.

nam cum ea scientia sit et rerum spiritualium et spiritualis nec possit homo facile de spiritibus afferre iudicium, is etiam, cui est inter angelos et daemones iudicandi concessa potestas qualibet discreta pensiculatione vel usque ad aequatam regulam, profecto non sine multa utique formidine ac nisi purgatis ante moribus isti facultati. Ehlerr, Roloff and Schäfer, eds. *De Arte cabalistica libri tres/Die Kabbalistik*, 544, ln. 25-30.

Muslim convert and the other is a Pythagorean.⁷²⁵ The two often discuss and debate their respective philosophies, as Simon, the Jew, teaches them with the knowledge that their wisdom will someday exceed and surpass his own.

5.4 ESTABLISHING CHRISTIAN DOMINANCE: HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA VON NETTESHEIM (1486-1536)

Perhaps one of the most influential humanist and esoteric thinkers was Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim. Born to a minor noble family in Cologne on September 14 1486, Agrippa began his studies at the University of Cologne in 1499, gaining his master's degree in 1502. In 1509, he began to lecture at the University of Dôle on Reuchlin's recently published *De verbo mirifico*, and it was there he wrote *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminae sexus* (*On the Noble and Excellent Nature of the Feminine Sex*),⁷²⁶ a work which seeks to demonstrate the superiority of the female sex using his understanding of Christian kabbalah.⁷²⁷

In late 1509 Agrippa travelled to Würzburg to meet the famed abbot, Johannes Trithemius. This encounter left a deep impression on the young Agrippa, and, upon leaving the monastery, he began work on what would become his seminal *magnum opus*, *De Occulta Philosophia*.⁷²⁸ While serving in the military under the Emperor Maximilian he was inspired to delve even more deeply into philosophy, theology, and Christian kabbalah, as a result of various encounters with other thinkers and their works. In 1515, Agrippa gave lectures at the University

⁷²⁵ It is interesting to note the presence of the convert to Christianity as a foreshadowing of Simon acknowledging the eminence of Christian kabbalah, with an implication that with this acknowledgement, Simon has, in a way, converted. Simon has reified Reuchlin's presentation of supersession theology by, as Wolfson noted, providing the necessary "numerical proof for the Christological claim (...) the secret names of God are thus interpreted as encoding the mystery of the Trinity" (Wolfson, "Language, Secrecy, and the Mysteries of Law", 330).

⁷²⁶ This is sometimes translated as *On the Noble and Superior Nature of the Female Sex*.

⁷²⁷ Wolf-Dieter Müller-Jahncke and Paul Richard, "Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535): Philosophical Magic, Empiricism, and Skepticism," in *Philosophers of the Renaissance*, ed. Paul Richard Blum, trans. Brian McNeil, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 123.

⁷²⁸ Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 1-2; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 66-67.

Echoing his tutor Trithemius, Agrippa stated that magic represented a culmination of all natural philosophy, mathematics, and canonical theology—essentially, it was a way to understand the universe. Agrippa believed sin and evil came from ignorance of God, and that the knowledge of God can be found in the "Book of Creatures, Book of Law, and the Book of the Gospel": natural philosophy was believed to contain some of the truth; the Torah, most of it, and the Gospels, all of it. For Agrippa, magic was a path for enlightenment, what Nauert calls "illumination". The Bible recounts the "illumination" of those who were divinely blessed and who were taught to preserve the divine truth; therefore it was an authoritative text (Weeks, *German Mysticism*, 121-122; Watanabe-O'Kelly, "Exploring the 'Three-Fold World'", 244).

of Pavia on Hermes Trismegistus' *Pomander*.⁷²⁹

In 1518, Agrippa secured a position at Metz as the town's advocate. However, he left his post in 1520 after becoming embroiled in a dispute with an inquisitor named Nicholas Savin while defending a woman against charges of witchcraft. In 1524, he worked as a physician in Freiburg before moving to Lyons to become the personal physician of the queen's mother. After her death Agrippa encountered open hostility in the royal court, and was ultimately stripped of his pension and forbidden from leaving France. In desperation, in 1526 he wrote *De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum (On the Uncertainty and Vanities of the Sciences)*, where he satirized and apparently recanted his earlier works in esoteric thought—though his later works suggested that he merely paid necessary lip-service, and he continued his studies.⁷³⁰ The ploy worked, and Agrippa soon found his way to Antwerp, becoming the historian in the court of Margaret of Austria.

In 1531, Agrippa revised his earlier draft of *De Occulta Philosophia*, and published the first book. At this time, *De Vanitae* came under fierce scrutiny, particularly by the theologians at Louvain, even being denounced by Agrippa's patron at the time. Agrippa took his detractors to task in both his *Apologia* and *Quaerela*.⁷³¹ While admirable, this act inevitably cost him his career at the court.⁷³² However, in June of 1532, he was offered both protection and employment by the Bishop of Cologne, Hermann von Wied. He completed *De Occulta Philosophia* in November of that year, and dedicated it to the Bishop; although just before Christmas, an inquisitor declared the texts "heretical and nefarious."⁷³³ Printing was suspended, and Agrippa sent the town's council a letter to argue for the value of his work. Agrippa accused the council of being weak-minded, arrogant, and controlled by religious authorities, and also mocked the censors, which did little to endear him to them. It was only after the intervention of the bishop that all three books of *De Occulta Philosophia* were finally printed in July 1533.⁷³⁴

Agrippa's life after the publication of the *De Occulta Philosophia* becomes enveloped in

⁷²⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, 57; Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 4.

Ποιμάνδρης, also transliterated as *Poemandres* or *Pimander*

⁷³⁰ Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 4.

⁷³¹ The full titles are: *Apologia adversus calumnias propter Decalationem de Vanitate scientiarum, & excellentia verbi Dei, sibi per aliquos Lovanienses Theologistas intentatas* and *Quaerela super calumnia, ob eandem Declamationem per aliquos sceleratissimos sycophantas, apud Caesaream Modest. Nefarie ac proditorie*

⁷³² Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 8.

⁷³³ *doctrina haereticus et lectione nefarius*, Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 9.

⁷³⁴ Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 10.

mystery. What little information we have of this period comes from Agrippa's student, Johann Weyer, who wrote that Agrippa returned to France in 1535, where he was arrested and released very soon after. Very soon after his release (sometime between 1535 and 1536), Weyer writes that Agrippa died in Grenoble.⁷³⁵

5.4.1 *De Occulta Philosophia*

Written in three volumes,⁷³⁶ this compendium of neoplatonic thought, magic, Christian kabbalah, alchemy and an understanding of the role of transempirical beings attempted to systematize all “the cognitive data collected in the various fields of scientific research” to “guarantee the effectiveness of each branch of research and make explicit its potential for acting upon reality.”⁷³⁷ This massive undertaking emphasized a link with the divine, a link that was understood to have passed through ancient traditions, connecting the various revelations back to God. The writings of Hermes Trismegistus, for example, were seen as linking the Pythagoreans and the Platonists to Moses. Highlighting the notion of *prisca theologia*,⁷³⁸ each major philosopher represented a spoke in the wheel of the transmission of divine truth. Zoroaster, Orpheus and Plato (to name a few) each received and nurtured a particular branch of divine knowledge that would provide a link back to the divine.⁷³⁹ It is only through the cultivation of an enlightened soul that one could understand the will of God. By studying Christian kabbalah, magic and other esoteric topics, one could then cleanse one's soul, and be able to truly grasp the deeper meaning of the universe. With knowledge comes power, which also includes the ability to control nature and even the potential to produce miracles.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁵ Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 14.

⁷³⁶ Later legend has it that Agrippa secretly wrote a fourth book of his *De Occulta Philosophia*, and was published about thirty years after his death. An intriguing and fascinatingly dark text, Book IV discusses the naming and summoning various transempirical beings. I have disinclined to discuss the text for various reasons: First, Agrippa's student, Johann Weyer, denounced it. Second, it lacks a certain continuity with the previous three books. And third, unlike my use of the *Book of Abramelin*, which circulated as a legend, became a part of the lore and has a pseudo-epigraphical author, Book IV is directly attributed to Agrippa (this attribution is often disputed by scholars, cf Perrone Compagni and Zambelli), without Agrippa himself claiming authorship, making the fourth book Pseudo-Agrippan.

⁷³⁷ Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 16.

⁷³⁸ Literally “ancient theology”; a notion that one single theology—given by God to the first humans—underlies every single religion. However, despite what the name suggests, *prisca theologia* was most likely formulated in the fifteenth century.

⁷³⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, 59.

⁷⁴⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, 59.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing elements of the *summa* is the neoplatonic focus on the division of the cosmos into three distinct worlds: material, celestial, and divine, mirroring the three aspects of a person (body, soul and spirit) and the Christian ideal of the Holy Trinity. Corresponding to the three worlds were the three principal branches of magic: natural, cosmological and divine. From there, the material/elementary plane of existence was thought to be composed of four material elements, with a fifth non-material element, *quinta essentia* (literally, the fifth essence), which was conceptualized as the underlying force that shapes matter into form, which Agrippa emphasized in his works. The *quinta essentia* is responsible for shaping the properties of minerals and plants, bestowing instinct to animals, and granting reason to humans. Tapping the *quinta essentia* through magic can allow one to control the quintessential properties of the natural world.⁷⁴¹ Magic, as the hidden language of God's truth, thus represents the pinnacle of knowledge: the conjunction of science, philosophy, theory and practice, mathematics and theology.

In keeping with the logical categorical organization, Book I of *De Occulta Philosophia* addresses theories, elements, properties, and uses of various schools of magic, as well as their relationships to the movement of the planets.⁷⁴² Book II discusses numerology, sacred mathematics, music, astrology, and the microcosm residing in humanity.⁷⁴³ Book III focuses on Christian kabbalah, magic, religion, the existence of angels and demons, the power of names, and underscores the importance of faith in the practice of magic.⁷⁴⁴

It is the power of those names that is of particular interest. In Book III Chapter 24, Agrippa discusses the true names of the good and bad spirits. As he writes, although the names of the good and bad spirits are legion, God knows them all, and they can be revealed to humans only through divine revelation. That said, the "Masters of the Hebrews"⁷⁴⁵ believe that as Adam was given the gift to name all the creatures (cf Gen. 2:19-20), that power extends to spirits as well. However, Agrippa stated that demons are named according to their offices: deceiver, fornicator, etc,⁷⁴⁶ whereas the names of angels are divinely given, only revealed to the pious

⁷⁴¹ von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 67.

⁷⁴² Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 18-20; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 67.

⁷⁴³ Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 24-26; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 67.

⁷⁴⁴ Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 28; von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism*, 67.

⁷⁴⁵ *Hebraeorum magistri*

⁷⁴⁶ Agrippa, *De Occulta*, Book 3, Chapt. 24

magician. The implication in the text is that the names of the demons are derived from (earthly) tradition, whereas the names of angels are divinely inspired. This harkens back to previous emphasis on the power of names and the importance of the correct usage or invocation of names, and also hints at the perceived limitations in Jewish thought and tradition, echoing the prevalent supersession theology. Even though Agrippa acknowledges the prevalent idea that “Hebrew was the first of all languages given directly by the heavens”⁷⁴⁷ in the preceding chapter, the actual naming—and therefore the power to control and to be like—divine beings was misinterpreted. This echoes many polemic debates between Christian and Jewish religious thinkers, with many Christian theologians insisting that Jews misconstrued the Covenant as described in the Hebrew Bible, while asserting that their Christian understandings were both superior and the truth.⁷⁴⁸

Because they properly interpreted the scriptures—and by extension, the inner workings of God’s cosmos—Christians were able to learn the true names of angels. Jews, on the other hand, were only able to name the baser demons. Put differently, although their tradition preserved the names of the demons, it could not properly preserve the names of angelic beings. We see here an implicit undercurrent linking the perception of Jews to demons: although both originally were given God’s grace, they have chosen to deny it—a core interpretation which played an integral role in the construction of Christian identity. The voice of Jewish alterity in this particular scene indicates the hegemonic perspective of power: the names of the angels are divinely given, whereas the names of the demons are traditional and are limited.

That Agrippa believed that the truest interpretation and approach to magic was through a Christian lens is undeniable:

Hence, the Hebrews and kabbalists, experts in divine names, can no longer operate the ancient names after Christ, as their fathers have once done. As experience has proven, no evil demons nor any powers from hell, that which can vex or harass humanity, can resist this name, but they will kneel and obey when the name of Jesus is reverently pronounced; not only the name, but they will also quake at the sign of the cross⁷⁴⁹

simili modo in malorum daemonum officiis leguntur eorum nomina: lusor, deceptor, somniator, fornicator et huiusmodi plura. Perrone Compagni, editor, *De Occulta Philosophia*, 469.

⁷⁴⁷ *ipsum esse Hebraeum, quia hoc omnium fuit primum emanavitque de coelo.* Perrone Compagni, *De Occulta*, 467.

⁷⁴⁸ Hammer and von Stuckrad, “Introduction: Western Esotericism and Polemics”, viii.

⁷⁴⁹ Agrippa, *De Occulta*, Book III, chap. 12

Hinc Hebraei et cabalistsae, in divinis nominibus peritissimi, nihil post Christum in priscis illis nominibus operari possunt, sicut olim eorum patres. Et aim experimento comprobatum est nullum malum daemonem, nullam inferorum virtutem ex his, quae vexant aut obsident homines, posse huic nomini resistere, quin velint nolint genu flectant et obediant quando nomen Iesu debita pronuntiatione illis proponitur venerandum; nec solum nomen, sed etiam illius signaculum crucem pavent. Perrone Compagni, editor, *De Occulta Philosophia*, 436-437.

Here Agrippa avers that when the name of Jesus is “invoked in the Holy Spirit with a clear, pure mind and fervent spirit,”⁷⁵⁰ this can guide us to knowledge. This Christo-centric perspective is an underlying theme to his *summa*. In this vein, he also emphasized the necessity of sacraments when expelling demons:

But the bad demons can be conquered by us through the help of the good, especially when they appeal to God the sanctity of the sacred words and the conversation and the horrible incantation—by conjuring the divine power by venerated names and signs of supernatural powers, by miracles, *by sacraments, by sacred mysteries* and such; which indeed, conjuration or exorcism are done in the names of religion and divine virtue⁷⁵¹ (emphasis mine).

Agrippa’s faith is not in question, nor the importance of the sacraments. What is interesting is how he incorporated the social discourse around sacraments into his treatise through his particular portrayal of demonic exorcism.

It is important to remember that Agrippa wrote *De Occulta Philosophia* approximately fifteen years after Luther sparked the Reformation. This was a period of intense social, political and religious unrest that saw debate, public challenges to religious authority, and conflict. During this time, Christian identity was in a state of flux, and these tensions and questions played out in Agrippa’s text. What is of note is the encroaching of demons in the Christian practitioner’s space and with it, the power of the name, which has silenced the Jewish traditional expertise in that particular power. Their voices—their expertise, their names, and their power—have been excluded from the exorcism space.

Here we have two inferences: the first is that after the birth of Jesus, the power of the Jewish magician is obsolete, despite their potent magical lineage. The name of Christ is equated to the name of God, and the name is therefore more powerful than the previous tradition it appropriated. Second, we can see that demons can be only fully conquered with the proper sacraments, knowledge of the Christian sacred mysteries, and the sincere invocation of the name of Jesus. It is faith, and not tradition, that allows one to control and exorcize demons. The

⁷⁵⁰ Agrippa, *De Occulta*, Book III, chap. 12

sed oportet illud invocare in Spiritu Sancto, mente expurgata et animo ferventi. Perrone Compagni, editor, *De Occulta Philosophia*, 436.

⁷⁵¹ Agrippa, *De Occulta*, Book III, chap. 32

Mali vero daemones a nobis convicuntur auxilio bonorum, praesertim quando obtestator erga Deum sanctimonia pollet verbaque sacra sermonemque horribilem incantet—puta coniurando potestate divina per veneranda supernaturalium virtutum nomina et signacula, per miracula, per sacramenta, per sacra mysteria et per eiusmodi; quae quidem coniurationes sive exorcismata quatenus nomine religionis et divinae virtutis fiunt. Perrone Compagni, editor, *De Occulta Philosophia*, 498-499.

Christian social anxiety around their identity and their central position in the cosmos is played out in tension with Jewish identity, and the Christian perception thereof.

5.5 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Systematic discourse is ingrained in social cognition, and indicates not only an understanding of—and communication with—alterity, but also an attempt to integrate alterity into the hegemony's construction of identity. In other words, the hegemonic community constructs their identity through the various conversations, ideas, understandings and social tensions that they encounter in society.⁷⁵² As this filtering process is captured in narrative, we can say that texts often reflect their authors' positionality with respect to the grand scheme of social discourse, revealing aspects of how they understood and channeled the social discourses of their world.

In the figure of Trithemius we see someone who—plagued by rumours of consorting with demons—is immensely concerned with harmonizing his magical practice with Christian dogma, a concern that results in the construction of what Brann refers to as a magical Christian theology. This magical theology, informed by the discourse of supersession, works to circumscribe the intellectual/theoretical perimeters of magic to privilege the Christian position in the fight for control over the ultimate aim of magic: attaining the divine secrets of the universe. In this fight Trithemius feels that the best way to win is—to borrow a popular aphorism—to know the enemy. Demons, for him, represented a chaos that permeated and threatened to taint the “purity” of Christian magic, and, by extension, divine and societal order. However, by gaining knowledge about them through study, Trithemius believed that the practitioner could control and exorcize this chaos to restore order.

The ambiguous nature of the transempirical beings in his works highlights the danger inherent in invocative magic. To be successful the practitioner would need to know exactly what and who the being was. Put differently, controlling the ambiguous becomes an exercise in nuance that requires a considerable amount of power. For Trithemius the attainment of knowledge is power, and can be exceedingly dangerous if not undertaken by only the most

⁷⁵² Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism*, 6.

learned and pious of Christians. While there is a discernible Kabbalistic influence here, this influence is much more clearly expressed in the works of Reuchlin and Agrippa.

In *De Arte Cabalistica*, Reuchlin asserts the superiority of Christian kabbalah by highlighting the alterity of Jewish magic through the figure of Simon. Not only does Simon become the object of a kind for the hegemonic Christian gaze, but his teachings were then taken and moulded to fit a Christian framework. He becomes the very personification of exoticism:⁷⁵³ knowledgeable, even mystical, but only because of his innate “Otherness” and “taboo-ness.” Embodying some sort of transformative wisdom, Simon’s wisdom is incomplete precisely because it is Jewish; it is only through the Christian reformulating that this knowledge—and wisdom—becomes realized. Further accentuating Simon’s status is his portrayal as mysterious; Reuchlin does not give much personal details about him, and very few passages are written in Simon’s voice. What is of concern is what Simon can contribute to Christian kabbalah, not who Simon is.

In *De Occulta Philosophia*, we see how Agrippa attempted to Christianize not only the magical ritual space, but also its theoretical framework by silencing, and thus eliminating, the Jewish voice and the traditional expertise that is often associated with the portrayal of the Jewish magician. Presenting his work as a *summa magice*, Agrippa created a paradigm that not only placed the access to the underlying divine secrets in Christian hands, but has, like Trithemius but even more so, Christianized the very secrets themselves. Agrippa has achieved the initiative instigated by Trithemius: the Christianization of the intellectual framework underlying invocative magic.

It is important to note that, in the efforts to assert Christian magical prowess and to paint magic as a Christian activity (thereby magically reifying supersession theology), the magical thinkers we have seen also emphasized that the theory and rituals were aligned with canonical Christian orthodoxy, thus defending their magic as being not only compatible with their Christian faith, but also necessary for it. The knowledge—and at times, the practice—of demonic magic was necessary not only to definitively identify and isolate the potentially corrosive force that could corrupt true Christian magic, but also to demonstrate true Christian piety, as only a true Christian could control and compel demons. It is the strength of one’s devoutness that

⁷⁵³ Cf. “Oriental monk.” Please see Jane Naomi Iwamura, *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

allows the magician to wholly command the ritual space, to learn the divine secrets, and to complete the Christian faith—only then are they able to fully control that which taints Christianity in all realms, just as Jesus commanded them. Alterity is therefore necessary, as it is through tensions with alterity—whether it is Jewish alterity, or demonic alterity—that one could begin to discuss and understand oneself. Alterity is an ingrained part of society (magical or otherwise), and it is only through conversations with and about them that Christians could build and secure their hegemonic identity.

Through the narratological theories of alterity and postcolonialism, we can see how social tensions were mirrored in the texts, and how this contributed to the creation and recreation of the majority's identity. Minorities posed a threat precisely because they were just as much a part of society as the hegemony. In spite of attempts to segregate them, Jews in urban centres lived and worked alongside their Christian counterparts. They were talked about by the hegemonic communities because they were a part of society, therefore a part of the prevalent social discourse. They are powerful because they are the inheritors of the first language, because of their inherent magical abilities, because they were taboo. And it is because they were taboo that they could be superseded.

CONCLUSION

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES WITH DEMONS

As the preceding chapters have highlighted, demons, magic, invocative rituals, and other forms of esotericism were all part of the lived experience of the premodern individual. Esotericism, and magic in particular, were integral parts of the worldview, and to ignore these facets completely—as past scholarship has tended—would be to ignore a supporting pillar of premodern life and identity. In short, esotericism was a constituent element of premodern self-understanding, and this should at least be acknowledged in any attempt to probe premodern lived experiences. Other constituent elements of this period include the presence of transempirical social actors and the relationships that were formed with them; Jewish and Christian religious discourse; the dialogue between these two discourses, and the social tensions that arose from sharing such a dynamic social space. These facets of lived experience formed the basis which premodern society and the premodern individual defined themselves and understood their reality—one that was nuanced, complex, and characterized by fluidity, not the rigidity sometimes imagined. What I have tried to accomplish in the preceding chapters is an account of this period that reevaluates these constituent elements with a critical eye to show how they may have been treated in the past; to take esotericism and magic as seriously as premoderns themselves.

By looking at Christian perceptions of Jews—perceptions that are enshrined in demonic ritual magic—we can see how Christian supersession theology and other assumptions about Jews helped to solidify the identity of the premodern German Christian. By studying the Christian inclusion of demons in their ritual magic and conversations about Jews, we can see how Christian demonic ritual magicians saw themselves in contrast to their Jewish counterparts. According to Christians, Jews were the original Chosen People, the first recipients of the Covenant. As the gatekeepers of the original language—the language through which God revealed the secrets of the universe—Jews were seen as powerful magicians, particularly adept at magic. They were feared and held in awe because their knowledge of the occult was perceived as being an inherent facet of their Jewishness.

This was a source of tension for the Christian ritual magic expert: while the power this knowledge represented, particularly as it relates to demons, was perceived as an existential threat to Christianity, by learning to control this threat Christians could assert their dominance. Jews—

and demons—were necessary for premodern Christian magicians; by using secret Jewish knowledge to compel the power of the demons, Christians could learn the truth of the hidden laws of the universe and come to control the magical sphere. In other words, the Christian magician, while fearing the Jewish magician, needed them. Texts of invocative demonic ritual magic thus represented a particularly fruitful source for understanding this dynamic, as texts embodied the cultural and social realities of the author. The translation of these realities into a creative product allows us to probe a facet of the lived environment that was crucial to the identity-formation of the author and the larger society of which they were a part of.

In the first section, we saw how identity should be understood as a product of lived experience; as something informed by the socio-cultural environment—which must be looked at within its historical framework—as well as the individual mind’s interpretation of the various discourses permeating this environment. Put differently, identity is formed through relationships. These relationship dynamics are apparent in texts, texts that give us clues to how the relationship between the author, the readers, and demons (that is, the social actors) mirror the social discourses which contributed to identity-formation.

Rather than looking for cultural artefacts that reaffirm our understanding of how premodern society should be—therefore projecting our contemporary worldview—I argue that we instead look at the variety of cultural artefacts (in this case texts of ritual demonic magic) as products of knowledge created by society, products which embody premodern self-understandings and enshrine their minds. While these texts were written to preserve and perhaps disseminate magical knowledge, they also contain important information about social identity. By reading the texts, we are participating in the creative act of knowledge making. By including a wider variety of texts, through a careful contextualization and understanding of them as cultural artefacts, we can acknowledge these writings as valid historical sources. As such, we can approach the premodern understanding of reality on its own terms, rather than shaping the past’s reality to what we think it should be. We can begin to understand how the Christian identity was created through discourse and through various social tensions.

In the second section, we saw how Christian discourse about the Jewish community became not only a space for grappling with social tensions, but also for solidifying and validating the hegemony of the Christian identity by providing justification for the social, spiritual, and magical centrality of Christians in the premodern world. By analyzing the anonymously written

Liber Iuratus Honorii and *CLM 849*, and the pseudonymously written *Book of Abramelin* (attributed to Abraham of Worms), we can begin to understand how the identity of the Christian demonic expert was dependent on Christian beliefs. Here, by drawing parallels to exorcism and supersession theology, we saw how the Christianization of Jewish magical knowledge allowed premodern Christians to assert control over the ritual space of magic.

However, this assertion to control the ritual space of magic also includes an assertion to control the intellectual/theoretical space of magic. By fully restricting the intellectual as well as the ritual space to reflect Christian truth could the Christians assert a magical hegemony, reflecting the Christian hegemony in the social sphere. By sketching out the Christianization and control of the Jewish alterity in the theoretical space of demonic ritual magic, we saw how this further cements the Christian identity as hegemonic by asserting Christian control over access to the deepest secrets of the universe. This was done through an analysis of the figure of Johannes Trithemius and the magical Christian theology of his *Steganographia*, Johannes Reuchlin's Christianization of Kabbalah in *De Arte Cabalistica*, and finally, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De Occulta Philosophia* as a *summa magice*. The analysis of these works traces the creation of this hegemonic identity by examining how the Christian community created a space for their identity-formation *through* the Jewish community.

The Jewish community is reflected in premodern Germanic social discourse through the narratives told about them and the stereotypes conveyed about them. One of the most pervasive tropes or stereotypes, as mentioned above, was that of the exceptionally skilled (but still fallible and limited) Jewish magician. They became a monstrous identity—the exotic other, the taboo, a fetish to indulge in. At the height of political and inter-Christian religious tensions, the hegemonic Christian community needed, to borrow Feldt's terminology, an “exteriorization of the self.” In other words, in order to step outside of themselves, Christian esotericists used the Jewish community as a way to talk to themselves about themselves, by projecting that which they feared.⁷⁵⁴ While using the Jewish community as a mirror for Christian identity was hardly a premodern invention, it most certainly solidified the fundamental shaping of the hegemonic perception of Jewish alterity during this period.

It is only through such an effort—that is, the effort to understand through the exteriorization of the self—that we can get a fuller sense of the spectrum and scope of the social

⁷⁵⁴ Feldt, “Monstrous Identities”, 146, 148-149.

discourses at play during that time and place. As I have argued throughout, if one attempts to solely rely on “mainstream” texts, they run the risk of missing out on (or misperceiving) aspects of that wider conversation. Using so-called esoteric texts therefore offers us a different and unique glimpse into a strand of social discourse that is often cast as peripheral, overlooked or misunderstood.

Identity, as we have seen, is often built through social tension. Jews and Christians co-existed, worked together, lived together, loved together. The premodern German social fabric was the collective product of contributions from both Jews and Christians. It is the tensions that arose from living together in this way (from being in dialogue), that enabled this nuanced, co-created social identity. While social discourse can result in physical violence—and indeed, Niremberg discusses violence as a form of social discourse—tension can also be embodied in conversations, conversations that engage the senses and the cognition of the social organism, enabling it to form and identify itself. This in itself is not unique. As cognitive narratological theory has reiterated, we are very much the product of our environment. We unconsciously act and react to the cultural stimuli that surround us. Our senses engaged, we place ourselves, and our social environment, into our narratives. We continuously build and rebuild our identity. Through alterity and postcolonial narratological theories, we can see the extent to which the alterity is a part of society: the community may be the minority, but they are ingrained within the very society in which they lived. They are not in borrowed space. They more than just occupy the space; they are an integral, fundamental part of the fabric of the shared space where identities are formed and reformed.

I focused on texts written in the same geographical and cultural regions, in a shared time period; by doing so, I was able to highlight the construction of identity through a cognitive approach. The similarities tell us much: they support the cognitive approach as viable, and also demonstrate that esoteric texts should be evaluated as a source when studying cultural and the lived religions of the past. It would be interesting to compare different genres of esoteric texts, or texts from different cultural regions/social circles, or even esoteric texts from different historical periods, as the differences would tell us much. After all, it is through such differences that we learn what makes a culture unique and what that particular culture finds important.

The underlying question this project asked is whether we should include esotericism when studying historical periods, despite the fact that it is very difficult to approach, and nearly

impossible to define. As we have seen throughout the project, knowledge is subjective and can only exist in relation to the experience and environment from which it arose. At the same time, the environment itself is shaped by the knowledge it has produced. Whether or not the seat of that influence is somehow “real” is of minor consequence. Take our current plane of existence as a general, loose example. We are thoroughly intertwined with the digital world. We receive our information on-line and through various social media sites; it is integral to our society. How deeply one is in the digital world is up to the individual. But it exists. It is a part of our worldview of being informed and connected. If, in five hundred years, future historians would deign to study our culture, we would hope that they would include the digital world—it is ingrained in our current understanding of our reality, of how we perceive ourselves, the world around us and our role within it, shaping our individual and collective identities.

This consideration brings the question to mind: what would happen if future historians neglect this part of our reality, because it was somehow “not real”? After all, our digital world cannot be physically touched. It exists in our minds and on our screens, and yet it is very real to us, and has factual, palpable, and observable social and individual ramifications. It is a part of our lives, in one way or another. The digital world is real, even if it is not immediately tactile. Esotericism can be thought of in similar terms when approaching the premodern world: it is a lived activity that embodies the social discourses about identity of the environment. It was real, even if it may not be empirically tangibly verified.

As we have seen throughout this project, esotericism was not a fringe perspective; rather it was one of the perspectives that shaped premodern reality. Magic was an integral part of the worldview, and to ignore it completely would be ignoring a supporting pillar that shapes the premodern understanding of itself. Magic, religious discourse, and social tensions were some of the basis in which the premodern individual and—by extension, premodern society—defined themselves, and understood their reality. It was a nuanced, complex, intricate reality—a reality shared by Jews and Christians, a space in which social discourse shaped cultural identity. It is that social discourses that influenced the author, who then translated that reality into their creative product.

What am I proposing is that identity should be understood as a product of reality, shaped by both the socio-cultural environment, which must be looked at within its historical framework, and by the individual interpreting the conversations that formed a part of their reality. By taking

texts that move beyond our contemporary criteria of valid, we can therefore approach the reality on its own terms rather than shaping the past's reality to what we think it should be. Only then can we begin to grasp and meet the mind of the individuals. Texts of demonic ritual magic were written not only to record and transmit spells that details on how to control demons, but they also contain an aspect of social identity. By reading the texts, we are also participating in the creative act of knowledge making: not only the esoteric knowledge, but in the knowledge of identity.

Esotericism helps to round out our picture of the dialogue of tensions that existed in premodernity. By studying esotericism within a particular historical context, we are forced to accept the limitations of our own personal worldviews, and are encouraged to break free of the categorical restraints that we have placed not only on our past, but also on ourselves. It compels us to accept a culture—here, our collective historical culture—on its own terms and not on the terms that we have imposed on it. It motivates us to listen to the voices that were traditionally ignored because it was not part of the hegemonic. It allows us to re-evaluate what we thought we knew and accept the dynamics that were hidden. It presents us with an understanding of how people understood themselves and how they created their identity. We may not be practicing ritual magicians, but through the study of esotericism, we are nonetheless transforming ourselves. We begin to uncover the history that has shaped our present, to better understand the intercultural debate that has taken place, to better appreciate the shaping of our identity and reality, and to begin to uncover that which has been hidden for centuries by telling the lived experience of history.

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ADDENDUM

IDENTITY, TENSION AND THE CHRISTIAN APPLICATION

This thesis focused on rehabilitating the scholarly evaluation of esoteric texts (in this case texts of demonic ritual magic) as a knowledge-source in understanding Christian identity-formation, by looking at how premodern Christians responded to social tensions with Jews. Although by the 1500s the Christian identity was the dominant one in the overall cultural sphere, this hegemonic identity was by no means a unified one. This addendum seeks to illustrate that the theoretical framework I've been pursuing throughout—that is, using a cognitive approach and narratological theories of alterity and postcolonialism to examine how social discourses were embodied in esoteric texts and how this, in turn, impacts identity-formation—can also be applied to investigate intra-Christian tensions (i.e., between Catholicism and Protestantism, broadly speaking). Works of demonic invocative ritual magic from the sixteenth century, then—when tensions between these two strands of Christian thinking were reaching a boiling point—can also give us a sense for how magic, demons, and social discourse played a role in Christian identity formation, specifically the development of a Reformation identity. For this, I will briefly look at Johann Weyer and his *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563), focusing specifically on its famed appendix, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* (1583).⁷⁵⁵ While *De Praestigiis Daemonum* offers a detailed, methodical critique on popular (mis)conceptions about witchcraft, the *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* contains a list of demons (which has parallels to the list in *CLM 849*), their realms, and rituals.⁷⁵⁶

JOHANN WEYER (1515-1588)

⁷⁵⁵ Despite its influence, it is very difficult to find a Latin critical edition of the text. As such, I will be using the Editio nova & hactenus desiderata edition of *De Praestigiis Daemonum* and *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, published by Amstelodami, apud Petrum van den Berge, 1660, in conjunction with the English translation by John Shea in *De Praestigiis daemonum: Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance* (George Mora, general editor, Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991) is the most prominent one, and the best researched. I will also be using Joseph H. Peterson's transliterations for *Pseudomonarchia daemonum*; as noted by Hedegård (*Liber Iuratus Honorii*, 10-11), they are fairly accurate, based on the 1660 edition published by Amstelodami, Apud Petrum van den Berge, and includes Reginald Scot's translation, which is part of his *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584) (*Twilit Grotto—Esoteric Archives* CD-ROM Kasson MN, 2000; "Pseudomonarchia". N.D. *Esoteric Archives* <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/weyer.htm>, retrieved December 25, 2017). All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁷⁵⁶ Davies, *Grimoires*, 69.

Very little is known about Johann Weyer (also spelled Wier). He left no autobiographies, and no full biographical accounts were written about him during his lifetime. The *De Praestigiis Daemonum* does make a few references to him, his family, and his career, but these are quite scant, and he is only occasionally mentioned in other contemporaneous works and letters. With regards to the latter, what we have was mostly written by critics who opposed Weyer's views on witchcraft and magic, and should therefore be looked at with caution.⁷⁵⁷ The records we do have suggest that Weyer was most likely born in 1515, in the culturally Dutch region of Graves, Brabant, part of the Holy Roman Empire. His father, Theodore, was a trader in hops, and his mother was Agnes Rhordam. Johann had two brothers: Arnold, a cook, and Matthew, who became a Reformation mystic.⁷⁵⁸

Weyer himself writes that he was a student of Agrippa (between c1530-1532/5), who, as previously noted, studied under Trithemius. This tutelage under Agrippa is what mostly likely inspired Weyer's fascination with demons, magic, and witches (as well as his skepticism on witches). It was also during this time that Agrippa published *De Occulta Philosophia*. As such, Weyer would have been intimately familiar with his tutor's work and perspective, particularly Agrippa's criticism of the idea that the women accused of being witches were schooled in demonic magic. This criticism impressed Weyer during his formative years, and had a lasting effect on his later writings.⁷⁵⁹ It was also under Agrippa that Weyer studied Plato, Christian kabbalah and the writings of Trithemius (specifically *Steganographia*), writings that Weyer would eventually criticize. Yet, despite the criticism of his tutor's admired thinkers and their ideas, Weyer remained loyal to Agrippa, and defended him against his detractors.⁷⁶⁰

Around 1534/5, Johann Weyer travelled to Paris to study medicine. It was here that he began to experiment with poetry, writing religious verses, most likely in Latin. However, unhappy with the cosmopolitan city of Paris, by 1535 he moved to smaller

⁷⁵⁷ Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xxvii.

⁷⁵⁸ Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xxvii-xxviii.

⁷⁵⁹ E. William Monter, editor, *European Witchcraft. Major Issues in History* (New York and London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1969), 37; Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xxx-xxxii.

⁷⁶⁰ Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xxxi; Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, 86; Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton*, 80.

Orleans and attended the university there, continuing to study medicine.⁷⁶¹ At 22 he received his doctorate and moved back to Grave to practice medicine, and in 1540 he was appointed as physician at Ravenstein. Five years later, in 1545, he became the municipal physician of Arnheim, and it was there that he married Judith. The marriage would eventually produce five children: four sons—Theodor (who would become a jurist); Heinrich (a physician); Galenus (a physician), and Johannes (a public official), and a daughter, Sophia.⁷⁶²

In 1550, Johann Weyer became the court physician for Duke William V of Cleve. It was here that he wrote what would become later the highly influential *De praestigiis daemonum* (1565, *On the Illusions/Tricks of Demons*). In 1572, Judith died, and a few years later, he married his second wife, Henrietta. At this point his life becomes even more shrouded in mystery. We know that he retired from public life in 1578, but the reasons for this are unknown. On February 22 1588, at the age of 73, Johann Weyer died in Tecklenburg after a short illness that struck him while he was attending the Duke of Tecklenburg.⁷⁶³

De Praestigiis Daemonum (On the Tricks of Demons) and Pseudomonarchia Daemonum (False-Monarchy of Demons)

Considered by Freud to be one of the ten most significant books of all time, *De praestigiis daemonum*, written in 1563, is an attack on the prevalence of witchcraft, and more specifically, on witch-hunting, with one of its central arguments stating that witches are no more than poor, deranged, physically-and-mentally-ill old women. Originally written in Latin, with four editions published between 1563 and 1568, it was quickly translated into German and French by 1567.⁷⁶⁴ With each edition, Weyer continued to add more material, until the final edition was filled with Biblical passages, patristic quotes, and classical literature, as well as references to medicine, philosophy, and religion, all working in tandem to support his hypothesis. Maintaining a relatively orthodox perspective on the classifications and hierarchy of demons, Weyer postulated

⁷⁶¹ Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xxxiii-xxxv.

⁷⁶² Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xxxv-xxxvi.

⁷⁶³ Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, xxxvi, xlv-xlv.

⁷⁶⁴ Monter, ed, *European Witchcraft*, 37; Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton*, 86.

that while demons are real, witches themselves are nothing more than old, delusional women.⁷⁶⁵ In 1583, Weyer added his infamous appendix, *Pseudomonarchia daemonum*, a catalogue of demons and rituals to summon them—elements of which would eventually be incorporated into the seventeenth century grimoire, *Lemegeton Clavicula Salomonis* or *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, as part of its *Ars Goetia*.⁷⁶⁶

Weyer never denies the existence of demons and magic; he merely counters the validity of the *Malleus Maleficarum* as a useful tool for identifying those who are in league with demons. For Weyer, anyone who is unlettered, unlearned, and untrained⁷⁶⁷ can never hope to practice true demonic magic, as they are too imbecilic to be able to learn the proper techniques. We see a self description as well as a critiquing of the witch-hysteria. Weyer not only described what he imagined the proper Christian to be—chiefly, one who would not fall sway to mob mentality—but also indicated that a true magic practitioner could never be a witch. This conceptualization acts as a kind of distancing, an attempt at apologetics in face of popular mob mentality.

Johann Weyer's famed appendix to his *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* was not in itself unusual; it was relatively common to provide a catalogue of demons, listing the names, their ranks, their physical attributions, and their roles and functions. Weyer's use of *Liber officiorum spirituum, seu Liber dictus Empto. Salomonis, de principibus et regibus daemoniorum*⁷⁶⁸—a source that Trithemius himself mentions—indicates that such catalogues and usage of demons/spirits were common in the practice of certain rituals of magic.⁷⁶⁹

Joseph Peterson noted that some of the demons in *Pseudomonarchia* and *CLM 849* are remarkably similar, suggesting that the names and attributes of demons were

⁷⁶⁵ Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, lviii-lix; Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton*, 86.

Because Weyer averred that most witches were merely sick old women who were hallucinating, he suggested that during an accusation, a physician should be present to rule out any mental illness. It was reasoned that a feeble-minded person can never hope to summon, much less control, a demon, and that only those with true power are capable of interacting with demonic forces (*Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, 97).

⁷⁶⁶ Davies, *Grimoires*, 69.

⁷⁶⁷ As translated by Shea, *De Praestigiis Daemonum: De Praestigiis daemonum: Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, Book 5, Chap. III, 370.

⁷⁶⁸ *Book of the Offices of Spirits, Or The Book Called Empto, Salomonis Concerning the Princes and Kings of the Demons*

⁷⁶⁹ Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 161-162.

shared in the circle of ritual magic experts.⁷⁷⁰ This shows that demons were social actors who (through magical texts) united demonic ritual experts under a common identity, sense of purpose, and set of beliefs. As demons were part of the social landscape, humans formed relationships with them—whether in order to promote demonic ritual magic, or to denounce it. Demons become an important tool in communicating with others. By knowing the names of the demons that are “known to all,” one will also know the same realm and occupy the same sphere of knowledge and existence as other practitioners of demonic magic.

The ritual calls the demons into the presence of not only the ritual expert, but also that of the author and the reader. It becomes more than a shared experience and creation of knowledge; it is a construction of a shared space that defines their (author, reader, and ritual expert’s) perception of reality. Just as every participant in a ritual or in a community shares and continuously defines and redefines a particularized reality within a greater social reality, so too does the ritual magician define and redefine a particularized reality within the context of a greater social reality. It is this act of definition that contributes to the construction of identity—an identity which, in face of increasing demonic paranoia, defined what it meant to be a legitimate practitioner of demonic ritual magic: one who is Christian, pious and educated.

While the ending ritual could be understood as a critique of Catholic exorcism, the fact that Weyer claims that he redacted it indicated that he believed it was powerful. His final concluding (and decidedly anti-Catholic) thoughts of

I have chosen not to suppress these formulas which I stole from the priest. I reveal them so that judgment can be pronounced more easily regarding the other deceptions of these men. If I had had even the slightest suspicion that there was a whit of truth in the formulas I would certainly have consigned them at once to Vulcan’s fires, which is what they deserve⁷⁷¹

⁷⁷⁰ *CLM* 849, No. 34, *Forbidden Rites*, Kieckhefer, 291-293; Joseph Peterson, “Pseudomonarchia”. <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/weyer.htm>, Retrieved Dec. 25, 2017; *Pseudomonarchia*, Chapt. 2.

⁷⁷¹ As translated by Shea, *De Praestigiis Daemonum: De Praestigiis daemonum: Witches, Devils, and Doctors* Book 5, Capt. XI, part 9, 397.
ut periaporum, characterum, figuratum, annulorum, imaginum, reliquorumque id genus prodigiorum vanitas ubque explordenda, omnium obtutui lucidissime peteat, formulas has sacrificio surreptas, suppressere nolui quo de caeteris ejusrodi hominum ludibriis facilius pronunclatur sententia, quibus si vel vertatis momentum in effe levi solum cogitatu suspicatus suspicatus, eas hauddubie evestigio cui debentur, consecratas excepisset Vulcanus

Therefore, we see that, for Weyer, certain rituals are false and ineffectual—presumably due to their inherent Catholic nature—and are therefore harmless and meaningless. However, by expressly stating that he has removed some portions of the ritual included in the *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, he suggests that he actually regards this particular ritual to be effective. By giving an incomplete ritual, he has rendered it useless,⁷⁷² for, as with the other works examined in Chapters Four and Five, incomplete knowledge of a ritual renders the ritual ineffectual.⁷⁷³

What is of particular interest is the comment that in “this most infamous world, the Kingdom of Christ is attacked by enormous and unpunished tyrants who choose to openly perform sacraments to Belial.”⁷⁷⁴ On the one hand, we can see this to be a commentary on the competing religious discourse: not only the prevalent demonic paranoia that gripped Germany, but also the emergence of Lutheranism and the battle for authority on defining who embodies the proper Christian. The juxtaposition of sacraments with Belial (a prominent demon)—in essence, accusing Catholics of performing sacraments to a demon—highlights an anti-Catholic rhetoric. On the other hand, however, we can also understand this as an observation on the shifting secular worldview, where the notions of individuality, national identity, and the social structure that were changing. The near-monopoly of the Catholic interpretation of what it means to be Christian was contested. As mentioned in the first chapter, that German-speaking lands were experiencing a dynamic cultural change during this period is undeniable, and the discourses of those changes are mirrored in Weyer’s writings. Through narrativizing about demons, Weyer was able to describe the Reformation perception of the pope and Catholic priests as “enormous and unpunished tyrants” attacking the “Kingdom of God” (that is, the Reformation understand of Christianity).

Pseudomonarchia Daemonum was more than a dissemination of knowledge; it was also a creation of it. Chapter Three of the manuscript details how the various

⁷⁷² Cf *De Praestigiis Daemonum* Book 5, chapter IX, X, XI, where Weyer detailed many rituals in their entirety.

⁷⁷³ It is interesting to note that Kabbalists of a similar time period would occasionally make the claim that they are leaving something out.

⁷⁷⁴ Weyer, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, Prologue, 649

hoc potissimum seculo scelestissimo, quo Christi regnum tam enormi impunitaque tyrannide impetitur ab iis qui Beliali palàm sacramentum præstitère.

Peterson, editor, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*.

demonic ranks must be bound, with Chapter Four describing the incomplete invocative rituals. As with early Catholic based rituals, this one also requires strict ritual protocol. Demanding that the practitioner be ritually pure, “free from pollution three or four days prior,”⁷⁷⁵ it also requires them to “create a circle, and, with a ring in hand,⁷⁷⁶ call up the spirit with an intention”⁷⁷⁷; the ritual also includes a prayer that evokes an exorcism:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the father and the son, and holy spirit: the holy trinity, the indivisible unity I call upon you for my safety and my defense, and to protect my body and my would and all that is my all. Through the power of the holy cross, and through the virtue of your passion, I entreat you, lord Jesus Christ, through the services of the blessed Virgin Mary and your mother and all your saints, that you will grant me grace and divine power over all malicious spirits. And so I will I call upon all names, so that they may come to me from all parts, and do my will, and fulfill their obligations so that they would not harm me or cause me fear, but rather through your power, they are diligent to my command. Amen⁷⁷⁸

The prayer continues, calling upon the various names of Jesus, supplicating the divine for a granting of power through virtue, and calling upon the names of God.

Although the last sentence of the *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*—“this blasphemous and abomination is the scum and dregs of the world, and the mediums merits the penalty of the criminal law”⁷⁷⁹—indicates Weyer’s personal view of demonic

⁷⁷⁵ Weyer, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, Chap. 4, sect. 1, 664.

inprimis autem ab omni pollutione, minimum tres vel quatuor dies. Peterson, editor, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*

⁷⁷⁶ Interestingly enough, the ring evokes Solomon and his ring with which he can control demons. As the famed King of Wisdom, the inclusion of the ring in this—as well as other demonic ritual magic—in order to control demons reinforces the idea that in order to properly complete the ritual, one must be also wise as Solomon as well as skilled and knowledgeable.

⁷⁷⁷ Weyer, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, Chap. 4, sect. 1, 664

fac et circulum, & voca spiritum cum multa intentione: primum vero annulum in manu contineto. Peterson, editor, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*

⁷⁷⁸ Weyer, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, Chapt. 4, sect. 2, 664.

In nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi + patris & + filii & + spiritus sancti: sancta trinitas & inseparabilis unitas te invoco, ut sis mihi salus & defensio & protectio corporis & animæ meæ, & omnium rerum mearum. Per virtutem sanctæ crucis + & per virtutem passionis tuæ deprecor te domine Jesu Christe, per merita beatissimæ Mariæ virginis & matris tuæ atque omnium sanctorum tuorum, ut mihi concedas gratiam & potestatem divinam super omnes malignos spiritus, ut quoscunque nominibus invocavero, statim ex omni parte convenient, & voluntatem meam perfecte adimpleant, quod mihi nihil nocentes, neque timorem inferentes, sed potius obedientes & ministrantes, tua districte virtute præcipiente, mandata mea perficiant, Amen.

Peterson, editor, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*

⁷⁷⁹ Weyer, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, Chapt. 4, sect. 5, 666

Hæc blasphema & execranda hujus mundi fæx & sentina pœnam in magos prophanos bene constitutam, pro scelerato mentis ausu jure meretur.

Peterson, editor, *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*

ritual magic, he nevertheless acknowledges that demonic ritual magic is not only very real, but also exceedingly dangerous. For Weyer, Catholicism is equated with the demonic hierarchy, and he represents those who study illicit demonic ritual magic as abominable. However, he continues to support not only the idea that ritual magic real, but also that it can only be practiced by educated and pious Christians (presumably by a Lutheran rather than a Catholic).

Despite this final assertion, Weyer nonetheless moves in the same circles as Trithemius, Agrippa, Reuchlin, and the author of *CLM 849*. He may be criticizing certain forms of ritual magic, but he is still engaging with demons. His social and intellectual environment therefore does not only include the existence of demons, but also the active engagement with demons. Demons become more than social actors with whom people have relationships; they are the conduits in which identity is built, in which people are able to construct their understandings of themselves in conversation with their world. Demons become a reflection of their mentality of their own world.

As a Lutheran, Johann Weyer was highly critical of Catholic practices, criticizing, for example, the use of the sign of the cross during exorcism (cf Book V of *De Praestigiis Daemonum*).⁷⁸⁰ However, for Weyer, and like his tutor Agrippa, magic as a whole was not necessarily harmful, illicit, or anti-Christian. It was a study of reality, a way of understanding nature, a neutral activity. False and illicit magic aimed to bring harm.⁷⁸¹ While Weyer expressed skepticism against the fixed notions of witches and witchcraft that were prevalent in his time, he did write extensively about demons, demonic natures, and demonic possession. Demons for him were very real, ever present, and very dangerous.⁷⁸²

Weyer, in his somewhat ambiguous condemnations of the use of demonic ritual magic, nevertheless engaged with demons: through his discussions about them—his cataloguing of them and his explicit statements on his studies in demonic ritual magic—he was involved in a process of knowledge-creation with the texts that he consulted. What we see here is an identity-construction that reflects the tensions of Catholics-

⁷⁸⁰ David Hawkes, *The Faust Myth: Religion and the Rise of Representation*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 32; Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, 153-154.

⁷⁸¹ Mora, ed, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, lxii.

⁷⁸² Hawkes, *The Faust Myth*, 43; Levack, *The Devil Within*, 76; Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton*, 86.

Protestant polemics, with demons playing an integral role in the defining of one's self, in this case, what it meant to be a proper Christian as a Lutheran.

This brief analysis is meant to highlight three salient facts: 1) that while Christian identity was hegemonic, it was not unified; 2) this identity was created not only in tension with Jewish culture, but also in tension with various understandings of Christianity, and 3) we can glean this identity-formation in esoteric texts. As I have argued throughout this thesis, through the application of a cognitive approach, we can begin to understand texts as the embodied minds of the authors, and reading the texts became an active creation of knowledge. The text and the narratives within extend into the lived world, and became a part of the lived reality. As culture is crucial in mapping the individual's cognition (including their sense of self), the text reflects how the individual orients that cultural map, enforcing and subtly shifting it. The texts are therefore the embodiment of the minds of the author, readers, and society, reflecting the tensions, the intellectual debates and the cultural discourse, preserving the social changes that affected the author.

In *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* we have seen Weyer's mind at work, filtering through the social discourses and cultural influences that shaped his identity. Through his works—and by extension, those we have just analyzed—the authors and readers are continuously (re)defining their identity. By looking at texts of demonic ritual magic, as well as the context of the authors who wrote them, we can begin paint another picture of premodernity, one in which multiple thoughts and worldviews shared the same cultural space, where there were competing discourses, and where tensions resulting from these discourses contributed to construction identity.

By looking at the texts on their own terms, we see how magic, not merely invocative ritual magic, but all forms of magic that were prevalent at the time, and the beliefs in transempirical beings, had their unique space within premodern reality. We can begin to understand the cultural production of the people, how their minds interpreted the reality that surrounded them. By realizing esotericism was an integral aspect of the lived reality of premodernity, a weft in the cultural tapestry, an accepted concept that just was, we can begin to construct the existence and better understand the cultural artefacts that were produced by the minds that fully inhabited worldview, even if they are considered to be transgressive.