Witchy Methodologies: Bewitchment, Shapeshifting, and Communication with More-Than-Human Kin

Sandra Huber

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ABSTRACT

Witchy Methodologies: Bewitchment, Shapeshifting, and Communication with More-Than-Human Kin | Sandra Huber | Doctor of Philosophy | Concordia University | 2022

Shapeshifting, spellcasting, salt circles: who are witches and why should we, as scholars, care to know more about them? My dissertation, "Witchy Methodologies: Bewitchment, Shapeshifting, and Communication with More-Than-Human Kin" examines the media and techniques of contemporary North American witchcraft — such as tools, spells, and communication with spirits, ancestors, and more-than-human kin — against a theoretical background that reaches towards feminist and unsettled positionalities. How does the witch act in / on the world in a way that opens tricky questions surrounding the methods we use to craft knowledge as well as who is deemed able to do so?

My dissertation is broken down into three chapters, where each chapter involves a set of media or techniques that witches use as well as their surrounding questions — Chapter 1: "Mirrors"; Chapter 2: "Knots," and Chapter 3: "Fluids." In Chapter 1, I look at mirrors, concentrating especially on the witches' black scrying mirror that does not reflect, but, rather, divines. In chapter 2, I open a discussion of what I call the methodology of bewitchment and how it is involved with tricks and traps, such as knot spells, cauldrons, and animal familiars. In chapter 3, I focus on fluids; in particular water, blood, and ectoplasm. What is it, finally, that the techniques and tools of witches *produce*, if anything?

Ultimately, my dissertation is about communication. The tools and techniques that I discuss throughout may seem extraordinary but are in fact quotidian and widespread. We all communicate and seek to connect with more-than-human companions and kin. Rather than learning or making, witches' methods offer a way of unlearning and unmaking the structures that define and bind the perimeters of the enlightened and empirical. How do witches and their techniques teach us to attune to the subtle frequencies of our environments and underworlds — and open our ability to listen.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

1. Inside Out

Witches hardly need an introduction. They are everywhere and hidden. Concealed behind black robes in wooded rites; revealed in crystal balls at occult bookshops; concealed in arcane symbols and the realm of dreams; revealed in newspaper headlines proclaiming the latest "witch-hunt"; concealed in initiation rites and fantastical sabbats; and revealed in gallery spaces and museums heralded by the descriptions "spellbound," "magic," "ancestors."[1] Witches, as conveyed by their tools and techniques, offer a flipped mirror image of the rational, able, sane world — they present a knot of questions regarding illusion, tradition, and heresy; and they change and morph as quickly as fluid, as streams, moving in and out of the purview of the public gaze, art, politics, and culture, arching and ebbing from a shadowy space that conceals tricks, monsters, and a little chaos. Throughout the course of this dissertation, I take an interdisciplinary look at the tools and techniques of the witch, with a focus on feminist media studies, fine arts, anthropology, and cultural studies. The term "witch" is capacious, and as such my examination of witches is as shapeshifting as their techniques: throughout, I put neopagan witches alongside the accused witches of Early Modern Europe, I delve into the world of fairy-tale and sci-fi witches, mythological witches and political activists, feared villains and feminist icons. I place a particular emphasis on the tools and techniques of self-defining witches in contemporary North America. Though part of this dissertation involves unravelling who the witch is, I am more invested in what the witch does, and how her particular tools and techniques present alter-epistemologies within interdisciplinary humanities — ones that reach towards ways of reconfiguring kinship and communication, as well as redefining the perimeters of the evidential within culture, the arts, and epistemology.

To carry out these explorations, I not only examine the media *on* witches, but more emphatically the media *of* witches. Spells and cauldrons, incantations and salt circles: these are some of the typical tools and techniques that we, in the Western world, may associate with witches and witchcraft, and all of these I explore in the following pages; however, I am even more focused on the tools and techniques that are involved in the most secretive of rites — communication with the dead and more-than-human-kin. The dead, in particular, are those who, like witches, are both revealed and concealed in our everyday lives; death is the villainous residue of the living, often banished to the undergrounds of graveyards and the balance of ashes.[2] Witches are those who are adept at communicating with spirits, as well as deities, familiars, and other beings, which itself brings forth a set of techniques that, I argue, are much needed in the present era, where linear ideologies of "progress" and "development" have driven the earth itself to the brink of environmental collapse. Rather than moving forwards, perhaps it is time to move sideways, to look back, or to learn to move differently altogether. The techniques and tools of witches, however, especially as they communicate with spirits and other entities, move neither in a backwards, forwards, or sideways motion, but rather in the conditional, the *what if*, in the traps of the trickster. As author Margot Adler writes, "[t]he Witch is the changer of definitions and relationships."[3] As such, the communicative tools and techniques of witches are non-extractive, fantastical, non-linear, and non-mimetic to the methods of capital-M Man nor the great stories of the great heroes. Yet they are also not passive, benign, purely righteous or well-meaning. Witches deal in bewitchment and at times in villainy, in beckons and lures, and under the guises of shapeshifters, heretics, and charlatans.

In her 1997 work *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying*, co-authored with M. Macha Nightmare, neopagan witch Starhawk noted that in contemporary witchcraft, the one important set of rituals that are missing are rituals to pass from life to death. This she realized when her mother, a psychoanalyst, was passing away. As Starhawk recounts, her mother was a person who was more interested in "post-Freudian theory than Mosaic law," and yet who, on her deathbed, requested the most traditional Jewish prayers to help her cross over. Starhawk reflects on this moment: "dying changes everything," she writes. "When you are dying, you do not have the energy to create. When you are grieving, you are already overwhelmed, faced with decisions and demands at a time when coping is extraordinarily difficult. You are in no position to design new rituals or to write new liturgies."[4] There is undeniable grief found at the heart of communication with the dead, whichever way we look at it, and perhaps now, in the throes of late capitalism and neoliberalism, there is also grief to be had for ways of living in the world that are no longer sustainable or nutritious. In the following pages, my focus is not primarily on examining rituals or liturgies, but rather on exploring a view of communication that the techniques of contemporary witchcraft help to complicate and open; furthermore, it is one that brings the most central, poignant issues of communication in general to the fore, such as misunderstanding, miscommunication, and wild interpretation. "Communication is as rare and fragile as crystal," writes media studies scholar John Durham Peters. He continues:

> That we can never communicate like the angels is a tragic fact, but also a blessed one. A sounder vision is of the felicitous impossibility of contact. Communication failure, again, does not mean we are lonely zombies searching for soul mates: it means we have new ways to relate and to make worlds with each other. My emphasis on the debt that the dream of communication owes to ghosts and strange eros is intended as a corrective to a truism that is still very much alive: that the expansion of means leads to the expansion of minds.[5]

A corrective to the truism Peters puts forward may also assert that what we need are not greater means with which to communicate, but an expanded sense of communication itself, one that is incredibly embodied for Peters, and related, also, to touch, which "defies inscription more than seeing or hearing, or even taste or smell."[6] The way that witches work with their tools and techniques is as much a non-sense as a sense, one that very much has to do with touch and with smell, with seeing and with hearing, and with that which cannot be empirically gathered at all, nor inscribed, nor made evident.

In the present introduction, I will highlight key themes that run throughout the course of this dissertation. I begin with "Origin Stories," which includes my own positioning vis-à-vis the subject matter as well as a positioning of witches and witchcraft within a (so-called) Western framework as well as within my own theoretical frameworks of communications and interdisciplinary humanities. I continue with one of the central facets of witchcraft in my section "Shapeshifting," which includes the different ways that witches dissolve and reshape notions of ancestry, family, and kin, and how this craft fits in with other alter-epistemologies in critical theory and research. I move on to "Consensual and Non-Consensual Kin," where I set up a closer look at the slipperiness of communicating with ancestors, spirits, and chosen kin, including issues of appropriation, neopaganism, and the New Age; if we ascribe agency to spirits, then can we also assume they are able to consent (and not consent) to a communicative practice that one opens up with them? Finally, in "Chapters and Frameworks," I offer an overview of the chapters in the present dissertation and lay out how I use key terms and themes throughout, such as *magic*, *spirits*, and *mediums*. In laying this foundation, I hope to historically and theoretically

situate practices of contemporary witchcraft and to extrapolate the methods with which I will be examining witches' tools and techniques throughout.

Starhawk found that witchcraft as she learned it offered little rituals for death, yet from within that realization, she also discovered an open window. There is not only mourning or celebrating, but the pleasure of changing the game entirely, of casting the trick, of laying the stage, the spell. Throughout I choose to do so with a mirror from which to see (to hear), a knot with which to bind (unbind), and the fluids that unleash the mess of the present. The revealed and the concealed is, ultimately, a game of inside and out, a sleight-of-hand, a trick and a trap. I have structured this dissertation around three wide categories of witches' tools and techniques — mirrors, knots, and fluids — that exemplify the communicative capacity of witches, while complicating the distinctions between who is interior and who is exterior, who is speaking, who is listening, and who mediates between. Talking mirrors, knot spells, blood rites. We could say that these, too, are not only the media of the living witches who wield them, but of the dead who exist, agential, on the inside out.

2. Origin Stories

i. Hats

My desire to write a dissertation focused on the tools and techniques of witches started in an attempt to cut the silence. I was in a car of strangers on our way to a ritual in the woods, heading from the city of Montreal to rural Ontario. I was in the back seat and my High Priestess at the time, Meri, was in the front seat. I was fresh to the coven and barely knew anyone. No one was speaking and I was getting nervous about driving further and further out into the darkness and the woods. I leaned in towards the front and asked Meri, "what is the origin of the witch hat?" I made a gesture like a long, pointed thing emerging from the top of my head. She was silent for a beat like she didn't hear my question, and I was going to sit back down and continue looking out the window when she said, "why don't you ask the hat?" The quality of her question (to my question), the sassiness and bemusement of it, not only started a bubbly conversation between everyone in the car, but it also held something very simple and moving: that the world itself is ready to give up its own answers.

My own personal interest in witchcraft followed from an interest in mediumship, a term that the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces back to the mid-19th century, during the heyday of Spiritualism in Europe and North America; it is defined as both a "state or condition of being a spiritual medium" or an "action or intervention as a spiritual medium" as well as an "[i]ntervening agency, instrumentality."[7] The way that Meri answered my question about the witch hat addresses the instrument itself (in this case, the hat) as an agent able to convey its own history, its memory even. Her answer also suggests the way that contemporary self-defining witches in North America, particularly in the so-called Western traditions, are imbricated with a variety of other traditions and anti-traditions, including Spiritualism, ceremonial magic, shamanism, and neopaganism, to name a few, a tangled, at times appropriative, protean web, and one that I will speak more on in the following pages of this introduction. After two years of working with the Greenwood witches, a neopagan Wiccan tradition in Montreal founded by Meri Fowler and Ronin in 2004, I moved onto work with a much smaller, more traditional coven in Montreal that prefers to remain unnamed, and that I continue to work with at the time of writing this introduction. Concurrently to working with a group, I have developed my own witchcraft

practices that include Internet searches, probing questions to various relatives about "family secrets," and many a hardware store and herbal apothecary visit. That is to say, I work as part of a coven, or wider tradition, and I also work more creatively on my own as a solitary practitioner.

At the time of writing this dissertation, I situate myself as a daughter of Sicilian, Irish, and Swiss settlers on Indigenous land. I descend from an ancestry of trades people and crafts people and peasants, with a long line of Catholicism stretching like a taut and gravelled ribbon on all sides behind me. I am a granddaughter of ghosts. I grew up on the idealism of commune culture in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia, where a largely white group of draft dodgers and wanderers cobbled together a living through house building parties and grow-ops, and where I played alongside of, though never significantly mingled with, the children of Doukhobors, the Ktunaxa people, and the grandchildren of the Japanese Canadians forcefully interned in nearby camps during World War II. I situate myself as one who has entered significantly into multiple pagan and witchy worlds and then simultaneously into the worlds of writers and academia, making me a daughter of the enlightenment and the scientific revolution as much as the hippy movement, counterculture, neoliberalism, and bad TV. I learn from academics and self-defined witches and pagans and magicians, and I learn from memes and social media and books found on the shelves of New Age shops that smell of amber and eucalyptus. I buy crystals and I am prone to a gothic t-shirt or two, I attend marches and vigils, and I keep the sparse photos and amulets of my ancestors alongside a dizzying array of oracle decks, coloured candles, questionable homemade potions, and tomes of philosophy, critical theory, and poetry. When I attain a PhD, I'll be the first person, male or female, to do so in all the known and remembered generations of every line of my family.

What follows in these pages is not an autoethnography of my own witchcraft practice, but rather a theoretical, interdisciplinary discussion of how the techniques and tools of the witch bring something to light in the area of cultural studies and interdisciplinary humanities that no other assemblage of techniques and tools can: the methods of bewitchment and the crafts of they who are simultaneously feminist icons and horror villains, wise crones and "consummate leg-pullers";[8] both hated and feared, beloved, ever-changing, and full of mischief. What do you have to say, I ask them, and how is it that you carry your messages? Knowing full well that the answers anyone receives from a witch will also be through the wink of an eye.

ii. Re-writing and un-writing the epic stories

A central over-arching theme throughout the present dissertation is the way that the tools and techniques of witches are involved not so much with creating, but with un-creating, with unravelling the grand narratives, with turning around and backwards the central objects and subjects of secular humanities; with aligning more with the villains than the heroes. This is exemplified by the ways that witches turn around the tools of the supposedly ordinary and make us consider them anew: rather than tying a knot to fasten something together, witches may untie a knot to a completely different effect than knots are usually used, such as unleashing the wind as part of a weather spell. What, then, does the technique of tying knot spells or using a black mirror in divination or using bodily fluids in mediumship, as a craft, tell us about otherwise ordinary objects, bodies, or gestures — such as gazing, tying, or even making and producing — that then also has the power to change how we interact with or make sense of the objects, subjects, things, and tactics within interdisciplinary humanities that we've been educated to reproduce, obey, or participate in? The tools of witches can be studied as devices that craft

communication in a way that is intuitive rather than rational, open rather fixed, and bewitching rather than enchanting, a distinction I will pull out more throughout.

Historian Wouter J. Hanegraaff asserts that the witch is a "positive anti-type" who contains a critique of mainstream "Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment values." He writes, therefore, that "there is hardly a better way to express one's rejection of the values informing mainstream society than claiming the name of its traditional enemies."[9] Ethan Doyle White and Shai Ferraro add, "[t]o put it another way, the image of the witch carries with it counter-cultural chic."[10] The witch not only carries counter-cultural chic, but she carries the very objects of the mundane world in a way that makes us look at them askance. The installation *Tremble Tremble* by artist Jesse Jones, presented in the Irish pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2017, puts into focus the uneasy relationship between the magical woman and the world of the evidentiary and legitimate. Here, projections show a giantess witch touching and handling objects of the law and the church, such as a podium that appears tiny in comparison to her looming body (fig. 1). In handling the podium, the giantess re-creates a relationality between herself and a basic object of the governable, the well-defined, the able. Witches make apparent, even highlight, an asymmetry between the world of perceived stability and the inherent suspicion that this stability is vagrant, transient at best.

Fig. 1 Jesse Jones, *Tremble Tremble*, Irish Pavilion, Venice Biennale, 2017. Photo by Anne Murray

Writer and cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter has done a great deal of theoretical work untangling the harm that subject positions formed by secular humanities, progress, and development, have unleashed on the world at large; a subject position that the witch, for the most part, and broadly speaking, stands in opposition to. In her interview with Katherine McKittrick that stretched from 2007 to 2014, Wynter drops (what I see as) a challenge: "[w]e must now collectively undertake a rewriting of knowledge as we know it," she begins. "If we continue with our old way of thinking . . . we drift as a species toward an unparalleled catastrophe."[11] Wynter delineates how, in the Renaissance era, Copernicus dropped the very centre out of medieval Latin-Europe's worldview, ushering in the era of Man1 or *homo politicus*.[12] Subsequently, Darwinism and the Natural Sciences are major events that shaped Man2 or *homo oeconomicus*. This is the figure who, as Katherine McKittrick writes, "uncovers the teleological underpinnings of the story-lie of ostensibly human development, as well as the reality of climate change / instability, to which, inter alia, it gives rise."[13] It is one of the central proponents of this dissertation that rewriting begins with unwriting, and that subjects that have been deemed villainous, heretical, and antithetical to the Man2 can offer the methods and positionalities to do so. The techniques of witches such as scrying — which involves gazing into a surface such as a mirror or ink or water in order to divine or communicate with a being therein — invites an alternate tale to the act of looking, and the tools of witches, such as the scrying mirror, which is also a black mirror, bring us into a world of tools that are deconstructed from their original use (in the case of the mirror, to reflect) and rewired in order to be communication devices between the human and the non-human, or between the living and the dead.

Philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers, who writes on contemporary neopagan witches, proposes that witches avoid the epic of critical reason, the epic that scholars tell ourselves in order to protect and enclose ourselves between the brackets of the rational. "How can we [scholars] accept regression, or conversion to supernatural beliefs?" asks Stengers. "The point,

however, is not to wonder whether we have to 'accept' the Goddess that contemporary witches invoke in their rituals." Rather, what "the witches challenge us to accept is the possibility of giving up … the epic of critical reason."[14] As Starhawk writes, "[w]henever we feel the slightly fearful, slightly embarrassed sensation that words like *Goddess* produce, we can be sure that we are on the track of deep change in the structure as well as the content of our thinking."[15] Part of what witches teach is how to fashion methods that stand apace from those of the epic of critical reason, and from, as Wynter writes, "our present ethnoclass (i.e., Western bourgeois) conception of the human, Man, which overrepresents itself as if it were the human itself."[16] This has everything to do with mirrors and the mimetic desire to reflect, to be reflective of the dominant paradigm, but also to reflect as in to understand, a mode of reflexivity that relies on the subject's transparency to herself.

In her book, *Caliban and the Witch*, Marxist feminist and activist Silvia Federici criticizes the way that scholars who have studied the witch-hunt of Early Modern Europe speak of it as a "craze," a "panic," or an "epidemic" — these definitions, she argues, serve to exculpate witch hunters and depoliticize witch-hunting, when in fact, she writes, "[i]t should have seemed significant that the witch-hunt occurred simultaneously with the colonization and extermination of the populations of the New World, the English enclosures, the beginning of the slave trade, the enactment of 'bloody laws' against vagabonds and beggars, and it climaxed in the interregnum between the end of feudalism and the capitalist 'take off' when the peasantry in Europe reached the peak of its power but, in time, also consummated its historic defeat."[17] In short, Federici notes the significance of witches being hunted in Europe at the same time that the colonization of the so-called New World and the transatlantic slave trade were taking place and at the same time that poverty was being criminalized. All events involved subjects, according to Federici, who needed to be done away with if feudalism was to transfer to capitalism. What is called for in order to move past the episteme that the above writers criticize, perhaps, are methodologies that require us to shift shape.

The property of shapeshifting has everything to do with the "craft" part of witchcraft, and, by extension, the type of communication that witches open up when using devices such as mirrors, knots, and their own bodily fluids. Furthermore, it forms the perimeters and spillages of a larger discussion around witches' tools. The craft of witches presents an alter-epistemology, and as such the themes of this dissertation move alongside other alter-epistemologies emerging from, for example, disability studies; decolonial movements in science; the resurgence of magic and spirits in media studies; and, even more specifically, from the imbrication of the philosophy of science and witchcraft, as in the work of Isabelle Stengers.[18] The present research also intersects with a growing academic interest in contemporary witchcraft, such as Manon Hedenborg White's 2020 *The Eloquent Blood* or Amy Ireland's 2017 article for *e-flux*, "Black Circuit," both of which deal with conceptions of the modern goddess, Babalon, from an interdisciplinary, feminist, and theoretical framework, and a goddess I speak more on in Chapter 3 alongside Marjorie Cameron and contemporary manifestations such as the Scarlet Witch. Additionally, there have been significant interdisciplinary conferences centred around contemporary witchcraft that are contributing to opening up the highly interdisciplinary field of Witch Studies, such as The Royal Academy of Art's spring cycle of Studium Generale called *Wxtch Craft*, featuring lectures by Silvia Federici, Denise Ferreira da Silva, adrienne maree brown, and CA Conrad, among others, or Queen University's 2021 Witch Institute conference, which featured presentations, workshops, roundtables, and performances by scholars, self-defining witches, and artists.[19] Just as witches' tools are involved in shapeshifting, witches

themselves are shapeshifters. By presenting alternate possibilities of connectedness, communication with spirits and more-than-human kin teaches us how to construct wayward methods of knowing and being.

iii. A note on methodology and archive

Throughout this dissertation, I weave together many voices, themes, and perspectives in ways that lean more towards a poetic sensibility: I work with my archive from a space of intellect, as an academic, and from a space of love and intuition, as a writer and a more aleatory thinker. Therefore, throughout the dissertation, I place a multitude of voices in conversation with each other that may not normally be speaking together in the same room: here, critical theory runs alongside DIY magic manuals, psychoanalysis runs alongside feminist consciousness-raising movements, and pop culture runs alongside philosophy, to name a few. With that in mind, I bring in voices as diverse, for example, as adrienne maree brown and Michel Serres, as M. Jacqui Alexander and John Durham Peters, as Doreen Valiente and Jacques Derrida

Where witchcraft is involved, it is not always about historical veracity and truth as it is about lore, intuition, and oral knowledge. As such, many of my sources consist of what could be termed "esoteric literature" mixed with critical theory and philosophy. In the present era, witchcraft is no longer sure of itself (if it ever was). Just as writer Peter Grey builds a conception of witchcraft around rhythm and the body, digital and Instagram witches learn how to cast spells using emojis via their touch screens, a scrying mirror of a different kind than witches have traditionally used.[20] As witchcraft changes, so must our source material when studying it. As witchcraft, and especially mediumship and divination, have been likened to and practiced as trade work, the how-to literature of witchcraft, including manuals, websites, and material from specialized presses is a significant part of keeping my research up-to-date.

Both folklorist Sabina Magliocco and historian Philip J. Deloria note the literary quality of new religions and spiritualities in general; i.e. that an entire spiritual practice can, in some instances, spring into being from the shelves of libraries, or from blogs or podcasts, which puts considerably more gravitas on what is often termed bibliotherapy or spiritual self-help books.[21] I therefore consult vernacular esoteric literature throughout the present dissertation, including work put out by mainstream esoteric presses such as Weiser Books and Llewellyn, as well as lavish occult presses, such as Three Hands Press, Atramentous Press, Scarlet Imprint, Ouroboros Press, and Strange Attractor, in addition to blogs and podcasts, such as Bri Luna's *The Hoodwitch*, Amy Torok and Risa Dickens's *Missing Witches*, and Pam Grossman's *Witch Wave*, to name a few. In addition, the archive I consult is wide and diverse, including film, ethnographical accounts, mythology, and literature. In terms of the media objects of contemporary witchcraft, the 2016 book *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic*, featuring photographs by Sara Hannant and write-ups by Hannant and Simon Costin, and covering many tools and talismans kept in the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic located in Boscastle, England, has been indispensable.

The most consistent voices running throughout the dissertation include Isabelle Stengers, Silvia Federici, and Sylvia Wynter — a philosopher of science, a Marxist feminist, and a cultural theorist, respectively. Though their ideas and perspectives are crucial to unravelling my theoretical framework, I do not always align with their respective methodologies. For example, Federici grounds her analysis of the Early Modern European witch hunts in a historical re-

evaluation of how and why the witch hunts occurred within a particular political and cultural milieu. My methodology is not primarily historical and, though I align for the most part with Marxist feminism, the dissertation does not perform a Marxist feminist reading of witchcraft. Additionally, Federici is interested in accused witches, while Isabelle Stengers speaks more on self-defining neopagan witches, a subject position that I am equally if not more interested in for the present dissertation. Sylvia Wynter opens a space from which to engage with the human as equal parts *bios* and *mythoi*, and to open different portals from which oppressed subjects not only can be included in wider philosopher conversations, but change the conversation altogether, which is significant to a discussion of the tools and techniques of witches; Wynter, however, does not speak specifically on witches per se. Therefore, the interweaving of these voices, in addition to the many other voices I have included throughout, not least from witches themselves as well as media and cultural theorists, forms the central thread of the critical work I am inspired by and write alongside of — at times veering far the particular author's path, yet always, I hope, cautious with and respectful of their work.

iv. Who (and where) is the witch?

Tracing the (obscure) origins of media such as mirrors or knots (or especially, even, fluids) would prove an impossible act. Yet it is in many ways like tracing the (obscure) origins of witchcraft itself. We can follow the mirror back to Egypt, Mycenea, Greece, Etruria, and Rome; this is not dissimilar to descriptions of the formal practices of Western-based witches, if there is such a thing, whose traditions can be traced back, and sketchily, to a diverse and multifarious transmission of lore and practices.[22] Gerald Gardner's 1954 book *Witchcraft Today* was one of the first non-fiction works on self-identifying witches, appearing shortly after the repeal of the 1951 Witchcraft and Vagrancy Act in Britain. In it, Gardner (in)famously outed the witches of Europe;[23] indeed, the book is prefaced by anthropologist, archaeologist, and Egyptologist Margaret Murray, whose theory of an early "witch-cult" that involved the persecuted witches of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, still remains highly contentious.[24] About the origins of the "witch-cult," Gardner writes:

> [witches] have vague stories that the cult comes from the East, the Summer Land, combined with a story that it had existed since the goddess went to the Land of Death. Of course they know that they have been vaguely in touch with various sorcerers and wise men, and it is said that in the old days when witches were persecuted, the sorcerers were not, and that they secretly used witches as mediums to attain success in their arts. With the help of these clairvoyants they became successful as prophets, and probably the witches took several of their ideas and certainly some of their tools. I have seen several witches' swords; of these, four had apparently been made for sorcerers, according to the pattern prescribed in the *Key of Solomon*, with Hebrew inscriptions on hilt and blade.[25]

The way that Gardner cuts from his charming, entirely informal history of the "witch-cult," directly to the tools of witches, suggests not only the hard-to-trace lore of witches, but also the close linkage between witches' lore and witches' instruments, and furthermore, the latter as the evidence of the former.

Before I continue exploring who and what the witch(-cult) is, it is worth noting the rich imbrication between the history of witchcraft in the West and the innovation of media technologies. Predominantly, the first widespread and popular use of the printing press was to

publish treatises against witches for distribution in Germany and other parts of central Europe as early as 1436, culminating in the printing of the infamous 1486 *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*), without which the scale of the Early modern witch hunts would not have reached the proportions it did.[26] In this case, the dissemination of knowledge was directly linked to the accusation, killing, and torture of thousands of so-called witches. Not just the printing press, but media scholars have linked technologies such as typewriters, photography, and cinema to the rise of Spiritualism in the 19th century, particularly to mediums who hosted séances to communicate with the dead.[27] John Durham Peters goes so far as to note that even the words we associate with communication in general — such as channel and medium — derive from Spiritualism, where "communication was a concept that straddled the line between physical transmissions (the telegraph) and spiritual ones (messages from the other side)."[28] What is the connection between Spiritualist mediums and witches? For one, Spiritualist mediums have historically been tried as witches, such as Helen Duncan, who was imprisoned as late as 1944 under the Witchcraft Act in Great Britain for practicing mediumship and producing ectoplasm.[29] In Canada, "pretending to practice witchcraft" has been a punishable offence under Section 365 of Bill C-51, which was only repealed in 2018.[30]

These overlaps between new media, witchcraft, and the law put an emphasis on the act of connection, particularly on which forms of connection are deemed lawful and normative, as well as how far our metaphors between body and machine can extend. Cultural historian Jeffrey Sconce highlights the pernicious and widespread equation of women with technology in the 19th century when he observes that "mediums became complex and contested 'devices,' linking for some the living and the dead, science and religion, masculine technology and feminist spirituality."[31] Despite the overt links between witchcraft and media technologies, there is a dearth of academic study that looks at the tools and techniques of witches themselves, and from their perspectives, a gap that my research hopes to fill; moreover, I believe that the present examination will sit alongside pertinent epistemological and methodological concerns within feminist media studies, particularly when we look at how so-called fiction and so-called history intertwine to create diverse subjectivities and methodologies.

Swords, pentacles, and mirrors are equal parts lore, instrument, and method. To come back to Gerald Gardner's description of witches and tools, it is salient that he puts a stress on sorcery, which has everything to do with his own background, and links witchcraft to ceremonial magic. Before outing the "witch-cult" of Europe, Gerald Gardner (1884–1964) was quite high up in the echelons of ceremonial magic, having reached the seventh degree of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), headed at the time by infamous ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley (1875–1947).[32] Ceremonial magic plays a large part in the story of contemporary Western witchcraft, especially if we take into consideration the fact that an early version of Gardner's Book of Shadows (or grimoire), titled by Gardner as "Ye Bok of Ye Art Magical," includes a parsing of ritual magic, Kabbalah, the Rider-Waite Tarot, and other unknown grimoires.[33] Gerald Gardner was both a witch and a magician, and he exists as an ambivalent source in the history of

witchcraft, as much beloved as mistrusted; a trickster to be sure (fig. 2).[34] In the context of the present introduction, it makes sense to touch on Gardner, not only because he was the "founder" of what is now known as Wicca, or at least the outer-of-the-secret of traditional British witchcraft, but because he was also an amateur anthropologist, a scholar. Gardner had travelled the world learning about "Freemasonry, spiritualism, Buddhism, and tribal magical practices" before he finally settled down in rural England in the 1930s, where, as historian Ronald Hutton describes, he believed his vast collection of artifacts from his journeys would be safe if war was to break out.[35] It was twenty years later, when Gardner was in his seventies, that he claimed he had been initiated into the New Forest coven in 1939 — from there, a hidden world of witchcraft emerged into the full light of day.

Fig. 2 Gerald Gardner at his cottage and original Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Isle of Man, UK, circa 1950s

Gardner would go on to write prolifically about the rites and rituals of the supposedly traditional (and very secretive) witches who had initiated him, in short, giving up their much-guarded secrets while fashioning himself both as an initiate of an ancient mystery tradition and, incongruently, the very public face of it. Not the first time in history, perhaps, that a well-to-do European man has claimed for himself a vast tradition of secretive and oral knowledge.[36] Whatever one may think about Gerald Gardner — whether he be a fraud, a founder, an initiate, or an imaginative eccentric and nudist (the last one definitely true) — he is a significant place to begin, for he situates us on the very unsolid ground that will follow. The imbrication of fact and fantasy, of academia and magic, of secrets, ceremony, and, above all, tools and techniques, supply us with a taste of what the written paper trail of witchcraft looks like and how it comes into being, at once highlighting its overt materiality and questioning the material in the first place. Gardner's New Forest coven was far from the last word on the origins of what is now contemporary Western-based witchcraft. When he published his book about the "witch-cult" of Europe, a deluge of other self-defining witches poured out of the woodwork, among them, prominently, Sybil Leek and Robert Cochrane.[37] Though witchcraft has likely always been practiced to one degree or another, has always been alive, in different gradations of obscurity, discussions of the origins of Western-based witchcraft are imbricated into the question of who and what a witch is to begin with.[38] It is one that continues to the present day.

Setting out to answer the question, "who is the witch?" is as difficult as attempting to answer the question, "what is witchcraft?" Its transparency only obviates a further opacity. In his 2013 book *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, self-titled "magickian" and publisher Peter Grey writes, "[t]he witch and witchcraft are an historical reality. Yet we quickly come to the conclusion that witchcraft is not the religion that Murray or Gardner proposed, neither is it [Émile] Durkheim's unified set of beliefs and practices."[39] Going further, Grey invokes the mirror:

> So we ask the looking glass our question, what is witchcraft? In the search for origins we ask who we are. Not a miasma of deception to drape over the show stone, rather a blood thread that spins into a mantle, a living web of connection. What is witchcraft? The answer is simple: Witchcraft is the work of the enemy. Witchcraft is the sex that other people have, witchcraft the drug that other people take, witchcraft is the rite that other

people perform. Witchcraft is the magic that other people do. Witchcraft is the clothes that other people wear. Witchcraft is the words that other people speak. Witchcraft the Goddess they venerate."[40]

Like mirrors, witchcraft and witches brings the subject / object and self / other split into sharp relief, making it clear that any construction of "I" is phantasmatic, constructed in the face of, and often at the expense of, the "other." Witchcraft, like mirrors, is in a sense deictic. Linguist Émile Benveniste notes that "deixis is contemporary with the instance of discourse that carries the indicator of person." The adverbs *here* and *now* are associated with the pronouns *I* and *you*, which are unique and particular each time they are spoken, arising only in a *present* instance of discourse.[41] "Language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a subject by referring to himself as *I* in his discourse," writes Benveniste. "Because of this, I posit another person, the one who, being, as he is, completely exterior to 'me,' becomes my echo to whom I say *you* and who says *you* to me."[42] As Jacques Lacan writes, no doubt in conversation with Benveniste, "I am thinking where I am not, therefore I am where I am not thinking."[43] This is a positionality that occupies both sides of the mirror and at once neither: where am I where I am not *I*? And further, what kind of echo is the *you* that is ever more exterior to *I*, that is not-I, that is villainized? Who is the *you* who does not reflect?

The most apt definition of the witch that I have found in general is also deictic and it also comes from Peter Grey; it does not have to do so much with what or who, but where. "You will find the witch at the end of a pointed finger," Grey writes.[44] In addition to locating the witch in the reflection of the self, Grey puts the witch on the end of an extended finger: she is over there, she is pointed towards as an accused subject, the root of a crime that is, most often, a crime of communication — with the devil, with the forbidden and the illicit. But there is a double entendre to Grey's definition that also signals a beckoning. What if it is the witch herself who is pointing? Not to accuse, but rather to manifest, pointing in the direction of her object of desire, demonstrating the efficacy of her crafted will. The witch uncoils their will to the stars and watches it unfold like a fern, a rhythm, a stone. Like an ocean, the witch is a lure. Like desire, a trickster. For Grey, the witch is defined not through rituals or symbols, which, he asserts, lead most often to cultural appropriation from established systems; rather, for Grey, witchcraft is found in rhythm — of the body, of the moon, of the stars.[45] The way his deictic sentence inflects a double meaning is also indicative of one of the main characteristics that mirrors, knots, and fluids share with witches: shapeshifting.

v. The (witch)craft of communication

Before I go into shapeshifting more specifically, it is worthwhile framing the techniques of witchcraft within communication studies and the figure of the witch within the pantheon of tricksters who are very much connected to the craft of (mis)communication. The god Thoth (Greek), also called Hermes, or Mercury (Roman), is the god of communication, as well as trickery and the liminal zone between death and life; witchcraft, being a practice that at times calls upon gods, as well as spirits and other entities, is therefore very much in line with the mythology surrounding communication to begin with. In his 1968 text *Plato's Pharmacy*, Jacques Derrida writes about Thoth, the "messenger god," the "clever intermediary," found in Plato's *Phaedrus*, composed around 370 BCE, who is the ultimate god of trickery, at once feared, hated, and beloved.[46] Thoth brings the sun god the gift of writing, of *logos*, and all that springs from it, such as dialectics, hermeneutics, and rhetoric — all of which Socrates compares

to the *pharmakon*, which is as much a medicine as it is a poison.[47] The *pharmakon* is a "kin to witchcraft and magic," writes Derrida: it deals in illusion, sleight of hand, and bewitchment — *logos* therefore is a "magical 'pharmaceutical' force," and one that "derives from ambivalence."[48] The *pharmakon*, like the tools and techniques of witches, sits on the double edge between that which heals and that which harms, that which is sought out, and that which is avoided. Derrida could well be describing the witch when he writes that the *pharmakon* is "[b]eneficial insofar as he cures — and for that, venerated and cared for — harmful insofar as he incarnates the powers of evil — and for that, feared and treated with caution. Alarming and calming. Sacred and accursed."[49] Importantly, the *pharmakon* is also associated with the scapegoat, an ancient Greek ritual of purification in which one is sacrificed, thereby pushing evil to "the *outside*," excluded from the body and from the city.[50] The witch, in all their incarnations, is just such a figure on the outskirts or outsidedness of our deepest longings (the medicine) and our deepest fears (the poison), that which is ambivalent, sacred, and accursed.

Witches' tools are broad and could include any variety of the following items: a wand, a cup, a cauldron, a censer, candles, oils, jewelry, and reems and reems of written papers or oral teachings that stand in for holy books. Yet witches' tools could also be entirely non-canonical, such as particular perfumes and scents, fabrics, pendants from relatives, or writings and formulae developed individually; it is not so much the object itself that makes the witch's tool, but rather the way that the object works within a web of relationality between practitioners, other tools, and their designated purpose/s, which could include divination, spell casting, or mediumship. The consecration of the tool re-crafts it, trains it to act differently than the manufacturer of the object may have hoped, and, by extension, the tool then crafts the subjectivity of the one wielding it. For example, once a black-handled dagger is consecrated as an athamé, it no longer performs the functions that a dagger would normally be put to use for, such as cutting, slicing, or otherwise behaving as a blade — it is now an energetic instrument that cuts shapes across the air.[51] Peters writes that "[h]umans and their crafts have entered into nature and altered every system on earth and sea";[52] a witch or a magician would read this sentence literally. That once they enter into an interaction with their tools, the tools are altered in order, themselves, to alter space, time.

Peters surfaces the elemental nature of media, particularly media that can be taken as whole environments, such as "the ozone layer, the arctic and whale populations." No longer does media only encompass "message-bearing institutions such as newspapers, radios, television, and the Internet," Peters writes, but media also includes "vessels and environments, containers of possibility that anchor our existence and make what we are doing possible."[53] In the case of mirrors, fluids, and knots, media are at once containers and vessels — environments — for the communicative possibilities that lie within or beyond them — often illegible, diffuse, obscured, or wild. This is what Marshall McLuhan was pointing to when he wrote that, "[n]ew media, new technologies, new extensions of human powers, tend to be environmental. Tools, script, as much as wheel, or photograph, or Telstar, create a new environment, a new matrix for the existing technologies."[54]As Richard Cavell writes, "McLuhan used the term 'environment' to extend the concept of 'medium' so that it implied not only the formal paradigm of spatial production but the context of that production as well."[55]

Ozone layers and whale populations still exist, however, solidly in the realm of secular media described via data; witch tools exist more in the zone of spiritual or fabled instruments. Ashon T. Crawley, in his book *Blackpentecostal Breath*, opens an approach to media that involves sensuous experiences specific to Blackpentecostal congregations — "Breath," "Shouting," "Noise," and "Tongues" — vibrations, sonic events. To do so, he coins a

methodology of thinking about and with what he calls "otherwise possibilities" through a combination of aesthetics, anecdotes, and queer theory and critical race theory. As such, Crawley seeks to avoid recreating the subjectivity of the philosopher or theologian who has historically been involved in oppressive, colonial categorizations of thought.[56] This runs along the lines of how Jeremy Stolow notes that the media of religion, especially, must take into account sonic and invisible realms, writing that "the most primary media of all [are] the human senses." The very fact that critical approaches to media have a difficult time grappling with religion points not to a separation between media and religion, posits Stolow, but their very imbrication: the phrase "'religion *and* media' is a pleonasm," he writes.[57] Religion does not exist without media; media is always already embedded within religion. It is often only through media that one's faith is communicated at all; rituals, venerations, incense, space, and garments are not excesses of a religion, but the very manifestation of the religious. Stolow coins the multi-sensory and beautifully impossible phrase "liquid aura" to ask, "what happens to sacred presence once it is mediated, and re-mediated, through an ever-thickening raiment of technological apparatuses and in ever-widening circuits of exchange?"[58]

Though indeed practices of witchcraft, such as Wicca, can be defined as a religion that includes devotional practices, this is not always the case, and I am more interested in the *craft* part of witchcraft than the devotional part in the present dissertation — works rather than faith, or what Margaret Murray termed "Operational Witchcraft" rather than "Ritual Witchcraft."[59] Anthropologist Zora Neal Hurston, in her 1931 ethnography, "Hoodoo in America" uses the term "works," which she floats between quotation marks, as well as "techniques," and "routines," to discuss spells, divinations, and petitions in the Hoodoo tradition of the American South.[60] What exactly is it, then, that witches *do* when they *work*? Peter Hamilton-Giles, who has written the only full-length philosophical treatise on witchcraft that I know of, asserts that what a witch does is quite simple (not at all simple): *witching*. For Hamilton-Giles, the act of witching has become "superseded by terms such as "ceremony, ritual or conjuring, to name just a few" for the fact that these categories fit "with contemporary expectations on how a magical act should resonate relevance."[61] In other words, formalized rituals, such as those that have been written down, published, or even carried on under the moniker of a "tradition" have created a particular vernacular of ritual that has obscured *witching* and erased, over time, many practices of witchcraft that may be less well-known. One property of witching, as I will draw out further in the present introduction, is shapeshifting, which has as much to do with time as with spatial devices.

I am not only interested in techniques of witchcraft, such as witching, but also the way these techniques involve media, tools, devices. How do we speak of the way witches tie knots to cast a spell, or use a pendulum to divine the future, or use a lock of hair to connect with the deceased, or grow datura to concoct a flying oil? Especially in the case of using talismans such as fingernails, the objects of witches are subjects as well. There is an aspect of witches' tools that navigates death and life, not only to venerate or demonstrate faith, but to do work, to affect change. Witches' tools, therefore, enter a very ephemeral category of things. By speaking of practices, we also engage in a dialogue with the *practiced*, the rehearsed, the learned; witches' tools, by presenting functions that do not always collocate with their original semiotic intentions, such as turning a reflective mirror to a black mirror in order to divine rather than reflect, ask us, as Crawley suggests, to engage with what is otherwise. This is also close to what Peter Hamilton-Giles means when he demarcates "witching" from ritual. It is wilder; less easy to transmit or to explain.[62] The co-creation of subject and object is also described by the field cultural techniques,

which aim to replace the hegemony of understanding with the materialities of communication — not television, radio, or film per se, but discourse operators such as alphabetization, writing tools, and disciplining techniques that are very much Friedrich Kittler's domain of thought. As Geoffrey Winthrop-Young writes, "[t]he human is not human all the way down. Instead we emerged, quite literally, from doors and gates while domesticated animals — in opposition to which we were able to identify ourselves as a species — emerged on the other side …. cultural techniques refer to processing operations that frequently coalesce into entities which are subsequently viewed as the agents or sources running these operations."[63] In this view, the witch co-emerges with her techniques and tools; she is inseparable from them in a holistic sense.

Slowly, as I begin to move from general sweeps to the specificity of witchcraft, we can begin to see the crafting together of a religious or spiritual practice that itself is called "the Craft."[64] I have contextualized the tools and techniques of witches within media studies, a project that will be ongoing throughout the dissertation, and yet they equally belong to the world of craft, which has long been pitted against "art." Art critic Lucy Lippard made significant contributions to the recognition of craft within art circles, writing, in 1978, that "[m]uch has been made of the need to erase false distinctions between art and *craft*, 'fine' art and the 'minor' arts, 'high' art and 'low' art," yet there is also "high" and "low" craft, Lippard asserts, such as the "Good Taste" of crafts found in the Bauhaus movement versus the "Bad Taste" of those found in hobby art books, which is a distinction made as much on the basis of audience as on categorization — who is looking at this work? Who perceives it? Who is this work for?[65] Lippard's emphasis on "hobby" crafts also leads us to the question of where: as in, where is the art or craft made? Art made in studios may be different from art made in homes and collocates with the particular domesticity that the tools of witches possess; as Wiccan High Priestess Doreen Valiente wrote in 1973, "[i]deally, all witch tools should appear as close as possible to household objects." This was not so that witches' tools would remain mundane, however, but so that a witch could easily hide her / his / their tools amongst the everyday items of the household in order to disguise their practice.[66]

Given the feminist tone that underlies a large swathe of self-defining witches, and that I will address throughout, it is important to note the imbrication of witches' tools within the realm of art and the crafts of the sacred. Therefore, it is not only useful to frame witches' techniques via media theorists, but also via artists such as Lygia Clark, who created relational or sensory objects in Paris in the 1970s,[67] or scholars who are themselves invested in the sacred, such as M. Jacqui Alexander, who writes, "[i]n the realm of the secular, the material is conceived of as tangible while the spiritual is either nonexistent or invisible. In the realm of the Sacred, however, the invisible constitutes its presence by a provocation of sorts, by provoking our attention."[68] The invisible shows its presence by calling us to attention: this is the work of communication with the dead and more-than-human kin, one that takes place in attentional space, where the senses become, to Alexander "rewired," a process that unmoors the patterns and habits of separation.[69] Alexander, furthermore, views her instruments themselves as medicines, an important distinction in light of how the tools of witches, such as plants, can also be agential collaborators, bringing benevolent or malevolent effects upon those they are pointed towards.[70]

vi. So-called Western witchcraft

As I have stated, my area of interest in the present dissertation concerns the techniques and media of communication in contemporary witchcraft, especially as they manifest in North

America, and predominantly, but not limited to, the Western tradition. Yet these perimeters tend to spill past any enforced containment, much like the media I am discussing. Like Hutton, a historian, and like Grey, a self-identifying witch, when we try to look for origins and definitions of witches and witchcraft, we discover shaky ground. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said uses a deictic turn of phrase to describe how the "Orient" is pitched against the "Occident," writing, "the Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either."[71] "There is no there there," wrote poet Gertrude Stein, which could also be what the witch's reflection in the mirror declares.[72] In his 1994 preface, Said points out that "neither the term Orient nor the concept of the West has any ontological stability," going on to call each and both "supreme fictions."[73] The entire conception of the "West," therefore, is itself problematic, and the tools and techniques of witchcraft tend to point accusingly, like the witch Grey describes, to the tangled webs of history, politics, appropriation, inquisition, and so-called modernity that the "West" lays out before it.

In their book, *Postcolonial Astrology*, astrologer Alice Sparkly Kat reiterates this position, noting that "the West is a modern invention" and that "the ability to claim Roman cultural or biological genealogy is an integral part of the *storytelling* that reinforces the West as a political reality."[74] Sparkly Kat opens their book by asserting that "[b]oth astrology and race are types of magical thinking and are not rational." They quote anthropologist Ashley Montagu, who called "race 'the witchcraft of our time.'"[75] Sparkly Kat continues: "[r]ace is experienced as a political reality, while astrology is not. Race, then, is not experienced as fictional, which astrology often is."[76] As a premise for writing their book, Sparkly Kat asks, "[i]f astrology is just as speculative as race, can we make it more responsible? Can we use Western astrology to respond to the West? The word 'responsibility' has the word 'response' in it. Responsibility is possible when response is possible."[77] One could ask similar questions of other tools and techniques of Western witchcraft, including the ones I will focus on in the following dissertation, such as divination, spellcasting, and mediumship. Issues of race figure loudly among the topics that the tools and techniques of Western witchcraft put into focus, alongside issues of (dis)abilities, queer positionalities, and feminist perspectives. Sparkly Kat's question of whether one can use astrology to respond the (creation of the) West is provocative — magic and witchcraft can be seen, in some ways, as responses to the storytelling and mythology that at once paints the West and posits it as an illusion, a trap, and a craft.

In her overview of scholarship on African witchcrafts, Shelagh Roxburgh likens witchcraft scholarship to the witches' scrying mirror itself. She observes that "[b]y studying witchcraft, we ourselves are bewitched, as our engagement with the supernatural forces our own biases to the fore and links us all to global processes of harm." For Roxburgh, scholars of witchcraft must "resist the marginalization of non-Western conceptualizations of reality that remain embedded in witchcraft studies. In order to prevent discussions from reflecting themselves, we must work to ensure that new theories and paradigms are able to emerge and multiply."[78] Roxburgh calls for a less Western-focused discussion of witchcraft and I would italicize the importance of this endeavour while adding that a discussion of Western-based witchcraft by default blows open the construction of the concept of the "West" to begin with. Practices as early as the 15th-century Mirror of Floron, that I will discuss in Chapter 1, show us the utter confabulation of multiple strands of culture that are woven throughout a seemingly straight-forward ritual, with a stress, in this case, on (garbled) Arabic or Chaldean incantations and Christian knights.[79] In her book *Ona Agbani*, Yoruba practitioner Iyalosa Apetebii Olaomi Osunyemi Akalatunde notes that "European culture is built on Greco-Roman philosophy and

Greco-Roman philosophy is an adulteration of ancient KMTic (now called Egyptian philosophy)."[80] It is necessary, therefore, that in speaking of Western-based witchcraft, or indeed any Western-based spirituality or faith, we must complicate conceptions of the "West," at least until we have another way, another framework, of speaking about what is meant by the word.

3. Shapeshifting

i. The ancestors of the witches

Where, then, do the tools of witches come from? Who is it at the end of the pointed finger? This becomes especially complicated as Gemma Gary, who defines herself as a Traditional Witch, notes, the witch may not even be entirely human, but rather a "living avatar of the night."[81] A third person indeed; a person who is not a person at all. These themes reach into the heart of the questions the present dissertation means to open: who, exactly, are witches speaking with when they use devices such as mirrors to communicate? How do they accomplish this act? And what does it say to a wider discussion of instruments and communication techniques? These are questions that are imbricated in the worlds of the living and the dead, that point to temporalities that belong not only to futures, or to histories, but to the fabulated, the wayward, and the nonlinear. To speak of the communication devices of witches is to speak of the ancestors of the witches, is to trace a tricky and many-thorned path of origins.

Fig. 3 Haydée, *Bruja de Villas de Loíza* (the witch of Villas de Loíza), as Anglo witch, 1996. Photo by Raquel Romberg

Writing about witches and their devices is to get comfortable in a space of shapeshifting, which is a major theme in the present dissertation, and is demonstrated by anthropologist Raquel Romberg's work with Puerto Rican *bruja espiritista* (Spiritist witch healer), Haydée, who, to Romberg's surprise, celebrated a Halloween ritual dressed as a stereotypical "Halloween flying-witch" — complete with pointy black hat, besoms propped on her walls as décor, and even "a cat-decorated iced cake, bought from a nearby Walgreens" (fig. 3).[82] Romberg, as an anthropologist, found herself startled and unable to fit this particular event into her fieldwork in the 1990s; it was not what she was "looking for," nor did Haydée perform the type of witchcraft that Romberg was expecting her to.[83] Writing ten years later, however, it was precisely her own discomfort with Haydée's Halloween ritual that sparked Romberg to look back at it, concluding, "I see Haydée's innovative celebration of Halloween as an impromptu form of personal ancestor worship."[84] Reading the ritual performed by Haydée as ancestor worship widens the definitional space of "ancestor"; in this case, it is the image or marker of the witch as a semiotic assemblage (black hat, besom, cat), an open ancestral icon.[85]

Haydée's ritual deserves pause in light of how witches have and still do actively bend the word "ancestor," not only to refer to biological kin. Artist Edgar Fabián Frías, who has appeared on Pam Grossman's *Witch Wave* podcast as well as *The Commons*, "a morning talk show for witches by witches," posted on Instagram that "ancestors can be related, chosen, non-humxn, spiritual, imagined, etc." (fig. 4).[86] This notion is not new. Historian Mircea Eliade noted in 1975 that in Romania, fairies are the ancestors of the witches, while folklorist Eva Pócs asserted in 1999 that in Europe the ancestors of the witches include vampires, wolves, and incubi.[87]

Claiming a creative, at times non-human ancestry, is part of a wider practice within feminist spirituality, and it is not only limited to human and non-human kin, but also to fictional ancestors. M. Jacqui Alexander notes how so-called fiction is tightly woven into the sacred and points out that Black women theologians use will sometimes use Baby Suggs in ceremony, a character from Toni Morrison's 1987 book, *Beloved*.[88] Alexander extrapolates this practice outwards and writes:

> The knowledge derived from faith and belief systems is not uninformed epiphenomena, lapses outside the bounds of rationality, but rather knowledge about Sacred accompaniment, knowledge that is applied and lived in as consistent and as committed a way as possible so as to feel and observe the meaning of mystery, not as a secret, but as elusive — hence the constancy of work.[89]

What Alexander is pointing to is also a big part of the work that witches' tools engage in and craft: that mystery may not be secretive, but merely elusive — one that can be located in its various techniques, contexts, and communities. Where the term "ancestor," is concerned, the bending and twisting of this term has a lot to do with the work of creating a roomier view of what constitutes family and kinship. Margot Adler notes the beauty of self-defined witches who come from a particular family tradition of witchcraft, or "fam trad," as she calls it: "[t]he family tradition … is a heritage of magical teachings, mostly oral," she writes. "The religion is simple. There are no elaborate initiations. Ritual is at a minimum. It is a *craft*."[90] What is more pertinent to the present dissertation, however, are those witches who demonstrate a more sideways view of family, such as Frías and Haydée (who may or may not, of course, additionally have their own family traditions and a significant relationship with biological ancestors as well). In a dissertation that is in part about communication with more-than-human kin, which involves, as I see it, spirits and ancestors, it is worth spending time on what is meant by "kin" in the first place.

Fig. 4 Edgar Fabián Frías, Instagram post, April 11, 2021

ii. Witchkin

I mean to circle back to the way that witches perceive ancestry as well as to Haydée's Halloween ritual, but it is worthwhile jumping forwards to contextualize the way that witchcraft is entangled with re-defining the perimeters of family and ancestors to begin with. When Western witchcraft travelled from Gardner's 1950s declaration of the existence of the New Forest coven in England all the way to North America in the 1970s, it also became entangled with feminist, ecological, and queer movements.[91] With her book *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* published in 1982, Starhawk, a neopagan witch located in California, who has created her own tradition called Reclaiming, presented a feminist face of witchcraft to the world, inextricably linking herself to the lineage of the accused witches who were burned in Europe during the witch-hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries (fig. 5). This leads us back to Margaret Murray's research of the 1920s, from which Gardner drew in order to back up his theories of the original "witch-cult" of Europe. Yet whereas Gardner used the ancestry of Europe's burned witches as proof of the ancient roots of the New Forest coven in England, Starhawk used the

same chosen ancestry to connect her to a feminist lineage of oppressed and hunted women, and to bring vengeance for this lineage into present-day political and magical action.

Not only feminist communities, but witchcraft and queer communities have had a long history. Sylvia Federici notes the very material parallels between the persecution of so-called witches in Early modern Europe and the persecution of homosexuals. "'Faggot' reminds us that homosexuals were at times the kindling for the stakes upon which witches were burned," she writes, "while the Italian *finocchio* (fennel) refers to the practice of scattering these aromatic vegetables on the stakes in order to mask the stench of burning flesh."[92] In his 1978 book *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*, activist and author Arthur Evans put together a creative and impressive timeline of events dating from 399 BCE to 1801 — starting with the condemnation of the Athenian philosopher Socrates "for corrupting young men" and ending in the removal of a statue of the Greek goddess Demeter in Eleusis, Greece — imbricating the histories of witchcraft, heresy, and queer culture. Evans, who was one of the first to start the Radical Faeries movement, alongside Harry Hay and psychologist Mitch Walker, among others, calls upon Joan of Arc, fairies, and the Cathars and Waldensians as queer ancestors in his book.[93] Matt Baume, writing for *The Hornet*, describes Arthur Evans as "an activist in San Francisco who created a mishmash of mythologies to lead prayer circles inspired by Greek and Pagan gods in his Haight Street apartment in the mid-'70s."[94]

Fig. 5 Starhawk making a speech on behalf of the Gualala River, California, 2013

Not all witchcrafts or witches have historically leaned toward the queering of family structures and ancestors, however. Traditions such as some factions of Wicca can be heavily heteronormative, for example, stressing gender polarities (male / female) and the re-enactment of fertility rites.[95] Additionally, questions of what and who constitutes family and ancestry bring up questions concerning appropriation, transgression, and consent that I will address further below. Witchcraft and witches are tricky to pin within a singular political framework, which is part of what makes research in the field electric, contradictory, and challenging. Though I choose to take a largely left-leaning, feminist and queer coalition throughout, witchcraft remains knotted, multifaceted, and at times as villainous and problematic as it is creative and subversive, which is part of the way that bewitchment unfolds and functions, as I will speak of more on in Chapter 2.

Witches bend the term ancestor, to say the least. When we open the cover of Christopher Penczak's *The Mighty Dead: Communing with the Ancestors of Witchcraft*, we will not be surprised, then, when we see that, among those who a witch may wish to commune with, "Genetic Kin" are listed among "Adopted Kin," "Land Kin," "Story Kin," and "Path Kin" — one can commune with historical magical practitioners and mystics like Giordano Bruno, Hildegard von Bingen, or John Dee, just as one can commune with those killed during the European witch-hunts like Isobel Gowdie, just as one can commune with more storied beings like The Witch of Endor or Cuchulain.[96] Who are the ancestors of the witches? This is all about kin. In her book *Staying with the Trouble*, Donna Haraway writes:

> Kin is a wild category that all sorts of people do their best to domesticate. Making kin as oddkin rather than, or at least in addition to, godkin and genealogical and biogenetic family troubles important matters, like to whom one is actually responsible. Who lives and who dies, and how, in this kinship rather than that one?[97]

The way Haydée takes on the costume of the stereotypical Anglo witch as part of a healing ritual, or the way that Penczak figures Story Kin next to Genetic Kin points to the ways that witches participate in developing and sustaining relationships with what Haraway terms oddkin and what we could term witchkin, not just conceptually, but also actively; donning the garments of one's witchkin, opening up communication with one's witchkin in ritual — these gestures point us to ethical questions; as Haraway asserts, *who are we responsible for?* The answer we see may not be one, necessarily, who is reproduced in the mirror.

The witch, who is also a figure of reproductive deviancy — historically characterized as eating babies, or at the very least, as not participating in the obedient duty of reproducing them — shows us how acts of curiously sustaining and creating relationship and relationality points outwards to figurations of kin and ancestry that are both human and non-human, linear and non-linear, extra-sensical, and super-natural, and complicated, knotted.[98] This is an aspect of shifting shape. It is to look in the mirror not for one's own reflection necessarily, but rather as a way of "eschewing futurism," as Haraway suggests, of "staying with the trouble … making oddkin … in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles."[99] Staying with the present, adamantly, in various concatenations is also a form of ancestor work, of making and refiguring kin, of asking who one is responsible for *right now*, in the adamant present. This is one way, as Haraway asserts, of moving away from figurations of capital and anthropos, and it is one way to relish and enjoy other assemblages of being.[100] The witch is, therefore, not only un-mimetic to conceptions of the Western bourgeois capital-M Man, which is overrepresented, as Wynter asserts, but the witch also participates in the un-mimetic craft of shapeshifting the very notions of kinship and ancestry that have reproduced and overproduced those values. This is part of shapeshifting. And in this, there is great communal power.

"One of the central motifs connecting all forms of shapeshifting," notes Romberg, "is power — the power to do things or obtain abilities that would otherwise have been impossible in the pre-metamorphosis state." To come back to Haydée, she is a witch who shifted her shape into "a pop culture black-bonneted stereotypical Anglo witch" for a Halloween celebration, the significance of which took Romberg, a trained anthropologist, years to process, and years to overcome her own initial reaction to. When she did, she noticed that "on a deeper level … the spiritual meaning of the strategic self-presentations of *brujos* and their self-identification with previous genealogies of *brujos* (and witches, in this case) … bears on their professional persona and their power to heal."[101] Haydée's shapeshifting is not merely a ruse; it is an act of healing. Haydée, the self-titled *Bruja de Villas de Loíza* (the witch of Villas de Loíza), declares: "I was born a witch, and as a witch I'll die. Witchcraft is my food. At my burial I want witches, like myself, to come."[102] The reference to food and digestion is one that starts to bring us closer into Grey's definition of the witch both at the end of the pointed finger and as the other in the mirror, the ouroboros who eats its own tail: the witches who craft themselves upon the witches: the reflection of the reflection that is not always linear or reproductive, but circular, spiral.[103] Haydée demonstrates to Romberg what Grey notes when he writes that *witchcraft is the sex that other people have, witchcraft the drug that other people take, witchcraft is the rite that other people perform*. Romberg, in allowing herself to be changed by Haydée, rather than following her first impulse to ignore what made her uncomfortable, entered meaningfully not only into her own research, but into the realm of the witch: she allowed herself to be bewitched. As scholars who confront witchcraft, we, too, shift shape.

iii. Witching: bending, twisting

Who is the witch? A Shapeshifter. What does she do? She witches. On the surface, these seem like simple markers, but in them exist coiled worlds. It must be possible to get closer. Before moving on, it is useful to pause for a moment and ask: how do witches themselves describe what they do? How do witches engage in witching? In her book *Beloved Witch: An Autobiography*, Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, a Wiccan priestess based in Kolkata, describes the word "witch" by first discrediting Cartesian dualism. "The new physics," Chakraverti unabashedly asserts, "has disproved Descartes' conception that dominated scientific thinking from the seventeenth century — that mind and matter are separate …. After all the word 'witchcraft' in one of its connotations refers to the use of extra natural forces to bend the world to one's will. The noun 'witch' may have been taken from the old Teutonic word 'wik' meaning, to bend."[104] In terms of a focus on craft, this is a beautiful definition of witches and witchcraft that is directly located in what the witch does: the witch *bends*, like a mirror reflects, refracts, ensnares; like a knot loops. Starhawk and M. Macha NightMare provide a similar definition both of witchcraft and of witches:

> While the popular understanding of "Witchcraft" often includes either devil worship or the wielding of supernatural powers, we know that the term has a more ancient and honourable history. It derives from the Anglo-Saxon root *wic,* meaning "to bend or twist"; it is related to "willow," a sacred tree much used for its flexible withes in basketry and building. Witches were those who could bend or twist fate, who could weave new possibilities, who used willow bark (from which aspirin is now derived) and other herbs in healing, who preserved the communal knowledge of the properties and uses of plants, who kept the old earth-based way long after most of European culture was at least nominally Christian."[105]

Here, bending and twisting is also related to weaving and to medicine making. These definitions are so rich in part because they relate to the *how* of witchcraft, which works with my discussion around witchcraft in the realm of communications, and also places the witch therein as a liminal figure; an interlocutor; a craftsperson; one who can bend the rules. Both Starhawk and Chakraverti, in their discrete ways, reveal a politicized aspect of witchcraft characteristic of contemporary self-identifying witches. For her part, Chakraverti uses her platform in Kolkata to speak out actively against the ongoing persecution of those labelled witches, or *daayani* (fig. 6).[106] As well as going directly into small communities and working with accused witches, Chakraverti has wielded the active and controversial power of the word "witch" in India to side publicly with them. Her actions have been met with political protest, particularly in 1986 by Jyoti Basu of the Communist Party of India.[107]

Fig. 6 Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, June, 2022

The self-identified witches I have so far discussed, each coming from very different backgrounds and roots — especially Gerald Gardner, Starhawk, Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, Haydée — craft their lineages from similar sources. This is significant for one of the central arguments I am making throughout this dissertation: that the way witches craft knowledge is similar to how they craft tools, and the way they work with tools is similar to the way they work with knowledge; with history; with lore; with origins. Isabelle Stengers comes

closest to formulating the significance of this particular form and force of knowledge-making when she notes, "[i]f we said to [witches], 'But your Goddess is only a fiction,' they would doubtless smile and ask us whether we are among those who believe that fiction is powerless." What Stengers ascribes here to the goddess I would like to also extend to witches' communication with oddkin, including spirits and other entities. What Stengers calls here *fiction* (and what we can also call *craft*) points to the very heart of how a witch is both seen and sees; the twinkle in the eye that gives her away and keeps her concealed. Following from the power of shapeshifting, a method that provides a whole fount of power — for power exists equally in so-called fact as it does in so-called fiction (both weave and unweave the webs of existence with equal tenacity) — witches are able to attain states they could not in a pre-metamorphosis stage, one that translates to their tools. Hamilton-Giles writes, "[a]s a fixed icon for all to behold the witch represents the accumulation of knowledge about how to entreat the visible and invisible forces that seem so intent on affecting our life experiences."[108]

4. Consensual and Non-Consensual Kin: Appropriation, Ancestry, and Craft

i. Witches, Woodcraft, and the New Age

Before I move into an overview of the chapters and key terminology that I use throughout, it is important to note that shapeshifting and bewitchment not only refer to spellcasting, divination, or witching, but also the way that witches participate in the construction of authenticity and the oftentimes consumptive and appropriative umbrella of the New Age. Opening up a discussion of communication with spirits and kin within witchcraft points us towards the ancestors of the witches, the witchkin, that in turn points us to the various sources and influences that have crafted and woven together Western-based contemporary witchcraft. This warrants a meditation on cultural appropriation and Western witchcraft's historically tricky relationship to it. Kin is complex; it is blood and story; it is carried through hardship and suffering and survival.

The shared ancestry of contemporary Western witchcraft is more complicated than the persecution of the so-called witches of Early Modern Europe and North America. If we look for one more moment at how Gardner arrived at outing the witch-cult of the New Forest coven, we not only have a mixture of ceremonial magic and folk magic practices, but, according to Ronald Hutton, Wicca was also "the result of major cultural trends."[109] These trends include the work of poets and writers, such as John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the Brontë sisters, Robert Graves, W. B. Yeats, among others — all interested in penning poems and papers to moons, Gods, and Goddesses — as much as folklore and early anthropological incursions into magic, such as Masonic traditions and folk magic (i.e. the cunning folk), as much as Indigenous traditions.[110] There is a difference, however, between taking on the words of poets and taking on (and no doubt changing, obscuring) Indigenous traditions, especially when Indigenous peoples are facing oppression on their own stolen land, Turtle Island, or what is currently mapped out as North America. We can formulate cultural appropriation, therefore, as a question of consent, especially in the discussion I am opening, where I am ascribing agency to both spirits and to witches' tools. I hope as I go forward in this dissertation that part of what I manage to unfold to some extent is how witchkin, as well as pointing to poets and anthropologists and folklore, as Hutton lays out, also points to the construction or creation of the villain, of "they" who are outside, pointed at. This includes not only the fact that witches have

been grouped into the category of the "villain" themselves, but also that New Agers and neopagans have historically adopted the practices of the "other" in a way that stretches the perimeters of consent, particularly in terms of the appropriation of (their version of) Indigenous traditions.

Ronald Hutton touches on the Woodcraft movement of the early 20th century, which now has its legacy in the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and was based on Canadian-born Ernest Thompson Seton's youth development organization, the Woodcraft Indians, that he founded in 1901. Seton's organization undoubtedly had an influence on the constructing / unearthing of mid-century European witchcraft. According to Hutton, "the woodcraft movements all to some extent took the animist view of the world, of a natural universe teeming with spirits." Some factions "openly modelled their religion on those of native America, or at least [and this is key] on European conceptions of them." One of the main ceremonies of the Woodcraft Indians youth camp, notes Hutton, was lighting a fire and dancing around it while chanting — "a further element," he writes, "of what might broadly be termed paganism."[111] Seton's so-called Indian lore, however, is itself a complicated assemblage that reflects a European conception of Indigenous practices, a sense of longing or nostalgic drive towards tradition and authenticity, which was especially urgent at the turn of the 20th century. "Ernest Thompson Seton was quintessentially modern," writes historian Philip J. Deloria Deloria, "wracked, like many intellectuals, by the anxieties generated by late nineteenth-century urban industrial capitalism."[112] Seton's philosophy waxes towards socialism and a return to the land, while maintaining a staunch position on engendering a kind of rugged manliness into young boys — "[i]t was Woodcraft that made man out of brutish material," announces Seton.[113] Deloria posits that with a robust schedule of outdoor activities, the boys "escaped the effeminacy of the modern city."[114] In this case, the craft of woodcraft — which ranged from "Rubbing-stick fire" to "Making a Dam" to "The Caribou Dance" to "The Pleiades as a Test of Eyesight" — countered the inauthenticity and effeminacy of city life with an "authentic" connection to the land, from which, at the time, actual Indigenous people were, and are, utterly dispossessed.[115]

The witch, whether as a constructed figure or as part of an "authentic" coven that Gerald Gardner stumbled upon in 1930s England, is also the figure of an other, one who hearkens back to older ways and days, and one whose lore intertwines significantly with the construction of so-called authentic epistemologies and techniques, and, importantly, with the crafting of authenticity / inauthenticity itself. As Rosemary Ellen Guiley notes in *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, the term "pagan," which includes "polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping religion," came from a Latin term meaning "country-dweller."[116] This can be seen in folk horror movies portraying witches in the Western world, such as Robin Hardy's 1973 *The Wicker Man* or Robert Eggers's 2015 *The Witch*, as well as in the wares of esoteric shops selling witchcraft items (all markedly un-techy), such as cloaks, besoms, crystal balls, herbs, black-handled daggers, and faux-tea-stained Tarot cards (fig. 7).

The wares of witchcraft undoubtedly maintain within them a sense of nostalgia, a yearning towards the authentic, a yearning to in fact create the authentic, bring it into being, and play with it, turn it around, ritualize it, even dissolve it. If the tendency to craft an authentic past or lineage is a modern phenomenon, as historian Philip J. Deloria asserts, then the craft of dissolving ancestry altogether is decidedly postmodern. Deloria notes that during the 1960s and 70s, "Cold War quests for personal brands of authentic experience gave way to increasing doubts about the existence of God, authenticity, and reality itself."[117] This assemblage engendered a crisis of meaning encapsulated by the "extraordinarily slippery word" postmodernism.[118] "Why not chop

up signs and rearrange them into a new reality?" asks Deloria, noting that alongside art pieces such as Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1961–62) or John Cage's practice of "dispensing a chance pastiche of sound," or political movements such as communalism, the New Left, and counterculture, spirituality and religion, too, were facing a similar crisis of meaning.[119] Deloria describes how it was not until the 1980s that the New Age solidified, marked by "self-help and personal development therapies" often in the form of books aimed towards those who were literate and who had time and access to literature.[120] In this space, religions and cultures became detached from lived experience and attached more to symbols; the "symbolic border-crossing of culture and race had become so painless that the meanings defined by those boundaries began to disintegrate. With them went a certain kind of social awareness."[121] Deloria is not exactly condemning New Agers themselves — "they tend to be good people bound up in contradictions," he neutrally offers — yet he does note that the practice in general tends to highlight an "asymmetrical relation of power," one that eventually gave way to a larger stress on multiculturalism.[122]

Fig. 7 Charme et Sortilège, an esoteric shop in Montreal, Quebec, circa 2020

Do witches fit into the New Age? According to Ronald Hutton, "I have myself met many New Agers who have considered pagan witchcraft to be a part of their movement; I have never yet encountered a pagan witch who did."[123] New Age painter, author, and activist Monica Sjöö would concur. As she wrote in her scathing take down, *New Age and Armageddon*, the New Age movement is "racist, misogynist, reactionary and right-wing, inherited from a mishmash of both eastern and western occult sources … New Age thinking originates in north America amongst the children of the white and privileged."[124] Sjöö describes the New Age as a movement that works against the goddess, writing that "[i]n the New Age movement, there is no recognition that women were the creators of the most ancient cultures and that the original mother of humanity and ancestor Goddess was African and black."[125] She sums up the introduction of her book by aligning herself with witches: "[t]he time has come when all of us, who in past ages were burned as witches because we loved and cherished the lunar (and sometimes solar) Mother and magically communicated with our Mother Earth, have to fight anew on life's behalf."[126] As such, Sjöö vastly demarcates those who work with the goddess and / or who claim the ancestry of witches from those who adhere to the New Age movement. Contemporary author Elissa Washuta has a different framing of the New Age, however, and works out the complexities of locating herself both as a witch in the early 21st century and one who has inherited the complicated legacy of the 1960s and 70s. She writes:

> We crystal witches of the internet think what we're about is not New Age, but it surrounds us like water surrounds a fish. I'm learning from Wikipedia that's exactly what we're about, only we get our horoscopes as tweets and find our psychics on Yelp. We want the divine. We want to be healed and we want a fix. Most of all, we seek what we can't locate in the vast universe of the internet: reassurance that it will be okay. New Age eats the ancient, trying to digest old systems. It's a collage of angels, magic numbers,

> incantations, and stolen beliefs. A collage is made not just of what's there, but also of the absence of the material from which the pieces are cut. I got good at working gaps in essays, but not in life. Instead of fearing silence and disrupting stillness, I want to be ready to set down my cards, close the JPEG of my natal chart, and ask the quiet to tell me what this life should be.[127]

Washuta, a member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, not only has a complicated relationship to the New Age, but also to the word "witch." She writes, "I don't like calling myself a witch. I don't want to be seen following a fad, and I don't want the white witches I resemble to take my presence in their spaces as permission for theft."[128] Later, she writes, "I choose witchcraft. I choose to cast spells."[129] The choice for Washuta is a contradiction she leaves as-is, addressing herself as a witch throughout the book with an awareness of the controversial nature of the term she's taking on. "I don't care about Crowley or Salem," she writes, "only about my own conjuring."[130] Washuta shows that though the New Age "surrounds us like water surrounds a fish," the onus and omnipresence of a potentially bad environment does not have to be adhered to, yet it does bare acknowledging.

Part of what the tools and techniques of witchcraft show is the tricky nature of how the authentic is constructed and deconstructed. Witches, unlike the way Deloria paints New Agers, have not exactly been seen as "good people bound up in contradictions" — the public has never quite been convinced that witches' intentions are good ones. Witches are contentious and judged, whether as part of a passing trend or as unholy and heretical, whether as wildly appropriative or as heinously villainous. Witches, therefore, can serve as a critique of authenticity that asserts a tension between the utter stronghold on the ancestrally "pure," and, on the other hand, the utterly disintegrated, a pastiche of ancestral lineages that can be equally problematic. Witchcraft balances on the knife edge of reverence and irreverence, of sacred and sacrilege.

ii. Witches and neopaganism

In her entry on neopaganism in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Sarah M. Pike notes the sheer broadness of the designation, which can encompass Druidism, Wicca, witchcraft, or ceremonial magic, among many other practices, with a historical origin in 19th-century new religious movements, such as Theosophy or The Golden Dawn, as well as folk practices and magical practices, such as Tarot or astrology, not to mention the entire "countercultural milieu of North America in the 1960s."[131] Asking if witches are neopagans is as difficult as asking if witches are New Agers. The answer will differ depending on the particular witch asked; therefore, during the course of this dissertation, I will always respect how the particular witch or tradition defines her / him / themselves or itself. The proliferation of literature on neopaganism and witchcraft has allowed for a wide variety of people to adopt practices without labelling themselves under a chosen umbrella, and, as Pike writes, "[t]e Internet has played an important role in popularizing Neopagan traditions and making them accessible to seekers everywhere."[132]

The construction of the "Indian," in particular, is still present in many Western-based witchcraft literature and practices and is part of what Elissa Washuta brings up by her ambivalence surrounding the word "witch."[133] Christopher Penczak includes "Black Eagle" in his list of ancestors that a witch can connect with in his book *The Mighty Dead*, writing that Black Eagle aided Austin Osman Spare in his magical work.[134] Whether this gesture is appropriative or honouring (or both) is necessary to unpack. There are many ways to go about this. Ronald Hutton, whose subject is primarily British witchcraft, proclaims that witchcraft is

"*eclectic and protean*; it takes from many sources and applies them in many — and often constantly altering — ways."[135] Folklorist Sabina Magliocco, who writes on witchcraft in North America, particularly the San Francisco Bay area in the early 2000s, includes a much more in-depth exploration of the protean, eclectic, and appropriative characteristics of witchcraft and neopaganism in North America. Importantly, she explores notions of hegemony and power, referencing Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault, as well as the complex politics of blood. "Pagans sometimes use arguments of blood or ethnicity to justify their right to certain disputed cultural practices," she writes, yet this "becomes complicated by a general lack of understanding of cultural diffusion and polygenesis," she continues, "and by essentialist notions of cultural purity rooted in nineteenth-century nationalism."[136] On the other side of the purity spectrum, Magliocco cites the work of Wren Walker, editor of the *Witches' Voice*, who cautions against "F-keying" through historical or cultural practices. "In our [neopagans'] efforts to reclaim, retrace or reconstruct the spiritual or magical or cultural beliefs of ancient peoples, we so often just key on a word or a phrase and then lift it out of its original context." Thereby, "we not only steal them away from the homeland and culture, we also rob ourselves of an opportunity to grow."[137] Ultimately, neopaganism in general could spark a further discussion of how ethnicity, identity, and culture "are collective fictions that are continually reinvented."[138] To this, however, it would be wise to add the question *cui bono?* that Isabelle Stengers qualifies as "the question of a true cautious, discriminating witch."[139]

Magliocco also embeds discussions of appropriation in commodity culture. Where once appropriation may have only centred around "the imbalance of power between colonized people and their Euro-American conquerors and oppressors," today, Magliocco adds, "it is occurring, for the most part, through the medium of consumer culture, thus bypassing any form of social exchange or reciprocity between the two individuals or groups."[140] In this way, ideas of appropriation date back to a 19th-century conception of culture as a commodity and a limited good, harkening to ideas of copyright and production. Magliocco references the work of folklorist Deborah Kapchan who discusses culture as both a possessable as well as possessing element, an argument that seems especially apt in a discussion of magical practitioners.[141]

If origin, tradition, and authenticity are difficult to trace in general, and nearly impossible to trace in witchcraft traditions (or anti-traditions), then the space is left dangerously open to craft the positioning that Isabelle Stengers, throughout her 2012 text, "Reclaiming," also urges us to avoid, a neoliberal space where one can adopt historical ancestors such as the accused and murdered witches of Europe, but not, say, the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry. In a dissertation about the communication techniques of witches and witchcraft, particularly communication with the ancestors of the witches, it seems onerous and uninteresting to push unwanted ancestors back into the void of the pre-imaginal rather to than to meaningfully open communication; in this line of thought, I will explore the more contentious techniques of witches throughout, such as Marjorie Cameron's experiments with magical eugenics in the California desert of the mid-20th century. Though Stengers speaks about the importance of the goddess in witchcraft, she does not speak about the importance of spirits, and this is where I believe the messy, ancient, and new work lies for the "we" that would like to disaggregate from the "we" of the conquering knowledge-makers. To go further, however, we must face the fact that neutralizing witchcraft into the safety of an innocent or afflicted positionality is to defang the transformative and risky possibilities of what witchcraft has been, can, and will be capable of.

There are many ways to approach issues of appropriation — from relativism to universalism to the construction of facts and fictions — but we could additionally use a method

that treats ancestors, and their tools, as agentic. This involves returning to Haraway's questions around who one is responsible for, and what one's "response-ability" is, as Haraway phrases it. Referencing the work of anthropologist Marilyn Strathern, Haraway writes, "[i]t matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots …. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories…"[142] Many contemporary self-defining witches are, on the whole, becoming more savvy to questions of cultural appropriation. They are questioning where their practices come from and crafting new ways of working with and formulating witchcraft in the present era. The Star + Anchor put out a zine on *Witches, Pagans, and Cultural Appropriation*, where they note, "[i]ncreasingly, neo-paganism is growing more diverse in membership. As a result, all will encounter the impacts of intersectionality to an increased degree. … Knowing one's relationship to the worlds around them is vital."[143] The call to *know* where a practice comes from and *why* one is adopting it is at once a call to know the dead, to know one's ancestors. As Anchor + Star write, a practicing witch can ask themselves questions, such as, "is what I'm doing bringing peace to the dead, honoring the integrity of the living, and generating hope to those to come?"[144] The delicate dance between one's chosen and one's literal ancestry is a tangled and ongoing part of finding out about one's kin, and about, as Haraway, might put it, staying with the trouble.

5. Chapters and Frameworks

i. Terminology

The question, "who is the witch?" is being redrawn and expanded not only in the world of neopagan witches, but also in the world of media and art, a trend that can be seen in projects such as the Digital Witch Project by Tess Henthorne, Bridget Sellers, and Elizabeth Crowley Webber.[145] Similarly, photographer Frances F. Denny has put together an exhibition of portraits titled *Major Arcana: Witches in America* that "explores the various ways the notion of witch-ness belongs to those who claim it." Denny presents a diversity of witches, including gender fluid and trans witches, hailing from a range of practices, such as "Wicca, Santeria, or Voudou" as well as "kitchen witches, hedge witches, sex witches, and cosmic witches."[146] As a reflection of these contemporary trends in both widening and narrowing in on who a witch is (and how, and where, and why), the tools and techniques I am speaking of throughout this dissertation are ones that are often non-canonical to a particular school of witchcraft: black mirrors, spirit houses, cauldrons, roots, and fluids, have, for example, been and are used by many different kinds of witches and magical practitioners at many different points in time and for many different reasons, as I will demonstrate in each particular section. These widening discussions are important because they have everything to do with the mirrors we choose and the mirrors that choose us.[147] In this section, I will offer definitions for terms and concepts adjacent to witchcraft — I have chosen, however, not to provide a succinct definition of "witch" or "witchcraft" here, as that is part of the work of this present chapter and dissertation as a whole. As for various magical practices, such as Wicca, Traditional Witchcraft, Hoodoo, or Brujería, I have included an appendix at the end of the dissertation that defines individual groups and traditions.

Animism and "reclaiming": The issue of consent brings us into the darker side of choosing one's own ancestors and discarding others in a magical practice. The wider discussion points to a need to retrace terms such as "animism" that have been historically wielded like weapons against those who practice it. Peter Grey, Starhawk, and Isabelle Stengers recognize the

care and attention they must give to the history and use of animism in the context of contemporary Western witchcraft. "I suggest that witchcraft can best be described as animist," writes Grey. "But this is already problematic, as animism is a term of abuse. It was coined to describe the belief of 'primitive' people and their 'primitive' religion. This distinguished it from the book, the chalice, wafer and steel born aloft by their conquerors."[148] The history that Grey is referring to is, largely, anthropological work, gleaned from the reports of explorers or missionaries, who were encountering or "discovering" peoples and cultures in the Americas, in Africa, Asia, and Oceania.[149] The study of witchcraft, and witches' tools, must take this history into account, especially when one considers how imbricated anthropology is with the development of practices that have been recorded and passed on under the moniker of witchcraft, by writers such Gerald Gardner. In an appendix of her book *Dreaming the Dark*, Starhawk notes that the European witch-hunts were galvanized by what she terms the expropriation of land, the expropriation knowledge, and the war on immanence, all of which are imbricated with enclosures of knowledge, such as anthropology.[150]

Isabelle Stengers writes that the word "reclaiming," given to her as gift from Starhawk and other neo-pagan witches, suggests that "[a] poisoned milieu must be reclaimed, and so must many of our words, those that — like 'animism' and 'magic' — carry with them the power to take us hostage: do you 'really' believe in … ?" The "us" that Stengers addresses is a loud part of this sentence, for it connotes the "us" who believe in "our critical power to 'know better' than both the witches and the witch hunters," a stance that, she writes, makes "makes us [scholars] the heirs of witch hunting," and, by extension, "the forerunner of what was committed elsewhere in the name of civilization and reason," i.e. conquest, colonization. To "reclaim" animism, for Stengers, therefore, is not to try to understand animism, nor ascribe it to a scientific system of categorization, nor to assimilate the word into a scholarly register, but rather to recover and regenerate what once was poisoned. Rather than understanding, Stengers's "reclaiming" involves a sensory reactivation. By re-practicing terms such as "animism" or "magic," we are not forcing "some 'true,' 'authentic' tradition [to] come alive," Stengers writes, but reconsidering the implications of our own situated positionalities vis à vis others. Animism finally affirms "that we are not alone in the world."[151] Though I do not use the term "animism" too often in the present dissertation, it is a significant term to touch on up front when speaking of agency and witches' tools.

Magic and magick: In her book *Conjuring Spirits*, medievalist Claire Fanger writes that "[m]agic may be a marginal pursuit; certainly it has been known to represent itself this way. Yet what precisely does it mean for a practice to be 'marginal' if it is widespread, if it is transmitted over several centuries, if textual evidence for it is relatively abundant?" Fanger notes that the "occult arts" are not merely practiced by a handful of people on the margins of religion and spirituality, but also by "monks, doctors, clerics, and other literate people."[152] In fact, literacy is one of the central factors differentiating folk magic from ceremonial or ritual magic. Ritual magic, she writes (with a particular focus on medieval European magic), is distinguished from "spells, charms, and folk magic, which generally involve much shorter rituals, need not to have been performed by literate people, and in the early period might sometimes invoke recognizable pagan entities in addition to Christian ones."[153] Fanger connects the rise of witchcraft accusations in Early Modern Europe to the way that practitioners of magic began to cloister themselves to secrecy, with a particular wish not be connected to necromancy.[154] The lines between ritual magic and folk magic, however, became blurred, as we have seen (if they were not already), with

the rise of Wicca and Aleister Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) in the late 19th / early 20th century. I engage a further discussion of ritual magic vis à vis witchcraft in Chapter 1.

What is magic in the first place? Historian Wouter J. Hanegraaff writes that "*magic* is undoubtedly one of the most heavily theorized concepts in the study of religion … there seem to be almost as many definitions of 'magic' as there have been scholars writing about it."[155] Magic, therefore, has a complicated theoretical history: 19th-century anthropologists Edward Burnett Tylor and James George Frazer have spoken of magic as the lowest rung on the evolutionary ladder that passes through religion to eventually reach its apex in science, while more contemporary uses of the term, notes Hanegraaff, at once "assert that it [magic] can be used to disenchant the world by claiming that magic was really just a natural phenomenon, but it could be used to re-enchant the world by claiming that nature was inherently 'magical' (now in the sense of being permeated by mysterious forces."[156] Magic can also be pitted against realism, as Blanche proclaims in Tennessee Williams's 1947 *A Streetcar Named Desire*: "I don't want realism. I want magic! … Yes, magic! I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them. I don't tell truth, I tell what *ought* to be truth."[157] Magic may be a false god, but that's the point. For Hanegraff, those who use the term *magic* must "recognize that the magic 'out there' is believed to 'exist' only because *we* have first decided to call it 'magic.'" As such, Hanegraff asserts that magic "should simply not be used as a general category," but rather always as an emic term.[158] How does a witch define magic? This no doubt varies from witch to witch. According to Guiley's *Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, magic is "[t]he ability or power to manifest by aligning inner forces with natural and supernatural forces. Inner forces are will, thought, and imagination; natural forces are found in nature, such as the elements; and supernatural forces are spirits, deities and the Godhead."[159] For Guiley, witchcraft includes "the magical manipulation of supernormal forces through the casting of spells and the conjuring or invoking of spirits, for either good or bad purposes."[160]

There is more to magic, however, than ritual magic and folk magic. Where does stage magic fit in? In her book, *Ona Agbani*, Iyalosa Apetebii Olaomi Osunyemi Akalatunde takes special care to define the word *magick*, a term that she demarcates from the practice of "sleight of hand tricks." Magick, by contrast, is "well-known to practitioners of the 'Craft of the Wise' also known as witchcraft," writes Akalatunde.[161] It was ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley who first put the term *magick* into popular usage in his 1911/12 tome, *Magick Book 4, Liber Aba*. Writer and ceremonial magician Kenneth Grant points out that as early as 1893, Crowley "adopted the old English spelling — magick — 'in order to distinguish the Science of the Magi from all its counterfeits,'" as well to put stress on the letter k, which, in addition to other correspondences, adds a sexual connotation. In a wonderful example of the purply, spidery, and often infuriatingly opaque prose found in much occult literature, Grant writes: "'K' (the last letter of Magick) is the eleventh letter of several major alphabets … 'K' is also the Khn, Khou or Queue symbolized by the tail or vagina, venerated in ancient Egypt as the source of Great Magical Power. Magick spelt with a 'k' therefore indicates the precise nature of the Current which Therion (Crowley) embodied and transmitted."[162] Akalatunde not only differentiates magick from magic by way of a visual shift, but also a sonic one. The term is listed with others in a glossary that Akalatunde calls "Bara or Wordsound Power." She writes: "I have taken the liberty of spelling some words differently so that they will house the vibration that I am trying to create with them." In this way, we can assert that magick houses a wholly different vibration than magic. Or rather, a "wholy" different vibration, a word that Akalatunde also includes in her glossary and defines as "part of the Divine Whole, part of the ALL."[163] I appreciate Akalatunde's

connection of magick specifically to witchcraft, for it is more craft than magic(k) that interests me in the present dissertation. Furthermore, the connection of magick, in the Crowleyan sense, to sex, adds a particular inflection of the trick, which weaves in and out of the following pages. I include more discussion of magic and magick in Chapter 2. Throughout the manuscript, I use the term "magic," and only "magick" when a particular writer or practitioner uses this appellation.

Shamans and mediums: Since I am concerned in the present dissertation with the way that witches and witches' tools offer a form of communication with spirits, ancestors, and more-than-human kin, it is salient to look at two terms widely imbricated with these techniques: shamanism and mediumship. Anthropologist Michael Taussig notes the colonial and anthropological construction of the term *shaman* — which came originally from one of many Tungus words meaning *healer* — and was exported by Europeans exploring Siberia in the 17th and 18th centuries.[164] As Ronald Hutton writes, "[t]he term 'shamanism' is one entirely created by Western scholarship, and dependent in all its current public usages on the definitions that this scholarship has made of it." Hutton continues, "[a]t its widest application, it is used to describe the practice of anybody who is believed, or claims, to communicate regularly with spirits," particularly "in a traditional non-Western society, and does so for the benefit of other members in it."[165] In terms of Western witchcraft, there has been research on shamanistic techniques, specifically by historian Carlo Ginzburg and his study of the *benandanti* ("those who go well") of the Friuli district of northeast Italy in the Early Modern period, who would send their spirits out at night to battle witches. Folklorist Vilmos Diószegi has also asserted a connection between shamanism and the *taltós* ("they who open themselves") of Hungary during the Middle Ages, who would similarly battle evil in dream state.[166] However, scholars have pointed out key differences between these European "shamanistic" practices and more traditional concepts of Siberian shamanism, for example.[167] There is also the issue of appropriation concerning the use of the term "shaman," which in North America primarily denotes Indigenous practices. The Montreal-based *Missing Witches* podcast, hosted by Risa Dickens and Amy Torok, facilitated a roundtable called "What Is a Shaman?" in 2021. In it, Dickens comments that shamanism "was from the beginning of its usage a settler term of oversimplification," while Granddaughter Crow notes that part of the problem with the word is that is simply too broad. "I am a member of the Navajo nation," she says, "and we don't call people 'shaman.' We say, 'that is a singer,' or 'that is a hand trembler,' or 'that person understands how to pray with peyote,' or 'that person understands the wind.'"[168] See Chapter 2 for more discussion of shamanism.

Where *shamanism* as a term relates more to anthropology, *medium* as a term relates more to media studies. I have already defined "medium" above, and indeed given the significant effect of Spiritualism on contemporary witchcraft, mediums are a key part of this work. In the introduction to their compilation *Trance Mediums and New Media*, anthropologists Heike Behrend and Martin Zillinger reference Jacques Derrida, who noted "the ghostly quality of mediation," and contended that spirits and mediums even serve as "'media a priori' for the 'invention' of certain media: spirits were able to 'telesee' and 'telehear' long before television and the telephone existed."[169] Not only in the West, they note, but spirit mediums in Uganda have compared themselves to electric batteries, and women spirit mediums in Morocco have compared their visions to films in the way that they see themselves from the outside.[170] Mediums and witches are often imbricated, a fact that I pulled out above in my preliminary discussion on mediums and spend more time on in Chapter 3.

Spirits: So far, I have been discussing the tools and techniques of witches as they communicate with spirits and more-than-human entities; but since communication between

witches and the ones they communicate with is a two-way channel, could we just as easily call tools of mediumship the tools of the spirits themselves? John Durham Peters in fact goes so far as to qualify tools of communication such as the telegraph, telephone, and wireless as "more nutritious for ghosts" — creating doubles that sometimes work against us, the living.[171] What is a spirit in the first place? How do we qualify them? In putting together their 2014 compilation *The Social Life of Spirits*, Ruy Blanes and Diana Espírito Santo note that the study of witchcraft and shamanism have proven that the agency of the nontangible and nonhuman are not just speculations, but lived experiences.[172] They are interested in how to anthropologically approach the invisible, namely, affects and things that cannot necessarily be experienced empirically, or where the idea of the empirical, the senses, must extend to include the invisible or intangible" an "anthropology of intangibility"; a "semiotics of knowing."[173] The editors look not to ontological pre-definitions of what a spirit may be, but to the extensions of spirits that are traceable in communities and histories, and these through bodies, producing subjectivities and orientations; these extensions, to the authors, constitute any "proof" of existence.[174]

Jacques Derrida opened the field of hauntology and instigated the "spectral turn" with *Specters of Marx* (1993), yet there has been little (super)naturalistic reckoning of ghosts as ontological possibilities rather than as metaphors or projections within critical theory.[175] Behrend and Zillinger ask, "[w]here are we to locate agency in the interface between humans, spirits, and media? Should we consider subjectivity a given, or a variable that emerges from cultural technologies and practices."[176] Throughout the present manuscript, I will speak of spirits and more-than-human kin as the particular witch or magical practitioner speaks of them: primarily non-metaphorical and non-psychological, and at the same time embedded and actualized as part of a social web that includes the tools and techniques of those who communicate with them. Occult media studies scholar Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan beautifully tips the scientific probing of spirits on its head when he discusses the work of art critic William Crary Brownell, observing that "[t]he problem is not the ability of spirit to withstand the test of science. Instead, the question was whether modern science — with its invisible forces and occult spaces — could match the realism of concrete, everyday encounters with spirit."[177]

ii. Overview of the chapters

The three chapters of the present dissertation are centred around three particular techniques or tools of witches and witchcraft: mirrors, knots, and fluids, which themselves are focused on the techniques of divination and communication (mirrors), spell casting and communication (knots), and more direct bodily communication with the dead (fluids).

In Chapter 1, "Mirrors," I take a focused look at the witches' scrying mirror or black mirror and the technique of scrying, which can be succinctly described as divining by gazing upon a mirrored surface, such as ink, metal, glass, or even a fingernail. Through the mirror, I ask the question: what kind of positionality is the witch? How does the witch — as a contemporary practitioner of magic, as myth, and as a historical figure — present an un-mimetic subject position vis-à-vis the episteme of the Western capital-M Man? I meditate on the witch's relationship to the black mirror and how it participates in the craft of unreflection, unmaking, and at once opens a portal into communication with kin who create a counter lineage to secular humanist notions of what it means, quite literally, to relate, and, from that standpoint (which is always standpoints), to craft, to fabulate. Central to the chapter is a 15th-century scrying ritual called The Mirror of Floron and the work of Wiccan priestess, Doreen Valiente. Within the

wider framework of the chapter, I explore how community creates tools and techniques, and I look at other wielders of mirrors, such as 1970s feminist consciousness-raising groups and their use of the speculum; Jacques Lacan's *objet a*; and ceremonial magician John Dee who worked with a professional scryer, Edward Kelley; among other witches, magicians, and those who work with mirrors, reflection, and mimesis.

In Chapter 2, "Knots," I move from (un)representation to method, and open what I am calling a "methodology of bewitchment," a tricky epistemology that explores the ways that techniques of the witch both create and sustain spaces of tension. Bewitchment is akin to enchantment, but it favours heresy and chimerical transformation over awe and wonder, while inciting action and engagement over spectatorship — one need only think of the way that witches generate mischief, such as the trickiness of catching spirits in bottles or even the witches' wink, shown in the seven-second shot of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (a key film in the critique of industrial capitalism), where the character Maria turns into a cyborg-witch villain (1927). Alongside an examination of knots and knot spells, I unpack bewitchment in two distinct categories — tricks and traps — which serve to examine a variety of objects and subjects that demonstrate the possibilities of this theory, such as witch bottles, salt circles, and cauldrons, as well as witches' familiars, which can include bees, imps, or cats. Additionally, I take a closer look at the "knotted" issues that witchcraft brings into play, such as conspiracy theories, consumerism, the so-called essentialism of goddess worship, and "turning tricks," all of which I examine through individual witches and groups, such as the political activists W. I. T. C. H. (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell), Homer's Circe, and Tituba, a practitioner of Hoodoo and one of the first people accused of witchcraft in 1692 Salem.

What does communication with the dead and more-than-human kin produce, create or, or (un)make? In Chapter 3, I get to the heart of the matter and dive into the messy boundary crossing between the bodies of the living and the dead, focusing in particular on three fluids: water, blood, and ectoplasm, which themselves are framed by the techniques of artist Ana Mendieta, artist and ceremonial magician Marjorie Cameron, and turn-of-the-century medium, Mary Marshall, respectively. What do water, blood, and ectoplasm teach us about the lines we draw up and the techniques we put in place between purity and contamination, sterility and reproduction (/ replication), as well as the spaces between politics, affect, and the at times arbitrary and dangerous distinctions carved out in terms of gender and race. Alongside the techniques of these three women, I make significant detours into the construction / birthing of the modern goddess, Babalon, and her connection to contemporary AI, feminism, sex magic, and apocalypse, as well as the contentious artwork and rituals of those who have dared dabble in blood, such as Jenny Holzer's *Lustmord* (1993), Lil Nas X and MSCHF's Satan Shoe (2021), and Peter Grey's Babalon ritual (2008). To fill in the wider cultural contexts of the three figures in Chapter 3, I discuss brujería and Santería in relation to Ana Mendieta; the occulture scene of the 1940s to the 1970s in terms of Marjorie Cameron; and 19th-century Spiritualism in terms of Mary Marshall. Since this chapter has to do with what is produced or made apparent by communication with the dead, I take a closer look at evidence itself, especially the different kinds of evidence that were made to speak and morph in uncanny and unintuitive ways during the Early Modern witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, and especially, as it pertains to the chapter's overarching theme, the "swimming test" administered by mobs and judges to accused witches. What is evidence and, by extension, what is made evident by the techniques of witchcraft?

Finally, in the concluding chapter, I tease out the major theoretical threads running throughout the dissertation, including the ways in which the techniques of witches are heretical techniques — ones that do not fit tidily into strict religious techniques nor into those containers created by secular humanism. I begin by writing about the witches' sabbat and how it turns everything upside down, inside out, outside in, topsy turvy. Witches teach us how to spin and un-spin narratives, to re-world, and the tricky ways in which stories have the power to refigure futurities, both for better and for worse. The techniques of divining, spellcasting, and mediumship are ultimately techniques of kinship, listening, and receptivity; they are the cultural techniques of the conditional, the *as-if* and the infrathin, the *pharmakon* and the scapegoat. The way that the witch always carries a tinge of villainy makes her an ideal figure to discuss how narratives, theories, tools, and techniques are crafted and created in precarious webs of relation that create and uncreate the worlds we erect as containments and the monsters that lie therein. If the tool and the technique is co-produced by the one who wields it, what sorts of subjectivities and epistemologies can the witch bring into being?

iii. The technologies of magic

The question remains, why would we as scholars want to undertake this tricky body of knowledge? I believe the answer has to do, again, with shapeshifting. Not only witches, but academics who tread into witchcraft, like Raquel Romberg, tend to find themselves changed by the knowledge they glean in the field. In trying to come to grips with Haydée's surprising self-framing, Romberg describes how she struggled with how to make sense of this decision ten years after deciding to ignore it in her research. There are a number of different ways to look at what Haydée is doing with the appropriation of the stereotypical iconic Halloween witch, Romberg reflects: one could see her ritual through the lens of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's "false consciousness," which takes place when one culture is subsumed by another, in this case of Puerto Rico being subsumed by American culture; or, Romberg continues, one could see this as a form of hybridity, which would fit more postmodern theories of what it means to be a witch. Finally, she chooses to take neither of these stances. "I draw here on technologies of magic, not social theory," writes Romberg, "in order to make sense of the practices of a *bruja*. In this way, I am honouring the intentions and affect that had infused the initially outrageous, almost impossible, performance of a 'Halloween *bruja.*'"[178] Haydée has taken the chosen kin that witches connect with one step further than Starhawk and Chakraverti have; not only connecting herself to a history, but to an icon: the stereotypical flying witch, one built from the footprints of an especially well-hewn lore that has crystallized into symbol. Following Romberg's methodology and looking at Haydée and other witches through the lens of the technologies of magic is truly difficult work. For it must not become a way to shirk the responsibility of facing questions that may come up in social or critical theory; one cannot use "magic" as a catch-all or solve-all to philosophical aporia, but rather, like Romberg, allow it to change the course and direction of the research, and to meet it rigorously and meaningfully in those spaces that are rarely trodden.

For Stengers, the craft of witches interests her when opening up a wider discussion of efficacy, which is similar to Tanya Luhrmann's approach in her 1989 book, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*. Lurhmann, who conducted emic ethnography with witches in London, England, in the 1980s, notes that the witches and magicians she studied (with), perceive "magic as both a

religion and a pragmatic result-producing practice."[179] Witchcraft is pragmatic, Stengers asserts, precisely because witches work with creating protections. "They [neopagan witches] are pragmatic, radically pragmatic," writes Stengers, "experimenting with effects and consequences of what, as they know, is never innocuous and involves care, protections, and experience."[180] Stengers therefore shows the importance of learning how to construct, how to craft, especially as scholars. "[T]he problem with theorists [in general]," Stengers writes, "is that they very often refer to what they do as 'constructions,' but lack the craft which a construction requires."[181] This concatenation of the milieu of academia with the milieu of witches, that both Stengers and Romberg pave the way to with their respective work, is one where magical efficacy enters into the realm of scholarly practice. What begins to come into focus is a tale of origin that at first appears solid, but liquifies on contact. In the history of contemporary North American witchcraft, when we try to look for a centre it disappears before it can be revealed.

In discussing psychoanalyst Carl Jung's *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, composed between 1915 and 1930, archetypal psychologist James Hillman notes that in "this afterlife which was recognized in Rome, which was recognized in Greece, which was recognized by the desert saints, which was recognized always, everything was talking to them. We have nobody to talk with. We are desperate and desolate, the ordinary individual. So that when one voice comes along and says one thing you think you're going crazy. This is how arid our desert is." He continues: "The task is living with the dead," which, for Hillman, is precisely "the revolutionary cure to the real disease of our [Western] culture."[182] There is an open window, the airy corridor of all the knowledge that is waiting to let in the light, and there are the curtains against the windows, the folds of the things in the room, all the dimly lit corners suggestive of secrets, but then there is that other space, the one that is harder to find than darkness and light, one that shimmers against the wall at the back of the room, both open and closed, a space that leads to other spaces, like hinges and thresholds and doors, and promises to give up the questions we never bothered or learned to pose. In seeking out this space, first we will look in a mirror.

CHAPTER 1: MIRRORS

1. An Inquiry

i. Knights, spirits, witchdom

At the Bavarian State Library in Munich, Germany, there is a 15th-century manual called *Codex Latinus Monacenssis*, or Clm 849. It measures 8 ¼ x 5 ¼ inches, and yet within its modest frame holds what historian Richard Kieckhefer refers to as "forbidden rites"; that is, magical rites used to summon the dead.[183] In one of these rites, we find a mirror. More particularly, we find a mirror who finds a knight. The ritual is called The Mirror of Floron and it is with this ritual that I will begin a discussion on how mirrors have been and continue to be interlocutors not only between the living and our own reflections, but more particularly between the living and the non-living, a form of communication not so much about representation as about divination, that secret seam between the present and its horizons.

The Mirror of Floron begins with two people: a "master" and a "medium." The master leads the rite, and the medium, in this case a young boy, provides the interface between the worlds behind and before the mirror.[184] The master first begins by rearranging the perimeters of the mundane. He cleanses his body and his space; he sprinkles equal proportions of milk, honey, and wine on the air while reciting the words, "O Floron, respond quickly in the mirror, as you are accustomed to appear."[185] The mirror, in which Floron is being invited to appear, is pre-programmed specifically for the purpose of inviting him in. It is made "on the first hour on Friday on a waxing moon," and includes ten names on its rim, with the name of the spirit to be contacted, Floron, at its centre.[186] The mirror is then anointed "with pure and bright balsam, and fumigated with aloes, ambergris, myrrh and white frankincense" (fig. 8).[187] After it is constructed, after the space and body, including the air surrounding, has been cleared and charged, changed, through suffumigations and incantations, the ritual proper then begins (but in these preparatory gestures, it has already begun).

Fig. 8 An iteration of the Mirror of Floron, iron, 18.5 x 10 cm, Mathematisch-Physikalischer Salon, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany, 16th century

The master, sitting down with the boy medium at his chest, starts to recite a passage of words that are described in the handbook as "Chaldean" but which Kieckhefer points out is perhaps "garbled Arabic." To give a sense of the language being used in the ritual, the opening of the conjuration of Floron reads as follows:

> Bismille araathe mem lismissa gassim bisim galasim darrgosim samaiosim railm ausini taxarim zaloimi hyacabanoy illete laytimi hehelmini betoymi thoma leminao vnuthomin zonim narabanorum azarethia thathitat hinandon illemay sard lucacef illemegiptimi sitaginatim viaice hamtamice…[188]

The knight then appears. When he does, he is seated on a horse, and with an accompanying squire. The master then greets the knight and is free to ask him about "past, present, and future things," to which he will receive his response in writing.[189] Language, therefore, in various registers, plays a key part of this ritual, and, to Kieckhefer, is one of its most "curious" features

of it. Does the writing appear as patterns on the mirror, Kieckhefer asks, or does the knight then hold up a written response?[190]

There are a variety of practices carried out in The Mirror of Floron that would be echoed in rituals found in modern and contemporary witchcraft: preparations of cleaning and anointing both body and ritual space, the specified use of herbs and incenses, opportune astrological and horary assignations, invocations performed in unfathomable languages, and the involved preparation of the ritual item itself — all forming an assemblage of the scrying mirror, an atmosphere and an affordance of this tool and technique. Given that there is sparse literature on the practice of early witches, who included folk magicians and healers, it is likely that many formalized practices that have carried over into contemporary witchcraft have come from early surviving documents on ritual magic such as The Mirror of Floron (or, perhaps, the practices that ceremonial magicians wrote down came, in part, from the oral traditions of witches).

Five hundred years after this ritual was recorded, a woman by the name of Doreen Valiente, the first formalized High Priestess of Wicca, also had an encounter with spirits and with mirrors that lasted from August 1964 to May 1966 (fig. 9). Valiente first met "the discarnate spirit of a traditional witch, who gave his name as John Brakespeare" in her dreams, at the crest between waking and sleeping, and she later learned to reach him during waking meditation.[191] What she discovered when she met him was not just one spirit, but a small coven of discarnate witches who were engaged largely in spirit communication themselves. In short: Doreen Valiente found herself communicating with the spirits of witches who were communicating with the spirits of witches. The way they were doing so was by "summoning visions in a dark mirror or glass globe," and alternately via the steam rising from a boiling cauldron, which may have had to do with the powers of the herbs boiling in the steam itself.[192]

Fig. 9 Doreen Valiente, Brighton, UK, circa 1960s

John Brakespeare was not just a discarnate spirit communicating with Valiente from nowhere, however. He came from a place he called Witchdom. In one of his last communications to Valiente, he tells her:

> Witches today waste much time on unnecessary matters. You think these things important, but they are trivialities. Look to Witchdom for your answers …. Get down to practice. It is easier to sit reading a book than it is to practice; but reading books nourishes only the thinking mind …. Dip into the Pool of Memory and find treasure."[193]

Where is Witchdom? What it is it? Does it exist in the pool of memory? In the suffumigations of a cauldron? And what connection does it have to the dark mirror, to glass globes, or to The Mirror of Floron that precedes Valiente's encounter? Both rituals not only involve mirrors, but through the mirror, a pluralistic conception of spirits. Neither the knight nor John Brakespeare come alone — an indication, perhaps, of the splintering or multiplying of spirit worlds as rendered through the mirror itself, a translation of spirits into un-cohesive optical matter. The pluralizing of spirits is also encountered in mediumship as it was practiced in 19th-century Spiritualism, where mediums used a "spirit control" as an interface between themselves and the spirit they wished to contact — not just one spirit was summoned, therefore, but rather a layer or strata of spirits was established within an echelon of communication that involves medium, spirit, and communicative device, such as, in the above examples, mirrors.[194]

In the following chapter, I am interested in many key themes that spring from The Mirror of Floron and Valiente's contact with Witchdom: encounter, craft, and the communicative play between surface and depth, death and live-ness, and how each are unravelled and "seen." Throughout, I will examine a particularly focused type of gaze called "scrying," used not to look *at* a mirrored surface, but onto, into, and beyond it. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the verb "to scry" comes from the Old English "descry," which itself originates from the French *descrier*, *décrier*, and originally meant *to describe*, *to perceive*, *to see*, *to observe*, *to discover*, and even *to sift*; in Scottish and Northern dialects, it means to proclaim, and as a noun "scry" has denoted *a clamour*, *a sieve*.[195] In its barest definitions, scrying conjures a multi-sensory world, meeting at the apex of touch (sifting), sound (clamouring), and vision (observing). In particular, I will be looking at those who are adept at adopting this gaze, those who stand between the worlds: witches, mediums, and practitioners of magic.

To examine how mirrors are used as communicative devices in witchcraft, I will begin with a discussion of mirrors both as domestic items and as magical tools, before narrowing in on the witches' scrying mirror (the black mirror), and the techniques it entails, such as scrying, gazing, sensing, and even, simply, sitting. Along the way, I will discuss key themes that the mirror brings with it, such as mimesis and the philosophy of reflection, Jacques Lacan's mirror stage and the work of fantasy, as well as the creation and uncreation of capital-M Man as discussed in the work of Sylvia Wynter, Michel Foucault, and others. I am interested not just in the mirror, however, but the kinds of communities that the mirror creates (and uncreates). Alongside magicians and witches, therefore, I will loop in those who have experimented with other kinds of mirrors, namely the speculum used for vaginal self-examination in the 1970s. James Carey's ritual view of communication as well as Isabelle Stengers's ecology of practices become important guides that lead us through the at-times full, at-times solitary paths of those who work through mirrors, such as hedge witches and healers. I will conclude the chapter by broadening my discussion into philosophies of the spirit, the ghost — an extrasensory and extratemporal entity that is very much accessible through communicative techniques that the black mirror presents.

I want to find out: how has the mirror been used to construct boundaries between states of the revealed and the concealed? Between the receptive and the active? Who is it that is speaking back from the other side? Ultimately, the scrying mirror asks us to reconsider the psychological episteme that links the supernatural back to phenomena of the mind — instead, those who look both into and out from the other side of the mirror ask: what if spirits are very much among us, kindred, kin? How does witchcraft, and the witches' mirror, ask us to re-envision mind and matter and spirit? And then, to re-envision vision itself, the gaze, the look, sight?

In circling around The Mirror of Floron, in circling around Witchdom, in getting closer and closer, we may assume we are simply observers to these events — we can see the "master" with the boy medium at his chest, as well as the knight and his cohorts; we can see Doreen Valiente, sitting in a meditative posture, with the spirits of witches behind her and the spirits of witches behind them, and between all these scenes, mirrors. What if, looking into these mirrors, we realize that we, as observers, are not on the outside of all this at all? The closer we get to the mirror, the more tenuous are the boundaries between within and without. What if we found ourselves staring out from within the scene rather than onto it? We would feel, suddenly, at odds and ends with both time and space — we'd have to seek out methods that have been missing, details that have been forgotten; connections that were stored somewhere, at some time, in some language. We might remember that the first mirror was still water, ice, that Scorpio is the fixed

modality of water in the art and science of astrology, and that it had three faces, the scorpion, the eagle, the snake, raveled into each other like rays, like gates; that ancient Greeks did not separate the arcane uses of herbs from the chemical;[196] that early mathematicians such as Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī wrote their formulae in prose like spells.[197] An inquiry opens and we are now uncertain of our distance from either side of the mirror. Near us, perhaps, is a thread hanging from beneath the armour of the knight, Floron, that we pull in hopes that it will unravel an originary event and wind us back from where we came. Looking into his face, he holds up a written message that reads *to sift, to clamour, to perceive*.

ii. Un/reflection, mis/understanding

Being suddenly on the other side of the mirror seems impossible, perhaps unfair, clever — one finds themselves bewitched. Not enchanted, not mystified, but tricked, bended around, twisted through. Finding out about mirrors is discovering how the so-called material world, composed of tools and instruments is also involved in a life of its own. The other side of the mirror fixes its glare on us, its shimmer, its sheen, its glimmer, its glance. The witches' mirror, particularly the black scrying mirror, provides access to a mode of knowledge-making that does not only involve a forward-facing version of epistemology, but a backwards and wayward facing one as well: communication with the dead and more-than-human kin beckons in the voices and channels of older strains of knowledge, lineal rather than linear.

It is noteworthy that the witches' scrying mirror is often black as the eye's pupil. The scrying mirror, or black mirror, involves a process of un-manufacture, of stripping-away: the sheen, the shimmer, the paint, the reflection. And then, adding further unbeautifications. As Raymond Buckland notes in *The Witch Book*, old grimoires gave instructions on converting glass into black mirrors, "involving turpentine and multiple coats of asphaltum."[198] The mirror, then, is changed from an object that reflects to an object used for scrying, an object that connects. A process of unmaking, we could say. How, then, do we characterize the black mirror as an object? It is, perhaps, not so much an object as a shadow object, a phrase that Shelagh Roxburgh has used to described witchcraft in general.[199] The shadow object places us in a world where the reflective surface of the mirror has been removed to reveal, rather than conceal, another realm and set of articulations. Mirrors, and especially black mirrors, are not only tricky in that they allow us to mistake the outside for the inside, or the inside for the outside, but because they rewire the very division of the senses that allows the assumption to manifest. In his book, *The Tain of the Mirror*, philosopher Rodolphe Gasché notes that "the philosophy of reflection is shown to be in essence a philosophy of understanding." In this process, "understanding separates itself, as thinking, from its own object, that is, from being," writes Gasché.[200] As reflection and understanding separate one from being — from being present, embodied — the knowledge-making of witches often invites the opposite inflection: it is sensuous, sense-able, and, like the black mirror, often requires a "rewiring of the senses," a phrase coined by feminist scholar M. Jacqui Alexander, who writes on practices of women, pedagogy, and the sacred.[201] To demonstrate how intertwined witch knowledge is to the knowledge of the senses, philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers invokes the phrase, "the smoke of the burned witches still hangs in our nostrils" (originally written by neopagan witch, Starhawk) to demonstrate that we, as scholars, must begin to smell, to sense the history of the hunted witches, not just to reflect or to understand it.[202] I would additionally assert that to follow the smells, sights, sounds, and senses that witches evoke is also to conjure up the whole tangled history of magic, which is as garbled as the words

that The Mirror of Floron evokes, and that brings with it the construction of the so-called West at the expense of those it deems as "other." This can also be rephrased as: who reflects us, who is mimetic of the learned patterns and behaviours of the ruling or elite classes, and who is on the other side of the mirror, who is not?

To begin to speak of the witches' mirror is also to speak of the philosophy of reflection and of understanding, of standing under, as well as the philosophy of misunderstanding; before getting into the mirror proper, I would like to give these philosophies some preliminary space. "Was it not on the basis of error, illusion, dreams and madness, all the experiences of unaccounted-for-thought that Descartes discovered the impossibility of there not being thoughts," asks Michel Foucault. He goes on to note that the unthought, "never more than an insistent double," has only always received "the inverted name of that for which was the Other and the shadow: in Hegelian phenomenology, it was the *An sich* as opposed to *Für sich*, for Schopenhauer it was the *Unbewusste*; for Marx it was alienated man; in Husserl's analyses it was the implicit, the inactual, the sedimented, the non-effected." And all of these based in a preceding assumption, the "arbitrary" divisions that distinguish "illusion from truth, the ideological fantasy from the scientific theory." Finally, the unthought, to Foucault, is what culminates in that concept called the unconscious. "For is not the unconscious that necessarily yields itself up to the scientific thought man applies to himself when he ceases to conceive of himself in the form of reflection?"[203] The unconscious, in this case, is that which does not reflect, like the scrying mirror. Yet it is just one angle of unreflection. Taking into consideration the fact that the psyche arises from the soul, from the early conception that there is, in fact, a possibility of being outside the realm of the mind, are there not other ways to encounter the unthought — not to understand it, but rather to meet it?[204] As Foucault writes, the whole history of the thought was based upon those who, it was suspected, did not or could not think: on the deviants, the insane — and, of course, the witches.

"If you talk to God," writes psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, "you are praying; if God talks to you, you have schizophrenia. If the dead talk to you, you are a spiritualist; if God talks to you, you are a schizophrenic."[205] Szasz brings the connection between those who characteristically speak with the dead and those who are pathologized as mentally ill to the forefront in his 1970 book, *The Manufacture of Madness*, where he draws a line from the creation of the demonic witch in the European witch-hunts to the creation of madness by the psychiatric institution. With the scientific revolution, Szasz writes, "medicine replaced theology; the alienist, the inquisitor; and the insane, the witch. The result was the substitution of a medical mass-movement for a religious one, the persecution of mental patients replacing the persecution of heretics."[206] In Szasz's analogy, the demonic witch created by the inquisitors of the 16th–17th centuries, provided a similar exigency that the subject position of the insane was later to replace; that, is, "[p]sychiatry fulfills a basic human need — to validate the Self as good (normal), by invalidating the Other as evil (mentally ill)."[207] The need have an other is the need to validate a self, not an abstract concept that one arrives at upon reflection, but, in Szasz's formulation, a manufactured position. Rodolphe Gasché suggests that the act of self-reflection creates the world of objects by attaining a guise of mastery. "Self-reflection … makes mastery of the world dependent on the status of the world as a world of objects for a free and self-conscious subject."[208] The Delphic dictum *know thyself* requires a coiling of the subject into oneself, and a turning away from the world of the so-called object, which is in effect a turning away from immediacy. Self-reflection grounds "the autonomy of the individual as a rational being," writes Gasché, and works as "the very motor of history as a progress toward a free society."[209] But a free society for whom?

Writer and cultural theorist Sylvia Wynter notes the trickiness of mimesis, or reproduction, involved in the creation of a desirable subject position. Speaking with Katherine McKittrick on the rise of global warming that accelerated in the 1950s, Wynter asks, "What happened by 1950? What began to happen? The majority of the world's peoples who had been colonial subjects of a then overtly imperial West" were reincorporated "neocolonially and thereby mimetically," she writes. "The West said: 'Oh, well, no longer be a native but come and be Man like us! Become *homo oeconomicus*!'"[210] Wynter remarks that this model also occurred in the Roman empire when "subordinated populations were educated in Roman imperial schools," yet with one significant revision: "Rome's empire was Roman," says Wynter. "Instead … the West, over the last five hundred years, has brought the whole human species into its hegemonic, now purely secular (post-monotheistic, post-civic monohumanist, therefore, itself also transumptively liberal monohumanist) model of being human."[211] So-called progress and development, therefore, became major contributors to climate change, driven by the hegemony of capital-M Man, who we, as scholars, are built to mimetically resemble. To obediently reflect. An obedience so ingrained it feels, rather, like desire. I would argue that in presenting a lure, a depth, and a non-reproductive space of communication, the scrying mirror asks us to align with the disobedient, with the immediate, with the receptive, and perhaps, then, to learn to desire this gesture instead. It is with these preliminary notes that I will move on to a discussion of the mirror itself.

2. An Occult Media History of the Scrying Mirror

i. Properties, presences

It is no stretch to say that we in the contemporary Western world, if not we in the world at large, are obsessed, or at least intrinsically connected, to small black mirrors. We carry them in our pockets, we put them face down or face up on tables beside us, we sleep next to them at night. They are our familiars and our interlocutors. At the moment of writing on black mirrors, I am interfacing with a black mirror. And if I stopped typing for long enough, I would leave enough space for it to go silent and recompose its reflection. Though a screen is not the equivalent of a mirror, the two bear more than a family resemblance. If we try to connect them at their origins, we stumble on the production of presence, on the components of glass and heat, and on the long and hidden history of divining. We stumble on communication not only between relatives or friends or colleagues, but between ancestors and deities and ghosts.

The uncanniness of both these thresholds — screens, mirrors — is that the living and the dead equally inhabit these planes. In the following, I am interested more in the voices of the dead; in the pupil of mirrors. Or, at least, in the tricky seam where the dead and the living converge, a seam that requires those who know the tricks of crossing over. As an object, mirrors come rife with taboos, omens, secrets. They are the ultimate interplay between surface and depth, like ice spread over an ocean that teems with movement. It is witches' lore that the Goddess Hathor held a magic mirror (or is it that the mirror held the goddess Hathor?).[212] Embedded in the Grimm brother's tale *Schneewittchen* (Snow White) are two items made out of glass: a mirror, a coffin.[213] Mirrors are rife with contradictions: as objects on a wall, they are cold to the touch; as screens we carry with us, they are marked with fingerprints, the heat of our bodies. Both speak volumes, and listen in turn.

What, then, makes a black mirror different from a memento mori, another set of items that connect objects and the world of the dead? According to photographer Paul Koudounaris, memento mori translates as "reminder of death," which is the opposite side of the coin to memento vitae or "reminder of life." He continues: "By presenting the specter of death, these spaces [memento mori and memento vitae] affirm life: they ask to remember those who lived before us, while simultaneously reminding us that our own lives are, and forever will be, linked to theirs."[214] Memento mori are a vast and varied array of media, which are not only reminders of death, but oftentimes divinatory devices, bridges of communication, again not unlike witches' mirrors.[215] However, witches' tools have an aspect about them that includes more of a tendency towards the craft of trickery, or towards the method of bewitchment that I will discuss more fully in Chapter 2.

When a methodology of bewitchment opens, one enters a space full of incongruities and hidden corners, like walking into the mirror itself. In her book, *The Mirror*, historian Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet portrays how origin stories of the mirror involve equal parts lore and history. Lore: the first mirror was invented by the Greek god of fire and metal, Hephaistos. History: the mirror can be traced back to the peoples of ancient Egypt, Mycenea, Greece, Etruria, and Rome, who fabricated mirrors that were small and metal with either a concave or convex face.[216] One's reflection in these objects would have been quite different from one's reflection in the life-size surfaces of the glass mirrors we encounter today. According to Melchoir-Bonnet, mirrors have been found in the tombs of Etruscan women from the 6th century BCE; therefore, mirrors have long been talismans that accompany both the living and the dead.[217] The first mirrors made out of glass come relatively late in the long view of mirror history: not until the 3rd century CE according to archaeological digs in Germany, Egypt, Gaul, and Asia Minor.[218]

Glass mirrors, however, were less functional as reflecting devices than their metal predecessors. No larger than three inches in diameter, the first glass mirrors "make one think of amulets or jewelry rather than of objects for grooming," writes Melchoir-Bonnet.[219] Indeed not only were the first mirrors water, then metal, but black mirrors have a geological history written in stone. "Besides metal," Melchoir-Bonnet writes, "Romans also valued obsidian, a very black and transparent volcanic rock, for its reflective powers, even though, as Pliny the Elder, author of *Natural History*, noted, this stone 'reveals the shadows of objects much more than the objects themselves.'"[220] The latter detail is significant when we consider the witches' scrying mirror, a shadow object indeed, used to obtain a shadow knowledge, we could say. It is noteworthy that the witches' scrying mirror returns the glass mirror to its original amulet-like state in the way that it, too, is not an instrument of reflection.

ii. Tricks of the mirror: excesses and absences

The mirror has a long history of use in initiatory and shamanic traditions that extend to the present day. A mirror called a *toli* is used in shamanic traditions in Mongolia and the Buryat region as a means to help spirits enter and exit ceremonial space.[221] A mirror is placed before presumptive initiates into the Mbiri-Bwiti religious movements of Western equatorial Africa so that they can recognize their ancestors therein, a recognition essential to initiation.[222] But even the most seemingly secular, mechanistic descriptions of mirrors carry something of their relationship to a magical sphere. Looking at recipes for mirrors is somewhat like looking through spell books. Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet notes that Thomaso Garzoni de Bagnacavallo, marveling at the beauty of 16th century Murano mirrors in Italy, offered three explanations for their beauty:

"the salinity of the sea water, the beauty and the clarity of the flame (due to the woods used in the firing process), and the quantities of salt and soda."[223] Water, fire, and earth make up glass and glass makes up the mirror. Though we could posit that the mirror doubles by offering a reflected other, a surplus, the mirror is equally a force of subtraction. Therein exists both the excess — the ghost, the reversal — and the virtual — the absence, the portal.

There is a symmetry between mirrors, especially glass mirrors, and magical recipes, or spells. According to Alan McFarlane and Gerry Martin, glass in the present era is manufactured in large furnaces and usually involves combinations of silica with either soda or potash, with calcium oxide as a stabilizer. The particulars of these individual materials alone present us with an entire geography: silica comprises an abundant 44% of the earth's planetary body or mantle, while calcium oxide, in the context of glass making, is often an "accidental calciferous inclusion, such as sea shells."[224] Both soda and potash are essentially ash, the remains of burned plants: soda comes from sea, such as the ash of the marsh plant barilla, while potash is ash of the forest, such as bracken and beechwood, used mostly in the production of glass inland and referred to as "forest glass."[225] In the Middle Ages, science and the supernatural were "intimately linked," notes Melchoir-Bonnet. Glass, especially, as an art of fire, "shored the prestige of the alchemist's quest for the philosopher's stone. The transformation of half-solid, half-liquid molten glass into a transparent and rigid substance indeed seemed like alchemy."[226] The contemporary beamsplitter, or half-silvered mirror, too, has an alchemical property: it both reflects and transmits light. Its uses? The creation of holograms or ghostly illusions.[227]

Like witches, mirrors are tricksters. The trickiness of the mirror is an esoteric, or specialized, property of it, but it is also exoteric — held in the very matter of reflection. Anthropologist James W. Fernandez points out that "[m]irrors play at least two tricks. They reverse the horizontal plane while maintaining the vertical and they give the see-though effect. That is, they locate, as anyone who has tried to photograph a mirror knows, the virtual image as far back of the mirror, apparently, as the objects in view are in front of it." These tricks — the reversal, and the depth of the virtual — give rise to "an interesting arousal and a state of wonder,"[228] which Fernandez collocates with bilateral symmetry. Or, more particularly, with the acquisition of sidedness in individuals (eg. right-handed versus left-handed sidedness) and the trick of having this sidedness suddenly reversed in the mirror. "The effect," Fernandez ventures, "is that of having a dualism which has been resolved in dominance suddenly reversed …. The world is transformed without being turned upside down."[229] This is particularly apt for witches, who have a history with handedness and symmetry: theologist Gordon Jensen notes that "in the middle ages, left-handedness was associated with witchcraft," specifically referencing a supposed initiation rite where a so-called witch would sign a pact with the devil using the blood of her left thumb.[230] According to astrologer Alice Sparkly Kat, the moon is described by Alexandrian astronomer and astrologer Claudius Ptolemy as sinister — "[t]he word sinister means left-handed," writes Sparkly Kat.[231]

These two tricks of the mirror, that of presenting a slight reversal of symmetry, and that of locating the virtual in the depth of its surface, are related, according to Fernandez, to the land of the dead. In the case of the first, Fernandez notes that "[t]he reversal of an otherwise identical representation," referred to as "the enantiomorphic effect" by psychologist Charles Ogden, is reminiscent of metaphors for the dead used by cultures who view death and life as contiguous, such as the Cuicatec of Central America. In this perspective, the land of the living is the visible one, but the land of the dead is no less present. "The effect is very much like that of walking on

top of a mirror — the living of this world moving about above and the dead of the past and future world walking upside down below," writes Fernandez.[232]

The mirror's second trick, that is, the knack of the mirror to locate its reflected image within or behind itself, is indicative of portals: the "widespread notion of being able to pass through the looking glass into other unseen realms." Which realms specifically? Again, according to Fernandez, the land of the dead.[233] But in this sense, the *land* of the dead is stressed, and not the dead themselves; the geography of the mirror is introduced, its virtuality, its opening, a kind of absence that shows, also, the vacuity of the one who looks upon the mirror. In echo of Lacan's sentence, quoted in the introduction, *I am thinking where I am not, therefore I am where I am not thinking*, Michel Foucault writes, "[f]rom the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there."[234] In this sense, the mirror is a geography, or a seam in geography that is the fault line of presence. As Mark Strand wrote in 1979, "Wherever I am / I am what is missing."[235] What kinds of echoes can be formed in this hall of light and shadows?

iii. The (black) mirror stage and *objet petit a*

There is a yearning quality to the play between the excess and absence that the mirror affords. In the psychanalytic episteme, mirrors both produce objects of desire and they are objects of desire themselves: one's desire to witness the *I*, the *you*, and even one's desire for the mirror. Why else would mirrors be worth more than a painting by Raphael in the early 16th century?[236] In his 1949 lecture, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," Jacques Lacan formulates the baby's construction and recognition of the *I* through the space of the mirror — which is both an identification and a transformation of consciousness whereby "the I is precipitated … [prior to] identification with the other."[237] Just as Foucault formulated the mirror as a heterotopic *space* in his essay "Of Other Spaces" quoted above, Lacan formulated the mirror stage as spatial, first and foremost. The mirror *stage*, which takes place from six months on could also be called the mirror *space*: it is a "spatial capture" and one that Lacan hauntingly draws out as "a statue onto which man projects himself" or as "the phantoms that dominate him" or even as "the automaton with which the world of his own making tends to achieve fruition in an ambiguous relation."[238] As *I* enter the space of the mirror, *I* am at once mobilized and multiplied: the mirror tells *I* about its refractions as a statue, a phantom, an automaton (but never, tellingly, a spirit, a ghost, an ancestor). To Lacan, the mirror itself presents both a "drama" and a "lure," and the mirror stage is the function of *imagos*, which situates the inner world in the outer world and vice versa, which starts the dance of "*Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*" — the "specular *I*" before it "turns into the social *I*."[239] In the way that Lacan lavishly paints the mirrored *I*, the mirroring *I*, the *I* in the mirror of the eye, he also pays homage to the desire that sculpts out knowledge, itself another lure. "It is in this moment," he writes, "that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge [*savoir*] into the being mediated by the other's desire."[240] Near the end of his short essay, Lacan comes back to desire, writing that "psychoanalysis alone recognizes the knot of imaginary servitude that love must always untie anew or sever."[241] To extend Lacan's musings on desire, and to move with and into the mirror, is to move past the mirror stage and into the formulation of the gaze that establishes it.

The desire of / for / from the mirror, the desire that causes one to gaze in the mirror (to be held in the mirror's gaze, lured, beckoned) could be discussed in terms of Lacan's *objet a*, which, like the two motions of the mirror itself, presents both an excess and an absence. As Lacan's

translator Bruce Fink writes, *objet a* is "the object of desire in fantasy"[242] — it is the unempirical, spectral, elusive, and virtual; it is the always missing object that will ever be sought and never be found. The *objet a*, writes Lacan, "is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ."[243] It is, therefore, both separate from and inseparable from the subject. As Slavoj Žižek writes in *The Plague of Fantasies*, the *objet a* is "that which is subtracted from reality (as it's impossible) and thus gives it consistency."[244] But the *objet a* is at once a surplus enjoyment, not just in relation to the other for Žižek, but in relation to technical objects as well — particularly unheard-of objects, excessive objects, prosthetic gadgets that enhance our abilities, such as Google glass, artificial hearts, smartphones.[245] To understand *objet a*, and to understand these excessive objects, is to enter the world of fantasy, which occupies a zone or a geography that is both an excess and an absence, one that connects the mirror to the worlds of the dead.

Gazing, we could say, is an absorption, a saturation, and a focus. "At the scopic level," writes Lacan, "we are no longer at the level of demand, but of desire, of the desire of the Other." He continues: "Generally speaking, the relation between the gaze and what one wishes to see involves a lure."[246] The lure is somewhat like witch and publisher Peter Grey's sentence, "you will find the witch at the end of the pointed finger" — it is a crooked beckon, one that does not so much reflect as inflect.[247] To bring the discussion out of the realm of mirrors in general and into the more specific realm of scrying mirrors or black mirrors, it is important to state that scrying itself interrupts any over-focus on the scopic register. In his essay "Visible Music," poet and cultural theorist Fred Moten critiques Lacan's ocularcentrism and logocentrism, and searches for another path into the gaze: sound. Moten discusses what he terms a "black mirror stage"— *discusses* as in *mixes* the visual and aural registers of language throughout his text, producing a *more than* of the visual, an excess, a *w*hole.[248] A kind of ectoplasmic manifestation of materiality (*mater*-iality), wherein we can figure the mirror itself as an aural, and not only ocular, device.[249] "Is there a black mirror stage?" Moten asks.[250] If there is, the black mirror stage is not so much about the scopic field, which is inextricably connected to Eurocentrism, to logocentrism, he argues, as it is to an aural one, which is hinged to being, to sensing, to moving. This aural gaze is connected to jazz, for Moten, and to "the possibility of significance at the level of what abounds or augments meaning, the way in which nonmeaning renders meaning more significant and the way this demands a critique of (psychoanalytic) interpretation."[251] Throughout his essay, Moten poignantly and powerfully re-configures Lacan's mirror stage in light of racial and sexual injustice — the cut, the wound — that catastrophically forms an identity out of a lack — and then replays it backwards until the gaze becomes not a stare, but a sound; the lost language, found, speaks of justice, no longer a wound, but a blessing, no longer something taken, but rather something extending, giving. "Nevertheless, the primal scene must be heard," Moten writes, "one must be attuned to its sound and perhaps, then, even to a real reformulation of, rather than dismissal of, spirit."[252] The black mirror stage, to Moten, is a lure in itself, it is a question that he extends, a curiosity, more than it is an answer or a concept. It is like Roxburgh's designation of witches' tools as shadow objects. It is an improvisation, like a spirit.

The witches' black mirror, an ultra-material object in that it is exceptional, special, occasional, also evades itself in the act of scrying as it becomes a multi-sensory, auditory device, a channel for sound, but also for feelings, tactile and kinaesthetic, to pass through. The fact that the scrying mirror is wielded by witches, and that witches have been hunted, extricated, tortured, as Sylvia Federici notes, at the same period in history as the transatlantic slave trade rose up, as the colonization of the so-called New World was put into motion, as laws against vagrancy were

erected, as the female-gendered body was tamed and put to use as a reproductive machine, connects the scrying mirror, via the history of witches, to an "invaginative racial poetry" that Moten figures in the black mirror stage.[253]

What or who is in the mirror that is more than the mirror and causes a yearning or desire to come closer, to fall into it, without ever being able to grasp it? The black mirror, even more so than the mirror that reflects, is a mirror that ceases to be a mirror and moves us closer to an impossible object, one both in surplus of the mirror and created in the sublimation of it. Žižek writes, quoting Lacan, "I love you, but there is something in you more than yourself that I love, *objet petit a*, so I destroy you."[254] Fantasy, and the *objet a*, open beautiful channels of potential to speak of the witches' mirror, but lack is not the only way to speak about desire. As Hélène Cixous asked in her 1976 essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa," "[w]hat's a desire originating from lack? A pretty meagre desire."[255] For Cixous, *écriture feminine* is not one that would equate receptivity, or a proclivity for anonymity, onto a concept of lack.[256] Rather, at the end of her essay, Cixous extends outwards to love. "When I write, it's everything that we don't know we can be that is written out of me, without exclusions, without stipulation, and everything we will be calls us to the unflagging, intoxicating, unappeasable search for love. In one another we will never be lacking."[257] Rather than lack, we could say that the mirror presents us with a beckon. It presents us with the possibility that not just the *I*, but the other, lurks within its environment, its spaciousness, its *Unmwelt*. The verbs *to lure*, *to beckon*, *to gleam*, *to glimmer*, like the twinkle in the witches' eye, gives way to fractures in the visible; fractures in the registers of the knowable. Psychoanalysis is an important lens, but it is not the only one, and sometimes proves as problematic to a seeking-out of witches' knowledge as capital-S science does, as the epic stories do.

Verbs that have to do with glimmering and gleaming and luring also bring us to the one final component of the mirror that we have not yet discussed — its face and its silvering, precisely the component that is removed to make a scrying mirror. When Thomaso Garzoni de Bagnacavallo, above, noted the components that went into a beautiful Murano mirror — sea water, flame, salt, soda — he missed one important aspect. The last component to be perfected in the making of the glass mirror, the formula that was long missing, was the mirror's perfected reflective surface, the part of the mirror that gives us its constantly changing face and its consummate ocularity. It was not until 1850 that an English researcher named Drayton figured out a way to silver the surface of the mirror without mercury or lead. "At last," writes, Melchoir-Bonnet, "the mirror lost the grayish tint so detrimental to the clarity of its reflection."[258] This is not just significant for the amount of time it took to perfect the reflective device. The mid 19th century, the very middle point of the 1800s, is significant to the timeline of techniques and traditions of speaking with the dead in Europe and North America: the mirror's sheer translucent silvering was perfected only two years after Spiritualism cropped up in Hydesville, New York, when the Fox sisters began hearing mysterious raps on their tables and walls.[259] Sea water, flame, silvering, salt, and soda, glimmer, glean, shine. The scrying mirror, in taking off its reflective properties, and (re)turning the mirror to a state of darkness, also adds something to these multisensory shimmers: shadow.

iv. Dark portals

We know that it is connected to the mirror, and to the witches' black mirror more specifically, but what, exactly, is scrying? In this section, I will delineate the use of the mirror as

a scrying device, for an occult media history of the scrying mirror is also one of scrying itself. In looking at the scrying mirror, I will examine how it is practiced, crafted, and made fluidic. What follows is a delineation of dark portals and the methods of interacting with them. In their catalogue of objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, England, Simon Costin and Sara Hannant include a photograph of museum founder Cecil Williamson's scrying mirror (also called a black mirror or a dark mirror), set up on an easel, protected from illumination, and charged by the light of the moon (fig. 10). Beside it, they write:

> A dark mirror is used for summoning spirits or scrying, a form of divination or fortune telling that conjures up visions. In magic, a mirror has the capacity to absorb. Everything, once reflected, is stored, providing information that is then accessible for future use. In quiet contemplation, staring deeply just beyond the mirror's surface, images can sometimes appear, or an answer may be whispered.[260]

In the scrying mirror, a particular technique becomes available: scrying, a form of conjuring visions by staring deeply into the absorptive depth of a dark mirror. We could say that everything in this description of Williamson's scrying mirror is setting one up for learning the gesture of scrying itself. The mirror provides us with a language to rearrange both space and time on several levels: the space of the mirror is darkened and set up in the room as a place of focus; then, the act of looking into the space of the mirror is positioned not as one of seeking out a reflection, but rather seeking out a past or a futurity, an omen, a sign, a spirit.

In describing what he termed the ritual view of communication, James Carey noted that space can be mapped out "in different modes — utilizing lines on a page, sounds in air, movements in dance. All three are symbolic forms, though the symbols differ; visual, oral, and kinesthetic."[261] For Carey, line or dance or sound can provide a sense of displacement, can conjure forth what is at once here and not here; each provides us with a communicable atmosphere. The ritual view of communication, then, is for Carey a way that one rearranges and confirms their worlds by tracing them through meaningful gestures and repetitions. He writes:

Fig. 10 Cecil Williamson's scrying mirror, 600 x 450 x 70 mm, Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, UK, undated. Photo by Sara Hannant

> The ritual view of communication … exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the terms "commonness," "communion," "community," and "communication." A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs.[262]

For Carey, the ritual view differs from a view of communication as transmission that has largely dominated how communication is seen in general, i.e "as 'imparting,' 'sending,' 'transmitting,' or 'giving information to others,'" such as in railways, telegraphs, the increased speed and extended borders of technologies and transportations; in other words, "the ideal device[s] for the conquest of space and

populations."[263] Reframing communication as ritual, on the other hand, paints communication with the hues of a given community and becomes alert to the ways that a community iterates and restores its habits and worldviews; how it makes and creates the world itself in homonyms of communion, common, community. Ritual, to Carey, has both a "for" and an "of" mode — it is at once a blueprint for a particular condition or meaning at the same time that "it induces the dispositions it pretends merely to portray." Carey continues: "All human activity is such an exercise (can one resist the word 'ritual'?)."[264] The scrying mirror, then, especially in the description of Williamson's mirror above, is a way of iterating and opening a whole different way to experience sight as well as to experience what it means to communicate in the first place; it brings the spirit world into the community of the frame of the mirror; it opens a space for a communion that is also a timeline extending into multiple directions; its placement and framing and environment draws a boundary and a map, like a dance, like a line, around the known and the unknown, then it lets that boundary spill, shoring up the distinctions that lie between. The scrying mirror is both spatial, as I've previously stated, as well as temporal. The technique it involves — scrying — is equally as embodied as it is ocular; a blending of the visual, aural, and kinesthetic fields.

Scrying is receptive and vessel-like; the black mirror stores information, dispensing it to those who have adapted a sense of listening that is at once a sense of looking. Divination is not only seeing into the future, but peering into it, like looking into a well; in this way, the future has depth, not only length. The surface of the mirror becomes a boundary like the water's edge, and sometimes the scryer does not know who they will meet there — friend or foe. If you'd like to learn how to scry, you do not need a mirror: a bowl of water, an anointed fingernail, an egg yolk, a sword, a crystal, ink, all will suffice.

In his full-length work on the 15th-century Munich Handbook of Necromancy (Clm 849) that I opened the present chapter with, Richard Kieckhefer writes extensively on ancient scrying practices. Therein, he includes a subsection titled "Experiments Involving Vessels," where he notes that, in a letter to King Psammetichos found in the Greek magical papyri, the following instructions are inserted: "take a bronze bowl or saucer and fill it with water, then add green olive oil, recite an incantation over it, and ask questions of whatever god one wishes."[265] This type of scrying by using a vessel filled with liquid (cyclicomancy or lecanomany) traces back to the art of gazing into natural bodies of waters such as ponds and lakes (hydromancy) and can also be accomplished by gazing into a cauldron, according to Rosemary Ellen Guiley.[266] In this sense, scrying presents a certain receptivity or openness, one that connects it to fluidic, expansive gestures. Ceremonial magician Franz Bardon even suggested, according to Ronald Hutton, "a glass of Guinness as a medium in which to scry."[267]

As previously defined, the verb "to scry" is akin to the verbs *describe*, *perceive*, *see*, *observe*, *discover*, *sift*, and also to a clamour, a sieve.[268] Infamous ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley, in his tome *Magick*, book 4, co-written with Leila Waddell and Mary Desti, equates learning to divine with cultivating a whole other sense. Crowley writes, "[o]ne acquires what one may almost call a new sense … It resembles the exquisite sensibility of touch which is found in the great billiard player whose fingers can estimate infinitesimal degrees of force, or the similar phenomenon in the professional taster of tea or wine who can distinguish fantastically subtle difference of flavor."[269] Crowley uses a trained or educated lens to describe an action that I would say is not so much imbricated with professionalism as it is with attuning — more like the efferent tactility of a spider that uses the environment of the web as a sensorial extension of its body. The environment hybridizes, swapping senses out for one another. This is present in

Raquel Romberg and Claire Fanger's observation that the verbs used to describe the actions of the mirror suggest a crossover from the optical to the tactile, the kinetic, and in effect disassembles the visual field: in religious and shamanic ceremonies, they note, the words *shimmer*, *glimmer*, and *sheen* conjure up mirror-like effects of quickly moving silk fabrics or the flickering of candles against statues, becoming methods to "attract and direct intention," to create hypnotic effects, and even, in the case of light flickering against a statue, to bring it to life.[270] To interact with another sense of liveability.

One does not necessarily need a semi-reflective or once-reflective object to scry. Witch Christopher Penczak uses relics, amulets, and crystal skulls,[271] and Aleister Crowley used precious stones (lithomancy), particularly "a topaz set in a wooden cross of six squares, painted vermilion."[272] Perhaps one the strangest scrying devices is using an anointed fingernail (onychomancy), a method that dates as far back as 2000 BC in Mesopotamia,[273] and, in the Middle Ages, was most often the nail of a virgin boy.[274] In this case, the boy acts as the medium, the one "who actually sees and communicates with the spirits."[275] On the other side of the spectrum from (the strangeness of) the fingernail is the familiarity of the crystal ball. Sybil Leek, a British hereditary witch, writes that even though one can use molasses for scrying, it may not have the same theatrical effect as crystallomancy. [276] "'Come to my bowl-of-molasses reading party,'" she writes in her trademark laconic tone, "will never have the panache and romantic aura of 'come up to see my crystal ball.'"[277] So widely attributed to scrying is the crystal ball that Theodore Besterman, in his book *Crystal-Gazing*, declares that "though not originally one of the common forms of scrying, [it] is now practically the only one used."[278]

But is this really so? Leek associates the crystal ball mostly (and fondly) with a seaside fortune-teller she visited as a girl — in other words, to stagey, nostalgic scenes that are meant to evoke an ambience of magic (which, admittedly, is magical in its own right).[279] Valiente wrote that although crystal balls are famous, they are not often used by witches due to two main considerations: first, crystal balls (real crystal) are expensive; rather, witches will use glass or even sometimes globes of acrylic plastic.[280] Secondly, having a crystal in one's house could be seen as incriminating. "In the days when witchcraft was a hanging matter," she writes, "witches found it wise to improvise their speculum out of things which could be found innocently in any cottage; a rule which they followed with many of their other tools as well."[281] Valiente notes that fishing floats, which "often come in beautiful dark green or blue glass … make fine specula," as well as pieces of green beryl. But many witches, she concludes, "prefer to make their own magic mirror."[282]

v. Rituals of scrying: scribes and angels

"Let us first ask about the divination of hidden matters," wrote Pedro Garcia in the 15th century. "The first manner [of doing so] is by gazing at luminous bodies and instruments."[283] What does the assemblage of luminous instruments with the technique of gazing produce that is different from an optical encounter? To find out, we will look at specific instances of scrying. Since scrying was formalized by ceremonial magic (or, at least, magicians left more of a written record than witches or folk practitioners), I will take a look at the early ritual practices of magical practitioners in order to better contextualize the unruly knowledge productions of this technique. Importantly, it is not just a question of the scryer and the media of scrying, but also of the third presence, the being who is manifested within / behind / on the surface of the mirror, on the other side of the gaze.

In her work on Renaissance magician John Dee, historian Deborah Harkness notes that during the 17th century, scrying was a trade; she even goes so far as to refer to scryers as "technicians."[284] One could hire a scryer like one can hire a contemporary electrician or an editor. John Dee himself worked with various hired scryers, particularly one by the name of Edward Kelley. Together they peered into mirrors to dialogue with angels. Richard Kieckhefer goes even further back in history, and notes that as early as the 5th century, scryers in Europe, known as *specularii*, were condemned and sentenced for their actions. In fact, notes Kieckhefer, a lot of information obtained about the *specularii* and their methods came from legal documents or tales of condemnation. "In 1311," he writes, the bishop of Lincoln instructed one of his officials to investigate people who were practicing divination by conjuring spirits in their fingernails and in mirrors, as well as in stones and rings. This paints a vivid picture of how various reflective objects were used in divination practices, and it pertains directly to one of the main objects the *specularii* would have had on hand: the mirror."[285] Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet notes that, around the same time, in 1321, a woman by the name of Béatrice de Planissoles was accused of witchcraft on the evidence of her being found with a mirror, "a tool of the devil."[286] She was sentenced to life in jail. The (scrying) mirror itself, when refusing reflection, becomes interrogated; in its unruliness, it becomes a liability.

To reflect the influence of magic on witchcraft, I have opened the present chapter with both a magician's ritual (The Mirror of Floron from the 15th century) and a witch's ritual (Valiente's encounter with Witchdom in the 1960s), for there are many overlaps between the practices of both. However, there is one significant central distinction: witches have a history of being hunted, of being seen as villainous, treacherous, and as "heathens," whereas magicians have on the whole profited from a more neutral positioning, one that is not unaffected by gender as well as class. Anthropologist Margaret Murray noted that witches have been historically prosecuted on account of being "heathens" as early as the 8th century, where she cites a condemnation from the first Archbishop of York that reads as follows: "Prohibition of offerings to devils; of witchcraft; of auguries according to the methods of the heathen; of vows paid, loosed, or confirmed at wells, stones, or trees; of the gathering of herbs with any incantation except Christian prayers."[287] Sylvia Federici writes that "[i]t was the sexual nature of her crimes and lower-class status that distinguished the witch from the Renaissance magician, who was largely immune from the persecution." Federici goes on to note that although High Magic and witchcraft shared many elements in Early Modern and Renaissance Europe (among them, the ability to "manipulate and imitate nature"), witches were seen to copulate with the devil, a criminal act, whereas magicians, particularly astrologers and astronomers, were secure under the mantle of the sciences.[288]

Just as there are significant differences, there are also significant connections between the magician, especially those working with necromancy, and witches. Kieckhefer writes that "the rise of the witch trials in the fifteenth century is related to increasing consciousness of this [necromancy's] explicitly demonic magic."[289] In particular, during the witch trials of 1428–47 in the Dauphiné, a sixty-year-old necromancer by the name of Jubertus of Bavaria was brought to trial for necromancy. "Apart from accusations more or less typical of the incipient prosecution for conspiratorial witchcraft (flight to nocturnal assemblies, killing of infants, etc.), Jubertus was charged with activities more often found in connection with clerical necromancy," writes Kieckhefer.[290] It was 15th-century physician Johannes Hartlieb who made the explicit connection between conspiratorial witchcraft and necromancy in his 1456–64 book *Das puch aller verpoten kunst* (The Book of All Forbidden Acts), which declared necromancy the first of seven forbidden

arts, then linked it to already circulating portrayals of witchcraft that were flourishing at the time in both trials and treatises.[291] Like the witch, "[t]he necromancer conjures the devil with characters and secret words, with fumigations and sacrifices, in addition to making a pact with the devil."[292] Necromancy was in fact closer to witchcraft, therefore, than it was to Renaissance magic, and Kieckhefer notes that humanist mages, such as Marsilio Ficino or Johannes Reuchlin, even defined their magic as that which was *not* necromancy.[293]

Who, then, was the necromancer who wrote The Munich Handbook of Necromancy in which we find The Mirror of Floron? The short answer is no one knows, and a longer answer would even question whether The Munich Handbook of Necromancy is a book at all, for it reads more like a compilation, or what is termed a *miscellany*, rather than a treatise on magic.[294] Therefore, we are speaking more about a compiler or a scribe than an author proper. There are conjectures that the scribe could have been Jubertus of Bavaria, mentioned above, or even Johannes Hartlieb himself, yet Kieckhefer rather posits that it was likely a cleric in the clergy who was trying to establish "a foothold at some court, possibly that of the Duke of Bavaria in Munich."[295] What makes The Munich Handbook of Necromancy significant to look at for magical rituals opposed to, say, the much more famous pseudepigraphic work, the *Key of Solomon* (14th or 15th century, attributed to King Solomon), or, the later *Lesser Key of Solomon* (17th century), which specifically deals with the conjuration of demons, is the lack of a moral code or prescription found in The Munich Handbook. "Whereas the key of Solomon insists that magic must be used only to glorify God," the compiler of the rituals found in Clm 849, according to Kieckhefer, "seems not to have been a man of conventional morality."[296]

The subject of authorship connects The Mirror of Floron ritual back to Doreen Valiente's ritual, for she, too, could be described as a scribe of sorts. Doreen Valiente was born in 1922 in the village of Mitcham, England. Before she was one of the most renowned High Priestesses of Wicca (and arguably the first), Valiente was a codebreaker during World World II at the famed Bletchley Park.[297] Upon reading an article about Gardner's coven in 1952, Valiente penned a letter and was soon put in touch with him. She was initiated into his coven a year later and remains the first "known" High Priestess of Wicca, for the fact that any former High Priestesses have proven either impossible to track or have adamantly denied their association to Gardner or to Wicca.[298] (Like many events in the lore and history of witchcraft, an origin story cannot be found or proves too distorted or unreliable to trust. This, too, is shapeshifting.) More so than her association with Gerald Gardner, however, Valiente is known as a master wordsmith — she rewrote much of Gardner's original Book of Shadows (a tome of rituals and magic), and is perhaps most known for writing, or at least piecing together from various sources, "The Charge of the Goddess."[299] As Risa Dickens writes, "[o]ne of Doreen's magical powers was that she was a genius editor, weaving together the through lines she could see in scattered stories and whispered rituals."[300]

The magical power of being a scribe and editor has precedence in histories of magic, particularly in the relationship between British magician John Dee, who used his "showstone" to communicate with angels in the late 16th century, and his scryer, Edward Kelley. It is salient to look at Dee in a discussion of scrying, for here we also see the transition of the boy medium, who we saw in the 15th-century Mirror of Floron ritual, to the professional medium, who we see crop up in Dee's time. John Dee poetically referred to his angel communications as a "colloquium of angels,"[301] and it was a colloquium largely held by Kelley, Dee's preferred scryer.[302] Deborah E. Harkness is careful to point out that scryers during Dee's time were not mediumistic in the Victorian sense of holding séances; rather, they were "skilled laborers" who

made “an inquiry into the mysteries of nature possible.” It was the showstone itself that was key to communicating with angels. Harkness describes the device not just as a tool, but a whole geography: the showstone “served as a locus for divinity, a sacred space capable of representing the world in microcosm.”[303] A locus, a sacred space. A stone, a glass ball, a circle.

In contrast to The Mirror of Floron, Dee was not conjuring spirits, but rather opening a direct and devotional communication with angels; his was a cosmology of nature or at least a new way of reading this cosmology. “Dee was not looking for wisdom itself on his library shelves,” notes Harkness, “he was looking for a new *method* to acquire it.”[304] Scrying was this method, and to hone it Dee looked as much into occult literature, such as the work of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa and Peter d’Abano, as into the study of optics, such as the work of Roger Bacon and Robert Grosseteste. So key were optics to John Dee that his angel conversations were carried out in full light, either before sunset or after sunrise, and he opened an entire discourse on rays; in particular, the showstone was that which captured and magnified “the rays on which angels were said to travel into the natural world.”[305] In this way, Dee’s perception of light was both physical and metaphysical. What kind of mirror exactly did Dee use to scry? Harkness is skeptical of the claim that Dee used an obsidian stone to scry, as there is no mention of this object in Dee’s otherwise very thorough documentations of his angel conversations.[306] Rather, Dee used not one but a variety of showstones — and so important were they to the magician that, as Harkness writes, “the focus of his angel conversations was not his library, alchemical laboratory, study, or oratory, but his showstone,” of which he had at least three: “a ‘great crystalline globe,’ a ‘stone in the frame,’ and a stone Dee believed had been brought by the angels and left in his oratory” — this one he set in gold and intended to wear around his neck (fig. 11).[307] All of these items create the context for the ritual of scrying; as Carey may posit, they are involved in displacement, in the creation of the scrying space, in bringing what is on the other side of the glass to this side of it. In the way that Dee wore mirrors on his body points again towards issues of space, or the black mirrors of our smartphones, as well as to embodiment, and particularly those spaces that are reflective / non-reflective or figured as passive / active. How does space itself as well as forms of embodiment help find a tangled, crooked way into methodologies of attunement?

Fig. 11 One of John Dee’s showstones, Science Museum, London, UK, 16th century

So influential was John Dee to early formalizations of British witchcraft that the original 1951 location of the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic on the Isle of Man (now in Boscastle, North Cornwall) included a duplicate of John Dee’s magic circle, including fabrications of his signature ritual items. This must have been a sight to behold, replete with “innumerable cabbalistic signs, each with a separate significance,” according to Simon Costin, “inscriptions of the names of Hebrew gods, nine candlesticks each in the form of a different symbol, black earth (to be specially imported), the Eye of Horus, the magician’s wands and a cup and four white swans wings.”[308] The museum was not just a site to visit and the circle was not just there to be viewed. At the museum after closing hours, witches Gerald Gardner, Cecil Williamson, and a coven “called upon spirits to work good, carried out seasonal fertility rites, and,” adds historian Ronald Hutton gleefully, “danced in the nude.”[309] What would John Dee say?

3. The Context of Community and the Art of Witnessing

i. In community (or out)? Hedge witching and an ecology of practices

I have so far discussed the mirror as an object that is a portal, a lure, an opening. But what about the communities that mirrors create? In this section, I will enliven the mirror and put it into motion. To do so, I will look at solitary witches, sometimes called "hedge witches," alongside a completely different group — feminists in the 1970s who used a speculum for vaginal self-examination, thereby developing an embodied way of looking and an alternate form of witnessing.

As I've been reiterating throughout this chapter, witches construct and consult the black mirror in order to speak with the dead and / or to divine. This is a wild technique. Scrying is not celebratory like a sabbat or a ritual to welcome the new moon, and it does not necessarily involve deities or goddesses. This is what makes it part of the murkier, wilder practice of witching. According to Hamilton-Giles, *witching* has been obscured and marginalized by more "popularized vernaculars" associated with witchcraft, such as celebratory, formalized rituals.[310] "It transpires witching is rather a rare term to use for describing the act of witchcraft," writes Hamilton-Giles, "and because of this rarity we might assume that particular forms of witchcraft are no longer practiced." Hamilton-Giles goes on to write that by using a term like *witching* that is unfamiliar and difficult to define, we come closer, in fact, to understanding witchcraft altogether. "The vitality elicited by using this term not only sets it apart from those other common and more convivial categories that so easily trip off the tongue, it also allows the deployment of a new style in understanding."[311] Witching involves techniques and modalities of working with lifeworlds, continues Hamilton-Giles, such as spirits. The witch, he writes, "is a conduit," but one who is also attached to a community of "practitioners, who by performing specific rites, whether tutored or not, gain from their understanding a sense of belonging" — it is this belonging that in part enables the specific interactions with lifeworlds, such as spirits, to begin with.[312]

Scrying is a technique of witching. It is also salient to discuss in terms of community, because it stretches the perimeters of the word: one does not necessarily scry surrounded by people. It does not have to be practiced in a particular community in the way that we normally think of it, i.e. in a coven (a group of witches), but it can also easily transfer to more "solitary" practices of witching that are, in fact, not solitary at all. British witch Rae Beth defined the term "hedge witch" in 1990, writing, in a letter to prospective students, "I cannot initiate you. Rather, I will not. I am a hedge witch, a solitary witch. I belong to no coven."[313] She goes on to write, "some witches prefer to be a lone priest or priestess of natural magic … they may take the name 'hedge witch' … it is in fact a different archetype to that of the coven witch. Both are witches, but the hedge witch is a solitary being."[314]

In the way that a practitioner of scrying needs a community to learn the trade (whether that community be online, in coven, or found in books), scrying is an example of what Isabelle Stengers calls an ecology of practices. One of the central tenets of an ecology of practices is that it includes practices that stand outside of institutional justification, and indeed have great power without it; i.e. practices that do not need to appeal to enlightened rationality to gain or accrue power. Stengers opens her essay with the example of physics, noting that when physicists are attacked on the basis that their models do not correspond to "reality," they often staunchly defend that it does; moreover, they stake a privileged claim on reality itself. Stengers remarks:

"what a terrible waste!" In fact, they never had to do that. "But physicists need the support of this authority [of 'physical reality']," Stengers continues, "as long as they are afraid of their environment."[315] To end her essay, Stengers turns not towards physics, but the practices of neopagan witchcraft. For Stengers, the neopagan witch is a type of practitioner who is empowered to produce knowledge within their milieu without having to resort to its justifications within what Stengers calls the "major key," or themes of rationality and enlightenment. She writes: "… the efficacy of ritual magic is in itself an act of magic."[316] I would say that scrying goes even further than this: it is a practice that is held by neopagan witches and practiced in community, but, in also being a solitary practice, it has the power to re-define community altogether: forming a communicative bond between the solitary, or hedge witch, and the mirror itself, as well as the spirits and messages it holds.

iii. The mirror, too, is a healer: the speculum and the speculum

In *Techniques of the Observer*, art theorist Jonathan Crary notes how the act of observation changed considerably in the 19th century, with the emergence of optical devices, such as the camera obscura and the stereoscope, which "codified and normalized the observer within rigidly defined systems of visual consumption"; in effect, "modernizing" the act of observation.[317] This modernization involved an isolation of vision from the other senses, such as touch and (if we can call it a sense) space. "Modernity, in this case, coincides with the collapse of classical models of vision," Crary writes, espousing "sensations and stimuli that have no reference to a spatial location."[318] Crary's central questions have to do with the ongoing legacy of such a break, especially in a contemporary environment saturated with screens. "If there is in fact an ongoing mutation in the nature of visuality," he asks, "what forms or modes are being left behind?" Furthermore, how does the subjectivity produced by these mutations, as he calls them, adapt to function as an "interface between rationalized systems of exchange and networks of information?"[319] These questions become even richer, in terms of a discussion of witches and witchcraft, when we move towards more intimate devices associated with the mirror, such as the speculum used for vaginal examination.

I have discussed how the black mirror opens a space in which to redirect the uses of the mirror, not towards reflection, but rather towards communication. The communities who use black mirrors in such a way are, for the large part, as I have stated, magical practitioners and witches. Yet the greater subcultures that make up magical communities are, at least where contemporary witchcraft is involved, in no small way slanted towards queer and feminist networks. Starhawk's *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics* from 1982 is a rich example of the imbrication between practices of witchcraft and practices of activism and feminism. In the opening lines of her prologue, Starhawk writes, "[t]his is a book about bringing together the spiritual and the political. Or rather, it is a work that attempts to move in the space where that split does not exist."[320] This prompts us to look at how the tools of witches — in this case mirrors — were and are used in wider feminist circles. In her book, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, science and technologies scholar Michelle Murphy discusses how vaginal self-examination in the 1970s not only opened a new community of DIY self-care, but also rearranged the act of witnessing. It did so by using a speculum. "Sit in a circle," Murphy begins. "Assemble a kit composed of mirror, light, and plastic speculum for each participant …. To see yourself, hold the mirror between your legs and direct the light toward it. The light will reflect off the mirror into your vagina so that your cervix will pop into view" (fig 12).[321] This is not dissimilar to instructions on scrying.

"Witches generally do their scrying within a magic circle," writes Raymond Buckland, echoing the first words of Murphy's instructions.[322] "*Look at your reflection in the black mirror*," writes witch T. Thorn Coyle, "*Let your gaze soften. What emerges? Ask your reflection the question, 'Who are you?' You might be surprised by the answer*."[323] This is a long way from The Mirror of Floron and John Dee. Contemporary practices of scrying also involve an alternate kind of confrontation with the "self," similar to practices with the speculum that opened in the 1970s.

Both the scrying speculum and the vaginal self-exam speculum present "embodied ways of knowing," ones that "reassemble objectivity." As Coyle asks, "*What emerges? … 'Who are you*?'" Murphy asks, "How to get nature to speak? Through what practices and what modes of representation?"[324] Coyle's instructions position the technique of scrying as something anyone can do, as long as they have a black mirror. This brings us into the realm of the expert / amateur divide, which has everything to do with who can and cannot make knowledge, who can and cannot witness. Murphy writes that the "vaginal self-exam was crafted as a form of counter-conduct, a way of knowing explicitly created as a reaction against the dominant practices."[325] It did this in part by extending "the biomedical gaze," and became a visual practice involved in reassembling "the status of the subject in objectivity," or what Murphy calls "the *immodest witness*."[326] The immodest witness is pivoted directly against the "modest witness," a positioning of credibility that derives from 17th-century experimental science. "Gendered male, raced European, and enjoying the status of gentleman," the modest witness "crucially delineated the kinds of person who could (purportedly unmarked subjects) and could not (marked subjects) credibly produce knowledge." By contrast, immodest witnessing "elevated the layperson as expert in the particularities of herself."[327] The very "modesty" of the modest witness, in direct contrast to what we can only assume to be the leaky immodesty of everyone else, is, in part, writes Donna Haraway, what laid the foundation of modernity itself. One that has everything to do with (magic) mirrors. Haraway writes:

Fig. 12 Suzann Gage, illustration of DIY speculum insertion, 1981

> This kind of modesty is one of the founding virtues of what we call modernity. This is the virtue that guarantees that the modest witness is the legitimate and authorized ventriloquist for the object world, adding nothing from his mere opinions, from his biasing embodiment. … His narratives have a magical power — they … become clear mirrors, fully magical mirrors, without once appealing to the transcendental or the magical."[328]

Whereas the immodest witness, figured by the vaginal-self exam, challenges the construction of "blind sight, or what [Donna] Haraway called 'the view from nowhere,'" the black mirror goes a step further by questioning if one can ever, in fact, be transparent at all, even to one's own self.[329] *Who are you?*

Vaginal self-examination of the 1970s extended beyond consciousness-raising groups into art performances, such as Annie Sprinkle's *A Public Cervix Announcement* that she started in the 1990s, using a speculum and a flashlight to show the audience her cervix. "There are those who say my purpose is to 'demystify the female body,'" writes Sprinkle, "but that is an impossibility. … You can never demystify a cervix."[330] Similarly, Murphy writes that "[i]n the mirror, the speculum guides our gaze to the cervix, yet the mirror as symbol of a transparent

access to the world is resisted"; rather, we become aware of the mirror's frame that "interpolates us into our own embodied gaze." [331] The point of the vaginal self-exam is to show — but not necessarily to make transparent — similar to the way that the black scrying mirror shows without necessarily revealing. This is the role of the empirical, where the affect of the practice itself is the entire point of the practice, we could say. Whatever knowledge is derived from the sights, smells, sounds discovered in the speculum of the vaginal self-exam or the speculum of the scrying mirror is to be interpreted by the viewer themselves; not to de-mystify, but rather to discover, to experience.

Just as both the witch's speculum and the consciousness-raising vaginal speculum bring into focus the role of the immodest witness as well as ways to reorganize subjective versus objective positionalities of seeing, they also bring two other crucial intersections of knowledge-making and reflection into conversation: the convergence of marketing and psychoanalysis and the role of the medical institution in dispersion of care and healing. Murphy recognizes that the quest for self-knowledge that the speculum opened was very much influenced by a marketing trend leaning towards psychoanalysis that was coming to a crescendo in the mid-to-late 20th century. "Cold War marketing experts [drew] on psychoanalytic notions of the self," writes Murphy, benefitting from the psychoanalytic theories that "people carried with them conscious forms of rationality and unconscious, irrational 'drives,' 'desires,' and 'affects' that capitalism could mobilize."[332] The way that the witches' scrying mirror slowly morphed from an instrument to communicate with spirits to an instrument to communicate with self is indicative of this turn as well. Witches' tools, though part of a subcultural community of magical practitioners, are equally affected by economic and intellectual trends just like their more secular counterparts. Part of my argument is that in the contemporary era, witches' practices have the ability to again turn us back to a communication with spirits, not unlike The Mirror of Floron and John Dee's methods, and away from a primary focus on the self, opening the possibility of a post-(or pre-)psychoanalytic episteme, yet retaining a background of feminism and activism sprouted by 1970s consciousness-raising and witches such as Starhawk.

Perhaps the most interesting convergence between the vaginal self-exam speculum and witches' tools in general is how they destabilize(d) the economy of the expert and amateur within the field of knowledge surrounding health, healing, and the body. Part of the vaginal self-exam movement involved the production and circulation of manuals, such as *Black Book* put out by the Well Woman clinic, aimed at showing people how to use a microscope. Witches' manuals that I have been and will be quoting throughout are similar to the Well Woman Clinic's *Black Book*: they too are how-to manuals for otherwise specialized methods gleaned in the hierarchical structures of covens or magical degree systems such as the Golden Dawn or Wicca.[333] *Black Book* was, in part, written "to defend against accusations of practicing medicine without a license," Murphy writes in parentheses[334] — I would, however, like to take this out of parentheses and even outline and italicize the significance of this point. For, it also converges with a history of witches being persecuted and removed as healers within their communities due to the onus to have a license to practice, which was solidified during the scientific revolution at the tail end of the Early Modern European witch trials.[335] Even in the 13th-century, however, European medicine was finding its place as a secular science and women healers were excluded from universities.[336]

Feminist writers Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English placed emphasis on the persecution of witches as healers in their 1973 book, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, which was re-issued in 2010. They write that in the 1970s, "feminists were becoming aware of a variety of

ways women were abused or treated unjustly by the medical system," and they go on to note that a series of "Know Your Body courses" cropped up in the United States as a way to remedy this issue.[337] Ehrenreich and English connect the discontinuity between women and the medical profession to 15th-century witch hunters, particularly the infamous 1487 *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches), in which clergyman Heinrich Kramer "proclaimed that 'No one does more harm to the Catholic Church than midwives."[338] Sylvia Federici, too, connects the witch to the midwife, writing that "[h]istorically, the witch was the village midwife, medic, soothsayer or sorceress … whose privileged area of competence … was amorous intrigue."[339] In their 2010 preface to their book, Ehrenreich and English quote John Demos, who writes that "the underlying linkage here is obvious enough; the ability to heal and the ability to harm [in the *Malleus Maleficarum*] seemed intimately related."[340] In their section on witchcraft and medicine in the Middle Ages, Ehrenreich and English note that "[t]he Church saw its attack on peasant healers as an attack on *magic*, not medicine."[341] Weeding out healers was a way of weeding out witches, for the separation between magic and medicine can be a thin one.

This is both a global and local issue. In so-called Canada, the country where I write this dissertation from, Indigenous peoples were forcefully alienated from their practices, including healing and healthcare, when the violent machine of colonialism was turned against them as early as the 15th century. Cowlitz author Elissa Washuta aligns herself with her own particular form of witchcraft to heal not only her body, but also the environment around her; the two being intimately connected. She writes: "I know how to show the spirits I'm here through the light of my fire, because we have always used fire to smoke fish, conduct ceremony, burn cedar boughs, turn prairie brush to ash so the camas or huckleberries can grow stronger. I choose witchcraft; I choose to cast spells."[342] There are other choices of giving and receiving healing beyond licensed medicine. The black scrying mirror, as a space to look into and retrieve communication with the dead is also a space to look into and retrieve information concerning the living legacy of witches and medicine, which, I hope, will continue to unfold in surprising ways as decolonial onuses are placed on the sanctioning of care; reviving and revivifying ancient or maligned practices that were once banished or lost.

5. Another Origin of the World

i. Ghosts

As I conclude this chapter on mirrors, I'd like to move back to the lure. For the lure, in the question of the scrying mirror, is one perhaps that psychoanalysis in general would not necessarily agree with, and it is one that Moten touches on: it is the spirit. The gaze and the ghost, that are brought together by Lacan and by Moten after him, is touched on in the interim by Jacques Derrida in his 1993 *Specters of Marx*, which is perhaps the ground zero of theoretical ghost stories. In Derrida's formulation, the gaze is not simply being directed from the living to the dead, but from the ghost back to the living. In an interview with Bernard Stiegler, Derrida notes the "visor effect" of the spectre: "…the spectre is not someone we see coming back," says Derrida, "it is someone by whom we feel ourselves watched, observed, surveyed, as if by the law … without any possible symmetry, without reciprocity."[343] In fact, "[t]he spectre enjoys the right of absolute inspection. He is the right of inspection itself."[344] The visor effect of the dead suggests that spirits have a different sensorial apparatus; they see too much, perhaps, they are overfocused, they see as they return, see as they exit, as they turn towards and away. John

Durham Peters also places ghosts in a different sensorial environment when he writes, "[c]ommunication with the dead is the paradigm case of hermeneutics: the art of interpretation where no return message can be received."[345] What is it then? It is only the ghost who can communicate? Or the living, trying to speak with the ghost? The gaze invites us into a space of affect, which is, perhaps, not a discourse, but a web. It tells us that a more complicated kind of encounter than physical seeing is at play, perhaps a kind of sight that "sees feelingly," a phrase that William Shakespeare coined in his 1606 play *King Lear* to describe how the character, Gloucester, when blind, developed an empathetic sense of sight.[346] Gazing is not simply an aspect of looking, of seeing or being seen; the gaze itself is an aporia. One that asks us to rethink sight and reflection altogether.

Normalization, rationalization, and the suspension of sight without space are reversed by the unruly behaviour of the scrying mirror, making it perhaps a prime candidate to explore the forms or modes that are left behind in the so-called modernization of the observer, proving perhaps, in the words of Bruno Latour, that we have never been modern.[347] What the spectre opens, as Derrida says to Bernard Stiegler, is the possibility of "another origin of the world." He continues: "What I call the gaze here, the gaze of the other, is not simply another machine for the perception of images. It is another world, another source of phenomenality, another degree zero of appearing." Stiegler interjects and calls this a singularity. Yes, says Derrida, but it is not a point, it is "a singularity on the basis of which a world is opened." The spectre, "the other, who is dead, was someone for whom a world, that is to say a possible infinity or a possible indefinity of experiences was open. It is an opening."[348] The gaze of the dead opens a set of experiences, ones that were previously foreclosed by the hinge between death and life. Derrida urges us to open this seam. It is arguable, however, whether or not Derrida is speaking of literal hauntings, literal ghosts — but the witch certainly is.[349] The lure of the dead lurking beyond the mirror is also the gaze of the dead, one that may be one-sided, as Derrida notes, but which the instrument of the scrying mirror makes reciprocal. This is not so much a doubling or a reflection or a reproduction, but a portal.

In writing about the crystal ball, Simon Costin and Sara Hannant note that "if one looks through it, it is possible to see the world upside down, which contributes to its magical significance." They quote witch Cecil Williamson writing, "[i]f you really must understand this world, first you must stand upon your head." [350] To under-stand. Scrying as a technique and behaviour opens up questions that do not necessarily have to do with the optical, but with the multi-sensorial, as Moten noted, and the spatial, as Foucault noted. Under-standing includes that which is hidden from sight, what the optical buries, blurs, or subsumes. It is not about who is able to send and who is able to receive, but the interaction that opens somewhere in between. It is a portal that takes up space on the level of (un)reflection. Thus, the scrying mirror opens a newness or difference in how we can re-think one of the oldest philosophical problems.

In his book *The Tain of the Mirror*, Rodolphe Gasché notes that reflection, in philosophy, goes back at least to Descartes, where it became "the chief methodological concept" and at once a "turning away from any straightforward consideration of objects and the from the immediacy of such an experience."[351] Reflection lies at the heart of the subject / object split. The Latin verb *re-flectere* "means 'to bend' or 'to turn back' or backward, as well as 'to bring back,'" writes Gasché, which is especially intriguing when considering the optic connotations of the verb — "the action by mirroring surfaces of throwing back light."[352] Significantly, the meanings of *re-flectere* are not dissimilar to the root of "witch" as *wic* or *wik* that both Starhawk M. Macha NightMare as well as Ipsita Roy Chakraverti point to — one who has the ability to bend, to twist;

a trickster and a weaver.[353] The ability of the witch to shapeshift is different from the property of reflection, however, which often works to hew rather than to weave. Gasché writes that the activity of doubling is essential to philosophical reflection precisely because it separates; therefore, "the philosophy of reflection is shown to be in essence a philosophy of understanding (*Verstand*) since 'the activity of dissolution is the power and work of the *understanding*.'"[354] Here, "understanding separates itself, as thinking, from its own object, that is, from being, writes Gasché"; as such, it creates an opposition that "is coeval with that of subject and object."[355] The (non-)reproductivity of the witch's mirror, the mirror which does not reflect, provides a non-mimetic entryway into speaking of communication over mimesis and reflection.

ii. The fluidic mirror

In writing about scrying rituals in the Middle Ages, Kieckhefer notes one reoccurring theme between them: not the mirror, not even the gaze, but rather the gesture of sitting. "These divinatory experiments are unusual in their emphasis on sitting," he observes — all of the participants, in fact, seem to be invited to sit or have special instructions to do so, including the master, the (boy) medium, and even the spirits themselves, "whether on thrones, at table, on stools, or simply on the ground."[356] Sitting, Kieckhefer notes, is a particular gesture of communication: in these divinations, the conjurations are intended specifically to bring about a consultation between the magicians and the spirits, and thus the parties on both sides are in effect sitting down to do business."[357] As Traditional Witch Laura Tempest Zakroff writes, "I don't worship deities, I work with them."[358] Most scrying directives invite the scryer to sit, yet we often do not think to comment on this behaviour among the more extraordinary seeming tools and prescriptions involved. In looking at ancient religious texts, from Egyptian and Greek papyri, to the Old Testament, Richard E. Lind notes that the heart was once "the seat of life," quoting from the Oxford English Dictionary.[359] There was a gradual transfer from the heart as the location of consciousness to the mind, writes Lind, one that was not complete until the 18th century. Moving the seat of life from the heart to the mind involved "a radical relocation of subjectivity," where "the 'I' of consciousness [was] restricted to the head" and "the body [became] relatively mute."[360]

The simple directive of sitting is perhaps a way, implicitly, of spatially connecting back to body consciousness, back to the seat of the heart. Sitting down to communicate with spirits seems ostensibly unmediated, yet it opens up a discussion of the techniques of the body. Alkistis Dimech, witch, dancer, and co-publisher of Scarlet Imprint, calls "the body 'the place of enquiry' — in reference to the grave and to divination — for the body limns and enfolds this occult world as the skin limns and enfolds the sensate. The matrix of connective tissue is the repository of our individual and ancestral memory." Here it is not the heart but rather the fascia that Dimech considers "to be the physiological substrate of consciousness." Borrowing Mae-Wan Ho's coinage "liquid crystalline," Dimech envisions the fascia as indicative of the subtler, electromagnetic properties of the body, "the medium through which our inner environment interacts with the outer … thus, the organ of knowledge par excellence."[361] This multisensory description of consciousness, connected to movement and to connective tissue, brings us to the importance of the body in contemporary witchcraft and begins to form a space where rhythm and liquid counter reflection and containment. In the contemporary era, there are a variety of online articles on "smartphone scrying" or "virtual scrying," using various methodologies, as well as an app called iScry, which presents the somewhat gimmicky interface of a black screen flocked by

candles.[362] Yet the reason why scrying apps like these may seem anachronistic or gimmicky, and have not caught on in the witchcraft community, is that the trend has been not to use more technology, but less. The movement away from tools is part of a contemporary movement towards behaviour, or at least into a more behavioural, physiological, embodied conception of tools (one that perhaps signals their implicit incorporation). What Doreen Valiente specified when suggesting that the scryer look *through* the mirror has in fact come to be, as if foreseen: the instrument vanishes.[363]

This runs along the lines of how Jeremy Stolow notes that the media of religion, especially, must take into account sonic and invisible realms, writing that "the most primary media of all [are] the human senses." The very fact that critical approaches to media have a difficult time grappling with religion points not to a separation between media and religion, posits Stolow, but their very imbrication: the phrase "'religion *and* media' is a pleonasm," he writes.[364] Religion does not exist without media; media is always already embedded within religion. It is often only through media that one's faith is communicated at all; rituals, venerations, incense, space, and garments are not excesses of a religion, but the very manifestation of the religious. This could not be more apt for a discussion on witchcraft, where the witch considers her tools as a literal extension of her body. Stolow coins the multi-sensory and beautifully impossible phrase "liquid aura," via Walter Benjamin, to ask, "what happens to sacred presence once it is mediated, and re-mediated, through an ever-thickening raiment of technological apparatuses and in ever-widening circuits of exchange?"[365] The contemporary trend in witchcraft to move away from tool and toward the gesture, as noted above, does not necessarily point to unmediation, but the body's mandate to subsume the technological — or, perhaps, borrowing terminology from Moten, to take on a space of the *ante*-technological.[366]

As tools shapeshift into the body, the mirror begins to bend and twist to liquid, turn to rhythm. The material force that the dead have, however, is perhaps not something that can be used. Our job as scholars is not always to try to retrieve and make useful, but to be affected. This is why, perhaps, there has never been a scholar who talks to ghosts, as Derrida asserts, for such a gesture goes against the propulsions towards complete understanding, finitude, and completion. We return to the partial scene with which we opened: circling like a bird around The Mirror of Floron, around Valiente's Witchdom. What if, upon touching the glass of the mirror that the knight, Floron, appears in, it wavers and moves, reverts to its liquid state? This would involve a transfer from solid to fluid, like a dancer picking up a rhythm, a puzzle piece clicking into that one space in the larger whole. This is a geography where the shadow object and the liquid aura comingle and coalesce to produce a bewitchment. Nothing makes sense here and everything is senseable. With this, we enter the territory of knots.

CHAPTER 2: KNOTS

1. A Journey into the Middle

i. The crossroads

There is a 12th-century spell from Devon and Cornwall in England that witches living along North-facing coasts sold to mariners. The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, England holds such a specimen, and it is ostensibly a piece of thin, white rope with three knots tied into it (fig. 13).[367] The simplicity of the device is deceptive in relation to its function. For this spell allowed the mariner to control the very element of air, to control the wind, not by tying knots into the rope (it already came knotted), but by untying them. To summon a light wind, the mariner would untie the first knot in the rope; to summon a high wind, the second knot; and untying the third knot would unleash a storm. In the following chapter, I am interested in what the methodology of this spell, of unknotting and unleashing, tells us about tricks, containments, and the act of bewitching. Rather than narratives of worlding, this spell brings us into narratives of undoing, knot by knot, the mechanics of the worldly. Whereas the black mirror brought us into the space of the unreflective, and the spirits and techniques that abide within, the wind, a mischievous behaviour of air, and the attempt to unleash it rather than contain it, points to a disobedient gesture. As Chapter 1 had to do with mirrors and the way that mirrors shift from a tool of reflection to a tool of divination, the present chapter has to do with knots and the ways in which they shift from tools of tying to tools of spellcasting. Knots ask us not to look anew but to look askance, with one eye open.

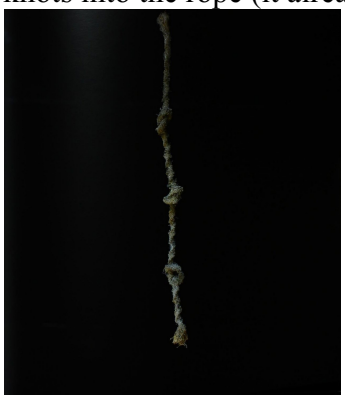

Fig. 13 Selling the Wind, 360 x 15 x 5 mm, Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, UK, undated

Throughout, I will follow directly from the techniques that the black mirror opens and step through its portal. Here, we find ourselves at crossroads, or, we could say, the centre of a knot. From this space, I will transition from a meditation on positionality into the heart of the craft: what counts as a witchy methodology? I will attempt to place the heretical theories that the witch spins into a multivalent, (mis-)communicative craft. If the black mirror shows us positionalties of the unreflective and the unmimetic, then the knot extends this villainous figure (villainous to whom?) to the entangled, the controversial, the double. To enter the space of the knot spell, I will continue exploring the shapeshifting property of witches' communicative tools in two broad categories, tricks and traps: in particular, the spirit house, the witch bottle, and the cauldron — alchemical vessels involved in the creation of diversions, boundaries, and potions. Just as mirrors brought into play the liminal space of trickery in being both an excess and a virtuality, an overflowing of presence and an absence thereof, the witches' tools discussed in the present chapter offer a material way to think about the techniques of bewitchment —distinct from enchantment in how the tools of the witch both create and sustain a space of tension. New materialist Jane Bennett introduces the theory of enchantment as a mode to reinvigorate and awaken wonder that may be lost in a secular world; bewitchment, however, produces no such soothing balm, but rather galvanizes by keeping you on your toes.[368]

The overarching theme of this chapter is knots, which can also be seen as a crossroads. According to Raymond Buckland in *The Witch Book*, "[a] crossroads was originally described as

a place 'where the roads meet,' rather than the crossing of two roads." In the Vodou tradition, Papa Legba, the trickster, is the guardian of the crossroads; in the Norse tradition, it is Loki; and in the Greek pantheon, it is the androgynous god Hermes, or the dark goddess, Hecate, who is sometimes called Triple Hecates (a plural goddess) for the fact that she faces in three directions at once.[369] At the crossroads are all the glimmers of the epistemologies of twilight, and I will explore those who occupy this zone, such as Tituba, a practitioner of Hoodoo accused of witchcraft in Salem during the Early Modern period, or the activist group, W.I.T.C.H. (Women's International Conspiracy from Hell), or the conjunction of witchcraft and consumerism, or the witch-goddess, Circe. Knots not only point to crossroads, or to messy, liminal zones (or events), but they also offer a chance to discuss the knotted topics that witchcraft brings to the fore, such as the tricky seam between truth, fiction, and conspiracy or the assumption of gender essentialism in goddess worship. In Chapter 1, I ended by discussing a simple gesture of the body: sitting. In this chapter, I will end on a similarly, seemingly simple gesture: winking. Not just anyone winking, but the wink of the witch / cyborg from Fritz Lang's 1927 film, *Metropolis*. The wink, being a familiar gesture turned unfamiliar, thereby invites the witches' familiar onto the scene, and asks — how is the method of bewitchment entangled with proclivities towards defamiliarity?

The theoretical framework of the present chapter, as in Chapter 1, is formulated around communication in an expansive sense. John Durham Peters laments how the word "communication" has become prone to platitudes: it has become the province of bureaucrats, the law, and therapists, in which it is seen as "good" or "bad." Peters points out that the Latin root *communicatio* originally referred less to mutual recognition as to connection via symbols, or a simulation of dialogue. "Bartleby, Emerson, and Kierkegaard were all failures at communication," he writes, "to their everlasting credit." He contends that "[a]t best, 'communication' is the name for those practices that compensate for the fact that we can never be each other."[370] Linking communication with the worlds of the dead, anthropologist Vinciane Despret writes that "what characterizes the narratives told by the dead is that they are never finished. On the contrary, these narratives are a protest against what is presented as finished."[371] In essence, this is a quality of communication in general. The way that conversations, for example, bleed out into further conversations, such as gossip or citational practices — continuing the thoughts of those who came before, carrying the communication into various capillaries and concentrations, even if this means a misunderstanding or a monstrous alchemy.

The methodology of bewitchment, unpacked via knots and crossroads, tricks and traps, not only invites us to look at the difference between supposed fraud and truth, but even more so the many grey areas between. Anthropologist Michael Taussig coins the phrase *trick as technique* in his 2006 essay "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism" in order to examine the trick through the lens of the sacred, and through the theatricality of the shaman, a method I will explore in detail in relation to the witch and practitioners of magic in general.[372] In their winkish, coruscating methods, the media of bewitchment are akin to the *trick as technique*, which we could also figure as quasi-objects, particularly in the way that philosopher Michel Serres categorizes them as "jokers" — like money, like a ball being passed from person to person, the quasi-object is more like a relationality than a fixed property, the passing of "I's" to form a "we."[373] Bewitchment places an emphasis on craft and relationalities; as feminist critic M. Jacqui Alexander writes, the crossroads is "a space of convergence and endless possibility … from which we dream the craft of a new compass."[374] The witch's craft is one of reorientation. Knots, witch bottles, spirits houses, and cauldrons are alchemical vessels that are involved in

transformation, scintillating the differences between inside and outside; not only passed between I's but containing them, creating them, in all their monstrosities.

The present chapter holds together Chapters 1 and 3 — the solid world of mirrors and the liquid world of fluids — to form a liminal space at once facing toward each and away from either, while producing a fold of its own, a divergence in the seam / seem of things, like a sleeve or a veil, an infrathin.[375] Epistemologies of the dead emphasize the life of communication by always pointing towards the absent / excessive, and by doing so relinquish a claim to reification. In this direction, I will move in the present chapter from tricks and traps to gestures that rewire the senses. But, as I see, I have already begun the chapter there — so I will form a middle in order to move around what has been said, and what says itself only through extension, movement, and repetition. As Despret writes: "To go into the middle … is to approach the issue in a way that does not lose sight of either the living or the dead; it is to learn to follow them or meet them through what binds them, what 'holds them together.' This is what narratives do: they protect the polyphony of various versions."[376] This is the work of binding as in knots, trapping as in bottles, embracing as in houses. I will begin with what holds and what holds together. We could call the tools of witches a presence or a present, but more accurately, they exist in the conditional, the *what if*, a tense conjugated on the fork in the path that is the fourth road, the one that seems at once the safest yet trickiest; hesitating towards it like a falter or a flicker is a move that defines the affordances of the medium.[377]

2. The Methodology of Bewitchment, Part 1: Traps

i. Matters of fact, matters of fiction: knots, topologies, and spells

To begin a discussion of bewitchment, I will begin with a discussion of knots. According to mathematician Peter R. Cromwell, knots are "part of 3-dimensional geometric topology" where topology is "the branch of geometry that deals with flexible and deformable spaces."[378] Topology itself comes from the Greek word *τόπος*, which has to do with locality and place; it denotes figures and surfaces that are unchanged by any kind of manipulation such as crumpling, twisting, bending.[379] A square, for example, is topologically equivalent to a circle because it can deform into a circle without breakage, but not, say, to a figure-8, which has two holes instead of one, and will break the square in the process of transformation.[380] As Cromwell elegantly puts it, "topology is the study of the way that spaces can sit inside one another."[381] It is about embedding, sitting, holding, and therefore has to do with continuity and connectivity. These words present an interdisciplinary method that is held at the core of verbs and gerunds that offer the best descriptive of techniques and methods. As Celia Lury writes in her introduction to *The Routledge Handbook of Interdisciplinary Methods*, gerunds are verbs that activate the present and, quoting anthropologist Alberto Corsín Jiménez, "function as 'traps' for the emergence of compossibility.'"[382] Different figures of topography can be seen as single-cell traps that reach out and deform one another's possibilities of expression without breaking them: spheres, cubes, disks, squares, vessels, and planes. Witch bottles, spells, spirit houses, cauldrons all fit into these structures, and are therefore all a type of knot.

Who uses knots? When we think of knots, we not only call to mind mathematicians, but also sailors, BDSM practitioners, and rock climbers, among other groups of knot users. The community that most brings us back to the particular knot I began the chapter with are sailors, whose knots connect witches to shores to wind. According to Clifford W. Ashley, who put

together *The Ashley Book of Knots*, "many knots owe both their origin and their names to the requirements of a ship at sea."[383] Ashley discusses knotting as a sailor's craft, including crochet and macramé, and alongside scrimshawing (carving whale bone) and tattooing.[384] Though he does not overtly write about the relationship between witches and sailors, there are similarities; in particular, Ashley notes that for 19th-century British and American sailors, "[c]omplicated knots were explained under a pledge of secrecy."[385] Ashley himself poured forty years into compiling his tome of knots and speaks of knot-crafting as a spatial experience. "To me," he reflects, "the simple act of tying a knot is an adventure in unlimited space. A bit of string affords a dimensional latitude that is unique among the entities."[386] Again, the spatial aspect of knots points towards topology and locates the knot as an environment capable of creating a space in which transformation comes into being, not unlike how Marshall McLuhan describes technologies as environments that provide an archetypal locale for other emergent technologies to pour out from.[387]

Before I move on to discuss the type of knot that I opened the chapter on, often called a witch's ladder, it is helpful to first talk about spells in general. In her *Element Encyclopedia of 5,000 Spells* (for which one needs two hands to peel off the bookshelf), Judika Illes defines spells as "a conscious formalized attempt to manipulate magic power and energy (*heka*) in order to achieve your own personal goal."[388] Illes notes that writing and spells, especially, are intimately connected: "[c]ollections of spells rank among Earth's earliest written documents. Not only are magical texts among the oldest surviving pieces of literature, but many scholars and anthropologists suggest that it was the need to record spells and divination results that stimulated the very birth of writing."[389] As a compendium, Illes's encyclopedia and the research that went into it is impressive and not unlike the amount of work that Ashley poured into his tome of knots — the spells are drawn from ancient to modern sources around the globe, some meant to be used and others included for historical interest.[390] In an episode of Pam Grossman's podcast *The Witch Wave*, Illes says, "people are, 'oh, 5,000, that's so many,' it's nothing.… Spells are like the stars in the sky, the grains of sand on the beach, you could have 10,000, 20,000, it's endless."[391] Spells themselves, we could say, point to an absence — one typically performs a love spell or a money spell if one perceives they are lacking in either. Spells are magical recipes that account for longing, yearning, wanting, even greed and coveting. They are artifacts that also give us a certain amount of information about different cultural beliefs, desires, and techniques as well. As Iles writes, "[r]ead between the lines of a spell and you will discover important details about a person's expectations of life and death, their daily problems, the materials that they cherish, their spiritual outlook."[392]

The medium and technique of tying knots or items such as beads or feathers, usually into string, rope, or cord, in order to create a spell, is sometimes called a witch's ladder.[393] In his 2010 article, "A Case Re-opened: The Science and Folklore of a 'Witch's Ladder,'" historian Chris Wingfield attempts to track down a specimen kept under glass at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England. The witch's ladder in question is a piece of string dotted with feathers (rather than knots) and hails from 19th-century Somerset, England. Wingfield questions the facticity of the placard beside the item labelling it as a "witch's ladder," and notes that to Bruno Latour this "simple act of display presents a 'matter of fact' for consumption by museum visitors," and effectively occludes other associations. Wingfield reframes this item, however, in Latourian terms as a "matter of concern" and goes about tracing it back through history.[394] How did this rope pierced through with feathers become labelled as a witch's ladder in the first place?

Like following up on witches' tools and lore in general, Wingfield soon finds himself wrapped up in a moray of dubious anthropology, fictional tales, secrecy, and even animals, with the subtitles in his article descending from "More Unreliable Evidence" to "A Further Uncertainty" to "Fact and Fiction." On the trail of his entertaining investigation, we find that the phrase "witch's ladder" was likely first mentioned in an 1887 article in *Folk-Lore* by medical doctor, Abraham Colles, who chanced upon many antique items in an old house in Somerset, England; among them "a 'rope with feathers woven into it'" that workmen in the house referred to as a "witch's ladder" (fig. 14).[395] Upon further investigation, local women, who were associated on some grounds with witchcraft, were asked about the item, and "claimed to be ignorant of its use," yet their information is doubted. "That they had a reputation for knowing about witchcraft," writes Wingfield, "suggests that it may have been in their interest to reveal a certain amount of knowledge about occult practices, but perhaps not too much."[396] Not just the sketchy historical veracity of witches' item, but the sketchy veracity of witches themselves, and how much they reveal and conceal, is always of concern in witches' tales. Wingfield skims over the unreliability of witches as narrators, a point that seems to be taken for granted, but I find it one of the most salient and interesting facts about witches' communication and what their unreliability tells us about communication and stories, about fact and fiction, to begin with. For the witch's ladder suggests a (mis)communicative craft.

Fig. 14 Witch's ladder, illustration in essay by Abraham Colles, 1887

Wingfield continues to follow other leads on the so-called witch's ladder, including a 1893 novel by Sabine Baring-Gould that mentions such an item, as well as research carried out by folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland via his source, Maddalena, that he apparently (and some say dubiously) consulted on matters of witchcraft, and in which he writes of the Italian *guirlanda* or witch's garland.[397] Wingfield even conjectures that the rope with feathers found by Colles was not a magical device at all, but rather an example of a sewel, a device of rope and feathers used by English hunters to glamourize deer in order to better entrap them.[398] In any case, the witch's ladder is a trap on several fronts: first, it is entrapped behind glass at the Pitt Rivers Museum and blackboxed behind the label "Witch's Ladder"; secondly, upon closer inspection, Wingfield is led down a maze of heresy and dead ends in his research, a trap of unravelled and unravelling facts and stories; thirdly, the witch's ladder, whatever it may have originally been, has ostensibly trapped us, the viewer of the item, not unlike how the sewel has trapped the deer, glamourized us by its odd, whimsical, and mysterious appearance. What is it *for*? What is its *use*? And why does it look so mundane and yet so odd?

These are some of the methods of bewitchment that I will explore further with other traps, such as the spirit house and the witch bottle. "The network of the 'Witches Ladder,'" writes Wingfield, "is continuously and possibly endlessly proliferating, suggesting that reopening the case has been akin to opening Pandora's box."[399] This brings us back to the transformative properties of the knot itself that is primarily a circle. Or is it the other way around? Cromwell notes that a circle is in fact a trivial knot; therefore, the property of transformation, of shapeshifting, is already held within the locale of the shape itself.[400] The type of knot used in a witch's ladder is a trefoil knot, simply made by joining two loose ends of string together. Theoretically, Cromwell notes (not unlike Wingfield's search for the witches' ladder)

that if one were to press a knot tightly enough, it would disappear into the string itself, changing the string by becoming a part of it.[401] Disappearing on the tail end of its own trace.

Whether or not the witch's ladder "exists" as a historical artifact with a particular set of characteristics and traits, it exists as a moving artifact that carries a number of growing associations, especially, as Wingfield notes, in its context as a revived object in contemporary neopagan witchcraft.[402] There are a number of contemporary spell books on knots; Sarah Bartlett's 2020 book *Knot Magic* is one of the most recent and includes a small section on the witch's ladder and its discovery in a house in Somerset, England, which, she adds (perhaps through the distortion of time and event and fiction that witches' tales travel on) was also "the venue of a witches' coven."[403] Bartlett writes that knot magic has a longer lineage than the house in Somerset, however, reaching back to ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and imbricated with weather and sea. "Egyptian fishermen," she notes, "knotted fish skins into a length of rope to promote favourable weather."[404]

Not only strings or ropes or withes, but witches' knots are also fastened with hair and thus lead us into the ephemeral realm of the body. In the case of weather spells in particular, Illes writes that during the Early Modern European witch hunts, women "were accused of binding winds into their hair; storms are thus the result of witches unbraiding their hair, thereby releasing knots," sinking ships.[405] A specimen of white plaited hair is kept at The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, England — according to the museum's original curator and witch, Cecil Williamson, hair is seen to have the ability "of jumping the fence of death."[406] Williamson, therefore, was surprised that 19th-century mediums seldom used human hair in their séances.[407] This is not the first time we have seen parts of the body used as tools and techniques of witchcraft: in Chapter 1, we saw that fingernails have been used as scrying mirrors for divination. And it is the extensions of the body that will also link us eventually to Chapter 3: Fluids — hair, like fingernails, grows in excess of the body and is continually siphoned off from it, cut, trimmed, kept near and dear or immediately discarded, bridging the precious / waste divide, much like bodily fluids. And as we have seen throughout, knots often connote traps. Cromwell writes: "[t]o make a study of knottedness, the knotted part of the string must be trapped."[408] The witch's ladder — a composition of knots tied to a string to lock in a spell — presents a binary code in its pattern of knot / space / knot / space, but the gestures of knotting and unknotting, especially in the particular witch's ladder described in the introduction to this chapter, contain an elemental force: the unpredictability, wilderness, and wildness of air. With this in mind, I will move from knots into (other) traps and topologies of bewitchment.

ii. Spirit houses, witch bottles

When one thinks of a trap, one probably does not think of a knot. But one may think of a vessel or a container of some sort. The traps I will discuss in this section fit that description: the spirit house and the witch bottle. According to historian and sociologist Lewis Mumford, the container is an under-theorized technology, and includes "hearths, pits, houses, pots, sacks, clothes, traps, bins, byres, baskets, bags, ditches, reservoirs, canals, cities."[409] Mumford questions the emphasis on manual tools in formulating theories of techniques and technologies and puts an emphasis on culture and art in addition to ritual, noting that "ritual exactitude in ceremony preceded mechanical exactitude in work" and that "the first rigorous division in labor came through specialization in ceremonial offices."[410] In looking at body techniques in general, and their applications, it is elucidative to take witchcraft into account.

In one aspect, both the house and the bottle are receptacles and topologies, much like the plane of the mirror. But unlike the mirror, traps are apotropaic media; that is, they avert, they counter, they are protective rather than receptive. Like the mirror, and indeed like knots, spirit houses and witch bottles play with the difference between the inside and the outside, similar to how a Klein bottle seemingly passes through itself.[411] Like the möbius strip, the Klein bottle is a topological space with no inside or outside — If one traces their finger along the lines of a Klein bottle, one will trace a continuous surface that contains both inner and outer contours (fig. 15). Contrary to the mirror, however, spirit houses and witch bottles are meant to draw a boundary line rather than open a portal.

Fig. 15 Klein bottle, Israel Medina 3D Modeller, 2018

Traps, furthermore, have to do with craft. The "craft" part of witchcraft is important in part because it demarcates a methodology of bewitchment from that of enchantment. Jane Bennett, a prominent theorist within new materialism, presents a theory of re-enchantment, which is, in part, a response to early twentieth-century sociologist Max Weber's thesis of *Entzauberung* or disenchantment, an affect that Weber argued takes place in a secularized, modernized Western world.[412] In her 2001 book, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, Bennett suggests enchantment as a mood, affect, or sense that has the power not only to counter the narrative of disenchantment, but to offer a mode of enacting what Bennett refers to as an "ethical generosity."[413] This strategy, as Bennett lays out, involves "giving a greater expression to the sense of play [as well as] to hone sensory receptivity to the marvelous specificity of things. Yet another way to enhance the enchantment effect is to resist the story of the disenchantment of modernity."[414] Her theory of enchantment, then, runs counter to a theory of disenchantment. According to Max Weber, disenchantment is caused, in large part, by "intellectualist rationalization, created by science and by scientifically oriented technology." The effect of living within the so-called modern world of science means, to Weber:

> … that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means.[415]

Weber goes on to question the "progress" (a word he hovers within quotation marks) that the process of disenchantment leans towards, and he briefly opens up a reflection on death, following his above reflections on spirits. For "civilized man, death has no meaning," writes Weber. "It has none because the individual life of civilized man, placed into an infinite 'progress,' according to its own imminent meaning should never come to an end; for there is always a further step ahead of one who stands in the march of progress." As the price to pay for this short-sightedness, "[h]e catches only the most minute part of what the life of the spirit brings forth ever anew, and what he seizes is always something provisional."[416] In other words, the one who leans towards infinite progress, infinite development ("civilized man"), will constantly be elsewhere, not capturing the depth of the moment, but reaching towards an always at-large futurity, an interminable and deferred point in time, a life-drive that perhaps has nothing to do with life and everything to do with linear accumulation. This is a force that communication with

the dead resists by opening the seam of the present. In the gesture of reaching backwards towards those who have passed, a different form of temporality and spatiality is unlatched.

Bennett, ultimately, tells her "alter-tale" of enchantment, as she puts it, because, very simply, "it is too hard to love a disenchanted world." Bennett wishes, like Friedrich Nietzsche, to suggest an ethics of joy over an ethics of goodness, one that inspires her to reach towards the galvanizing affect that enchantment could have on its adherents, with a result, perhaps, of loving the world and each other a little bit more.[417] A contemporary exploration of the techniques and tools of witchcraft could fit well into the mode of enchantment and into Bennett's project in general. However, the tools and techniques of witches, as I have shown, are involved in trickery and obfuscation, in showing us the utter defamiliarity of our tools and techniques of communication in general and, therefore, inciting participation, co-creation, and even suspension over wonder or awe. As M. Jacqui Alexander writes, the crossroads is a place where "judicious vigilance" must be exercised.[418] An obligation towards awe within a method of (re-)enchantment might leave us, as adherents to it theories, bereft of the fury or impetus (or even defamiliarity) needed to question an otherwise disenchanted world. A witch's tools, in contrast, such as the scrying mirror or the witch's ladder, will always leave more questions than answers, more suspense than awe.

Feminist media theorist Sarah Kember expresses resistance towards the obligation of enchantment in her book *iMedia*, and she does so in conjunction with the material of glass. For Kember, Bennett's obligation towards enchantment comes off as foundationalist in tone — where "matter" replaces nature / culture to become "the new real"[419] or "*i*mperceptible things-in-themselves."[420] This is tied to Kember's distrust of the tendency of academics in general to embrace and be complicit with objects and materials or to enter into a critique that tends towards scientism (what she sees as "physics envy") and masculism, which she finds in the work of object-oriented ontologists Graham Harman and Ian Bogost, as well as the fetishization of objects that would seek to align metaphysics and markets.[421] To Kember, the answer lies in boundary work and re-instrumentalization, without which politics tend to default to the mainstream, "to what *is*"[422] as well as to an "*i*-less story of *i*media."[423] Properties of translucency, attributed to glass, are problematic to Kember. Objects such as the black mirror that I discussed in the last chapter are subversive of translucency and reach towards an altogether different affect; equally opaque are the media of traps. Or at least, equally as tricky.

For Kember, boundary work involves an engagement with potential and *potentia* as well as a post-dialectical feminism that entails "an attention to the movements between, or toward, or away from, poles."[424] This is knot work. One way Kember works in this seam is through her creative interludes called "A Day in the Life of Janet Smart" that appear throughout her book. Here, Kember creates a fictional character rife with contradiction. She writes:

> Janet's day regulates her in time while extending her as time, as life, as her desire to become. By living through it, to the extent that she lives through it, she becomes the agent of her own reconstitution as a political subject, a reconstitution that occurs in the tension between *homo oeconomicus* and its constitutive outside. As my own sf figure, Janet enacts an irony in the depressive, non-paranoid sense of holding contradictory things together — because both are necessary and true. She is at once a feminized neoliberal subject and its feminist, queer alternative. She is a figure of irony and parody understood here as unstable antagonisms, as openings to the political — more or less. Janet is my key to *i*media otherwise."[425]

In many ways, Janet is a crosswords figure, one who, like the witch, exists both in the neoliberal market and as a parody of it. This sense of contradiction and tension exists in the word "bewitchment," and we can trace this through etymology. In German, the antonym of *Entzauberung* (disenchantment), which Max Weber used to describe the condition of the so-called modern world, is *Verzauberung*, which typically translates as "enchantment." However, there is another translation of *Verzauberung*: "bewitchment." Bewitchment introduces not so much an alternative as a tweak to enchantment, while opening a way in which we can look at the media of the witch. For I am cautious, like Kember, of narratives that ask us to (re)-enchant — yet, I also see the value in what Bennett is putting forward when she expresses that the problem with the "disenchantment tale" is that it "figures nonhuman nature as more or less inert 'matter'; it construes the modern West as a radical break from other cultures; and it depicts the modern self as predisposed toward rationalism, skepticism, and the problem of meaninglessness."[426]

What are the differences between enchantment and bewitchment? To begin with, the words are quite similar: enchantment, too, is a kind of trap, it holds us in fascination. To bewitch and to enchant both have a connotation of spells, magic, and sorcery. If we translate the verb "to enchant" into German, we come up with *verzaubern* as well as *begeistern* (to fascinate, inspire, delight, and enthral) and *entzücke* (to beguile, enrapture, ravish). Looking at the verb "to bewitch," we also find *verzaubern*, but from there the other translations are pricklier, such as *verhexen* (to jinx, bedevil, cast a spell on), *berziren* (to sweet talk), and *betören* (to fascinate, infatuate, befool).[427] Bewitchment carries a more malevolent note than enchantment; like a witch caught in the bottle, as I shall further explore, it asks us to be on guard. Of all English definitions of "bewitchment," I find the one by Merriam-Webster to be the most useful: "bewitchment" as a noun has three axes or modes of operation — it is an act or power (of bewitching); it is a spell (that bewitches); it is a state (of being bewitched).[428] An act, a spell, a state. A craft. Bewitchment brings us to spatialities and temporalities that exist on (at least) two planes at once, like a glass bottle that stands in a museum and houses a world of spirits. With this, it is helpful to continue discussing bewitchment through the specific witch houses and witch bottles I have been alluding to.

In 2016, Strange Attractor Press, a small UK publisher of what they term "unpopular culture," put out a book on witch's tools and reliquaries held at the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, North Cornwall. The book, *Of Shadows* (2016), is prefaced by historian Ronald Hutton, who I have amply referenced throughout, and includes darkly lit photographs of talismans, tools, objects — media of the witch — by photographer Sara Hannant. I have already gestured to and cited from this book in discussions of the witch's black mirror in Chapter 1 and the witch's ladder above. The objects within the museum (and the book) are some of the most salient items for a media history of contemporary Western witchcraft, and most of the items were collected by the now deceased witch and curator, Cecil Williamson. In *The Triumph of the Moon*, Hutton notes that Williamson began his first museum endeavour in 1951 on the Isle of Man, just after the repeal of the Witchcraft and Vagrancy Acts in June of that year. The house was eventually taken over by Gardner for use as his personal home, and in 1960 Williamson opened up what is now the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic at its present location in Boscastle.[429] The museum, in the sentiments of Williamson, is "a spider web, which drew to itself magical lore."[430] A spider's web is both a trap and a method of connection; an extension of the sensorium in the way that a witch's tools are extensions of the witch's body. Indeed, Williamson himself was a spinner of webs and connected two of the major figures within Wicca, Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente, who I spoke of in Chapter 1.[431] Cecil Williamson does not

hold the infamy or fame that Gardner or Valiente do, but he is equally if not more important to a media history of witchcraft, for we come to many of the items I am discussing in the present dissertation in Cecil Williamson's self-proclaimed spider web, via the photographs and descriptions found in *Of Shadows*.

A spirit house is a bottle, but more particularly it is an inner corridor, a maze (fig. 16). The particular spirit house portrayed in *Of Shadows* measures no more than 300 x 120 x 120 mm, but it contains a small universe. In the words of Cecil Williamson, it is made up of "paper and wood flowers, a spiral staircase construction, frames wrapped with coloured thread and with hanging rods, bells and beads etc."[432] A spirit house does not need to be quite so elaborate, however; as the entry goes on to tell us, spirit houses can simply be made with a glass bottle and cut up pieces of thread. The point, according to occultist Levanah Morgan, who has donated many spirit houses to the museum, is simply to "confuse the spirits so they won't be able to get past the bottle." Or, in the words of Cecil Williamson, to keep the spirits "amused indefinitely."[433] These spirits are the type that you would not want around; that you may want to trap. What is interesting is how this is done: in this case, via diversion.

Fig. 16 Spirit (in a) house, 300 x 120 x 120 mm, Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Boscastle, UK, undated. Photo by Sara Hannant

The next trap, the witch bottle, was featured as part of the Ashmolean Museum's *Spellbound* exhibition.[434] It is also a vessel, but this time it is not a spirit trapped inside, but rather a witch, sometime around 1850. The object resembles a small perfume bottle and is sealed. Unlike the spirit house, this bottle is not translucent, but reflective — we can surmise, based on the contents of other witch bottles, that this one could be filled with urine and hair and sharp objects, and was to be placed in a threshold space of a house.[435] This particular bottle, said to hail from Cornwall, and on loan to the Ashmolean from the Pitt Rivers Museum, also in Oxford, is comprised of glass, silver, cork and wax, and measures 110 cm (fig. 17). The woman who donated the bottle to the Pitt Rivers Museum is quoted as saying (recorded verbatim for extra effect on the placard), "They do say there be a witch in it and if you let un out there it be a pock o'trouble."[436] The witch bottle presents a series of questions: first of all, it is not at all certain who the witch in the bottle is. Secondly, how was she trapped there and why? Who would wish to do such a thing? For all we know, this witch trapped herself, or she was trapped by another witch (i.e. by a Cunning-Man or Cunning-Woman employed to do so), or perhaps by the bottle itself. Furthermore, we are not savvy to the affordances of this bottle. What we do know is that it is more than it appears to be; specifically, it exceeds its containment at the same time that it conceals a force larger than itself. This gesture of leaking past containment while at the same time being ultra-bounded is a theme that reoccurs in the spheres of bewitchment, and at the knotted space of the crossroads where nothing is translucent, nothing is exactly how it seems.

Fig. 17 Witch (in a) bottle, 110 mm long, East Sussex, UK, 19th century

iii. A diversion into tricks: the trappings of the stage and the tricks of the shaman

These two traps, the spirit house and the witch bottle, among the other questions they bring up, gesture towards the vernacular of a spider's web. In the case of the spirit house, the spirit is entertained to the point where it becomes unavailable for haunting, it is locked into a puzzle from which it will never emerge. This has resonances with another form of magic, namely, sleight-of-hand magic, the kind where stage magicians unfurl themselves from endless chains, underwater traps, locked boxes. The difference between sleight-of-hand magic and the type of magic that witches perform is often separated by a single letter, a *k*: magic versus magick, as I delineated in the Introduction, where "magick" is used at times by practitioners to separate their techniques from "magic" performed by stage magicians.[437] It is important in looking at the nuances of the trap to examine these small differences and deepen our understanding of the methodology of bewitchment. For witches, magicians, and stage magicians alike all work at the centre of a knot, a crossroads, a space neither day nor night, but twilight.

The practitioners of stage magic and ceremonial magic have of course overlapped, significantly in the work of Franz Bardon, a Czech occultist who was born into mysticism on his father's side and had a stint as a stage magician in the 1920s and 30s. In his autobiography, Bardon notes that he was imprisoned for three and a half years in a concentration camp on the basis that he refused to contribute his magical knowledge to Nazism.[438] His practices are important to formalized witchcraft: Alexandrian Wicca, founded by Alex and Maxine Sanders in the 1960s, incorporates a lot of ceremonial magic into its rituals, including, writes Ronald Hutton, "whole passages" from Bardon's 1956 work, *Initiation into Hermetics*.[439] Wiccan Priestess Ipsita Roy Chakraverti also notes the importance of stage magic, beginning her chapter titled "The Tools of a Witch — and a Few Secrets" by writing: "[c]onjuring, sleight of hand, ritual, magical objects, flowing robes, ambience — these were all tools of the trade, at one time."[440] However, one cannot deny the large gaps between practitioners of stage magic and magic(k); particularly the gap created by charges of "fraud" levelled against witches, Spiritualists, and other magic(k) practitioners that stage magicians have been invulnerable to, and even engaged in, if one considers how magician Harry Houdini actively spent time debunking Spiritualist mediums.[441] Practitioners of magic(k) are largely more vulnerable to oppression within a system of Western positivism and empiricism, concepts that rely on proof and measurement in order to validate and deem worthy. In short, the world of so-called civilized man, pitted against the world of those who, as Weber wrote (quoted above), *implore the spirits, as did the savage*.

The craft of witches includes the craft of stage magicians; additionally, it includes the craft of shamans, as I described further in the Introduction, which is also worth making a connection to, especially in the ways that both shamans and witches imbricate the worlds of the living with that of the dead. In his essay, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," anthropologist Michael Taussig positions the trick as a method that is embedded into magical practice, taking as his archive early anthropological work into shamanism and witchcraft, particularly by Franz Boas and E. E. Evans-Pritchard. What Taussig draws out to the surface in this work is an endless play between the concealed and the revealed within magic itself, not only between the anthropologist and their so-called subjects, but also between the practitioner of magic and their own subjects, the ones they are called upon to heal, as well as the spirits themselves who mediate between the healer and the healing. The playful exchange between belief, disbelief, performance, and technique, as well as accusations of fraudulence and its consequences are all part of what

Taussig calls, throughout his essay, the nervous system of magic. Thus, Taussig notes that what we call "fraud" is "somehow not fraudulent at all but something true and even efficacious, what I keep referring to as the *trick as technique*."[442] The theatre of magic is part of how magic itself takes place to Taussig, where "*the skilled revelation of skilled concealment*" is the very efficacy of magic, "proven," perhaps, by the fact that the exposure of the so-called tricks that magic involves do not cease the belief and curiosity in magic, but rather seem to fuel it. The act of exposure is a rite of magic that only seeks to strengthen it.[443] Robert Cochrane, founder of the witchcraft tradition known as Cochrane's Craft in 1960s England, stated the importance of trickery in witchcraft by writing that "[m]agic is the art of creating an illusion, which eventually becomes reality." He continues, quoting occultist Evan John Jones, "'No one, but no one holds any great secret, only the workings and rites of their particular group or coven.'"[444] Workings and rites versus secrets. The difference between the two is as nuanced as between enchantment and bewitchment.

Ultimately, for Taussig, it is the trick that produces the medicine within the magic. Quoting anthropologist Stanley Walens, Taussig writes, "the 'critical part of the cure is the fluidity, skill, and physical perfection with which the shaman performs his tricks, for it is the motions of the tricks (reinforced by their exact duplication by the spirits) that effect the cure.' … I call it sheer becoming in which being and nonbeing are transformed into the beingness of transforming forms…. magic of *contagion* and not of *likeness*."[445] To be clear, Taussig is not saying, in his essay, that what the shaman is doing is not real, is not valid; what he is saying is that there is a misunderstanding of what the trick is to begin with; that in order to widen our imaginations, we need to let go of the fact that we are going to catch the magical practitioner out, stop them in their tracks, reveal them as frauds, but rather that the so-called trick, which the one exposing the magical practitioner is trying so hard to find, in fact is so entrenched within the system of magic that it cannot see itself trying to see. As Taussig writes, "magic begs for and at the same time resists explanation most when appearing to be explained."[446] To arrive at a methodology of bewitchment is constantly to untangle, to unknot, oneself from the conditioned ways of perceiving, of weighing in, of measuring, and then to begin again, by fastening another knot.

This has everything to do with traps — particularly those of colonial knowledge, part of the disenchantment tale, perhaps, that Bennett rightfully bemoans when she writes that disenchantment *construes the modern West as a radical break from other cultures*. Taussig notes the colonial and anthropological construction of the term *shaman* in the 17th and 18th centuries by Europeans exploring Siberia. "From its inception, the naming and presentation of the figure of the shaman by anthropologists was profoundly linked to trickery," writes Taussig, "by means of startling revelations about ventriloquism, imitations of animal spirit voices, curtained chambers, mysterious disappearances and reappearances" as well as "sex changes by men and women." In short, transgressions — crossings — between the accepted and unaccepted. "The magic at stake here," writes Taussig, "first and foremost concerns the way in which the colonial presence provides yet another figure to be caught in the legerdemain of revelation and concealment."[447] Perhaps the greatest trick of all is that it is the system that "reveals" "fraud" that is itself rigged — disenchantment, rather than enchantment, as legerdemain.

The tricks of the shaman that Taussig describes above are also referred to by filmmaker, writer, Tarot reader, and artist Alejandro Jodorowsky as the "sacred trap." In his book *Psychomagic*, Jodorowsky carries the reader through his own journey of crafting a mode of healing that he calls "pyschomagic," wherein the participant being healed undergoes a

transformative ritual or action that abruptly re-pivots them towards a new way of being or seeing; in short, a cure.[448] Jodorowsky himself was inspired by the theatre, by poetry, by dreams, and, above all, by witches, particularly one witch who Jodorowsky studied with in Mexico city in the 1970s called Pachita, who performed operations on clients that were literally that: operations. Pachita, who worked with a spirit she called *hermanito* (little brother), had her clients lay out on a table in a darkened room, then ostensibly operated on them using medical instruments, even appearing to cut out the patient's organs with a large knife, all the while leaving them completely intact upon completion and, in many cases, completely cured of what ailed them when they arrived at Pachita's doorstep.[449] Concerning the "sacred trap," and what he alternatively refers to as the "sacred trickster," Jodorowsky writes:

> For the extraordinary to occur, it is necessary for the sick to firmly believe in the possibility of a cure and to accept the existence of miracles. To be successful, the healer is forced to employ tricks during the first meetings, which convince her clients that material reality obeys that of the spirit. Once the sacred trap tricks the person seeking consultation, he experiences an interior transformation that permits him to capture the world by way of the intuition rather than by reason. This is the only way that a true miracle can take place.[450]

Rather than viewing the trap as suspicious, Jodorowsky sees it as miraculous, sacred: for once inside its tentacles, one must transform to emerge. And if transformation is what is needed or sought, the trap will force its completion. It is a transformation, however, that has to do with intuition, tricks, and will rather than reason, the kind it takes to untie the wind from a knot.

iv. Hollows, circles, surfaces

What happens when we look again at the trap from the perspective of bewitchment, of being both within and without the trap itself? Of never quite being extricated from it? Of incorporating the trick and the trap into a wider theory of what it means to craft, to witch, to bewitch? Coming back to the witch trapped in the bottle, we can look anew at this item after Taussig's examination. For all we know, it may be the viewer of the bottle herself who is reflected on the surface who is the witch trapped in the bottle. Perhaps, unknowingly to the Ashmolean Museum, which has recklessly exhibited this tricky artifact, the bottle itself is a spell made to bewitch those who look upon it. In this case, the witch who is presumed to be on the inside of the bottle is in fact on the surface; the reflection is the trap.[451] This is topological, like the möbius strip, like the Klein bottle. Not the spirit, not the witch, but that the which has become invisible by its inflection into lore and myth. "Enlightenment disenchants the world," writes Taussig, "such that for the most of us spirits are to be explained rather than providing the explanation."[452]

I am interested in traps not because I want to make sure I avoid them or know how to find my way out of them, but because I think the trap, in the above examples, offers a methodology that is at once temporal and spatial, and one that will allow us to see, perhaps, from the perspective of the spirit in the house, of the witch in the bottle. The methodology of bewitchment via traps extends beyond the bottle and the house, however, and we could include magic circles that witches cast around themselves before beginning a ritual inside the media of traps. Artist James Bridle riffed on the trap quality of the magic circle in his photograph, *Autonomous Trap 001* (2017), which shows a salt circle composed of no-entry glyphs that has confused a self-driving car into complete stasis (fig. 18).[453] There are a lot of parallels we could make between Bridle's trapped car and the spirit trapped in the bottle, but I am most interested, for the purpose

of this chapter, in how the simple glass bottle and the humble chalk circle have managed to contain and trap — to bewitch — the ostensibly more complicated entities of both autonomous ghost and autonomous car.

In this dissertation in general, I am looking at the materialities and techniques of witchcraft as practices that complicate distinctions between the inside and the outside. Particularly, as I have laid out in the Introduction, mirrors, knots, and fluids, all of which offer their own traps, containments, and leakages, and all of which speak on acts of communication that are especially opaque. Mirrors, as I wrote about in Chapter 1, are not only optically interesting, but also geographically — they are a space in themselves, one from which other entities may issue. Vessels, such as spirit houses and witch bottles, are a spider-like extension of this media, this topology, and they tell us, among other things, that where we are looking for sense, we are looking in all the wrong places, and this is a method. As the stage magician locks himself in an elaborate trap in order to show the audience that he can emerge, the methodology of the witch bottle or spirit house, or even the above salt circle, has no such revealing moment: the witch and the spirit (and the self-driving car) remain in their respective traps, causing us to ask what kind of space the trap is, and, by extension, what kind of entity or body is trapped there? And further, what is it that they have to convey, to communicate from the vantagepoint of bewitchment, of bewitched? As M. Jacqui Alexander writes, "I say that the body is only one of the media for the housing of Spirit because there is no single place where this knowledge resides."[454] In the next section, I will turn to those who occupy the tricky positionalities that witches inhabit before moving on more specifically from traps to tricks in order to examine in more detail not only the space where knowledge (un)resides — but also where it falters, unknots, unravels, and ultimately alchemizes, producing its own bewildering labyrinths and smokescreens.

Fig. 18 James, Bridle, *Autonomous Trap 001*, performance of a salt circle trap, Mount Parnassus, March 14, 2017

3. Those Who Occupy the Crossroads, Part 1

i. Villains, icons, and conspiracies

To discuss a theory of bewitchment via the media of witches is always only going halfway: the tools and techniques associated with them create the "witch" and the witch enforces and recreates the tools and techniques of witchcraft. Thus, before moving back into a discussion of witches' media, I will use this section to speak on particular types of witches who occupy a crossroads-like positionality. As such, I will invite the accused witches of the Early Modern witch trials to stand alongside contemporary accused witches across the world; and conspiracy theorists, such as the 1968 group W.I.T.C.H. to comingle with the trend of crystal-sporting consumerist witches, who, as Lou Cornum writes, "like to talk about healing stones a lot;"[455] I will invite those who have the word "witch" thrown upon them to join with those who choose the word "witch" as a marker of identity. Both have to do with roots and with who one chooses to

walk with or is made to align with. Those who are called witches always exist in a knotted place. The witch, as a scintillating and multivalent figure, aligns with other hybridities, liminalities, and corruptions — because of this, the witch is somewhat slippery to pin down within any parenthesis of political fidelity. On the one hand, witches align with feminist, anti-capitalist movements; on the other side of the spectrum, witches participate in upsurgences of conspiracy theories and tendencies towards nationalism. This is part of the tension of the knot. To choose not to address it would be counter constructive within the methodologies of bewitchment, of tricks and traps.

To begin with, the witch is and has historically been a feminist icon and deploys her renowned villainy as a subversive and cheeky positionality against patriarchal, capitalist, and racist ideologies. W.I.T.C.H is a key example of this particular face of the witch: purportedly founded on Halloween of 1968, members of W.I.T.C.H, an acronym for Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell, dressed in black pointy hats and cloaks to hex wall street and "spook" bridal fairs, among other actions of "guerilla theatre."[456] The inheritors of this movement crop up today at protests and on social media in support of social justice movements, for example against white supremacy (fig. 19).[457] Starhawk, who I keep coming back to, is a politically engaged, self-defined witch, and she is a prime example of the witch as a feminist and political figure. Both a spiritual practitioner and an activist, Starhawk rallied against the building of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in 1981 at the same time that she was founding her own witchcraft tradition, Reclaiming. To do so, she called up a particular chosen kin, one that many neopagan witches thereafter have embraced: the hunted and persecuted so-called witches of the European witch trials that stretched roughly between 1580 and 1630, what Starhawk labels as the "burning times."[458]

Fig. 19 Witches protest against white supremacy, Boston, MA, 2017

Today, witches are still being hunted around the world, including parts of South Africa, Fiji, Brazil, India, and Mozambique. It was only in 2017 that the United Nations put together a working group on Witchcraft and Human Right that addresses specific complaints of how accusations of witchcraft target, especially, "[w]omen, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities," as well as persons with albinism.[459] It is poignant and meaningful to call upon the chosen ancestors of the hunted and persecuted witches of Early Modern Europe, and it is critical, by extension, to call attention to the living witches who are still being hunted — where the designation "witch" is a charged, non-empowered, and even deadly locution. Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of Black Lives Matter and a practitioner of Ifa, has been accused of witchcraft by the Christian right.[460] In response, she says, "[t]hey are claiming that we [BLM organizers] practice witchcraft and that we're aligning ourselves with satanic worship. So my next work is going to be on the persecution of witches and women who have been labeled as witches. There are still whole communities in Western Africa where women are banished to 'witch camps.' I'm doing a deep dive into that."[461] This, too, is the work of undoing knots. It is work that witches such as Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, as mentioned in the Introduction, and activist-scholar Silvia Federici, undertake in meaningful and risky ways.[462]

Witches, however, are not always, or even consistently, on the side of the good work. Before putting together some of the most famous liturgy known to Wicca, and to contemporary neopagan witchcraft in general, Doreen Valiente was pro-choice and anti-homophobic, all of which makes it somewhat jarring that Valiente had also joined the UK's ultra-right National Front in 1973. Risa Dickens and Amy Torok try to grapple with this fact in their chapter dedicated to Valiente in their book, *Missing Witches*:

> When we reach ambiguous spaces … let's not neglect to face the ugly stuff. We can't gloss over the dangers in our midst with love and light. A philosophy of reverence for land and ancestors runs the risk of tipping toward racist nationalism on the one hand — "our people and traditions are the pure and good" — and of consuming and commodifying Indigenous cultures on the other — "nature-based spirituality is so widespread, it's OK if we cut and paste it." Both rely on a lie.[463]

Being both an icon and a villain, the witch, again, exists in a space of tension, which is also a space that casts its shadows. The witch is fanged and villainous, from multiple angles.

There is no better place to look at the literal trickiness of witches than from the perspective of the conspiracy. Just as witches and their modes and modalities of craft and ritual open up a way to discuss and widen our conceptions of truth and fraud, they are also tightly linked to the trope of the conspiracy, as the Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell points to. This link brings into relief the spectre of fake news and groups such as QAnon. According to Kevin Roose writing for *The New York Times*, "QAnon is the umbrella term for a set of internet conspiracy theories that allege, falsely, that the world is run by a cabal of Satan-worshiping pedophiles."[464] QAnon, which began with a post on 4chan in 2017, and has largely migrated to 8kun, believes that former US president Donald J. Trump was involved in breaking up this alleged cabal, and has since attached to other conspiracy theories, while spreading misinformation about Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter, among others.[465] The methodology of bewitchment is a type of conspiracy theory, or at least conspiratorial methodology, yet it differs from other conspiracy theories in that it does not believe it is on the right side of truth, but perhaps the left.

One of the (many uninteresting) troubles with the conspiracy theorists, QAnon, for example, is that they are too earnest, too convinced. Bewitchment, on the other hand, always carries the wink — like the members of W.I.T.C.H. wearing the stereotypical clothing of the Halloween witch, like Haydée, a Santería *cuarandera* doing the same,[466] like Gerald Gardner when, explaining the difference between deosil (clockwise) and widdershins (counterclockwise) to a group of fledgling witches, said, no doubt with a twinkle in his eye, "the left is never right."[467] When Isabelle Stengers remarks that a witch would laugh if someone were to tell her that her goddess was a fiction, she is picking up on the technique of bewitchment.[468] And perhaps it has to do with the very small space (as small as the space between bewitchment and enchantment) that tells us that no one is in on the big secret and that therefore the secret, like the spirit trapped in the spirit house, like the self-driving car confused by a chalk circle into stasis, is perhaps itself involved in the craft of endless diversion — but from what? It is the twinkle in the eye that is the glitch in the system that tells us the system has gone rogue, or further, it always was rogue (/ rigged) — it is the tripwire between the registers of knowledge and non-knowledge that say we've hit on something livelier than either. This is where containment ends, and where one must stand at the crossroads, choose a way, and go.

iii. The wicked witch of the marketplace

So far, I have introduced a methodology of bewitchment and I have shown how witches, in their various guises, are often tricky figures who exist at a crossroads, overturn traditional values, and stand not just on both sides of the political coin, but in all the glimmers that coin conjures up as it shifts through different spaces and times. In their article "White Magic" in *The New Inquiry*, writer Lou Cornum notes that the contemporary rise in witchcraft in North America, particularly among affluent white women, has all but lost its political roots and become subsumed in capitalism and heteronormativity:

> The current trend in witch infatuation marks an alliance foreclosed. In the early days of America, when accusations of witchcraft were leveled at Indians, Black people, and settlers who strayed from the strict disciplining needed to create a cohesive sovereignty of one dominant nation, it was because witches were a threat. The representations of witches that dominate contemporary American cultural consciousness — the "Surprise, Bitch" meme from *American Horror Story*, Stevie Nicks, people who talk about healing stones a lot — betray the role witches could have played in undoing the nation.[469]

Cornum laments this trend especially for the power that the word "witch" once carried to undo nations, a huge trick indeed. "Along with witch, savage, and slut, the accusatory title of heathen is also hurled throughout colonial times at those who stand in the way of a cohesive nation," writes Cornum. The word "heathen" that Cornum connects us back to how Max Weber pitted the "civilized man" against the "savage" throughout his essay, quoted above.[470] Weber is, of course, a product of his times, but it bares pausing on in the context of the witch. The "civilized man" lives in so-called modern times, according to Weber; almost as if the civilized man has a different temporality than those who may fall outside of this category; a point that Bennett remarks on and riles against. We can easily see Weber's phrase cut the figure of the educated, European male. On the other side to him, Weber uses the example of the "American Indian" or "Hottentot" to qualify the marker of the savage.[471] "Witches steal babies," writes Cornum, "they eat babies, and they cover themselves in babies' blood. Relatedly, Indigenous peoples were figured as cannibals throughout the contact and colonial period throughout the Americas." Yet, this very heathenness has dropped out of contemporary witchcraft, notes Cornum; rather, "white witches" consume crystals from Urban Outfitters and Forever 21 to "express their pagan predilections for living ever so briefly outside time." This touches on the construction of nostalgia or authenticity that I noted in the Introduction, which so often leads to appropriative ends.

Cornum argues that under late capitalism, the "witch" becomes less a subversive, dangerous figuration, and more a fashionable and flattened space of commodification and appropriation. It is interesting, however, that in this figuration, the witch still retains a kind of villainy — the social media witch, a self-made commodity, is despicable to a wide range of political sensibilities, including both the left and the right. Therefore, on the one hand, the subjectivity of the "white witch" is constructed and contained within a system that has, historically, been hostile to witches or heathens or savages, which makes for a tricky positionality. On the other hand, the modes and methods of this particular type of consumerism are causing damage to the earth in very concrete ways, an especially ironic twist given that the tools and instruments of witchcraft are often meant to connect with the earth, the elements, and to immanence, as Starhawk lays out in *Dreaming the Dark*. As she writes, "another form of consciousness is possible …. I call this immanence — the awareness of the world and everything

in it as alive, dynamic, interdependent, interacting, and infused with moving energies: a living being, a weaving dance."[472]

Eva Wiseman, writing for *The Guardian*, notes that crystals have become a part of the multibillion-dollar wellness industry, causing human rights violations and environmental impact, particularly in Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of Congo where they are mined. First, crystals are a non-renewable resource, which presents a sustainability issue; second, since there is little to no regulation in the crystal industry, leading to massive worker exploitation including safety risks, child labour, and criminally low pay. Wiseman writes: "while it's claimed crystals help people harness the energy of the earth, the more they are mined, the more that earth is suffering."[473] What is highly problematic about consumerist witchcraft or "white magic," according to Cornum, is that its practices are entirely de-politicized, watered down, and removed from any positionality of risk. As they write, "[t]hese colonial logics that permit ongoing dispossession and death point to one of the failures of white witches: While they might hex Trump, they do not in any meaningful way extend their lifestyle to stand with those still marked by the history of the heathen."[474] As we have seen, the witch is by no means loyal to a particular political spectrum: she is always a shapeshifter and to extreme degrees, and in directions, sometimes, we'd rather not see her go. In this direction, the witch is always tied up with our desires — of who the witch is, who the witch is not, and what exactly is meant by the term. What links the mining of crystals to the "white witch" that Cornum draws up is extractivism — extraction from the earth, extraction from other cultures, and the blindness towards an obligation to either. This is villainous indeed — and not even in a subversive way.

In Cornum's eyes, the specific heathenness of the Early Modern European witch was tied not only to her ability to undo nations, but also to her wayward sexuality, which was significantly tamed in the 1990s by a slew of witch-themed films that stressed the witch as one who desired, in the end, heterosexual love.[475] This is important to address, for sex and sexuality are always simmering under the surface of the designation "witch" or "witchcraft," if not explicitly bubbling upon it. To continue unpacking these various crossroads in greater length, I will move back into the media of bewitchment in terms of containment and topology — and to cauldrons specifically.

4. The Methodology of Bewitchment, Part 2: Tricks

i. Turning tricks: Circe and the cauldron

What is the difference between a trick and a trap? We could look at this from the perspective of language. One sets a trap like setting a table or a stage; one plays a trick like playing a character or a hand. A hunter entraps, a sex worker turns tricks. Turning, playing, entrapping, setting, all bring us back to verbs associated with *wic* or *wik*, the Teutonic root of *witch*, meaning to bend, to twist — the arsenal of the weaver.[476] Taussig notes that "magical feats and tricks" are related both to theatre and to science, to the craft and construction of fraud and truth; tricks reveal a "corrosive power creeping along the otherwise imperceptible fault lines in the sturdy structure of language and thought." Finally, tricks point towards "the illusion of a world without trickery — the most problematic trick of all."[477]

As communicative devices, the spirit house and the witch bottle ward off, draw a boundary, like the chalk circle trapping the autonomous car. The cauldron, which I will speak of in the present section, does not draw such hard lines; it can be used to communicate with the

dead and other entities, like the mirror, but if it opens up any kind of portal it is one that moves like smoke or passes like touch. Cauldrons point towards the world of lore and storytelling; fiction and truth; as such, I will bring it to life by telling of a figure associated with it: the witch-goddess Circe of Greek mythology. The cauldron is similar to a trap in that it is a vessel, action, and gesture; an alchemical entrapment. Cauldrons contain intoxicants or other elements that are meant to effect a change in the one who receives its medicines or poisons.

The cauldron is generally a large black iron pot held over a fire, and its etymology is Anglo-Norman and Old Northern French.[478] The pot has come to be associated with witches via literature, such as William Shakespeare's 1606 play *Macbeth* and through mythology, such as the 6th-century Welsh sorceress Ceridwen, who uses a cauldron to brew potions.[479] The cauldron connects the media of tricks back to communication with the dead. Burning herbs, particularly in a cauldron, is one way to summon the dead, "principally because it [the cauldron] is a vessel of resurrection," writes Martin Duffy, "capable of breaking down the existent to create things anew." Smoke and also mist, rising in steam from the cauldron, creates "a capnomantic medium" in which spirits may appear.[480] Re-looking at feminist media and re-figuring the inert and the disallowed, is part of how we can use the methodology of bewitchment.

Peter Grey writes, "[t]he cauldron is the womb, cave, underworld, mountain and Sabbat itself."[481] The parallel between the cauldron and the womb may at first come off as essentialist; as Pam Grossman writes in *Waking the Witch*, "women's bodies have been traditionally viewed as mysterious and 'other,' a land of dim caverns and inexplicable lagoons."[482] Yet media such as the cauldron and the black mirror ask us to look again at these themes and tropes. The cauldron is not only used to make potions, but also to make poisons; the black mirror is the mirror that does not reproduce, but rather opens a portal. Therefore, if these media are womblike, they are perhaps also inhospitable wombs. Claire Colebrook has argued that, while feminism has problematized the gendered bias between the active male (mind) and the passive female (body), what has not yet been overturned is "a horror of the inert, the unproductive."[483] She continues: "The true politics of matter lies not in matter now occupying the position that was once attributed to God (and the man who is made in his image) … but in a matter that fails to come to life."[484] This is part of what separates enchantment from bewitchment; as Bennett writes (as quoted above), re-enchantment is a response to the "disenchantment tale" that "figures nonhuman nature as more or less inert 'matter.'"[485] I contend that part of a methodology of bewitchment is a love of inert matter.

As witches are hosts of the night, vessels themselves are hosts to the roots, vapours, and fluids (and spirits and witches) they carry within. I have already mentioned the cauldron in relation to scrying in the previous chapter, and indeed so important is the cauldron to depictions and practices of Western witchcraft that Gemma Gary refers to it as "the witches' vessel of arte."[486] It is a place of creation, a place of crafting, and it exists, like many witch's tools, in the liminal zone between benefic and malefic magic, depending on its use. In *The Crooked Path*, Kelden, a self-defining Traditional Witch, tells the story of Medea of ancient Greece, who possessed the power of *pharmaka* and used her cauldron as a geography to prepare both poisons and medicines. "Medea showed us the cauldron's power as a symbol of life … and tool for destruction."[487] This brings us back to Derrida's figuration of the *pharmakon*, who is as much as beloved as feared. "The *pharmakon* both wields power over death and is in cahoots with it," he writes.[488] The cauldron is linked to the methodology of the trick, and particularly with sex and death, through the witch-goddess, Circe, a Greek mythological figure who appears in Homer's *Odyssey* (8th century BCE) and poisons a group of warriors who attempt to rape her. Circe does

so by offering them "a potion / of barley, cheese, and golden honey, mixed / with Pramian wine" to which "[s]he added potent drugs."[489] Though the cauldron is not specifically referenced in Homer's tale, it is implied in the mixing of her poisons, and Circe has been presented with a cauldron in subsequent art and poetry (fig. 20).[490] After being thusly poisoned, she "struck them, / using her magic wand, and penned them in / the pigsty. They were turned to pigs in body / and voice and hair; their minds remained the same."[491] The myth of Circe and Odysseus, as well as incorporating plant intelligence and protective craft, also brings shapeshifting to the fore, as Circe changes Ulyssess's men from humans into pigs.

Of course, *The Odyssey* is itself a story, told by Ulysses to Alcinous, king of the Phaecians. In it, Homer describes Circe over and again as a witch and a trickster, who, like Calypso, is seen by Ulysses as one whose desire it is to entrap him: "Circe, / the trickster, trapped me, and wanted me / to be her husband," Ulysses complains to Alcinous.[492] Notably, the first mention of Circe's name comes through her connection with knots. In Book VIII of *The Odyssey*, Ulysses fastens a chest filled with precious goods by recalling Circe's craft: "He shut the lid and tied / a cunning knot that he had learned from Circe."[493] The bond quality of the knot brings us back to the embrace; what binds, what seals; what holds together, as Despret writes; a vessel or a containment. Even Circe's hair is knotted, done up braids, and as Ulysses's men first approach her palace, she is weaving.[494]

In Circe, we see the trickster, the witch, and a woman / goddess who uses her sexuality to do the tricking. This brings Circe and the medium of the cauldron into the realm of turning tricks. In her book *Caliban and the Witch*, Silvia Federici connects the persecution of prostitutes to the persecution of witches in the 16th century. Though prostitutes benefitted from a high wage for their labour in the Middle Ages, they were outright criminalized in Europe with the rise of Protestantism in the Early Modern period: brothels were closed and prostitutes themselves were subject to harsh penalties, which included being whipped, shaved, or branded with the "devil's mark," all similar punishments inflicted on accused witches.[495] At the same time, contraceptives disappeared, only to reappear in the 18th century with the "sheath," a type of vessel all its own, and one specifically employed by, and available to, men.[496] Reproductive labour in general is a major theme in Federici's book, where she discusses the fashioning of women in the 16th and 17th centuries as "unreasonable, vain, wild, wasteful" creatures, a state from which "a new model of femininity emerged: the ideal woman and wife."[497] This is a theme that carries over from the metaphysics of the mirror and the construction of the reflective (as opposed to the unruly) subject — similar to the unreproductive subject. Historian Jane Kamensky notes the close tie between the bureaucratic treatment of sex workers and witches, even on the level of locution — of speech. In 1692 Salem, Puritan clergyman Cotton Mather cautioned those who would not wish to appear as witches to "be careful that you don't Speak too much …. 'Tis the Whore, that is Clamorous."[498]

Fig. 20 Maxfield Parrish, *Circe's Palace*, 29 x 22 cm, 1908

In contemporary North America, self-defining witches are reclaiming their ties to sex work and the subversion of gender norms. Gabriela Herstik defines herself in part as a "sex witch" and speaks on the importance of sex and shadow work in her practice.[499] On her Instagram page @gabyherstik, she poses against multiple sex toys that she also views as magical tools, a practice that leads us into yet another use for knots: that practiced by the BDSM

(bondage, discipline, sadism, masochism) community or by those seeking to enhance sexual pleasure. Trans witches, such as Otis Bell and Moira Goree, bring attention to the imbrications between histories of colonialism, the persecution of those considered sexually transgressive, and witchcraft.[500] In an article on Moira Goree, Lewis Wallace notes that "one in five trans people who had ever participated in a faith community experienced rejection in that space. … a Pew survey of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people found they are twice as likely to be part of non-Christian religions as straight people."[501] Witches and heathens are unruly, therefore at once inside and outside of the rules that define the parameters between lawful and unlawful subjects. Both the perimeter, like a glass house built around spirits, and a rule, like the dictates of an efficacious knot spell, are delicate locutions. The knot unleashes the wind. Does the spirit bottle, smashed, release the spirit?

iii. Tituba, Kitsimba

Before I tie up the present section on tricks, two more figures bare mentioning here that not only link the media of bewitchment to the tricksters who yield them, but also bring us back to communication with the dead and more-than-human kin: Tituba and Kitsimba. In her 1692 Salem deposition, Tituba Indian is named only in a footnote: "Tituba, a slave originating from the West Indies, and probably practicing 'hoodoo.'"[502] Hoodoo is itself a crossroads practice; according to Katrina Hazzard-Donald, anthropologist, dance scholar, and initiate of the Yoruba tradition, Hoodoo is defined as "[t]he traditional black belt African American folk healing and spiritual controlling system. This system draws most heavily from African traditional religion but later, as a result of enslavement, integrates elements of Native American traditional religion and beliefs and some Old World European folk beliefs."[503] Practitioners do not always call themselves witches, but they have had the term cast upon them.[504] In fact, the first accused witch tried on the continent of North America was a purported practitioner of Hoodoo. Not a lot is known about the accused witch, Tituba, besides the fact that she was in service to Puritan minister Samuel Parris and that she was a glorious, even psychedelic storyteller. According to Stacy Schiff, Tituba's deposition — that is, her forced confession — "was vivid and sensational, lurid and harebrained"; Tituba was "masterful and gloriously persuasive."[505] She painted a dazzling scene to the jury of flying through the air to witches' sabbats, of red cats, of witches transforming into wolves, and of the devil himself, holding his famed book of the names of his nightly consorts.[506] And though historical information on Tituba is scant, she is not absent in the cultural imagination, dramatized, for example, in Arthur Miller's 1953 play *The Crucible* and Conrad Askland's 2012 *Witches! The Musical* (fig. 21).[507]

Fig. 21 Tituba's deposition in a staging of Miller's *The Crucible*, with Lilian Oben as Tituba, Olney Theatre Center, Maryland, 2018

Confronting the brevity and offhandedness of the footnote where Tituba appears in her court trials, author Maryse Condé composed a novel based on Tituba's deposition and surrounding lore. Condé's process of writing was one that involved opening communication with Tituba. "I had the feeling that Tituba was involved in the writing," she says in an interview with

Ann Armstrong Scarboro. "Even when I left my pages at night in my study, I believed that she would go look at them, read them, and eventually correct what she did not like … All along during my writing of the novel I felt that she was there — that I was addressing her."[508] The title *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* is also an affirmative utterance, writes Angela Davis in her introduction to Condé's book, "that counters this footnote that condemns her [Tituba] to insignificance."[509] The way that Condé communicates with Tituba returns us to the capaciousness of witchkin that I spoke of in the Introduction and how witches open communication with more-than-human kin.

In a talk for the *Wxtch Craft* Symposium held by The Royal Academy of Art (KABK) in The Hague, Netherlands, writer and activist adrienne maree brown claimed that "witchy work" involves working with ancestors, such as Harriet Tubman and Octavia Butler and, for example, the black women who take time to feed everyone at activist meetings. "I want those ancestors too, the unnamed," she said.[510] The tools of bewitchment — including the spirit house, the witch bottle, and the cauldron — are all vessels, spaces that confuse the external with the internal by crossing their wires, turning them inside out — and as such they are also embodied spaces that intersect with other bodies, especially if we think of the body, too, as a vessel of sorts. Peter Hamilton-Guiles notes the sheer conflation of body and space in witchcraft: "while the witch may remain largely in external space by being outside the confines of how we know our world, the use of bodily space provides the background onto which we place the witch"; he continues, "a flesh emplaced presence is where contradictions and inconsistencies forge new ways of knowing."[511] All writing is embodied, but the way that Condé also uses her own writing hand as a kind of antenna to connect with Tituba — as a vessel to intersect with Tituba's voice — is significant. It has to do with epistemology as much as with pedagogy.

In her book, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, M. Jacqui Alexander, a critical theorist who comes from a background of Lacumi, Winti, Vodou, and Espiritismo, is profoundly interested in modes of learning that imbricate the spiritual and the material, such as "Spirit, Wind, Orisha … energies that are sacred" throughout her writing.[512] She is invested in the crossroads as a mode of thinking and learning that ties together the dead with the living. Alexander places emphasis on crossings as well as the Crossing; that is, "the enforced Crossing of the millions of Africans that serviced from the fifteenth century through the twentieth the consolidation of British, French, Spanish and Dutch empires."[513] For Alexander, speaking on the political is also about speaking on the sacred; the two are not unbound.[514] From this point of view, Alexander discovered Kitsimba. While conducting a research project on modes of healing in 19th-century Trinidad, Alexander found documents surrounding the trial and torture of a woman named Thisbe, who was forced into the Crossing and accused of using "sorcery." In researching Thisbe, Alexander began to inhabit an unstable space of not knowing. "It was in a basement in the Bronx, New York," Alexander writes, "that she manifested her true name, Kitsimba — not the plantation name Thisbe — and placed it back into the lineage that she remembered and to which she belonged."[515] In this way, Alexander's methodology comes to include conversing with Kitsimba as a significant part of her research.

Kitsimba's emergence to Alexander is a pedagogy in its own right, one that reveals the seams between the secular and sacred; materialism and materiality — the former bound with accumulation and the latter with energies.[516] It is one that has to do with rememory and with the rewiring of the senses. "With what keys are these codes activated?" Alexander asks, "[o]f what is its labor constituted?"[517] Rewiring the senses involves a re-crossing of codes: it is a cultivation of an interior that involves dissonance with the concept of a self or selves: unmooring old patterns

and habits of separation.[518] Rewiring is much like crafting, specifically the kind of crafting that Isabelle Stengers notes as particular to witchcraft and that much critical theory lacks.[519] This rewiring is felt in the way that Alexander uses language, shifting the semantics of the senses. "These are indeed knotty issues," writes Alexander.[520]

What is bewitching or being bewitched but an act of communication in the first place? Whereas spirit houses and witch bottles are meant to contain communication, to trap it, cauldrons are meant to disseminate communication on the air. That which is being communicated is the whole embodied praxis of alchemical matter and method. For Condé to call Tituba into story, to replace the meagre footnote given to Tituba by her accusers and to compose an entire novel, to unravel her, open her like a bloom, is similar to how Alexander engages with Kitsimba, not Thisbe, a name given to her by her oppressors who called her a "sorcerer"; this is sacred, witchy work. And it speaks to the way that "work" can open out into "works," as Hurston wrote, spells.[521] There are so many ways, as scholars, that we can think about the work we do as well. The various media of bewitchment proposes that one way is through book-research, finding sources, submersing oneself in the written traces of history and those who were able to record — but there are other ways, too. What of all the stories that are forgotten, lost, violently abolished? This is the case with Kitsimba and Tituba. In this instance, to try to find out about them requires more direct communication, such as the methods that Condé and Alexander engage in. A method of bewitchment follows the crooked path, the curve in the crone's finger beckoning further in, the paths of the knowledge of the twilights between the recorded and the non-recorded: between legible and messy methods. The methodology of bewitchment is a methodology of listening and it takes up the proposition that to engage in crossroads logic is to follow the forked path and dare to ask where it leads.

5. Those Who Occupy the Crossroads, Part 2

i. The wink

We step through the centre of a knot and find ourselves at a crossroads. We pick up the tools that we see there on the road: a pot of potions, a house of spirits. We see that we have before us an array of devices that are involved in transmutation, requiring us, too, to learn their secrets and methods, to be receptive to the action of transmuting. What are the implications of a method of bewitchment? How do we commute this methodology to the positionalities I began to open up in Chapter 1 and continued with in discussing the tricky positionalities of those who inhabit the "witch"? In the present section, I move onto other hybrids who populate this crossroads, particularly the cyborg, the goddess, and the witches' familiar, part animal, part myth. Just as I ended Chapter 1 on a seemingly simple technique of the body (i.e. on sitting), so I will end Chapter 2 with a similarly familiar technique that is always more than it seems: winking. What happens when we start to use the methods of bewitchment to imagine subject positions exterior to mimesis? The human is betrayed in the wink of an eye. We move beyond monohumanism, or the overrepresentation of *homo oeconomicus* as the definition of the human, into the work that Sylvia Wynter refers to as hybridity. The origin stories that have produced *homo oeconomicus* are the very stories that need to be, quite literally, retooled.[522] Different methods and stories are being called for. In this section, therefore, I will continue to tackle some of the knottier issues that witches and witchcraft bring to light, such as essentialism and

positionalities that extend into sci-fi and folkloric re-imaginings. Rewiring our senses is cognate with rewiring our narratives.

For Sylvia Wynter, the particular origin stories that need to be undone are those stories that "produce the lived and racialized categories of the rational and irrational, the selected and the dysselected, the haves and the have-nots" as naturalized groupings, writes McKittrick.[523] The massive origin stories of the present Western episteme include, significantly, "Darwin's epistemological rupture," made possible by the Copernican system of 1543 — where not only a new astronomy, but also a new cosmology of thought was made possible. No longer was the earth created for God's glory, but for man, and was, as such, ultimately knowable, legible by him for whom it had been created.[524] These stories, carried forward by the Western education system, are among the ones that need to be rewritten, according to Wynter's thought. For humans are, in Wynter's eyes, a storytelling species, and it is our very capacity to tell stories, to write and unwrite ourselves out of origins, narratives, to pass them on as if they are literally part of our blood, our cells, that makes us unique.[525] Wynter's "wager" as she calls it is to disintegrate the naturalization of *homo oeconomicus* by asserting that the human is a hybrid being: both *bios* and *mythoi*, an idea taken from Frantz Fanon, where *bios* aligns with skin and *mythoi* with masks.[526] This very hybridity is what unsettles and makes impossible the naturalness of the "entire order of secular knowledge / truth" in which the present figure of *homo oeconomicus*, and thus the figure of the Western secular scholar, has been enthroned.[527] This may sound like an area of posthumanism, but McKittrick characterizes Wynter's project as "a *counterhumanism* — one now ecumenically "made to the measure of the world,'" quoting poet Aimé Césaire.[528] Wynter's counterhumanism does not rail against the human, necessary, but the stories under which various overrepresented versions of the human are placed. One way to undo it, perhaps, is to look towards not only what constitutes the human and the non-human, but also the gestures that give each away.

In Fritz Lang's Expressionist sci-fi film *Metropolis* (1927), there is a prolonged shot of a woman winking (fig. 22). Not just any woman, and perhaps not a woman at all, but the "Machine-Man," a cyborg, who has been created in the image of the film's wholesome and proletariat protagonist, Maria (both played by Brigitte Helm). The cyborg in the guise of Maria, different from the human Maria, is at once a character who exists in the shadow and the light and neither, in the overground and underground — the city of the workers beneath and the city of the industrialists above. Throughout the movie, she goes by many names, including "machine-man" and Hel, the latter of which was the name of her inventor, Rotwang's, former lover, who chose the mastermind of Metropolis, Joh Frederson, over him and eventually died while giving birth to Frederson's son, who incidentally becomes Maria's lover. In the 1926 novel *Metropolis* by Thea von Harbou, written two years after her screenplay, the cyborg replication of Maria is named Futura.[529] In Lang's film, the cyborg, by whatever name she is called, whether machine-man or Hel or Futura, is an unapologetic corruption of her predecessor, Maria, and set up as the villain of the story. Whereas the human Maria is flanked by children and is often portrayed in front of a large cross, giving sermons to the workers of the underground city, her cyborg counterpart is incapable of reproduction and is portrayed giving lascivious nightly performances to a crowd of ogling men;

Fig. 22 Cyborg Maria's wink (Brigitte Helm), film still, Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1927

when we first meet her, she walks out of the giant figure of an inverted pentagram.[530] Matter over spirit.

The wink takes place mid-film and is a special kind of communication device: it tells us, the viewer, that Maria has changed, and she is willing to participate in acts of deception. The cyborg's role is to corrupt the spotless image of Maria in the eyes of the workers and destroy her credibility. The wink that seals the deal makes the viewer feel like we are part of a conspiracy.[531] According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, both Jesus, in betraying "the God of the Jews" and in being "betrayed by God," and Oedipus, in betraying his father, epitomize "the system of betrayal," which has everything to do with hybridity, with crossing: "to cross (*hybris*)," they write.[532] This brings us into the territory of traps and tricks. Capture and captivation. For Deleuze and Guattari, betrayals circle back to how one is educated: "[t]he various forms of education or 'normalization' imposed upon an individual consist in making him or her change points of subjectification …. in other words, a subject bound to statements in conformity with a dominant reality."[533] The points of subjectification that need to be crossed, betrayed, are precisely those points that produce the monohumanist subject, the one who faces away from hybridity.

This leads us into the nexus of a wink. There is something too slow about the way that Lang orchestrates the machine-man's wink, which renders it not a wink at all, but more of a positive charge / negative charge gesture — a balancing of polarities — one eye open, one eye closed, which serves to paint the cyborg's entire gestural environment as uncanny, off. But as a cyborg, her gestural environment is already othered. She is a witch-like figure in Fritz Lang's film, alchemically, unnaturally (re)-created. She is constantly surrounded by signs that we, as viewers of films and consumers of culture, have come to associate with witches: flames, deception, goddesses, the pentagram: her image is juxtaposed more than once with an image of the goddess "Babylon," and, in the end, she is burned at the stake.[534] In the character of the cyborg, and in the seven seconds it takes for her to wink, the inhuman quality of the witch comes to the fore and it does so through a minute gestural flicker as familiar as it is unwonted. In being neither open nor closed, the wink is neither inside nor outside, like the witch trapped in the bottle. In being both quotidian and uncanny, the wink is indicative of both daytime knowledge and nighttime knowledge. It is both here and there, and that is somewhere specific.

In mythology, Hel is the Norse goddess of the dead. The wink, too, has Norse origins, harkening back to the god Odin, who sacrificed an eye to obtain a drink from Mimir's well in order that he might truly see.[535] The wink, therefore, points deictically towards secretive knowledge, an inner gnosis that is gained through loss or sacrifice. This relates the wink to the hoodwink. Writing on the Two of Swords Tarot card, occult author and tarot reader, T. Susan Chang notes that "the blindfold is the hoodwink of secret societies; it signifies the suspension of the ego, the setting aside of an individual identity as one joins a group, or apprentices to a master."[536] The hoodwink, in addition to being a blindfold and a strategy of secrecy or initiation, is also a verb that means to "deceive or trick."[537] In being both a cyborg and carrying the namesake of the goddess of the dead, the machine-man of *Metropolis* is placed before us in a knot that itself not only spans the land of the living and the land of the dead, but also the land where cyborgs are (re-)produced.

The fact that the cyborg's wink is a very human gesture issuing from a non-human subject, as well as the genre of film that the character appears in, points to adrienne maree brown's work with emergent strategy, particularly her focus on "science fictional behaviour" inspired by sci-fi author Octavia E. Butler. Part of science fictional behaviour, writes brown, involves creating new stories and methods that are "concerned with the way our actions and beliefs now, today, will shape the future, tomorrow, the next generations."[538] Emergent strategy and science fictional behaviour, to sum them up succinctly, are proposed methodologies to

counter bad storytelling.[539] To do this, brown weaves "together thoughts and theories … tools, spells, poems, examples, lists, assessments."[540] She learns from the way that water moves and ferns frond as well as from activities of dissent and consent in activist organizations and circles. She is interested in adaptivity, which is, after all, a method of witches, too: shapeshifting, an inflection of waters and smokes, cauldrons and roots.[541]

brown's methods are helpful in concretely working towards the imagination, and therefore creation, of a space that is not reflective or continuous of the methods of *homo oeconomicus*, but instead lean towards biomimicry, "practices of mimicking the natural world," as brown writes, that are ancient; practices, moreover, that are fueled by "recovery [rather] than a discovery."[542] She asks: "How can we, future ancestors, align ourselves with the most resilient practices of emergence as a species?"[543] For brown, this is where science fiction becomes "visionary fiction."[544] As Octavia Butler wrote in her unpublished novel *Parable of the Trickster*, "There's nothing new / under the sun, / but there are new suns."[545] The methods of Laboria Cuboniks adds more sci-fi creatures to the sphere of biomimicry. As they write, "XF (Xenofeminism) is an affirmative creature on the offensive, fiercely insisting on the possibility of large-scale social change for all of our alien kin."[546] The space where witches dwell includes not only corruptions and traps, but all the alien kin that have dwelled therein: familiars, monsters, cyborgs, goddesses.

ii. Animals, machines, goddesses

Issuing from the heart of a wink come the cyborg and the goddess, counterpoints of hybridity, speculation, and even, in the case of the former, devotion. I would like for a minute to explore the difference between the cyborg and the goddess, and especially their supposed polarization; in doing so, I would like to move one step further in the direction of the non-human, or at least the non-anthropomorphic. The infrathin between the biological and fictional, between beast and myth, is where another monster exists, particularly the witches' familiar that can be referred to alternately, according to Ronald Hutton, as a spirit, an imp, a devil, a fairy.[547] Before going further into this creature, the word "familiar" itself deserves pause, especially as bewitchment opens up a mode of the defamiliar. In her short text, "keyword," on the work of cultural theorist Raymond Williams, curator and researcher Rebecca Giordano writes that "[t]here are many types of familiar keys in the world. They are in your pocket, on your map, in your google search bar. Keywords are just as familiar. Like the metal tool they are named after, keywords unlock, index, cipher, map, and also telegraph." Keywords are familiar words, they exist in our pockets, near our skin. They unlock, and are therefore involved in our most intimate spaces, the ones we happen to have keys to. In his keywords project, started in 1948, Williams attempted "to map a new social and cultural terrain," writes Giordano.[548] In his book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Williams includes words ranging from "aesthetic" to "anarchism" to "experience" to "jargon" to "taste" to "work." In his entry on "media," Williams writes that it comes from "medium," which denotes a middle and "has the sense of an intervening or intermediate agency or substance."[549] Media, therefore, are intricately linked to hybridity, to middle-ness, and the medium is therefore connected to what is familiar, to what is key. The witches' familiar has aspects of all of these; and, like a keyword, it can take on many forms.

According to Hutton, one of the first recorded references to animal familiars was "a charge against a Yorkshire service magician in 1510, of keeping three beings like bumble bees

under a stone and calling them out one by one to give each of them a drop of blood from his finger."[550] The connection between the body of the magician or witch and the body of the familiar is an important one: the familiar is not quite animal, not quite human, but made in the pact between the two. The depiction of familiars suckling from the bodies of witches was later replaced, according to Hutton, with the ability of witches to shift into animals themselves.[551] The witch's body was not completely natural, not completely supernatural; similar, we could say, to the body of Maria, the "Machine-Man."

In *Caliban and the Witch*, Federici notes that during the time of the Early Modern witch trials, animals were at once likened to machines and to the unruly, bestial sexuality of the human body: the former via Cartesian dualism that sought to separate the (higher) mind from the (base) body,[552] and the latter linked to accounts of familiars, where witches were charged with keeping "a variety of animals … that helped them in their crimes and with whom they entertained a particularly intimate relation. These were cats, dogs, hares, frogs, that the witch cared for, presumably suckling them from special teats." The witches being accused of suckling their familiars were predominantly women, which, according to Federici, "also suggests that women were at a (slippery) crossroad between men and animals."[553] The particular knot where we find women (predominantly), cyborgs, and animals is also one that Donna Haraway addresses in her seminal 1991 essay, "A Cyborg Manifesto."

Haraway defines the cyborg as a being who is "simultaneously animal and machine" as well as "a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion."[554] (In)famously, Haraway pits the cyborg against the Goddess, contending that "[i]t's not just that 'god' is dead; so is the 'goddess.'… In relation to objects like biotic components, one must not think in terms of essential properties, but in terms of design, boundary constraints …" Finally, ending her essay by invoking the title of Starhawk's 1989 book, *The Spiral Dance,* Haraway writes, "Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess."[555] Before I begin to unpack the problematics of this assertion, I must note that Haraway was not being polemic without provocation. According to Joan Haran, the polarization between Haraway and Starhawk, that Haraway here pulls out, "emerges from a series of rhetorical moves in academic feminism that relegated feminist essentialism (attributed to radical feminists and ecofeminists) to the 1970s with putatively more sophisticated post-structural feminist theory ascendent in the 1980s and 1990s."[556] The polarization, however, has not held out; as Haran writes, "Haraway's assertion that she would rather be a cyborg than a goddess foreclosed possibilities in feminism which have taken decades to reconstruct." Haran continues:

> I am interested in what is lost by refuting the Goddess … I am curious about whether, had she [Haraway] given a little more attention to Goddess feminists and the ecofeminist activisms that they were practicing, other feminists might also have attended to nuance and creativity in the interventions that they made and knowledge that they produced rather than diagnosing essentialism …. I submit that if more feminists had read Starhawk's account of the immanent Goddess more carefully, recognizing her attention to the empirical as well as her feminist materialist politics, a fruitful entanglement with Haraway's material semiotics might have offered a way to pursue knowledge about the liveliness of the world nearly two decades before the efflorescence of feminist new materialisms.[557]

This is a point that Isabelle Stengers, too, brings up in her essay "Experimenting with Refrains" when she notes that Haraway "did not take the time and the needed care to anticipate and thwart the enthusiastic adhesion of her academic milieu, a milieu she authorised to snigger and promote a heroic adhesion to the cyborg as an (academic) weapon against those who still believe in ... (pick your choice)."[558] This, too, is a trap: thinking that "we" know better than "those" who would worship a goddess; writing off the worship of goddesses as essentialist, and therefore siding with the "'know better' theorists," as Stengers writes.[559] As for Haraway, she has since revised her position. In her book *Staying with the Trouble*, Haraway includes a speculative fabulation called "The Camille Stories" that ends with the characters singing "the words of a Starhawk poem as a hymn 'in ceremonies for resurgence attuned to the wounded earth.' The final couplet reads, 'Keen and mourn / for the dismembering of the world.' In this future, Haraway marks the importance of ritual," writes Haran; thus, Haraway combines, finally, the goddess and the cyborg. Notably, the singers in Haraway's fabulation call themselves the Speakers for the Dead.[560] Like the witches' familiar, who is bound to the witch from the very blood of her body — a gesture that changes the witch as much as the familiar, binding them together — so the goddess and the cyborg are not so much separate as interconnected, bound up in futurity as much as presence, bound up in kin, ritual, and the earth from which they both spring. Both familiar and defamiliar, they point towards that which we alternately cast off and revere, make sacred and make profane, live and die with.

6. Implications of Bewitchment

i. The familiar and defamiliar

We have seen how bewitchment is a winkish modality. Coming back to the definition of bewitchment, we have seen how it can be described as an act or power (of bewitching), a spell (that bewitches), and a state (of being bewitched). These three axes, when applied to the media of witches, point towards the crossroads character of both the witch who wields the media as well as the media itself. What has the methodology of bewitchment taught us about relating? About the self / other divide? How do witches' tools perpetuate and aid in the work of hybridity? Of creating unfamiliar doubles? To open his chapter on the quasi-object, Michel Serres asks, what is living together? What is the collective?[561] "We are precisely the fluctuating moving back and forth of the 'I.' The 'I' in the game is a token exchanged," he continues. "The 'we' is made by passing the 'I.' By exchanging the 'I'"[562] This passing and exchanging, this movement of the 'I' is important to Serres, for "the 'we' is not a sum of 'I''s, but a novelty produced by legacies, concessions, withdrawals, resignations."[563] The movement of the "I" and the "we" seems to define these values more than speaking of them as fixed or solid. To demonstrate the quasi-object, Serres uses the ball. "A ball is not an ordinary object," he posits, "for it is what it is only if a subject holds it."[564] And further: "The ball isn't there for the body; the exact opposite is true: the body is the object of the ball; the subject moves around this sun."[565] When watching a game that involves a ball, usually one is witnessing the players following the ball, as if attached to it, at once trying to acquire the ball and trying to get rid of it. "And between them, these quasi-objects, maybe jokers," writes Serres.[566] Quasi-objects, like witches' tools are foremost about how the tool is circulated between bodies and how the I's and we's are circulated in turn. This is particularly key for tools that exist at the centre of a knot: for here, in this locale, the I's and we's are not only the living and the living, but the living and the dead. And between the witch and the

spirit and the spirit house, we have seen that there are tricksters. As Derrida wrote concerning the *pharmakon*:

> Sly, slippery, and masked, an intriguer and a card, like Hermes, he is neither king nor jack, but rather a sort of joker, a floating signifier, a wild card, one who puts play into play … Always taking a place not his own, a place one could call that of the dead or the dummy, he has neither a proper place nor a proper name … It is to him that we owe the games of dice (*kubeia*) …. Every act of his is marked by this unstable ambivalence. This god of calculation, arithmetic, and rational science also presides over the occult sciences, astrology and alchemy."[567]

The *pharmakon* bears more than a passing resemblance to the witch. Hermes is a Greek god known also a thief, yet his type of thievery is not covetous or greedy; Hermes steals in order to recirculate to the item, to put it into other conversations. He exists in order to mix things up.[568] I began this chapter with the spirit house and the witch bottle, then with the cauldron; then, all the subjectivities and wicked problems that exist between and among them. We could say that witches' tools never exist in isolation, but are passed back and forth not only between I's and we's, but in and for the creation and decreation of entire spaces, atmospheres, realities.

In her book *Cloud of the Impossible*, Catherine Keller asks, "what if … every edge, every eschatos of space or time, appears as a fold or a tangle of further relation?"[569] — from this, she asks, what if relationally does not exclude or enclose, but rather enfold?[570] Knots, like black mirrors, are both held and holding. The relationship, altered, is then unfolded; alterity is relation in action.[571] Knots and crossroads, too, are entanglements. The seam between the familiar and unfamiliar teaches us how to be (un)comfortable with the fork in the path, the unmimetic. The methodology of bewitchment asks us to accept the discomfort of the trick and the trap, with what is deemed fraudulent and waved away; to do this, we need to rebuild the semiotic systems in which fraud becomes the tidy end of the story, where the revelation of the trick is the endgame and the triumph of logic and enlightened knowledge. We need more room and girthier imaginations. For on the one hand, if we, as scholars interested in witchcraft, see tricks as gestures of fraudulence, then we have no choice than to take the opposite route, of declaring, defensively, that magic or witchcraft do not involve tricks. Yet it would be a shame to disown the trick, especially when we consider Circe's cauldron or the (unreproductive) yet desirous body of Maria's cyborg other. Furthermore, as Taussig, Jodorowsky, and Chakraverti point out, the trick is part of magic. Yet these tricks are not what they're painted as; these tricks are a significant part of what witchcraft itself means.

Witches, and their quasi-objects, are ultimately storytellers. For Wynter, the price that the human pays for being emancipated from a *bios*-only existence, and having access to an existence that includes storytelling or *mythoi*, is our very subordination to the stories themselves, "to our genre-specific storytelling codes of *symbolic life / death*."[572] Furthermore, the enactment of these codes, the telling of these stories through our languages, our bodies, are "opiate-rewarded" as we come to see ourselves reflected through them as "*mimetically desirable*."[573] The epic narratives of our particular time not only exist at the level of *homo oeconomicus*, however, but on the smaller scale of interrelationships as well. Borrowing terminology from Derrida, Wynter notes that humans function in terms of a *referent / we,* or an us / not us, which causes us to "subjectively experience ourselves through the mediation of the same order of consciousness and its mode of mind / minding."[574] Wynter's postulation of hybridity is always "ecumenical," as she notes throughout her work. "Because we too," she writes," are also now struggling to move beyond the knee-jerk limits of the Us and the Them."[575]

How, then, to emerge from these seemingly endless loops? How can we presume to even *want* to, if the epic stories we are told by the great men are opiate-rewarded? As we craft the stories that we live within, we get comfortable, we no longer desire to re-craft them or unwind ourselves from their tentacles. Like M. Jacqui Alexander speaking with Kitsimba as a form of research; like Condé conversing with Tituba from the trace of a footnote, we can adopt more methods, as scholars, of kinship and listening. This is an act of coming-to-attention. The mode and keyword of "bewitchment" aids this movement, for it remains never one thing or another, never on this side or that, but always heretical to either and both, not a neutral middle point, but rather the intersection, the villainous crux of mediation, the very point of it, the de-familiar. I would like to say this is a celebration (and it is), but perhaps it signals, too, that a great grieving must take place — to let go of the stories that once were, and to make way for what *could* be. For this, too, is the work of speaking with the dead. Despret writes, "[w]e are not in the realm of proofs but of proving grounds; not of attestation, but of testing"; and the test of the enigma is not in its resolution, but in its ability to continue.[576] In its ability to weave and unweave. In its ability to utterly spill out from the seams.

CHAPTER 3: FLUIDS

1. To Come Undone

i. Lions

Three stories, each connected by ghosts, grief, and fluids.

The first story is an open road. It is 1952 and Marjorie Cameron is driving across the Mojave Desert with the ashes of her dead husband, Jack Parsons. She arrives in the unremarkable desert town of Beaumont, California; devastated, she scatters his ashes. Unable to leave, she sets up house in a nearby area. She has no electricity, no water. In 1953, Marjorie pens a letter to Jane Wolfe, a former silent film star and disciple of ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley, saying that out here, in all this solitude, she has birthed a child with her dead husband in a magical rite, an alchemy between death and life. "The pregnancy, as you understand," she writes, "was not the actual growth of a human child but the spiritual child of a psychic union."[577] She calls the child The Wormwood Star.

The second story is a small room. It is 1929 and Mary M. is sitting in a chair and her mouth is opening. She is in the house of Dr. Thomas Glendenning Hamilton in Winnipeg, Canada. It is dimly lit and smells singed, sweaty. Seeing this scene is like looking through a keyhole: Thomas, his wife, Lillian, and ten experimenters watch as Mary's hands perch out like she is trying to catch something, or someone. By day, she takes care of her family, attends church, tends to the chores of the living; by night, she enters the worlds of the dead on the living's behalf. Nearby, a flash burns off, emits its searing light into the room. White swathes like linen soaked in milk, or like gauze poked through by clouds start frothing, looming, out of her open mouth, the fluid secretions of ghosts.

The third story is not a road or a room, but a moving image, a series of outlines. It is 1973 and artist Ana Mendieta is in Oaxaca, Mexico, at an ancient Zapotec tomb. The day is blistering hot and as bright as the Hamiltons' séance room is dark. Through the flicker of Super 8 film, we see her lay her body on the grave site, grown over in lush blooms, letting her weight sink into its ancient surface. This is the first of her *Silueta* series, an endeavour that would allow her to enter into communion with the elements themselves — earth, air, fire, water. One year prior, she was still making paintings, a practice she gave up because "it wasn't real enough," and "by real," she elaborated, "I mean I wanted my images to have power, to be magic."[578] Her hips, hair, rocks, moss, all become mirrors in which each reflects the other by texture, by weight, the scents and sounds and mess of the world beckoned into and out of her 5-foot form.

Ana Mendieta was an artist. Mary M. was a medium; that is, a channel, a middle point between the living and the dead. Marjorie Cameron was both artist and medium as well as magician, witch, not quite contacting the dead as she was birthing life from death, an alchemical child. It is unclear exactly what Marjorie Cameron and Jack Parsons's child, The Wormwood Star, looked like, though I have seen the film[579] (as indelibly captured as Ana Mendieta's *Siluetas*, as the photographs taken of Mary M.), but it is clear that in 1951, Cameron collected Parsons's poems and her illustrations to birth another alchemical child, *Songs for the Witch Woman*. In it, Parsons wrote:

I was the wind of summer, the scent
of roses,
I was the star, the night, the Garden,

and I the fire.[580]

What does it mean to say, "And I the fire"? Not I, the man, not I, the human, but I, the fire. The "I" diffuses, liquifies.

It begins this way, or it ends this way: in grief. In either resurrecting or burying the dead. It is 5:30 a.m. on September 8, 1985, and Ana Mendieta falls out of a window on Mercer St. in New York City, plunging thirty-four stories to the solid cement. Just before, neighbours heard her having arguments with her partner, artist Carl Andre, who is later acquitted for her murder based on lack of evidence.[581] Dead on the pavement, Mendieta's body, or the mess it became in death, was never outlined in chalk, though this very outlining was her entire practice.[582]

On June, 17, 1952 at 5:08 p.m., Jack Parsons drops a vial of fulminate of mercury while working in his garage in Pasadena.[583] Behind him, a massive unfinished painting by Cameron depicts an angel carrying a sword. The image of this painting is haunting — looming, unfinished, cut across by Cameron's wild, jagged strokes that look more like gestures than lines. There is one split second, maybe less. Jack Parsons, the angel, the sword, all go up in flames. There is Cameron's face as she hears the news, there is her face as she gets into her car and starts to drive, and there is her face as she scatters the ashes that will create her alchemical child.

When they met, she and Parsons, at "the Parsonage," home to the Agape Lodge in L. A., home to wild salons on the occult and wilder parties, Cameron, with her red hair, her intense gaze, looked just like the goddess Babalon. Or so Jack thought. Together with L. Ron Hubbard, who would incorporate the first Church of Scientology seven years later, Parsons was performing what he referred to as "The Babalon Working," a magical operation to call in an "elemental mate."[584] Babalon, a goddess of love, war, and apocalypse, took a hold of Cameron after Parsons had passed away; and in the name of the goddess, Cameron began her ominous blood rites in the California desert, together with a clutch of occult friends and artists.

In his book on the red goddess, Peter Grey traces the modern goddess Babalon back in history and connects her to the Mesopotamian goddess, Innana, who descends into hell to visit her sister, Ereshkigal.[585] To get there, Innana must lift from her body seven veils or gates: her crown, her small beads, her large beads, her breastplate, her ring, her rod, and finally her robe, she sheds them all, for one can only enter the underworld naked, without device, raw and present.[586]

What kind of language does not pretend it is not inhabited? Hauntings are unsettling. There is Mary M. in the house of Thomas Glendenning Hamilton and the silence and buzz of the prairie city spreads out around her, her is posture erect, the language in her throat is ready to flow over in ectoplasmic phonemes, radiant as tentacles, as tongues. I follow Ana Mendieta, Marjorie Cameron, and Mary M. into their respective worlds and underworlds, and what I find is a journey not only of death, but ultimately one that seeks out and reaches towards the methods of love.

Ana Mendieta, Mary M., Marjorie Cameron — they are all connected to one another and to the unseen that they have all witnessed, participated in, created, conjured, a contagious red thread that I now pull taut between them. Dr. Hamilton has set up technological devices whose posture is alert and porous, ready to record. Mary M. opens her mouth. This is not a death song. Inanna opens her great eyes, she lifts her seven veils, and shimmying down past all the demons into the depths of this the hell of the gods, she breathes, she sings. She says:

Bridegroom, dear to my heart,
Goodly is your beauty, honeysweet,
Lion, dear to my heart, Goodly is your beauty honeysweet.[587]

ii. A thing wide open

In his essay "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy," William James wrote, "[t]he actual universe is a thing wide open, but rationalism makes systems and systems must be closed."[588] Throughout, I seek out the edges of the systems; not closed, but porous. This is a chapter of leaky media and methodologies. In Chapter 1, I spoke of the techniques of reflecting and unreflecting and in chapter 2, I spoke more pointedly of the techniques of bewitchment — each belonging to the realms of mirrors and their entanglements, of knots and their disentanglements — in the present chapter, I ask, what does all this *produce*? How does the witch's communication with the dead and more-than-human kin manifest? What does it *make* (or, more appropriately, unmake)? When mediums and witches speak to spirits and other kin, the conversation must go somewhere, must end up somewhere, become something. Yet I would venture that what speaking with the dead reveals is not a series of media or products, but a realm of fluidic processes — if it is material at all, it must be a material that flows between and through the fingers, disintegrates, and thereby has something to teach us through the act of dissolution. The central techniques I will discuss in the present chapter, therefore, belong to less solid techniques of communication than in the previous two chapters — the place where techniques come undone and flail out into death techniques and grief techniques, but more specifically, or perhaps more fluidly, techniques of evidence and of kinship, the latter of which is a topic I have gestured to throughout the present dissertation yet have not meditated upon in full. The techniques of kinship also relate to lures, beckons, and bewitchment, in the ways that witches make kin in general and the ways that Mendieta, Cameron, and M. made kin with landscape or ghosts specifically.

In her 2014 essay, "Fluid Histories," artist and scholar Jessica Bardsley examines the philosophies of "fluid mechanics" offered by psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray against a backdrop that is at once a critique and a celebration of feminist new materialism.[589] Irigaray references fluid mechanics in a way that offers "a critique of the Western metaphysical tradition based on solids," writes Bardsley, while insisting on "the relational, processual complexity of the world" — an immanent point of view that exists in stark contrast to Friedrich Nietsche's conception of the "overman."[590] As Irigaray writes, "[o]vercome, overpower, overman, isn't this flying over life? Life is what matters to me, not the beyond that snatches food from the man still struggling to live."[591] As such, Irigaray positions fluidity as a vantage point of connection and recognition, the refusal (or, in psychoanalytic terms, the repression) of that which has "become the basis for domination and exploitation of the other and earthly resources."[592] As feminist theorist Naomi Schor writes, "Irigaray's ultimate goal is not, so to speak, to put the physics back in metaphysics, but rather the ruining of the metaphysics of being through the substitution of a physics of liquid for the physics of the solid."[593] The gerund *ruining* strikes me as especially fluidic here, and could fit well into the gerunds listed as methods in the 2018 *Routledge Handbook of Interdisciplinary Methods* that I mentioned in Chapter 2, perhaps beside other entries such as "Suspending," "Dissenting," or "Troubling." As Lury writes in her introduction, "the handbook's concern with -ings is intended to identify the potential of interdisciplinary methods to compose problems as interruptions of the (historical) present."[594] Fluids — like gerunds that interrupt the difference between the verb and the noun — interrupt almost anything else they touch. As much as fluids connect, they also ruin: they spill, soil, and contaminate, all actions I will touch on throughout with Mendieta, Cameron, and M.'s respective techniques.

The way the gerund unfolds is akin to a recurring question that appears in fairy tales: "where are you going?" or "where have you been?"[595] (Rather than, say, what do you do? Who are you?) These questions about direction and flow embody the feeling of motion that the present chapter aims for, where it is more about movement as mediation than about media as things. As such, the discussion of fluids exists on a similar locutionary plane as the knot and the black scrying mirror: they require a different method of sensing, a different method of (un)knowing, which itself requires not only the act of unfastening, like the mariners who unfasten the knot to unleash the wind, but also the willingness to be unfastened. Bardsley notes how Victoria Browne argues for a conception of "lived time," moving away from a purely scientific model into a more phenomenological one.[596] "History," writes Browne, "is everybody talking at once, multiple rhythms being played simultaneously."[597] As I have tried to express in my introduction, and as I will endeavour to do throughout, Mendieta, Cameron, and M. present discrete histories and techniques, yet are also simultaneously comingled, talking all at once through the material of fluids.

The present chapter is not just interested in any fluids (a broad category), but with three fluid manifestations in particular: water, blood, and ectoplasm. To start off, the artist Ana Mendieta will open an exploration of water, which itself opens a discussion of contemporary brujería in North America, particularly the use of *limpias*, a spiritual cleansing that brings us into the watery world of contamination and contagion, a major theme that will run throughout the chapter as a whole. The issue of contagion furthermore will lead us into a discussion of xenophobia in magical practices as well as the way that magic itself is a tainting element in the body of Western thought. Just as dead bodies are scuttled into cemeteries to not contaminate the bodies of the living, so the notion of spirit — replaced by the vocabulary of consciousness, which is part of the vocabulary of science (including psychology) — signals the presence of the impure element of the illogical in the realm of reason.

Moving from clear fluids to more viscid realms, artist and witch Marjorie Cameron will open a discussion of blood, the liquid of life and vitality itself, which she used in counterintuitive as well as controversial ways that I'll explore through two of Cameron's experiments in the California desert in the 1950s: The Wormwood Star and The Children. In the former, Cameron sought to produce a "psychic child" between herself and her dead husband, which calls into question notions of replication and reproduction as well as how far, exactly, communication between the living and the dead can in fact extend. It is the latter experiment, The Children, that brings us deeper into the conceptual meanings of the fluids that compose and run between bodies, as Cameron put into motion a magical eugenics, one that tethers questions of race closely to questions of blood, harkening not only to the grisly history of eugenics itself, but also to concepts such as the blood quantum as discussed through the work of Kim TallBear.[598]

Finally, the medium Mary M. will close the chapter and guide us into the wildest and perhaps most erotic fluid of all: ectoplasm, the secretions of the dead themselves, one that resembles not blood, but another kind of lively and enlivening fluid, semen. Here, we come closest to glimpsing what it is that communication with the dead *results* in; how attempts were made to measure ectoplasm; how spirits were made to perform it, palpably and tangibly; and how this performance ultimately spawned a system of proof that was equal parts empirical and sexual, unravelling the status of proof itself. Ectoplasm leads most viscerally into the worlds where the dead mix with the living, a space at once gooey and pornographic, kitchy and theatrical, a liquid that can only appear in the darkness.

Framing all of these diverse threads is Babalon, a modern goddess also referred to as the Mother of Abominations, one who encapsulates themes of apocalypse, sex, war, and one who, holding a chalice of blood, is fit to stand behind such messy methods. My discussions of the goddesss Babalon in this chapter will move critical kinship into queer kinship practices, especially in the way that this particular goddess is invoked primarily in homoerotic or homosexual workings — or, in the case of Cameron's work with the goddess, in a way that fuses death with life in the attempt to birth something in between. As we — as in all of us — find ourselves in the midst or tail end of a global pandemic at the time I am writing this chapter, who better than the goddess of the apocalypse herself to usher us through? Not only the Covid-19 pandemic, but epidemics, such as AIDS and influenza, run through the various sections, tying together these three fluids in ways that push the perimeters of connectivity and porosity to their outermost zones.

iii. Fluid techniques, part 1: kinship and evidence

One of the central techniques that joins grief and death and fluids is an especially connective one: kinship. In the introduction to their 2016 book *Critical Kinship Studies*, Damien W. Riggs and Elizabeth Peel define kinship as a technology through which we can look critically at practices of naturalization and destabilize the centrality of the human in a discussion of what and who is considered kin to begin with.[599] Even supposedly basic categories of kinship such as "mother" and "father" are not concepts defined by "natural" relations, argue Riggs and Peel, but rather by an apparatus of cultural institutions that normalize heterosexuality and genetic relations while enforcing environments for child rearing.[600] Furthermore, the conception of the heterosexual family unit is underpinned and promoted by capitalism, which benefits from the way that labour is divided within a nuclear family unit, both to encourage reproduction and production.[601]

Judith Butler goes so far as to declare that kinship structures involve an elaborate procedure of taming that then becomes naturalized: "[t]he story of kinship," Butler declares, "is an allegory for the origin of culture and a symptom of the process of naturalization itself, one that takes place brilliantly, insidiously, in the name of culture itself."[602] To approach Western kinship categories, Riggs and Peel place "critical" in front of "kinship" to "move beyond a humanist account of kinship, one in which human understandings of kinship and human kinship practices are treated as the only forms of kinship and only ways of being possible."[603] Throughout this chapter, we will see how Ana Mendieta, Marjorie Cameron, and Mary M. respectively (and also as a chord) blow apart definitions of kinship practices that figure the human as central, inviting not only alternate forms of kinship — in the cases of Mendieta and M. — but also wayward and problematic forms of making kin, such as those practiced through the blood rites of Cameron in the California desert. As Riggs and Peel note, "kinship itself is a technology, one that shapes how we understand what counts as human."[604]

Alongside kinship, the present chapter is also concerned with techniques of collecting or presenting evidence. In his book *After Method*, social scientist John Law asserts that methods within the social sciences are not made to capture the world that is unstructured, fluid, diffuse; in short, the "hopes and horrors, intuitions and apprehensions, losses and redemptions, mundanities and visions, angels and demons, things that slip and slide, or appear and disappear, change shape or don't have much form at all."[605] Law proposes that in order to address such slippery themes, we need more slippery methods: embodiment, ethnography, situated inquiry, and "deliberate

imprecision."[606] "How might we catch some of the realities we are currently missing?" he asks. "Can we know them well? Should we know them? Is 'knowing' the metaphor that we need? And if it isn't, then how might we relate to them?"[607] When we put Ana Mendieta against Marjorie Cameron against Mary M., the fluidic media they produce between them become more than each would individually posit — they have something to teach together, I believe, that could not be articulated separately. Throughout this chapter, I will gather their various insights and manifestations to question the ways in which evidence, and the evident, is presented, gathered, and made legible. It is no coincidence that John Law turns to an examination of fluids when he seeks to consider the messiness of methodology itself, a topic that takes up a chapter of his book. Looking at fluids as well as fluidic methods is even more important because, as Law suggests, "[i]t is that methods, their rules, and even more methods' practices, not only describe but also help to produce the reality that they understand."[608] This is key: the way that we choose to examine an object of inquiry in fact creates that object in the first place, a theory that for Law is part Lewis Carroll, part Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar — reality is spun into being by our observation of it.[609]

The way that method creates its object of study can be seen historically in how the techniques of witchcraft have been classified, embodied, and made substantial. A prime example of this is Anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard's classification of what he called witchcraft-substance, one that links to the ways that water, blood, and ectoplasm are both part of and excessive to the bodies of the artists, witches, and mediums who produce them. Evans-Pritchard worked among the Azande people of the Upper Nile in the mid 1920s, and noted that witchcraft, to the Azande, "is a substance in the bodies of witches." This substance was described by the Azande to the anthropologist as "an oval blackish swelling or bag," which is "of a reddish colour and contains seeds of pumpkins and sesame and other food-plants." When the anthropologist asked how the substance was shaped, his Azande informants pointed to their elbows; when he asked how it sounded, they made a "pop" with their mouths; when he asked where it was found and how one could find it, they told him how it grows as the body grows. They said, it is of the body and "its action is psychic." The word used to describe the psychical part of witchcraft-substance was the same, Evans-Pritchard made sure to note, as that to describe the soul.[610] The fluids I am discussing in the present chapter remind me of the Azande's witchcraft-substance: water, blood, and ectoplasm are both part of the body and not, they are popping and fizzling and gushing, they are a *way* rather than a fixed element. They can be located in the body while also telling us something about where the body's boundaries stop and start.

As in my previous chapters, the emphasis on all these (bewitching) tools and techniques lies in their possibility to open different channels of communication, to sow porous room as well as rooms for thought and unthought. Even though this chapter involves the most fleeting techniques — fluids — the ways these fluids are contained and brought forward often involve the most materialist means. More so than the previous chapters, this one brings in the world of fine arts as well as new(ish) media — both Ana Mendieta and Marjorie Cameron were artists working within the fields of painting, film, and photography, while the ectoplasmic manifestations of Mary M. were caught by an array of cameras by Dr. Hamilton, not meant as works of art, but rather as evidence of a world too ephemeral for perception by the human senses alone. Not only their own art works or manifestations, but the surrounding environments of all three women carry heavy themes of mediation. Ana Mendieta was closely connected to the religion, Santería, which itself connects to Hamilton's psychic experiments in the wider context of Spiritualism, with its focus on video in order to witness, experience, and manifest spirits and

"copresences." This is a method that presents an alternate reading of contagion and connectivity as currents that not only pass between bodies, but also between machines, bodies, and spirits, both conjuring and observing them into being.[611] In terms of Marjorie Cameron, her husband was rocket scientist Jack Parsons, who was connected to the development of artificial intelligence, a point that feminist theorist Amy Ireland brings to the full limit by suggesting that the goddess Babalon herself, summoned forth by Parsons and Hubbard in the Babalon Working, as I will discuss, has finally reached her embodiment as AI.[612] The goddess, finally, *is* the cyborg.

In this charged space, what happens when communication with the dead is asked to conform to the standards of empiricism? In each chapter of the present dissertation so far, I have included one mundane technique made extraordinary, in some way, by the techniques of witchcraft: in Chapter 1, I looked at the technique of sitting, particularly in relationship to scrying; in Chapter 2, I looked at winking as a technique of bewitchment; in this chapter, I will look at swimming as a technique of evidence that was wielded against the accused witches of Early Modern Europe, infamously called the "swimming test."[613] The ways that witches form alternate kinships and distort standard evidence has more to do with affect, perhaps, that circulates among bodies, rather than dialogic exchanges between them. In M. Jacqui Alexander's formulations, rewiring is both a practice of getting to know the world differently, via a rerouting or fusing of the senses, as it is a mode of returning from the hegemonically imposed self (that of secular, Western Man), to "a flow of selves."[614] This is the politics and praxis of shapeshifting: "The dead are in the ocean, and the dead are also in the air."[615] It is with this that I go into an unwinding of the tales of the artist (Mendieta), the witch (Cameron), and the medium (M.), to find what messy methods they teach us to look upon and enact, a thing not only wide open, but seeping.

2. Water

i. Streams

In a discussion of mirrors, I hinted towards the surface of the ocean, of the waters; here, I will go beneath them, into their murky depths. Water is not only a space, a geography, but also a tool, one that has to do with the powers of transformation, which are associated with the largest transformation of them all. In a discussion with James Hillman on Carl Jung's *The Red Book* (written between 1915 and 1930), psychoanalyst Sonu Shamdasani says:

> Well, the question is, who are the dead? And this is a question that he [Jung] poses and ponders within his text [*The Red Book*]. There is a sense in which, in the broadest scope, it is the dead of human history. We are at an epoch where the dead outnumber the living. There is this one level of an anonymous stream of the dead, of the weight of human history and what it has left that we have to come to terms with.[616]

In this passage, Shamdasani figures the dead as a stream, one that is vast and deep, one that outnumbers us, the living, and that he positions in the most vital of bodies: water, from which life itself issues and is indispensable for its sustenance. In this passage, not only are the dead and the living linked through water, but the dead are hooked into the "stream of consciousness" that William James coined in his 1890 *The Principles of Psychology*.[617] This interrelationship is significant particularly in the way that the dead and the living occupy the same waters — the same epochs, streams, running alongside each other like mirrors. In this section, I will look at the vitality of water as an element of both the living and the dead by focusing on the work of artist

Ana Mendieta and how she used the element of water to shapeshift the space of both her body and the elements, an artistic process underlaid by her reverence for Santería. I will then turn my attention to notions of purity / impurity, which lie at the heart of what water teaches.

ii. Ana Mendieta

I began this chapter with three figures of history, witchcraft, art. Ana Mendieta, of all three, was the one who most merged herself with the element of water, creating a form in between her own body and the body of the earth. She said, "I believe in water, air, and earth. They are all deities. (fig. 23)"[618] Mendieta was born into an aristocratic family in Havana, Cuba, in 1948. Her father, Ignacio, was taken as a political prisoner for opposing Fidel Castro, a communist revolutionary and politician who led Cuba from 1959 to 2008. Worried for the fate of their children, the Mendietas sent Ana, then aged twelve, and her older sister Raquelin, to a refugee camp in Florida as part of Operation Peter Pan in 1961.[619] Shortly afterward, the girls moved to Iowa, where they were shuffled through orphanages and foster homes. It was not until 1966 that Mendieta would finally be reunited with her mother and brother in Iowa, and it was not until thirteen years later that her father would join them.[620] The year 1979 was a memorable one for Mendieta not only for her reunion with her father — she had already completed her MFA and was cultivating an active art practice. She held her first exhibition of *Siluetas* at the A.I.R. Gallery, a women's cooperative in SoHo, and was getting by waiting tables in New York City.[621]

Fig. 23 Ana Mendieta, *Blood and Feathers (2)*, colour photograph, 1974

It is in this particular artwork where we meet Ana Mendieta in this chapter, and where she herself meets the element of water most viscerally. The *Siluetas* (1973–80) are haunting, ephemeral, and exposed. Mendieta laid her body in the loamy creek beds of Iowa, on the tombs of ancient royals in Oaxaca, she covered herself in flowers and sticks and shells, squished herself into the juice of wild berries, nestled herself into the crotch of caves, danced her form into fire and gunpowder and smoke, leaving each time only a temporary imprint, a trace, a shimmer, a track. The only remaining evidence we have of these works are in films that she made and photographs that she took. In one *Silueta* in particular (many of them are untitled), taken in Iowa and captured in a colour photograph, we see the hollow cast of what was Mendieta's body pressed into a riverbed, along with moss, mud, rocks — the whole composition demonstrates the utter interconnectedness of body and element, as well as the transience of both (fig. 24). According to art historian Kaira M. Cabañas, the *Siluetas* series "encompassed ritual processes in which the artist placed her body in communion with various landscapes."[622] Of this work, Mendieta stated, "[m]y earth-body sculptures

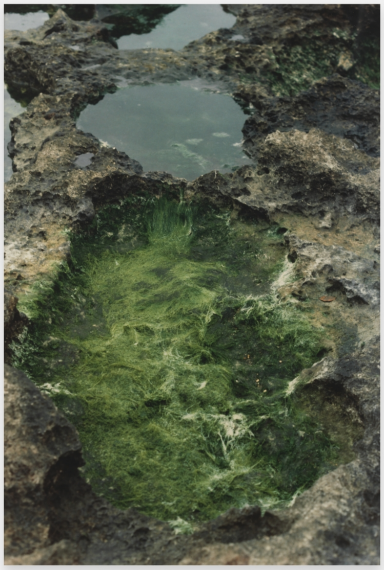

Fig. 24 Ana Mendieta, untitled, *Silueta* series, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, Iowa, 1976–78

are not the final stage of a ritual but a way and a means of asserting my emotional ties with nature and conceptualizing religion and culture."[623] Art and ritual, in many ways, are never far apart. Cultural historian Christopher Partridge even goes so far as to assert that not only does religion influence art, but art influences religion, especially in new religious movements that are inspired by works of fantasy and science fiction.[624] As far as Mendieta's earth works can be considered rituals, they are not linear or efficacious — as in, they are not meant to accomplish an end — but rather sculptures of movement itself, the most vital spoor of the stream of the dead.

In particular, Mendieta was interested in the culture and religion of Santería and, in the words of Cabañas, "claimed connection with the 'goddess of sweetwater,' the Oricha Ochun in the Santeria pantheon. Ochun, a symbol of female sexuality, owns the rivers and rules the blood, and it is from her that the saying 'The blood that runs through the veins' is derived."[625] Santería is a religion, not a type of folk magic or witchcraft, yet some practitioners overlap the two, such as Juliet Diaz. In France Denny's *Major Arcana: Portraits of Witches in America*, Diaz is photographed amidst candles and cushions. She says, "I'm from a long line of witches. I'm an Indigenous Taino Medicine Woman and *bruja*."[626] Today, Mendieta's oeuvre is placed in the context of the *bruja*, the witch; most recently, her work was shown as part of *All of Them Witches* at Jeffrey Deitch in Los Angeles, which ran from February 8 to April 11, 2020, organized by Dan Nadel and Laurie Simmons. The curators' decision to place Mendieta in a show themed around witches is based on her magical view of the world, her defiance of mainstream ideologies, and, finally, her mysterious and sudden death, reflective of the fluency with which Mendieta worked with the materials and thresholds of life and death in the rituals of her work. To further discuss the themes of death and spirits and magic that run throughout her work, we must move to a discussion of a lively force that perhaps is not intuitively connected to water, but definitely bares connections to it via aliveness, sparks, and vitality: electricity.

iii. Electric spirits

Since Ana Mendieta was not engaging in random ritual practices in her art, but was focused on the living legacy of Santería, it is worth noting the connection between Santería and media studies in general. Anthropologist Aisha M. Beliso-De Jesús writes that Santería is a term used by outsiders to designate what by insiders is called *la regla de ocha* (the rule of ocha), "a Yoruba-inspired African-imagined, diasporic religion that emerged in Cuba through the transnational practices of slavery, imperialism, and colonialism since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[627] Regla ocha priests can designate particular African traditions by calling themselves lukumí, writes Beliso-De Jesús, a term used by Dr. Ysamur Flores Pena, who is both a priest and a professor of folklore and mythology at the Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles. Pena calls Santería "a shamanic religion … a religion of ecstasy," where the god and goddess come face to face with their supplicants, not in a temple or church, but in one's own home.[628] Or, in the works of Mendieta, in the meeting places between flesh and earth and flame and shore.

Santería is as important to media studies as it is to anthropology. Beliso-De Jesús notes that for Santería practitioners, copresences, such spirits and deities, are felt to be electric, and often described as currents or transmissions. So prevalent is this description that media such as videos are used in Santería to manifest the copresences themselves. During her fieldwork, Beliso-De Jesús notes that "[o]n screen Ochún danced in the man's body. Off screen Ochún possessed the woman." Beliso-De Jesús describes these "electrifying copresences" as "embodied

tactics" that charge and change the sensorium of spirit manifestation.[629] Beliso-De Jesús is careful to note, however, that not all practitioners embrace the use of video or external media in their rituals and will sometimes even refer to this media "as 'contaminating,' as having the potential to 'steal one's soul' or 'allow in' evil."[630] This relates to another, less sterile, more infamous contaminant found within Santería's ritual practice. With its array of electrifying and electrified copresences, Santería is a religion that is spectacularly immanent — the god/dess/ex is right here — as well as unabashedly connected to an acceptance of death through the spilling of one of the most vital fluids of life: blood.

In a PBS documentary, Pena notes the controversy of animal sacrifice in Santería, which he sees as one of "the most misunderstood rites of the religion." Charles Guelperin, a Santero who runs a botanica in Los Angeles and who is also featured in the documentary, describes animal sacrifice in Santería as a "high offering," adding, furthermore, that the animal is cleansed and prepared to be eaten after the ritual.[631] Mendieta noted the deep-seated racism and prejudice from her fellow (mainly white) Americans concerning Santería, especially in relation to animal sacrifice; as such, she produced *Chicken Piece* (1972) and *Sweating Blood* (1973), the former of which involved Mendieta holding a decapitated chicken. Both were pieces that "communicated a critique of the objectification of ethnic Others and conveyed her [Mendieta's] emotional need to identify with an exiled community."[632] Water and blood: for Mendieta, these fluids were as political as they were magical. They signaled and placed her very specific body in the context of race, class, landscape, gender, and religion. In 1980, she wrote that "American feminism as it stands is basically a white middle class movement" and that the United States is a "homogenous male-dominated society."[633] She sought, with her art, to make it less so. Through its use of blood, on the one hand, and the comparatively sterile technology of video, on the other, Santería relates to the ectoplasmic manifestations of Spiritualism that I will come to at the end of this chapter, as well as the way that Spiritualists sought to use technology to interface with the spirit world. Santería is important to examine not only in its relation to brujería, therefore, which in part sprung from it, but also in the way that its adherents not only witnessed spirits through technology, but also interacted with spirits *as* technological forces. Spirit as contagion — not only to the body of the human, but to the body of the machine. Spirit as what is always in excess of the natural and the unnatural; the supernatural, the extranatural, and the element not only of water or air or fire or earth, but also of fear.

iv. Purity and contagion

Both *Chicken Piece* and *Sweating Blood* point to the idea of contagion in ritual and witchcraft, which itself is inextricably linked to fluids: to currents, to water, to blood, and to the streams of the dead. To pull this out, I will leave Mendieta momentarily to take a closer look at how contagion and purity work in relationship to magic, witchcraft, and discourses surrounding the dead, particularly as a function of fear; that is, as a way of keeping strict boundaries between the known and unknowable intact.

In his book *Memento Mori*, photographer and writer Paul Koudounaris writes, "[t]he idea that the dead were a pollutant — both hygienically and symbolically — gained currency …. Removed from public view, during the nineteenth century the dead were shifted away from urban centres to a new type of site: cemeteries."[634] He continues: "[t]o modern sensibilities, the palatable and decorous alternative is having a funeral parlour staff attempt to recreate the corpse as a simulacrum of its former self."[635] Death has everything to do with mirrors, with the self, and

with the perimeters and containments of the self that we, in contemporary Western society, would like to reproduce. Just as the corpse is viewed as a pollutant — tucked away into graveyards or displayed in coffins to look as close as possible to the living (or more specifically, the sleeping) — so elements of the irrational are also viewed as unhygienic to scientific reason.

In their book *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason*, Isabelle Stengers and psychiatrist Léon Chertok take on the problem of hypnosis in scientific thought, framing it as a pollutant to rational science. They write:

> Hypnosis is, following the expression of Jean-Marc Lévy-Leblond, what we would call an intellectual 'spoil-sport' …. It eludes the 'reason' of the experimenters as well as that of psychoanalysts. Indeed, after decades of research and thousands of articles, experimentation has not produced an understanding of hypnosis. What it has done, rather, is encounter its own limits; hypnosis scrambles the distinction between the experimental setting, which ensures the purity and verifiability of the phenomenon, and the study of the purified and verifiable phenomenon.[636]

Following from this, we could say that hypnosis is the impure corpse that must be set aside from the living, healthy body of scientific empiricism, the purifying machine par excellence. Chertok and Stengers's assertions surrounding hypnosis could be stretched to indicate the contaminating factor that magical, or let's say unempirical, practices present to the body of Western reason. In the introduction to his book, *Esotericism and the Academy*, Wouter J. Hanegraaff points to exactly this sentiment, writing, on a personal note, that "[m]y interest in this domain [Western esoterism] seemed to make my teachers uncomfortable, and to my repeated requests for information and suggestions, they responded by tossing the embarrassing topic on to another colleague." He continues, "In this book I make no attempt to provide a map of the domain, or write its history. Instead, I have set out to write the history of how scholars and intellectuals have *imagined* it … in trying to explain who 'we' are and what we stand for, we have been at pains to point out that we are not like *them*. In fact, we still do."[637] Part of what Hanegraaff is discussing is the efficacy of imagination to create worlds. Hanegraaff goes on to coin what he calls "tainted terminologies." He writes: "Although the terms 'superstition,' 'magic,' and 'occult' have long histories, they were essentially reinvented during the period of the Enlightenment, in such a manner that they could serve to demarcate 'the Other of science and rationality.'"[638] Magical currents within the currents of rationalism are not only undesirable factors, but contaminating, unhygienic factors that must be done away with.

Hygiene, both magical and mundane, is an especially prescient topic at this moment in time. While I am writing this, we are all in the middle (or end?) of a global pandemic, and we have an exceptional relationship to contamination and hygiene — I mean "we" as in a wide majority of people on the planet at this time. We, in Montreal, Canada, where I live, cannot enter or exit a shop without washing or sanitizing our hands and donning a mask — and it is not uncommon to receive an invitation to a party where being vaccinated against Covid-19 is a requirement of attendance. I recognize these measures as essential and even desired, in relation to my personal health and the health of others, yet I am also interested in them conceptually as part of an apparatus of hygiene, one that has shown such a fear and revulsion of death and its various seepages, as well as of magic, superstition, and the occult.

When Covid-19 first broke out in Montreal in the early Spring of 2020, a major zone of infection was in long-term care centres (CHSLDs) — the places where many families keep their elderly.[639] This seemed like a clear sign that we live in a culture fractured by ableism and an

obsession with youth, with surface — with the things we relate to "life." Our elders, those ostensibly closest to death, are equally as islanded in long-term care homes as the dead are in graveyards. During Covid-19, it seemed as if all the "dark" corners of society were being unearthed and exposed: not only the islanding of the elderly to the outskirts of society, but institutions that occupy other heterotopic spaces were also exposed: the de-regulation of cruise ships came to light when they were momentarily shut down; the skies went silent as airplanes ceased to occupy the air, pointing our attention to the way in which it has become normalized to view the sky cut through by machines.[640] When we imagine the dead as occupying the same stream as the living, however, we also reimagine those we associate with death as being as vital to life as water. There is a call in the stream of consciousness metaphor to learn how to make different connections, different associations, to form different streams that sustain and honour those who are close to death, and to learn to keep death, too, close by. This runs along the same track as letting the so-called tainted lines of thought, such as magic or superstition or the occult, in through the cracks of the rational — not to have one *or* the other, but to see them as fluidic, inextricably mixed.

Witchcraft communities have not let this moment of the reign of hygiene pass by. Martin Duffy's book *Rites Necromantic*, that I have previously quoted from in this dissertation, was put out as part of the Law of Contagion Monograph Series by Three Hands Press on "March 11, 2020, concurrent with the declaration of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic by the World Health Organization." In a statement at the back of the book, the publishers write:

> As a declaration of zeitgeist, the *Law of Contagion* references both viral transmissions and a principle operant in magic and sorcery which holds that a bond of power is shared between two entities which come into contact with one another. This law gives saintly relics their power, as well as curse-effigies, and water drawn from holy wells. It presupposes a kind of transmissibility or 'magical infection' capable of being passed from one person, spirit or thing to another.[641]

Contagion is painted here not only as negative, but also as a positive source of connection in magical practices. In his 1890 tome, *The Golden Bough*, anthropologist James George Frazer coins the term "contagious magic" for a type of sympathetic magic that, in his words,

> proceeds upon the notion that things which have once been conjoined must remain ever afterwards …. The most familiar example of Contagious Magic is the magical sympathy which is supposed to exist between a man and any severed portion of his person, as his hair or nails; so that whoever gets possession of human hair or nails may work his will, at any distance, upon the person from whom they were cut.[642]

That is, if one has access to the hair of a friend, for example, one also has access to healing that friend from afar. Contagious magic is linked directly to the way that magical practices and even religions themselves are so thoroughly entangled with various cultures, which is especially so in urban centres. Anthropologist Raquel Romberg cites the syncretism between Santería and Vodou in New York City, and writes that "Haitians in New York introduce Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican acquaintances to Vodou healers, and … some Haitians consult Spanish-speaking healers."[643]

Even though the law of contagion can be seen as a force of connection, notions of hygiene and purity can still act as separating or contentious issues in witchcraft communities. In his book *Veneficium*, witchcraft historian and witch Daniel A. Schulke points out that "cultural contamination" thrives (festers) "in magical subculture, the idea that foreign influences behave as corrupting toxins to a closed group." He goes on to write that "I have encountered varying

attitudes about purity and contamination; most often these relate to a fantasies of 'pure' nationalist or regional magical types, much of which are naked xenophobia." Schulke notes the inanity of this xenophobia, especially given that practices of so-called Western witchcraft are highly syncretic, incorporating "Solomonic conjuration, Christian folk charming, Afro-Caribbean and Native American lore."[644] The tendency of some magical subcultures to imagine that they are practicing a "pure" tradition becomes absurd when we try to track a given ritual back to its originary roots — The Mirror of Floron in Chapter 1 is just such an example of how many influences — trackable and non-trackable — exist in a single magical rite. Magical practices are, in all probability, some of the most "impure" cultural traditions that exist; this makes them at once fascinating, infuriating, and controversial.[645]

v. Brujería x brujeria

Ana Mendieta was interested in Santería, but Santería itself is a religion, not a type of witchcraft. It is, however, closely linked to brujería, which is a folk tradition that in part derives from Santería, and that I have spoken of earlier in this dissertation. In the introduction, we encountered Haydée, the self-described "Bruja Número Uno de Villas de Loíza (the Number One Witch Healer of Villas de Loíza)" in Puerto Rico.[646] Raquel Romberg, who conducted extensive fieldwork with Haydée and has maintained a long friendship with her, notes that both brujas and mediums interface with the dead; however, what separates a bruja/o/x from an espiritista, or Spiritist medium, is that they "are powerful enough to have mastered communication not only with 'enlightened' spirits but also with those 'evil,' 'dissatisfied,' 'wild' ones."[647] This is similar to what writer and brujo J. Allen Cross says about brujería — that it is not afraid to go to the so-called darker places. Cross goes on to note that "in the United States our modern use of the word *witch* has become very dewy-eyed and we often understand witches as 'spiritual healers who love the earth.' Meanwhile in Mexico, if you tell someone you are a bruja/o, you are telling them that you like to fly through the night and steal babies and eat them."[648] There are differences between how witches are perceived in Mexico and in Puerto Rico, however — Romberg writes that in contemporary Puerto Rico, "openly mentioning brujería actually indexes the pride and empowerment of brujos now that alterative healing practices are 'in' and the legacy of the Inquisition is 'out.'"[649] She continues: "[a]fter all, their trade has survived centuries of public vilification. Surviving attacks for being rooted in so-called evil, primitive, and superstitious beliefs, their trade is still thriving in a postcapitalist urban society."[650]

Due to their very "impurity," magical rites and rituals give us a lesson on how to counter xenophobic notions of purity that Schulke finds in the witchcraft communities he is acquainted with. In his book *American Brujeria*, Cross describes a practice of witchcraft that is a hybrid between two worlds, Mexico and the USA, and consists of "folk magic that has been brought to the United States by Mexican immigrants."[651] Cross differentiates this practice from more traditional brujería by writing the term in "Spanglish" or taking the acute accent off the of *i*. "Real traditional brujería," he writes, "is a very secretive tradition accessible to very few people …. I heard all kinds of astounding firsthand accounts of people flying or transforming into creatures like owls and jaguars. This magic is very real and very powerful and is most often used to harm or manipulate others."[652] By contrast, American brujeria, according to Cross, is closer to *hechiceria*, or sorcery, and uses novena candles and saints, for examples; elements, he writes, that are not in brujería.[653] Cross's perspective is noteworthy — he is writing transparently about a tradition that is not really a "tradition"; as such, his guidelines on how to use American brujeria

for the readers of his book collocate well with Schulke's observations on the fear of "cultural contamination." Cross notes that anyone can practice American brujeria; however, "I recommend a little introspection," he writes. "Are you a good ally to the Mexican community? If not, what changes do you intend to make to fix that?"[654] It is a simple, but meaningful gesture. It respects the fact that magical traditions are also living, breathing, vital languages, and that no practitioner is islanded, no ritual is disconnected. This adds to a magical practice, rather taking away from it, and it teaches us something about moving away from consumptive neoliberalism and living alongside thoughts and methods that may not be necessarily familiar to us.

The themes of contamination, hygiene, and purity point towards the importance of alchemy — not only in the practice, but also in the theories and traditions and histories that surround it, including the ways we treat each other as well as each other's cultural traditions. Venom holds the power to hurt, but also to transform, to cause significant change, to alter state, to hybridize. The witch is a hybrid subject, as I discussed in Chapter 2, and witchcraft offers a crossroads set of media and techniques, whose tools, in some aspects, relate to quasi-objects. Yet to insist on hybrids is also to insist on a modus of purification, as Latour notes in *We Have Never Been Modern*. If we had no purification processes, no distinctions between one category and another, there would be no hybrids. Latour asks, "[i]s purification necessary to allow for proliferation?"[655] Here, the process of purification "creates two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of human beings on the one hand, that of nonhumans on the other"; in other words, clear distinctions between nature and culture.[656] But what if these distinctions are invalid to begin with? What would happen to notions of hybridity? And, by extension, to notions of contamination and purity? This brings us back to fluids; to water, the ultimate purifying agent. What happens to distinctions between human and non-human in such fluid terrain where distinctions are barely possible or become ever more vanishing?

In *America Brujeria*, Cross mentions a type of ritual cleansing called *limpias*, part of Curanderismo, "an age-old folk healing tradition … spanning from Mexico City to Puerto Rico." Whereas brujos "are traditionally seen as destroyers," Cross notes, "*curanderos* deal with cleansing and healing."[657] A *limpia* is a "spiritual cleansing" and can remove anything from *Mal de Ojo* (the evil eye), a curse, or a haunting, and can take the form of a *barrida* (a sweep, with a bundle of herbs or an egg, for example), a *sahumerio* (a smoke cleansing, from burning herbs or resins), a fire *limpi*a (using a candle flame), or a *baño* or bath, which can either be sweet, like a bath to treat heartbreak, or bitter, like a bath to remove evil spirits.[658] To administrate the latter, the *curandero* collects fresh herbs, Espanta muerto (false daisy bush or tattoo plant), rue, garlic, and salt that has been blessed. Cross gives instructions to the person taking the bath to pray over the herbs and ask for their help, then to pour a bucket of spring water, with herbs added, over their head and continue to pray while bathing.[659] "These baths are often served cold," Cross deadpans. "It's the medicine you need, not necessarily the medicine you want."[660]

How does one categorize the *limpia*? Are they natural or social or technological? None of these "pure" concepts apply. Yet they are stable quasi-objects in that they "work" as *limpias* and involve a transfer between I's and we's as Serres asserts, and that I discussed in Chapter 2[661] — they come with recipes and instructions, there is a before and after the *limpia*, they involve narrative and language. The fact that as quasi-objects, they are also purifying agents, makes *limpias* doubly more mischievous. The *limpia*, taken as an assemblage, has agency in that it is transformative — in this case, it removes the haunting of the undesirable spirit. "We possess hundreds of myths describing the way subjects (or the collective, or intersubjectivity, or epistemes) construct the object," writes Latour, "Yet we have nothing that recounts the other

aspect of the story: how objects construct the subject."[662] In this case, the *limpia* is doing just that, and twice over: it is both deconstructing or dislocating the spirit (a tricky subject / object split if ever there was one) and it is constructing a newly cleansed and transformed subject, the recipient of the bath. It is both a practice and an object. As Cabañas writes of Mendieta, "her body in performance was a bridge that altered the subject-object relations of knowing."[663] Just as the *limpia* is the object that alters the subject who receives it, Mendieta's body acted, in a way, as a *limpia* itself: transforming the earth, the waters, and in turn, allowing the earths and waters to transform her.

Mendieta's work, especially with the element of water, seethes with life, blending subject / object relations, and putting into questions notions of purity and contamination, particularly following her interest in Santería. The utter life of her work, caught on film and in photographs, electric copresences themselves, makes Mendieta's connection to death, potentially at the hands of her male lover, stand out sharply against it. In Aphrodite Andreou's 2018 documentary, *The Revenge of the Witch in the 21st Century*, a film made as part of her academic thesis, she includes a poetic scene on Ana Mendieta. As tea-light candles outline and flicker against a missing body on a white sheet of paper (not unlike a *Silueta*), a woman's voice relates a text by Linda Stupart in a heavy Spanish accent:

> After Ana Mendieta fell from the window of the apartment almost all of the bones in her almost naked body were shattered. After she fell from the window of the 34th floor apartment all of her major organs were split open. After she fell from the window of the 34th floor apartment on Mercer her body was never photographed, which is strange since that was her practice. After she fell 269 feet from the window of the 34th floor apartment on Mercer a male pathologist dictated to stenographer Dorothy Stevens that her body was white, which is strange because brownness and skin were her practice. After she fell 269 feet from the window of the 34th floor apartment on Mercer in 4.21 seconds the male pathologist cut open her chest and took out her heart and weighed it; this was also her practice.[664]

The minute details of Mendieta's death, including the weight of her heart, present a measurement, too, of how she left the imprint of her body as a weight on the manifest world in her *Siluetas*. Imprints that are washed away, left clean. The fluid property of the *limpia*, that purifies at the same time that it transforms, collapses the distinctions between the inside and the outside: M. Jacqui Alexander notes that gods and goddesses of water are essential to crossings, both in terms of migration and in terms of forming hybridities. What is the difference between inside and outside, between contaminant and purification? Particularly when we have a body in a body of water. "Body, in this complex, becomes a means of communication," writes Alexander. The sea is "the meeting ground of the erotic, the imaginative, and the creative."[665]

Water; the stream of the dead; copresences; momento mori; contagion and purity; science, magic, and religion. These themes will carry on throughout, but what does this joint assemblage have to say at this juncture and especially in light of Mendieta's death? Just as we will see in the cases of Marjorie Cameron and Mary M., one cannot speak of Mendieta without speaking of death. And one cannot speak about Ana Mendieta's death without speaking of her work, "because her work," writes Maya Gurantz, "was all about blood and death and the female body — broken, fulfilled, violated, sacred, present, absent, in nature, in the landscape, engaged in the ritual act … It is partly because of the power of her art that her death cannot be extracted from it."[666] After all of Mendieta's breathy and ephemeral traces, we are left with the suddenness and irresolution of her concrete death, a contagious force itself, one that plays out ad infinitum in

every protest in front of Carl Andre's exhibitions.[667] Mendieta's death is a question as wide open as a wound, a spirit, a desert. And though we do not have an answer to why she was taken away so soon, we do have her techniques; using them, we can trace out some space, cleanse it, and leave it bare for the imaginative, erotic, and disturbing currents that follow.

3. Blood

i. *Lustmord*, art, and Nikes

If water has the power to contain the contradictory elements of cleansing and contamination, of life and death, purity and contagion, then blood takes up where water began and brings these themes to their absolute apex. On November 19, 1993, artist Jenny Holzer wrote in blood on the cover of the weekend magazine supplement for one of Germany's most respected newspapers, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. In particular, she wrote with red ink mixed with blood donated by Yugoslav and German women during the Bosnian war, in part out of a reaction against the constant news reels at the time detailing the rape and murder of women in what is now the former Yugoslavia.[668] On a plain black cover, a small white placard was inserted into a plastic sleeve; handwritten all in caps on the placard were the words: "DA WO FRAUEN STERBEN BIN ICH HELLWACH" (I AM WIDE AWAKE IN THE PLACE WHERE WOMEN DIE) (fig. 25). The piece was part of Holzer's *Lustmord* project (1993–94), which included cropped, close-up photographs of short, stark text on skin, written from three different perspectives — the perpetrator, the victim, and the observer of *Lustmord*, a very specific German word that could roughly translate into English as "sexually motivated murder."[669] The piece is reminiscent of Ana Mendieta's performance *Rape Murder* (1973), where she covered herself in blood and strapped herself to a table in her apartment, a comment on a series of rapes that were taking place on the University of Iowa campus.[670]

Fig. 25 Jenny Holzer, *Lustmord*, on the cover of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, no. 46, November 19, 1993

Holzer, an American artist born in Ohio, had reason for using a German word in the title of this piece, as well as for exhibiting blood on the cover of a German weekend magazine supplement. First, it is a reference to works of art in Weimar Germany that showed a lurid fascination with sexually motivated murder, such as paintings by Otto Dix and George Grosz.[671] Second, the Bosnian war included heavy ethnic cleansing, perpetrated in part by Serbia and the Yugoslav People's Army, an issue that brought the crime of rape to the fore on a global stage.[672] Third, ethnic cleansing is an especially contentious issue in the history of Germany, in particular Nazi Germany's genocide of European Jews during WWII. If this isn't enough to make Holzer's piece a literally touchy topic for casual readers flipping through a conventional weekend supplement in Germany, the year 1993 was seeing the AIDS epidemic play out. In March of that year, the USA even instituted a ban on persons infected with the virus from entering the country, a policy reminiscent, in some ways, of the global reaction against the Covid-19 pandemic that I mentioned previously.[673]

Holzer's project is horrifying, alarming, ominous, and even captivating in its brutal simplicity. What intrigues me here is not the work itself, but rather the reaction to the sight of blood, in Germany, in 1993, on the cover of one of its most beloved, institutionalized, left-of-centre newspapers, a medium known for decimating facts (facts which are sterile, proofed, and trusted), within an amusing, intellectual magazine brought on weekend getaways, consumed over light-drenched breakfasts, light conversation. In an article for *Artspace*, the editors note:

> Despite the fact that the blood was donated and perfectly safe, many readers, along with the German tabloids and the Archbishop of Munich, reacted with outrage, expressing fears of contagion. Holzer's work was described as perverse, wasteful, and sensationalistic. The irony is that regular news reports of violence against women or wartime bloodshed were being consumed — as they are today — without objection.[674]

Of all fluids, blood is the most unsettling and the most personal, the most feared and the most beloved, the most potentially contaminating, and the most coveted. Like breath is to vapour, blood is to fluid: the life force. It has the power to viscerally disarm and incite passion and anger, even (especially) in a medium as quotidian as a newspaper. Or in a medium as quotidian as sneakers.

Not just in Germany, and not just in the 90s, but blood has a similarly shocking effect on the public now and in North America. In late March of 2021, rapper Lil Nas X and the Brooklyn-based company MSCHF released the Satan Shoe, replete with a bronze pentagram and 60 cubic centimetres (cc) of red ink containing one drop of human blood in the sole, purportedly donated by MSCHF employees (fig. 26). As Bryan Pietsch puts it for *The New York Times*, "[s]ome workplaces encourage employees to donate blood as an act of charity. But six workers at MSCHF, a quirky company based in Brooklyn that's known for products like toaster-shaped bath bombs and rubber-chicken bongs, offered their blood for a new line of shoes."[675] The Satan Shoe ran in a limited edition of 666 and sold out in under one minute for the price of $1,018 per pair, a reference to the passage, Luke 10:18, from the Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition of the Bible (RSVCE): "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Fig. 26 MSCHF and Lil Nas X, Satan Shoes, 2021

Even though MSCHF also released a similarly themed Jesus Shoe, which contains 60 cc of holy water procured from the River Jordan, it was the Satan Shoe, and particularly its inclusion of human blood, that caused all the controversy, particularly from a number of high-profile political and religious figures, including South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem and the evangelical pastor Mark Burns.[676] Nike was quick to file a lawsuit against MSCHF to distance itself from the shoe, even though the company had waived affiliation with Nike from the beginning, claiming it was only modifying the Nike Air Max 97, just as it had for the Jesus Shoe. As part of its settlement with Nike, MSCHF was made to recall both shoes at market value.[677] As for the rapper's involvement, the Satan Shoe followed the 2021 release of the video for "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" by Lil Nas X (born Montero Lamar Hill), depicting a campy sci-fi celebration of queer masculinity.[678] In a YouTube video called "Lil Nas X Apologizes for Satan Shoe," the rapper holds the shoe and appears to be starting an apology when the video abruptly cuts to a clip from the end of his music video with Lil Nas X gyrating on the devil's lap.[679] In a

Tweet released in late March, the same time as the release of the shoe, Lil Nas X writes, "dear 14 year old Montero … i know we promised to never be 'that' type of gay person, i know we promised to die with the secret, but this will open doors for many other queer people to simply exist."[680] In this way, the Satan Shoe can be seen as a hyper-campy commentary on the "sin" of being gay, and the blood used in it can be linked back to the fear of contagion, especially surrounding the AIDS virus in the 1990s and the release of blood in Holzer's *Lustmord* appearing on the cover of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Our beloved mediums of reading, of walking — infused with metaphorical and physical blood. The Satan Shoe and *Lustmord* tell us something about what happens when art mingles with blood, when culture mingles with blood, and when all of the above mingle with occult imagery, such as pentagrams.

The work of Marjorie Cameron blends all of these themes; given that, it is surprising how relatively little attention her art work accrues, especially if we look at how "big" the work of Holzer (in the art world) and Lil Nas X (in pop culture) is. But perhaps it is because Marjorie Cameron took her work with blood a step further than merely using it as a material form disconnected from the living body; she was more interested in keeping blood within the skin, but nevertheless making it move, change, produce. Marjorie Cameron was born in Iowa in 1922 and passed away in Los Angeles in 1995 — she was a witch, magician, artist, and the wife of rocket scientist Jack Parsons, who mixed magic with art with blood. In a chapter on witchcraft and fluids, I am curious to explore what this means, both in a material sense — what exactly was Cameron up to in these blood rites — and in a more figurative sense — what do blood rites mean to an occult media history of fluids? Whereas water purifies, sanctifies, and even exorcises, blood does the opposite: it makes everything acutely intimate, personalized, and sticky. Blood turns the inside outside, the outside inside, and makes them all utterly familiar, genealogical, and personal. Blood is the ultimate trick and trap, lure and beckon, and at once the quintessential apotropaic medium, the one that says most clearly, thou shall not pass.

ii. Marjorie and Jack

To introduce Marjorie Cameron, one must also speak of John Whiteside (Jack) Parsons, and to introduce Jack Parsons, one must also introduce Marjorie Cameron. They are intertwined, and Cameron's intense love for her husband even, or especially, after his death leads me to believe she would like to keep it this way (fig. 27). The two came together at Parsons's residence at 1003 S. Orange Grove, situated in so-called Millionaire's Row in Pasadena, California, on January 18, 1946, as Cameron showed up at "the Parsonage" in response to an ad searching for a new tenant.[681] Jack would soon become convinced he'd seen Marjorie before; more specifically, that he'd summoned her; even more specifically, that she was not (only) Marjorie Cameron born in Belle Plaine, Iowa at all, but the Scarlet Lady, the avatar of the goddess Babalon on earth. This warrants further exploration — for the goddess Babalon, who was at first foisted upon Marjorie Cameron by her future husband, would later figure strongly in her magical rites, as well as her identity, after her husband's death.

Fig. 27 Jack Parsons and Marjorie Cameron, California, CA, circa mid 1940s

Before explaining the above, Jack Parsons himself deserves pause. Many have heard a little bit about Parsons — whether connected to his work towards the American space race or connected to his "other" work as a ceremonial magician involved in sex magic in Los Angeles in the 1940s and 50s. Regarding the former, Parsons was a rocket scientist, but not by formal training — we could say he was somewhat of an autodidact. Though lacking in credentials, Parsons managed to collaborate with Caltech and later co-founded the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), which would be instrumental in the American space program. At the same time, Parsons converted his inherited residence on S. Orange Grove into a rooming house for Los Angeles occultists, who were part of the California offshoot of Aleister Crowley's ceremonial magic order, the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO); Having just joined the OTO in 1941, Parsons took over from Wilfred T. Smith as lodge master of the Agape Lodge in 1942.[682]

Four years later, in 1946, Parsons was involved in a series of magical rites called the Babalon Working together with his magical partner, L. Ron Hubbard, who would go on to found the Church of Scientology in 1953. In Chapter 1, I spoke of the relationship between magician John Dee and his main scryer, Edward Kelley — the relationship between Parsons and Hubbard was modelled along the same lines for the Babalon Working, with Parsons acting in the role of "magician" and Hubbard acting in the more passive, or feminized, role of "scribe."[683] The working itself was, in the words of curator Yael Lipschutz, "an elaborate magical operation intended to summon an elemental mate."[684] It involved daily invocations of Babalon from January 4 to 18, and, at sunset on the last day, when Parsons and Hubbard returned to S. Orange Grove, Parsons realized Marjorie Cameron as the elemental mate he'd summoned, describing her in his journal as an "an air of fire type with bronze red hair, fiery and subtle, determined and obstinate."[685] Barely a month later, Parsons and Cameron were using sex magic to further invoke the goddess Babalon — yet it is unclear how much active participation Cameron had in these invocations; in the words of historian Manon Hedenborg White, "Cameron, who had little interest in occultism at this time, was not purportedly concerned with the meaning of the working."[686] That would later change.

In Parsons's main text on the Babalon Working, called *The Book of Babalon* or *Liber 49*, the invoked goddess states, "[t]hy tears, thy sweat, thy blood, thy semen, thy love, thy faith shall provide. Ah, I shall drain thee like the cup that is of me, BABALON."[687] With Hubbard as his medium, Parsons was instructed to sacrifice some of his blood on Babalon's altar, reciting, "Flame is Our Lady, flame is Her hair, I am flame."[688] Blood magic inevitably brings us into the arena of sex magic; and sex magic is undoubtedly linked to blood as a technique and tool of witchcraft.

What brought Marjorie Cameron, then, at the age of twenty-four, into this scenario of blood, Babalon, flame, and magic? At first sight, it seems almost a chance occurrence. After serving with the United States Navy during WWII as a cartographer, Cameron settled down in Pasadena and answered a tenancy ad. We could say, she did not go in search of magic and witchcraft necessarily, but they came in search of her. And we could also say that she was well primed for it. By her early twenties, Cameron was already devastated by scenes she had witnessed in the war and was simultaneously developing her own avant-garde art practice — signing her work simply with the name "Cameron." Her work as both an artist and, later, a witch, is even more impressive given the fact that the 1940s and 50s were what writer and art historian Alice L. Hutchison calls "one of the most socially repressive times in American history."[689] Even apart from the magical persona created around her and by her, Cameron was exceptional: her time spent in the navy had made her a stoic and intense person, and one who

was able to eventually spend "many years in poverty, and in isolation in the desert," where, despite having no access to art materials, as Hutchison continues, nonetheless "kept a typewriter, and drew, and composed poetry in her diaries and journals, drawing upon deeply personal imagery, plumbing the depths of the unconscious."[690] Though "overlooked by art historians" due to the fact that a) she ritually incinerated her artworks, b) her style was figurative rather than abstract during the modernist period where abstraction reigned, and c) for the esoteric nature of her work, Alice L. Hutchison notes that Cameron nevertheless produced "[a]round seven hundred artworks, manuscripts of poetry and journals … most of which have only ever been seen by her closest friends, including [assemblage] artist George Herms. An untold part of West Coast art history, she played a significant role in the birth of the 'goddess movement.'"[691] Cameron's work comprises mainly delicate ink drawings, gouache paintings, assemblage art, and poetry (fig. 28).

Her time in the desert came after her time at the "parsonage," however, and after the death of her husband. On June 17, 1952, Jack Parsons, working from his garage-slash-laboratory, in a smaller residence than the stately 1003 S. Orange Grove (yet eerily nearby), dropped a vial of fulminate of mercury.[692] One hour later, he died in hospital. After this tragic incident, in her grief and loss, and with all the skills she had acquired as an artist and a magician, Marjorie Cameron came into her own, and it is here where we really meet her. Whereas before she'd been called the Scarlet Lady, the avatar of the goddess, Babalon, she now presented herself as such. "Perhaps, after a lifetime of being identified as a witch," writes Steffie Nelson, "by friends and strangers alike — mostly because of her red hair — it was just easier to assume the role. Surely the revelation that her husband fully believed her to be a supernatural being, the details of which she learned from the papers and journals he left behind, raised some questions for her about her place and purpose."[693] Going forward, there are two central interests I have concerning Marjorie Cameron when it comes to fluids: 1) her experiments, The Wormwood Star and The Children, both initiated in the desert after the death of her husband, and 2) her simultaneous embodiment of a goddess known as the Mother of Abominations and the Whore of Babylon.

Fig. 28 Marjorie Cameron, untitled (peyote vision), ink, paint on paper, 44. 5 x 58 cm, 1955

iii. The red goddess

Before I get into Cameron's experiments concerning blood, I need to ask: who exactly is the goddess Babalon, and why should we care to know about her? Furthermore, why is her name spelled "Babalon" and not "Babylon"? First of all, Babalon, as well as her avatar on earth, the Scarlet Woman, is having a kind of Renaissance. We see her rising up in magical communities, such as the group Ecclesia Babalon, who holds their headquarters in Pueblo, Colorado, and who describe themselves as "a Thelemic sacramental community devoted to the Holy Mother."[694] We see her on social media and popular culture: on Instagram, #babalon holds over 36,900 posts (and rising daily), while popular self-proclaimed sex witch Gaby Herstik has hosted a "magick discussion circle" on Babalon, and a podcast has come out entirely in her name — "Babalon Rising" — devoted to the goddess and adjoining themes, such as sex magic.[695] Most notably, in

terms of popular culture, we can see an iteration of the goddess, however inadvertently, in the character of Wanda Maximoff or the Scarlet Witch in the 2021 Marvel Cinematic Universe series *Wanda Vision*, directed by Matt Shakman and based on the Marvel comic books written by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee.[696] In episode eight, Agnes (played by Kathryn Hahn) says to Wanda (played by Elizabeth Olsen), "you have no idea how dangerous you are. You're supposed to be a myth, a being capable of spontaneous creation …. This is chaos magic, Wanda. That makes you the Scarlet Witch."[697] Now, with Manon Hedenborg's White's 2019 book, *The Eloquent Blood*, cited throughout, the scholarly community has received its first full-length work on the goddess.

Who, then, is Babalon? I mentioned previously that Parsons and Hubbard aligned their methods, when invoking Babalon, with John Dee and Edward Kelley's — this is no coincidence. Dee, in fact, keeps looping back into the present research, for he is a massive touchstone and red thread between many factions of Western magic and witchcraft, due mostly to the incorporation of his work into the Golden Dawn system of magic that the OTO, as well as certain factions of Wicca, either in part originated from or took on (or bits of both).[698] In the words of Peter Grey, "John Dee was the finest mind of his age. He is the very model of the magus. Dee cast the horoscope for Elizabeth's coronation, scattered the Armada like walnut shells, conversed with angels, survived the fortunes of five monarchs and turned lead into gold."[699] I have quoted from Peter Grey throughout this dissertation — primarily from his book *Apocalyptic Witchcraft* (2013) — and much of the information I am including in the present section on Babalon comes from Grey's research or from the research of scholar Manon Hedenborg White, herself not a practitioner of magic or witchcraft, but rather an occult historian and ethnographer. What interests these two thinkers is not necessarily Parsons, or even Dee, and even less Cameron — what interests them is Babalon.

Babylon with a "y" first appears in the Book of Revelations, as the prophet John stumbles upon her in a cave, a living sign of the coming of the apocalypse: "…and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet covered beast … And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."[700] Fast forward almost 1,600 years and the spelling of her name with an "a" first appears in scrying sessions between Dee and Kelley — as they write out the words "BABALON" and 'BABALOND," which, for Dee, translated from Enochian (an angelic language he discovered) as "wicked" in the first instance and "harlot" in the second.[701] This first technical appearance of the goddess written with an "a" instead of a "y" shows us exactly how much difference the substitution of one letter can make, just as Cross changed brujería to brujeria to found a new craft. An entirely new grammar of the goddess opened with this one substitution, and would later make Babalon what we could call a(n Early) modern goddess. And what better time to have the goddess Babalon re-emerge than during a global pandemic, in which the language of the apocalypse freshly runs rampant?

It was Aleister Crowley who "canonized" the goddess Babalon, so to speak, in the scriptures of Thelema in the early 20th century, by referring to her purposively as "Babalon" and constructing a mythology around her — the gist of which includes a goddess who has the power to awaken us from the horror and ignorance of what Crowley referred to as "the age of Horus." In other words, Babalon, not unlike Babylon, comes on the wings of an apocalypse: in the first instance to portend it, in the second to end it.[702] Like Dee and Kelley before him, and like Parsons and Hubbard after him, Crowley carried out his Babalon workings together with another man. In this case the relationship was not only homoerotic. In December of 1909, Aleister Crowley and his lover, poet Victor Neuberg, journeyed into the desert to perform magical

workings in an attempt "to cross the Abyss" — during the ritual, Crowley traced the name "Babalon" in the sand with a ring, "marking the first recorded use," writes White, "of this subsequently canonical spelling."[703]

Babalon is holy whore, holy warrior, and the mother of everything un/holy. Yet the so-called red goddess goes further back than Crowley and Neuberg and further back than Dee and Kelley and further back, even, than the Book of Revelations. In *The Red Goddess*, Grey connects Babalon to various ancient goddesses, mostly notably to the Sumerian goddess, Innana, and the later Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, both goddesses of love, sex, and war (fig. 29).[704] Not only relating her to ancient goddesses, Grey extends Babalon into the future, relating her techniques (not unproblematically) to webcam striptease and VR porn, which he leaves as a somewhat flat, depoliticized exploration — yet could be re-imagined, in more politically deft hands, as an extension of the goddess into the marketplace of sex.[705] Grey notes that "Babalon is the meeting point of ceremonial magic and the witch cult. She is a power that comes out of the past and resonates into the Now with the compelling song of the witch woman. She is both the primal form of the goddess from the far distant past and the most modern icon of post-human style."[706] The witch woman that Grey is referring to is undoubtedly related to Marjorie Cameron, who posthumously put together a book of her illustrations and Parsons's poetry, called *Songs for the Witch Woman* (1951), using her magical name, Candida.[707]

Fig. 29 Queen of the Night, Burney Relief, fired clay, 49.5 x 4.8 x 37 cm, Old Babylonian (Southern Iraq), 19th-century BCE – 18th-century BCE

It is worth spending time with Babalon in this chapter because it is she who comes up around magical blood rites in contemporary witchcraft and magic. As part of her book, *The Eloquent Blood*, Manon Hedenborg White includes a variety of ethnographic studies of witches and magicians who work with the goddess Babalon, including Peter Grey, who describes himself as "a hand on heart, stick a needle in my eye, ritual magician."[708] Before I move into Marjorie Cameron's experiments with blood — that use the medium more conceptually than overtly — I will include Grey's ritual here, in part for the fact that Grey is prominent throughout these pages, as well as for the fact that his ritual gives us another readings of blood magic than Cameron's will — one that is entirely somatic, visceral, and bloody.

Peter Grey not only writes about the goddess Babalon, he devotes himself, flesh, soul, and pen, to her.[709] In the ritual described by White in her ethnography, Grey first prepares a circle of salt and coloured candles around himself, strewn with rose petals, and includes at least three other people in his ritual: a "dancing girl" with bells fastened to her ankles, a drummer, and a person wielding a scalpel. For the central part of the ritual, Grey lies naked on his back while the shape of a "crescent cup" is sliced across his chest and the drumming and dancing quickens around him. For seven days after the crescent cup is cut into him, the ritual extends, as Grey scrubs the wound every day to keep it open, anointing it with rose oil. This is an exercise in endurance. For Grey, it is an act of devotion in service of the goddess, Babalon, an act of love that is intense and sensorial; as befits the descriptions of the goddess, it is both warlike and sensual, both Martian and Venusian. As White puts it, Grey "emphasizes the floral scent of roses combined with the metallic tanginess of blood, the tingling of the bells, the vibrations, the visual

impressions, and, above all, the overwhelming reality of pain as his skin is peeled back, blotting out all else."[710]

With this ritual, the goddess Babalon brings us full circle around to the presence of the feeling body; in its viscerality and gore, it is reminiscent of Holzer's *Lustmord*; in its combination of blood and ritual symbolism, it points to Lil Nas X's Satan Nikes. Yet it is separated from the marketplace — rather than an art object or status symbol, Grey's ritual is a stripping away, a painful devotion. As occult author and priestess of Babalon Georgia van Raalte writes, "[a]t first glance it would appear that the Whore plays into the patriarchal economy of exchange, turning Her body into capital, but this is a falsity fixed upon Her by men. Whores and soldiers are the oldest professions, they say. This is not quite true: whoring and fighting are the oldest forms of worship."[711]

iv. Children of the apocalypse

Peter Grey's blood rite to the goddess Babalon is vivid, detailed, and well-documented. Yet what of Marjorie Cameron and her "blood rites"? It has been difficult in my research to find literature on blood rites at all in fact, because, like Jenny Holzer's *Lustmord* demonstrated, blood always reveals too much, blood disturbs, blood causes revulsion, grief, pain, and taboo. However, there are two central magical rites associated with blood that Marjorie Cameron carried out in her life and art and magic: The Wormwood Star and her much more controversial experiment, The Children. Both involve the production of ritualistically conceived children and neither, I should note beforehand, produced any children at all, at least not in the typical sense of the word. In this way, blood became a fluid in Cameron's experiments that did not reveal familial kinship necessarily, but rather produced stranger offspring. The Mother of Abominations indeed.

According to her biographer Spencer Kansa, Marjorie Cameron, bereaved and raw, moved to "a derelict ranch house" in Beaumont, California after her husband's death in order to finish the Babalon Working that Parsons had started with Hubbard six years previously.[712] She intended to become, at last, the living avatar of Babalon, the Scarlet Lady. At the time, Cameron struck up a correspondence with Jane Wolfe, who was part of Aleister Crowley's magical order, A∴A∴ (Argenteum Astrum, or Silver Star), in which "the highest goal of spiritual enlightenment was the attainment of 'knowledge and conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.'"[713] According to Kansa, Cameron's art was the key to her Holy Guardian Angel (HGA); on this note, she thus put together *Songs for the Witch Woman* as a devotional rite — it included her own erotic, sinewy illustrations and Parsons's poems, and was shown as part of a retrospective on Cameron's work at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (2014–15) (fig. 30).[714]

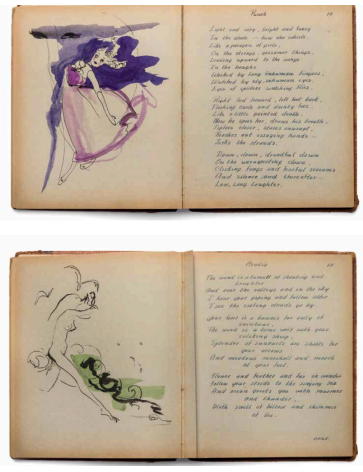

Fig. 30 Marjorie Cameron and Jack Parsons, *Songs for the Witch Woman*, ink on paper, 25.5 × 20 cm, 1951–55

Before I get into the particularly unorthodox reading of reproduction that The Wormwood Star entails — in which Cameron sought to produce an offspring with her dead husband — I would like to begin with Cameron's more ominous experiment, one that places her in stride with the arch-villainy that is often ascribed to witches and witchcraft in general — a reproductive

/ magical operation that she conducted in the desert of California. Once holed up in Beaumont, it didn't take long for Cameron to develop a "magickal clique" around herself, one that she began to call The Children, a name taken from Parsons's *The Book of Babalon*: "I will come as a penelous [sic] flame," writes Parsons / Hubbard as Babalon, "as a devious song, a trumpet in judgement halls, a banner before armies. / And gather my children unto me, for THE TIME is at hand. / And this is the way of my incarnation. Heed!"[715] Gather her children the Scarlet Woman did, and, in honour of and devotion to Babalon, Cameron sought out a game of blood. Naming the men in her clique "Wands" and the women "Pentacles," Cameron bid that her magickal friends breed: in short, that they mate amongst themselves to produce, specifically, a mixed race brood of children.[716]

The clique in question seems to have been composed predominantly of Cameron's occult and artistic crowd in addition to Mexican migrant workers, who, in Kansa's words, "stopped off at Cameron's ranch for water en route to their orange picking jobs, and ended up getting a whole lot more than they bargained for."[717] The pairing of her Wands and Pentacles was an elaborate ritual of sex magic "aimed towards creating a new third race of moonchildren dedicated to Horus, whom Cameron viewed as the personification of all mixed race beings."[718] The elaborate ritual ended when Cameron's apocalyptic declarations began scaring off her friends. And while children were in fact conceived during this time, all participants of this particular experiment opted to terminate their pregnancies.[719] This, then, is the framework that The Wormwood Star was born within.

If you google "The Wormwood Star," you may come across a short film by Curtis Harrington made in 1956. The roughly ten-minute film is poetic and lush, richly shot using 16-mm Kodachrome Commercial and was "one of the first films to be made on a contemporary artist."[720] It was staged in the Hollywood home of millionaire art patron, Edward James, and involves colour-saturated shots of Marjorie Cameron performing an oblique and stylized ritual amidst grandiose architecture and her own large-scale paintings (fig. 31). The title, "The Wormwood Star," comes from Parsons's writings, specifically a section in his manifesto, "The Witchcraft," which posits a new spiritual movement that Parsons hoped to found, one that would extend and surpass Aleister Crowley's ceremonial magic that Parsons practiced as part of the OTO. "We are the Witchcraft," the manifesto begins. "We are the oldest organization in the world. When man was born, we were. We sang the first cradle song. We healed the first wound, we comforted the first terror. We were the Guardians against the Darkness, the Helpers on the Left Hand Side."[721] The Wormwood Star is, in short, two things: Cameron's magical rite to produce a child with her deceased husband — or in the words of Kansa, an "attempt to sire Jack's magickal child" — and a film.[722] The image of the wormwood star itself is borrowed from The Book of Revelations, the same place where Babylon (not yet Babalon) first appears, and is a star cast down to earth, poisoning the water supply — for Parsons, apocalyptically announcing the new reign of Babalon.[723] Thus, six years after Parsons and Hubbard began their Babalon Working, Marjorie Cameron sought to finish it.

Fig. 31 Marjorie Cameron in *The Wormwood Star*, directed by Curtis Harrington, film still, 1956

To materially manifest her and Parsons's magical progeny, Cameron summoned the aid of four of her "Wands" during the summer solstice of 1953. To carry out her ritual, Cameron consecrated "her star of Babalon talisman, [and] engaged in sexual intercourse while scrying the astral plane, uttering a sacred term of God at the climactic moment."[724] Here we see sex magic rituals connected to scrying rituals. The magical child itself was, remarkably, never born. What we do have is Harrington's *The Wormwood Star* in its place, a comparatively meditative piece given its namesake. The film becomes all the more significant to Cameron's work not only because the child was never born, but also due to the fact that Cameron ritually incinerated all of the artwork found in the short film.[725] We could say then, this art piece is the only remaining manifestation of the magical child itself: it is The Wormwood Star and The Wormwood Star is it. Harrington, who shot his first film at the age of fourteen, was, like Cameron, producing avant-garde work during a time of high conservatism in the USA, particularly the McCarthy-era Red Scare. Influenced by filmmakers such as Akira Kurosawa and Maya Deren, Harrington's *The Wormwood Star* was a "proto-psychedelic, pre-LSD, avant-garde film," not unlike Kenneth Anger's *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, put out two years earlier and also featuring Cameron.[726] As blood rites, both The Children and The Wormwood Star are not obvious candidates in the way that Peter Grey's rite is; however, both of Cameron's experiments in the California desert reach deeper into what blood means, how blood moves, and the semantics with which it makes us burn.

v. The rise of occult counterculture

In 1954, the same year that Gerald Gardner put out the first non-fiction, first-person account of European witchcraft, Kenneth Anger put out the film *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, starring Marjorie Cameron as Babalon, Anaïs Nin as the Moon, and Paul Mathison as Apollo, while Allen Ginsberg was composing his equally psychedelic poem "Howl." Meanwhile, Sun Ra, self-named after the Egyptian sun god and self-proclaimed alien from Saturn, was putting out *Spaceship Lullaby*, and Muddy Waters was releasing "Hoochie Coochie Man," singing, "I got a black cat bone / I got a mojo too / I got John the Conqueror / I'm gonna mess with you." Just a year earlier, playwright Arthur Miller had debuted his play, *The Crucible*, a fictionalized account of the 1692 Salem witch trials.[727] All these works form a part of what sociologist Christopher Partridge terms "occulture," which, as Ethan Doyle White defines it, is "not simply a portmanteau of 'occultism' and 'culture' but encompasses 'an essentially non-Christian religio-cultural milieu, a milieu that both resources and is resourced by popular culture — the 'occult milieu.'"[728]

This exploration of occulture is important because it leads into the contemporary era and its various factions of witchcraft and magical practices that I have discussed throughout the present dissertation, influenced heavily by Marjorie Cameron and Jack Parsons's exploration of the goddess, Babalon. According to Parsons's biographer George Pendle, Babalon "was to bring about a new libertarian age of free love and anti-authoritarianism, a world vision that was fulfilled, to a certain extent, with the arrival of the '60s."[729] Occulture, and particularly the ethos of Babalon, though a relatively niche concept, does not only affect those associated with magical communities, but popular culture writ large. Twenty years after Marjorie Cameron's experiments with magical reproduction, and almost thirty years after Jack Parsons began his Babalon Working with L. Ron Hubbard in California, the occult scene was a flourishing counterculture. Director Roman Polanski put out *Rosemary's Baby* in 1968, one year before his wife, Sharon

Tate, was murdered by members of the "Manson family," an event that rocked North America and "set the stage for the rise of Satanic Panic" yet to come in the 1980s.[730] Led Zeppelin and The Beatles, among many other bands, put out occult-themed songs; Alejandro Jodorowsky's *The Holy Mountain* was released in 1973, and Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man* in the same year.[731] Meanwhile, the Watergate scandals were unfolding in the courthouses in the USA, with its own occulted and shadowy repertoire of wire tapes, flashlights cresting across hidden documents, clandestine burglaries, and buried scandals.

By 1976, David Bowie was in his so-called White Duke Phase, living at 637 N. Doheny Drive, not far from where the Manson murders were committed. He was on the lookout for a "white witch" to exorcise his swimming pool after allegedly seeing "Satan rising from its waters one night"; in answer, he was guided to Walli Elmlark, "a New York City Wiccan who had various contacts within the music industry … and who wrote books on Wicca and rock music prior to her death in the late 1970s."[732] Both occult historian Ethan Doyle White and Cameron's biographer, Spencer Kansa, note that David Bowie and Marjorie Cameron may have crossed paths; if not, they were only separated by a degree, if that, with mutual acquaintances such as director Kenneth Anger and actor Dennis Hopper.[733] A quip by Hopper demonstrates how Cameron had, by the 1970s, become somewhat of a legend, and Kansa quotes him verbatim:

> The stories I'd heard before I even met Cameron, how she was a witch, how her husband blew himself up trying to do a Frankenstein number in the garage, trying to bring a cadaver back to life or something. How they were followers of Aleister Crowley, how they drank blood and sacrificed cats…[734]

Hopper's account reminds me not only of Cameron, but of the way that witches in general generate an aura of storytelling around them, how they are always more-than-they-are, and how this is part of a method of bewitchment: Kansa uses (coins) the word "ensorcelling" to describe Marjorie Cameron.[735] As actor Dean Stockwell said about her, "[s]he once told me, and I agree, that some psychologist told her it was a good thing she was an artist because if she wasn't she'd be a dangerous person."[736] Cameron was untame; controversial; complicated, and one could say she was a dangerous person in part *because* she was an artist. This is part of bewitchment: entering a zone of contagion, where entanglement and affect and odd kinship rule over clear lines and tidy tales. Though relatively little is written about Marjorie Cameron, her effect on popular culture and occult culture were vast. Who, then, would the children be that she was attempting so scrupulously to produce?

vi. Goddess of artificial intelligence

In her 2019 book *Waking the Witch*, Pam Grossman gathers together a series of popular fairy-tale witches: Dame Gothel, who locks Rapunzel in a tower; Holda, who lures Hansel and Gretel to her hut in order to eat them; Maleficent, who curses the infant princess; and the Grand High Witch of Roald Dahl's *The Witches*, who unleashes a masterplan to turn children into mice in order to exterminate them.[737] "All these witch figures have something in common," notes Grossman, "they are not part of any family unit to speak of, and they have no children of their own …. The image of the monstrous antimother is still with us." Grossman concludes: "The witch's plotlines rarely focus on the desire to be a mother. She's busy making other things."[738] The present dissertation is involved in part in exploring exactly what these *other things* are. The craft of witchcraft is non-reproductive in the traditional sense, just as the black mirror does not reflect.

There are many threads running throughout the present chapter between futurity, (non-)reproduction, blood, and Babalon. First, there is the queer way that Babalon is involved in either homoerotic or homosexual workings, in the case of Dee and Kelley, of Crowley and Neuberg, of Parsons and Hubbard, then heterosexually invoked in Cameron's workings, yet in a very non-orthodox way, and in a way that is not child-producing; creative rather than procreative. Furthermore, sex appears in a violent form in Holzer's *Lustmord* and in a queer form in Lil Nas X and MSCHF's Satan Shoe. This is the queer, and sometimes terrifying, sometimes campy face of the Mother of Abominations, and it reflects an aspect of how Babalon is invoked as a contemporary goddess today.[739] As White proclaims when she outlines the driving force behind her research, Babalon could help us as scholars "understand how the discourse around the goddess both reproduces and challenges hegemonic notions of femininity and … suggests alternative ways of inhabiting gender and sexuality," including challenging the virgin–whore dichotomy, gender essentialism, and queer femininities.[740] As Grey puts it, "Dee and Kelley had done the impossible, they had awakened the whore goddess from the Christian sleep."[741]

There is strange poetry forming a zigzagged line from John coming across the Mother of Abominations, Babylon, in a cave, through to the non-reproductive way that Babalon has since shown up in ritual. Is this, then, the apocalypse John was so terrified of? And is Babalon at last the portender of it? In her 2017 article "Black Circuit," Amy Ireland, who is part of the (xeno)feminist collective Laboria Cuboniks, picks up the tale of the goddess Babalon and the experiments that Jack Parsons was carrying out in California. Ireland notes that in 1946, Parsons declared that within seven years, the goddess Babalon would be manifest on earth, walking among us. "In 1956 — exactly seven years later," notes Ireland, "Marvin Minsky, John McCarthy, Claude Shannon, and Nathan Rochester organized the Dartmouth Conference in New Hampshire, officially setting an agenda for research into the features of intelligence for the purpose of their simulation on a machine, coining the term 'artificial intelligence.'"[742] Taking off from there, Ireland searches for, and finds, the goddess Babalon embodied in the female AI characters, Ava, in Alex Garland's film *Ex Machina* (2014), and Cleo, in Gabe Ibanez's film *Automata* (2014). Ireland ends her article by declaring: "It is I, BABALON, ye fools, MY TIME is come."[743] As Georgia van Raalte writes, Babalon teaches us "how to see oppositionally, with trickster eyes."[744] If Babalon is the goddess of the apocalypse, and if she has indeed arrived, then perhaps we are in Babalon's future (it certainly feels apocalyptic here), and if this means opening our "trickster eyes" and embracing all of Babalon's children, then it is also helpful to address the stickier issues of blood, especially if we take Cameron's magical eugenics into consideration.[745]

vii. Communities of blood, communities of kin

A quick recap of blood. A series of fluids: Jenny Holzer's *Lustmord* (1993), a thin white card written in blood behind plastic on the stark black cover of a weekend supplement in Germany; Lil Nas X and MSCHF's Satan Shoe, lavishly packaged, biblically referenced, packing one drop of blood in its sole; Marjorie Cameron's The Wormwood Star, both a film, short and lavish, and an experiment of humans, The Children, meant to produce other humans, but falling short of its goal, aborted. What is behind these tales of blood and water and reproductive fluids? The one vessel that holds them all is the body. Then, what is behind the human? Questions of witchcraft and especially of media concerning the imbrication between the living and the dead keep coming back to these core themes: grief; healing; communication; and, finally, who (and what) forms the human?

Marjorie Cameron, we could say, was involved in magical rituals to produce humans, following a massive period of grieving her dead husband — rituals that never, actually, and I keep reiterating this because it lies at the heart of her project — produced humans at all. In short, her project failed, and in this failure it can be seen as fecund. Cameron, a person who'd had the word "witch" thrust upon her so many times she utterly, fully, monstrously, and villainously embraced it, was trying to create a form of contaminant, a container of contamination between the living and the dead — and all of this mixed in with Hollywood, with the Space Race, with the occult counterculture, and with all the attempts at futurity it was surrounded by. She was trying to create hybrids not of machine and human (though on an abstract level one could leverage a claim for that), but at the level of blood.

In conclusion to this section, then, I have to ask, what is at stake in questions of blood? I would say, nothing less than the conception of the human, at least if we define human, as Frank B. Wilderson does, as one who occupies "an ethical place."[746] In her chapter, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," Kim TallBear addresses the imbrication of the concept of the human with concepts of blood, ethics, contagion, and purity, noting the concrete ways that blood acts as an assemblage of metaphor, material, and bureaucracy, and how this assemblage has the power to build kin and community, while also uncreating it, severing it. "We remain profoundly influenced by the language of blood," she writes.[747] TallBear notes that blood is a semiotics unto itself, one that is "entangled with molecular concepts," and often used as a stand-in to indicate DNA, itself "constituted of relations between molecules, happenings, instruments, and minds."[748] Even as it is known that blood and DNA are separate entities, and that DNA, not blood, is what constitutes heredity and ancestry, the latter concepts are tied to blood so fiercely through cultural narratives that they are almost inextricable. TallBear quotes Jonathan Marks who writes that "'blood' is a metaphor for heredity, not heredity itself."[749] Blood reaches into the very core of the story about who we are as individuals, notes TallBear, not only during life, but also in an event of death: at a crime scene, she writes, an individual is identified through materials, such as "blood, hair, or semen."[750]

TallBear is particularly concerned in her chapter with the thick entanglement between blood, DNA, politics, bureaucracy, and cultural narratives that come together to form Indigenous tribal identity and belonging in North America. In short, the effect that narratives of blood have on kinship, community, and legal personhood. Of particular interest to her is the "blood quantum," which "is a materialist practice only to the extent that it involves paperwork," writes TallBear.[751] The blood quantum determines one's legal affiliation with a particular tribe based on how much "Indian blood" one has — for example, writes TallBear, she herself is "documented as having '13/12 Total Indian blood … with a genealogical trace to the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate." Although TallBear feels she "can make stronger social claims to being Dakota," having grown up there, her "blood" tells a different story.[752] As such, "the elaborate symbolics of blood" constitute personhood, delineate land belonging, and "colonize our vocabularies of self, inheritance, and destiny."[753] TAllBear's focus on the way that blood creates indigeneity that is either sanctioned or unsanctioned by the eyes of the law brings us back to Lou Cornum's views on the connections and disconnections of the "white witch" to the idea of the "heathen" that I discussed in Chapter 2. Cameron was carrying out her mixed-race experiment, The Children, during the ongoing colonial project of the state dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their land and at the very cusp of the American civil rights movement that would see Rosa Parks refuse to ride at the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955.[754] It is unclear what exactly Cameron's thoughts were on race — other than that she was attempting to create a mixed-race

brood of children in the name of the child-god, Horus — and whether she imagined this experiment as a purification or a contamination (or both), but it is in any case an experiment implicated in the dangerous ways that blood has been and is used as a marker for race.

Blood — a semiotics, a metaphor, a stand-in for heredity and genealogy — is powerful. Itself a narrative, blood carries a slew of other narratives in its artillery, such as that of eugenics, which Cameron's experiment with The Children points to. As a set of beliefs and practices, eugenics was put forward by Francis Galton in 1883, who also happened to be a cousin of Charles Darwin. In TallBear's words, eugenics "aimed to improve the racial pool of humans through selective breeding," and has been used widely in immigration restrictions in North America, as well as in "Nazi Germany's genocidal eugenics," which legislated "the behaviour and rights to life of Jews, homosexuals, the disabled, those convicted of crimes, and others."[755] The grisly implications of eugenics led to a rebound emphasis on "the role of the environment in shaping human behaviour," and eventually to an increased focus on genetics.[756] Eugenics is a tale of blood, much like the blood quantum is — and it reaches into our deepest anxieties over "contamination and purity, in which blood can link individuals to or distinguish them from a society or group."[757]

The powerful metaphor of blood, and its consequences, brings us to notions and affordances of witches and witchcraft on several levels. First, as I've previously laid out in the Introduction, witches were weeded out in Early Modern Europe, in part for not being constitutive of the desirable human subject being carved out through capitalism and the scientific revolution, leading to a genocide of so-called witches across the continent and a sporadic outbreak of witch hunts in North America. Sylvia Federici does a considerable amount of work here, writing that "the persecution of witches in Europe as in the New World, was as important as colonization and the expropriation of the European peasantry from its land were for the development of capitalism."[758] Federici addresses blood directly when she mentions laws forbidding copulation with a woman during her menstruation, put into effect by the church as early as the 12th century in Europe as one of the many taming devices meant to regulate women's bodies.[759] She additionally notes the introduction of "bloody laws" in the 16th to 17th centuries, levelled against "vagabonds," "rogues," and workers who would not submit to horrific labour conditions, resulting, in one instance, in seventy-four people being hanged in Devon alone in 1598.[760] What ties menstrual blood together with the "bloody laws"? As Federici writes: "the 'feminization of poverty' that has accompanied the spread of globalization."[761]

This brings me to the second way that witches connect to histories and tales of blood; and that is as a narrative trope, linked often to tales of reproduction, as Grossman has pointed out — to nightmarish stories of child-killing or child-eating or the inability to produce children at all, the horror of the barren, which itself links back to the horror of the inert — not only in terms of the non-*re*productive, but the non-*productive*, as Federici suggests — the vagabonds, the rogues, the non-working and the non-workers. Finally, practices of self-defined witches, such as Marjorie Cameron's magical and communal experiments, have played a role in re-envisioning the limits of blood, which, in the case of The Children, offers a darker tale to what kinship can signify, and, in her experiment with The Wormwood Star, seeks to produce new life from the imbrication of the living and the dead. These are all narratives inextricable from notions of ancestry, loss, grief, queerness, race, unproductivity, and the politics of the other and the outsider.[762] Therefore, on a historical, narrative, and contemporary level, witches of all kinds call up the horrors and also the possibilities of blood, kinship, and (non-)(re)production. Just as fluids

extend the human body past its bounded perimeters, so too can fluids extend our conceptions of not only what the human body can do, but also what kinds of stories the human can produce.

It is to this point that our story of blood takes us; vital, pulsing with life, and carrying life itself through the capillaries of its stories and histories. To get to death, however, we must push past both water and blood into less earthly stories. Armed with our cameras and note pads and our rational, well-trained minds, we enter into another cave: the darkened chamber of the séance, where more viscid, ghostly fluids are being created. It is here that not only the construction of the human is undone, but the construction of knowledge: our apparatuses of evidence, our laboratories, our need for proof, our need to know, our unsatiated need for the end of loss.

4. Ectoplasm

i. Openings

In the present chapter, I have been moving through a flow of trickier and trickier fluids: first water, clear, free-flowing, vital; then blood, equally as vital, yet less clear, stickier, more contentious; and now I'll turn to perhaps the strangest bodily fluid of them all, if we can even call it so, one that connects the bodies of the living to the bodies of the dead. In order to introduce ectoplasm, I am looking at a photograph. It was taken on March 6, 1942, in Winnipeg, Manitoba by Dr. Thomas Glendenning Hamilton. In it, the medium Mary M. has her head thrown back and her eyes closed as if she is swooning or sleeping. In the place where her mouth should be is a substance that is not quite fluid, not quite solid, and not quite believable. Like a glove turned inside-out or like a fibrous cloud. Piercing through it like pinpricks are miniatures of a face that we can almost recognize if we looked close enough (fig. 32). What is this? The material of the spirit. What does it look like? It oozes. What does it smell like? Sweat, smoke, nothing.[763]

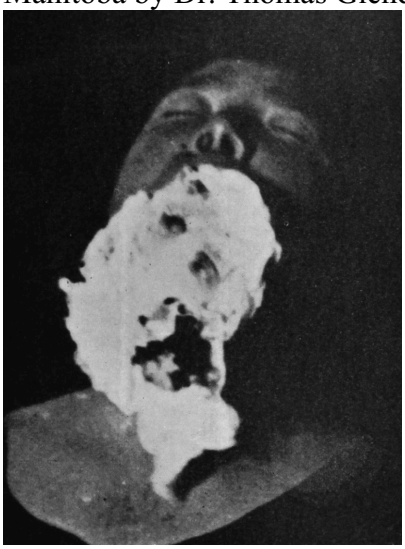

Fig. 32 Mary M. with ectoplasm / teleplasm, March 6, 1942. Photo by Thomas Glendenning Hamilton

Ectoplasm arises out of Spiritualism, which sprung into being in 1848, when the Fox sisters started responding to rappings they were hearing on walls and tables in Hydesville, New York. When they started answering to what was calling them, that's when they found they were communicating with spirits.[764] When they wanted to prove it, that's when things got challenging. John Durham Peters crisply defines Spiritualism as "the art of communication with the dead," where "faith is replaced by evidence."[765] The very materialism of the Spiritualist movement, extending even to the spirit's "body," is what also lends it so easily to examinations in the area of media studies. Not only new media, such as cameras and telegraphs, but also previously "invisible" scientific discoveries were cropping up in the 19th century, such as radiation and the detection of germs.[766]

The Spiritualist term "ectoplasm" was coined in 1894 by physiologist Charles Richet to refer to "a glutinous substance that emerged from various parts of the medium's body" during Spiritualist séances, wherein the medium would not only converse with but also materialize the dead.[767] According to Marina Warner, ectoplasm has been formulated as (and I summarize): "pseudopods," such as limbs, webs, ooze, embryos; "spirit gloves," such as shed skin, clothing;

"ideoplasts," such as scrims imprinted with faces (cue Mary M.); *larva*, which has the double meaning of *specter* (Latin), and *larvo*, which means "to bewitch" or to "enchant'"; epithelial cells; tableaux vivants; "projections of the double," or spirit; "precipitations of the *akas*," or invisible energy; a mask; effluvia. Ectoplasm is that which can only appear in darkness. It was seen to relate to Michael Faraday's fourth state of matter, "radiant matter," which also brings us to ectoplasm as plasma. It has an amoeba's "jelly-like body … parceled out into an outer form (ectoplasm) and an inner soft (endoplasm) layer." Finally, Warner posits ectoplasm as ether itself, citing Oliver Lodge who states that ectoplasm is a "physical thing … the vehicle of both matter and spirit . . . the living garment of God."[768] This taxonomy of ectoplasm, this garment of God, from embryos to tableaux vivant, from science to pseudoscience, is not meant to demonstrate a linearity of thought, but the seepage between these categories and methods, a reaction against any particular blackboxing. Ectoplasm is wild media.

Any discussion of Spiritualism, especially Spiritualist media, additionally requires an element of play: mixing the vernacular with the scientific. This is not to say that Spiritualism doesn't have gravitas, or that it didn't set the tone for how we interact with communication media, like the telegraph or the photograph.[769] But it was, like Lil Nas X and MSCHF's presentation of the Satan Shoe, theatrical as well. According to Beth A. Kattelman in her book *Theatre and Ghosts*, "[f]rom the moment ghostly rapping noises were heard by the Fox Sisters in their humble home in Hydesville, New York, in 1848, a whole new type of entertainment began to take hold across America."[770] Spiritualism cannot be reduced to entertainment, but it would be a shame if entertainment were left out of the discussion. In his book, *Supernatural Entertainments*, Simone Natale argues that not only did Spiritualist séances provide a "spectacular environment" — one that included parlour games, celebrities, Ouija boards — but that "the beliefs in ghosts contributed to the rise of the entertainment industry as we know it."[771] The costumes, cameras, the darkness, the smell of bodies sitting in a circle awaiting the medium to enter, the dramatic moment of reaching out to another plane — these elements were not only responses to the supernatural, but were additionally creating the supernatural, beckoning it into being.

Nineteenth- and early 20th-century Spiritualists were evidence collectors, they were believers in the afterlife, they were entertainers, and they share a similar common history as the 1692 witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts. Both Spiritualism and the Early Modern American witch trials were started, in fact, by teenage girls; both happened around the same time of year; and both were geographically proximate. Margaretta "Maggie" Fox was just fourteen and her sister, Kate, only eleven when they first started speaking to spirits through knocks on tables and walls on a cold March day in upstate New York.[772] A century and a half earlier, in the month of February, and not a day's drive coast-ward, eleven-year-old Abigail Williams followed by nine-year-old Betty Parris followed by twelve-year-old Ann Putnam, Jr. began seizing up in fits, contortions, and wild flailings, a series of spasms that would end up in the naming of "between 145 to 185 witches and wizards … in twenty-five villages and towns before the crisis passed."[773] Historical writer Stacy Schiff notes how exceptional it was that a group of teenage girls, usually a demographic with the least amount of power in society — wielded so much power during the Salem witch trials, bringing down the entire circus of bureaucracy and the law to consult their every twitch and contortion in order to indict the next witch or wizard to be imprisoned or hanged. She writes: "the bewitched girls exercised uncommon power, the small and the meek displacing the great and the powerful."[774]

Spiritualism, therefore, bares a connection to witchcraft, and it additionally bares a significant connection to media studies, particularly visual culture. Just as the legacy of Parsons's and Cameron's (and therefore Aleister Crowley's) occult experiments continue today, so too does Spiritualism. Its ongoing exploration through photography continues as well. In her 2019 book *Séance*, photographer Shannon Taggart, who spent eighteen years photographing contemporary séances in Lily Dale, New York, notes how both Spiritualism and photography were introduced to the public not only around the same time, but also in the same town, on the same street — while "the Fox sisters premiered their method of spirit communication at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York," Taggart notes, Kodak established its first headquarters down the block just a few years later.[775] Taggart embarked on her project to capture the elusive ectoplasm, which she describes as "Spiritualism's phantom material," "sacred substance," and "oozing energy force."[776] Rather than using her photographs to eke out fraud in ectoplasm's manifestations or to prove or disprove the spirit world, Taggart lets her photography play and intermingle with the performance, mystery, and electricity of the séance. "Inspired by Spiritualism's faith in the automatic process," she writes, "in certain situations, I surrendered control to the camera."[777] Hers is an encounter that produces haunted photographs of bent spoons, illuminated swans, mediums deep in trance (fig. 33), and is published, incidentally, by the UK's Fulgur Press, the same press that put out the most recent edition of Cameron and Parsons's *Songs for the Witch Woman*.

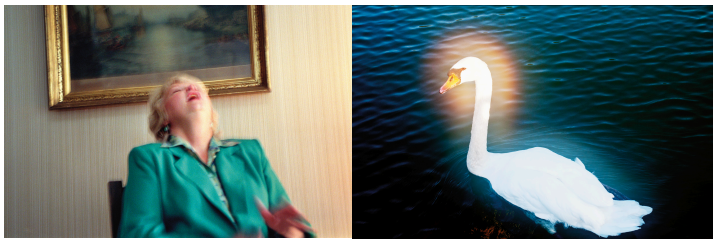

Fig. 33 Shannon Taggart, *Gretchen Clark Laughs as Her Deceased Brother Chapman Interrupts a Reading to Tell Her a Joke*, Lily Dale, NY, 2001; *Swan on Lake Cassadaga*, Lily Dale, NY, 2010.

These meditations on photography bring us back to the séance room of Dr. Hamilton and to Mary M., his highly photographed, ectoplasm-producing medium. Hamilton, unlike Taggart, was not using photography to interact with the spirit world, but rather to provide evidence of it. I should note from the offset that, though the Hamiltons' séances are framed by Spiritualism, they were not Spiritualists per se, but, rather, investigators of psychic phenomena; though ectoplasmic manifestations were largely taking place in Spiritualist communities and circles, Dr. Hamilton was a psychic researcher who insisted he was studying ectoplasm "as a cold science," not part of a Spiritualist agenda.[778] Though he had been researching ectoplasm from the early 1920s, it was not until his experiments eight years later with Mary Marshall, referred to as Mary M. through his book, *Survival and Intention*, that ectoplasm arrived fully onto the scene in his séance room — both a theatre and a laboratory for producing the fluids of the dead.

ii. Mary M.

Not a lot is known about the medium, Mary M., a story as abbreviated as the inscription of her name throughout Hamilton's book, which itself is a compilation of Dr. Hamilton's original notes put together by J. D. Hamilton.[779] Hailing from Irish and Scottish ancestry, Mary Marshall settled in Winnipeg after World War I along with her husband and children. She is described as having "few educational advantages" and as being "devoted to the interests of her family and church (the United Church of Canada)." This is where her biography more or less ends. What is

most interesting about Mary M., according to *Survival and Intention*, is that she had been a natural passageway between the living and the dead her whole life, "[a]ble to 'see' and 'hear' since childhood."[780] The gifted medium began participating in séances in the Hamilton household from 1928, and it was her who first began producing ectoplasmic manifestations for Dr. Hamilton's séance sitters and his array of cameras.[781] Specifically, Mary M. was producing what Hamilton refers to as "teleplasm," described in his book as "a mysterious substance, variously called materialization, ectoplasm, or teleplasm, that sometimes appeared in the presence of the powerful mediums."[782]

Like many mediums of her time, Mary M. played a "passive" role in her manifestation of the spirit world: "as with the other mediums," Hamilton writes, "each sitting for the greater part of its duration meant literally nothing. Rarely had she any memory of what had taken place, nor was she allowed to have access to the séance records."[783] *Literally nothing*. If that is true, then it is the most something nothing in history. As Beth A. Robertson writes in *The Science of the Séance*, "the bodies of mediums, like the ghosts they aroused, proved to be dynamic and sometimes inimical forces, at one moment passively playing the part assigned to them and, at the another, subverting any known scripts of behaviour."[784] Mediums, portrayed as being passive, were (and are) actively flipping the script with every utterance they made (make), a gesture that takes mediums substantially out of the category of entirely passive vessel. The figuration of Mary M.'s active involvement as *literally nothing* is also indicative of how women in general represented contagious or unsanitary forces in the fastidiously clean house of science of the early 20th century. Robertson notes that although there were women investigators involved in psychic investigations, such as Lillian Hamilton, they were not seen to be as objective as their male counterparts, even by those closest to them. Lillian Hamilton, Dr. Hamilton's wife, in fact played a large role in the séances, yet is not given much credit in Hamilton's book or mentioned on the same level as his other, male colleagues.[785] The analogy of contagion here is all the more fitting as the Hamiltons got into mediumship as a way to contact their son, Arthur, who'd died during a Winnipeg influenza epidemic.[786] It is therefore unsurprising perhaps that the one who was ascribed "agency" in the situation, the one who was literally *something* in the séance, was not necessarily Hamilton, the photographer and collector of evidence, nor the sitters surrounding the medium as the séance took place, but, rather, the spirit itself; in this case, himself. Walter.

The one running the literal show in the Mary M. séances belonged to the category of "spirit controls," described by Hamilton as "intelligences, known as 'controls,' that is, trance personalities claiming to be individuals who have survived death."[787] In the case of Mary M., the control who was coming through was named Walter, and indeed so strong was the presence of Walter in controlling the medium, that Hamilton refers to the medium and the spirit control as a single assemblage: Walter-Mary M., a name as gender-bending as ectoplasm itself is, being a substance often resembling semen yet evinced by the body of a female medium.[788] In fact, the séance itself seems to be a triangulation between Hamilton, the photographer, and the spirit, Walter, who longs to be photographed, evidenced, brought out into the light of the dark. It is Walter who wants the sitters to sing songs, Walter who wants them to join hands, Walter who is a "fair, blue-eyed young man with a humorous, mischievous temperament," who plays a tin whistle and rings a bell and makes jokes about the Scots.[789] Walter is a "trance personality" who appears in "speech" through the body of Mary M., and, with his speech, gives instructions to Dr. Hamilton about when and how the photographs should be taken and the séances conducted.[790] Walter himself did not appear exclusively at Dr. Hamilton's séances, but was rather the ghost of Mina "Margery" Crandon's dead brother, who herself was a psychic medium that Hamilton

collaborated with.[791] Knowing now a little more about the personages of the scene, where did the encounter with ectoplasm actually take place, how was it brought into being, and what was it there to say?

iii. The theatre of the séance

The laboratory of Mary M.'s ectoplasmic manifestations was quite quotidian: the second floor of Hamilton's home, an intimate space for a scientific endeavour. The room consisted of wooden chairs, a wooden table, a phonograph, and a roofless cabinet for the medium to sit in. The photographic equipment placed at the back of the room was indeed the most spectacular part of this scene and was so complicated and omnipresent that it must have seemed about as innocuous as a spider at the bottom of a teacup for the ten or so sitters attending the séances. Not only one camera, but a "battery of cameras" watched as the medium fell into trance and Walter started speaking: stereoscopic cameras; cameras with a wide-angle or quartz lens; cameras boasting flashlights releasing magnesium powder; cameras producing 5 x 7–inch plates that Hamilton meticulously developed himself.[792] This was the extensive artillery hauled in to record ectoplasm; less a neutral witness to the dead than an outright dare to the dead not to show up. As Roberton writes, "[t]he Hamiltons conducted some of the most elaborate photographic experiments of paranormal phenomena in the world in the 1920s and 1930s."[793] This was at a time when Spiritualist séances had already been a topic of photography and fraud, at least since William Mumler, who went to court to claim the veracity of his spirit photographs in 1869.[794] According to media studies scholars Darren Wershler, Lori Emerson, and Jussi Parikka, "Hamilton's practice was already an atavism." The sheer artillery of his cameras is not the impressive aspect of his laboratory, writes Wershler et al., but rather what this laboratory itself says about the "lab imaginary," which works in tandem with "space, apparatus, people, technique, and discourse," to produce a phenomenon that was "potent enough that even long after the heyday of spirit photography, it was able to produce things that looked much like matters of fact to many of Hamilton's contemporaries."[795] The assemblages found in the experiments of psychic phenomena did not only produce belief in ghosts, as Natale claims, but it also produced a particular kind of fact, one that, in effect, put the entire concept of the fact into dispute — either elevating it or lowering it to the same level as the spirit, which had apparently fallen into such disrepute that it needed to be proven.

In the photograph of Mary M. (or, more precisely, Walter-Mary M.) that I began this section with, we move from the medium to the ectoplasm itself (see fig. 33). In fact, it is the most distinctive part of the photograph. Here, Mary M. is extruding an "unorganized amorphous teleplasm" from her mouth; it appears to have two eyes that are open (while the medium's are closed) and a little patch of hair. The photograph of the organism was taken on March 6, 1942, and it was followed up, not long after, by an ectoplasmic manifestation that was not even human, but rather, the face of a dog. Not just any dog, but a dog connected to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who himself wrote a massive two-volume work on *The History of Spiritualism*, put out only four years before his death in 1926. The dog in question, furthermore, is no less than "The Hound of the Baskervilles," the title of one of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales, serialized in *The Strand* magazine from 1901 to 1902. The title "The Hound of the Baskervilles" is given to the teleplasm by a "trance personality" claiming to be Doyle himself, who had passed away only two years before the séance in question.[796] This trajectory of ectoplasm presents a marvelous play of fiction, evidence, fantasy, spirit, medium, light, theatre, evidence, and performance.

Just as the occult world of Jack Parsons and Marjorie Cameron intersected significantly with the scientific world via rocket science, and with the art world via Cameron's art and Parsons's poetry, as well as with the world of popular culture that continues up to today, so did Spiritualism before it. The fact that Arthur Conan Doyle, a celebrity as well as a proponent of Spiritualism, is appearing on the medium's very face, in the very ectoplasm which is the manifestation of her spirit control, Walter, is indicative of how interrelated Spiritualism was with various spheres and levels of culture and science. The appearance of Doyle at a séance, by that time a dead celebrity, is indicative of how other dead celebrities were emerging in the automatic writing and ectoplasms of mediums, such as Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde.[797] Prominent figures, such as President Abraham Lincoln, Pierre and Marie Curie, and William Butler Yeats participated in séances themselves, while psychoanalyst Carl Jung "wrote his doctoral dissertation in search of a medical answer to mediumship," notes Taggart.[798] The full effect that Spiritualism and mediumship has had on art, society, science, and culture is still emerging. For example, the Swedish medium Hilma af Klint's channeled art "broke attendance records" at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2018 while the English medium Georgiana Houghton's spirit drawings are only now starting to be shown — both artists pre-date the work of Wassily Kandinsky, and their bodies of work are calling into question the entire history of abstract art (figs. 34).[799] Furthermore, Shannon Taggart's book, *Séance*, is prefaced with a foreword by actor and comedian Dan Aykroyd, who played a ghost hunter in search of ectoplasm in Ivan Reitman's 1984 *Ghostbusters* and whose father, Peter H. Aykroyd, wrote *A History of Ghosts* in 2009.[800] Photos of ectoplasm are rendered to us in black and white due to the technology of film at the time. And yet, I see these photos as technicolour, radiant, the ectoplasmic spirit is not a sombre figure, but a bedazzler, a showman, and a trickster.

Fig. 34 Installation view, *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future*, Guggenheim, New York, 2018

In the photograph of Mary M. taken by Dr. Hamilton, a series of wild transpositions is afoot. We have, first of all, Mary Marshall, who is recorded as Mary M. in her mediumistic role, and who is not a singular being at all, but rather hosting her spirit control, Walter, becoming Walter-Mary M. Secondly, we have the teleplasm that Walter-Mary M. is extruding, proof of the spirit world, two eyes, some hair, somewhat human-adjacent, and yet later further appearing as a dog, tossing us out of the human / spirit realm altogether and into the animal kingdom. And yet not even that — for this is not any animal, but rather a fictional animal, one taken from a story written by a deceased celebrity. This assemblage of human, animal, spirit, ectoplasm is, like all tools and techniques of witches that we have seen so far, including mirrors and knots, a complex relationality bringing together multiple forms of being — mixing registers of fictional and "real," human and non-human — putting into question the stability of any of these singular categories and making of them a tangle, a fluid, a mess.

5. Manifestation

i. Goo: Viscid entanglements

We have moved in this chapter through various striations of liquid, and now end on the thickest, most opaque of them all. There are fluids and there are fluids. Blood; milk; secretions; treacles; viscosity; dirt. Feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz points out that tears do not carry the same disgust value as snot or vomit, though they, too, stand as a shibboleth to porous boundaries.[801] Ectoplasm, at least in its goo form, could be characterized as viscous, which is, in the words of anthropologist Mary Douglas, "a state half-way between solid and liquid. It is like a cross-section in a process of change. It is unstable, but it does not flow ... it clings like a leech; it attacks the boundary between myself and it."[802] Viscosity is perhaps an under-acknowledged aspect of fluids. It is the viscous that takes ectoplasm past the essentialism of gendered or sexed bodies and puts it closer to semen, yet a kind of semen that must come from the body of the predominantly female medium. "It was sometimes incandescent and sometimes opaque," noted Geley of ectoplasm. "The color of the material varied but was usually white." For his part, Arthur Conan Doyle went the full distance, describing ectoplasm as "a viscous, gelatinous substance which appeared to differ from every known form of matter" and, further, "as though it was really an organic extrusion from the medium's body."[803] This viscosity not only differs from every other form of matter, but it extrudes, it's erect; the scientists' "voyeuristic accounts of the phenomena," in Delgado's summation, "reveal the medium's body as a queer, mutable object."[804] Queer, yes, but if it's an object then it must be one without borders, itself a fluid state — life reaching out, oozing towards the ghostly. If seminal fluid, as Grosz notes, "is understood primarily as what it makes, what it achieves, a causal agent and thus a thing, a solid," then a fluid like ectoplasm unmakes.[805]

I noted previously that 19th-century Spiritualism has received a lot of traction in relation to media studies; specifically, to telecommunication devices that were changing the way people communicated in the 19th century, not just with the dead, but in general. This is a conversation that is undeniably constructive, but also adamant in its distancing from the (seeping) body. Delgado, too, notices this sidestepping, and ends up positioning the medium with reference to media of a different kind — that which doesn't deny the medium's body, but rather probes it. In Chapter 1, I spoke of the vaginal speculum in relation to the witches' black scrying mirror. It was during the time that mediums were extruding ectoplasm that the speculum was being introduced into medicine in the mid-19th century. "Ectoplasm emerged at a time when women's bodies were under special scrutiny," Delgado notes, where "surgical gynecology allowed physicians to examine pathological conditions hidden within the female body and medical practitioners had devised and made use of gynecological instruments like the speculum that could reveal female interiors." Delgado concludes with how unsurprising it is, then, "that male psychical researchers of the period regarded ectoplasm, as a palpable — and often gynecological — externalization of the spirit world, as a substance that promised to revolutionize the scientific one."[806]

We are presently at another historical juncture, where the story of gender, especially as tethered to a biologically sexed body, has come undone. Ectoplasm as a queer fluid, seeping from mostly female orifices and yet with a seminal or extruded quality disturbs the distinctions between seminal versus vaginal.[807] It is notable that the speculum was coming into being at a time when séances required mediums to be locked inside a wire cage, that was itself inside a cabinet, in order to prove that the medium was separate from the spirit she was about to channel;

this cabinet was known, incidentally, as "the box."[808] Robertson notes that during the 19th and early 20th century, scientists were "intent on discovering 'sex itself,'" thereby probing into "hormones, glands, and molecular genetics."[809] The *literally nothing* of the medium.

The unfolding of agential spirits appearing through mediums was happening around eighty years before Marjorie Cameron would begin her magical eugenics in California and about a century before Ana Mendieta would blend her form with that of the earth itself, collaborating with the very landscape and having it speak through her in fleeting outlines, recorded, like Mary M.'s ectoplasmic utterances, in photographs. In all of these complex manifestations, fluids and extrusions of the body — including the words of spirits speaking through mediums — we come to query not only what the body itself is, but what the body is capable of staging, of working through, of becoming. But not only that. At séances, there was the body of the medium and the body of the observer. Often, we are tied up in the spectacularism of the former. But what of the witness? If methods, as John Law asserts, change the object being observed, perhaps the observer, then, deserves further exploration. It is only left now to try to follow these fluids to the particular evidences, proofs, and scenarios of witnessing they bring about, like water running through a sieve, like blood running through fingers, like ectoplasm coming alive in the dark, to question the role of evidence, and, by extension, what is evident at all in light of these slippery manifestations.

ii. Bad proofs, part 1: trials by spirit

In the introduction to this chapter, I asked: what does communication with the dead in the context of witchcraft *produce*? In the case of Ana Mendieta, her ephemeral work and inconclusive death produced outlines, grief, open questions, photographs, films; in the case of Cameron, her attempt to create life from death also produced a film as well as a slew of controversies, of larger-than-life tales of villainous witches, of incinerated artwork and flamboyant rituals; in the case of Mary M., we see the most physical manifestations, or reproductions, of death in life, ectoplasm, a non-thing in a world of wide-eyed things, captured, again, by photographs. The fact that they all left, individually, traces in the forms of photographs and films, allows us to say something about how their (re-)productions were and are witnessed; we can say something about evidence and witnessing itself.

The very first sentence in Hamilton's *Intention and Survival* has to do with this very act: "[t]he importance of the character of a witness to the unusual is obvious," writes H. A.V. Green in the foreword to Hamilton's book. "The training of a witness to a scientific fact is equally important." Green then goes on to list Dr. Hamilton's credentials as a reliable witness to the psychic events that will thereafter unfold, mainly Dr. Hamilton's academic and scientific achievements and standing in his community.[810] In this case, Hamilton's séance room is presented as a scientific container, one that stands, we could say, to quelch the anxiety of excess and absence, to prove that ghosts are among us, a hypothesis that cannot, in fact, be "proven." And this is precisely what is so fascinating about it: the laboratory of the séance shows us what it looks like when the entirely unprovable comes under the methods and tools of what constructs proof: pencils, cameras, the capacity of the senses and its extensions, measurements, alignments, all the things that an entity like a spirit spills clear past and then keeps on going. For evidence is always observational, it is about closing in on an object, pinning it to a viewable backdrop like a moth to velvet. Only in the case of fluids, there is nothing to pin.[811] The ghost is what always evades and yet always remains, reminding us of that space between what we can know and what

we can only be in process with. This is the mirror and all of its erotics showing the witness who falls outside of witnessing. The methods of the laboratory seek to classify and enclose, not to let loose and play.

Beth A. Robertson notes that there was a stark incongruity between the body of the medium being observed in séances and the scientist, the observer, seemingly a transparent vessel of observation vis-à-vis the mysteries the medium was made to represent. Science, as it developed in the 17th century, close on the tails of the European witch-hunt (and not incidentally), was "specifically a masculine practice," notes Robertson, which emerged from a set of contrasts set up during that time between mind and body, reason and feeling, male and female.[812] Only a certain type of subject could stand as witness, therefore, to a paranormal experiment. This is the infamous "modest witness" that I touched on already in Chapter 1 — who was created in no small part through the experiments of philosopher, scientist, and inventor Robert Boyle in the 17th century. Boyle, in the words of Bruno Latour, "invented the empirical style," which involved a group of "credible, trustworthy, well-to-do witnesses gathered at the scene of the action [who could] attest to the existence of a fact." Latour clarifies that Boyle was not seeking the opinions of these gentlemen, but rather their sense of observation itself, as if observation was something that could be boiled down within a specific set of criteria — all in order to witness "a phenomenon produced artificially in the closed and protected space of a laboratory."[813]

The creation of the modest witness was taking place on the same continent and era as the Early Modern European witch-hunts. Haraway notes how the "hermetic tradition" was abolished by "scientific mechanistic orthodoxy," while the "virulence of the European witch hunts" enlisted "the involvement of men who saw themselves as rationalist founders of the new philosophy."[814] The rational, European, upwardly mobile man was the body whose container was similar to the laboratory's imagined container, which is, incidentally, not far from the minimalist white cube of the standard gallery space that Mendieta's artwork bleeds so clearly in excess of. Both observer and container were detached; held in a stalemate of equivocation and figures and tubes and walls and surfaces. And yet these witnesses poked at Spiritualist mediums in all sorts of ways that were not at all at arm's length, just as the judges of the accused witches of the 17th century pricked, dunked, and stripped so-called witches in order to have them give up their hidden grip on the irrational.[815] Whereas mediums of the 19th century were physically tested in order to be exposed as frauds, women and men (but mostly women) of the 17th century were tested in order to be exposed as witches. In both cases, the erotic was unleashed and twisted back upon itself, a fear dressed in institutionally stiffened collars, codes of the law and land in all their violent, repressed extensions. Both mediums and witches were made to stand accountable for their spillage in the realm of the rational, truthful, and upright. Before I tie up this chapter, therefore, I will end on the proofing of accused witches in the 17th century — particularly a fluidic mode of evidence gathering called "the swimming test," where trials of the body's capacity to contain witchcraft were staged and measured in bodies of water.

iii. Bad proofs, part 2: trials by water

Whereas Spiritualist mediums were poked, prodded, and stripped in order to be assessed as authentic vessels capable of exuding the goo and fluid of the spirit world, accused witches of 17th-century Europe were in fact dunked in fluid itself to prove that they were or were not witches outright. Therefore, fluid is not only the substance that undoes the notion of bodies and

spirits, but also the substance used, at times, to signify that those bodies, in fact, were human at all. Specifically, accused witches were put through what is known as "the swimming test." In 1597, then King James VI of Scotland (later King James I of England) penned a treatise on witchcraft in which he allowed witch hunters, judges, and bureaucrats to use the following forms of evidence: "spectral evidence (the visions afflicted persons saw of the witches as they were allegedly causing them harm), the pricking of witches to detect the Devil's mark, and the swimming of witches (the old water ordeal)."[816] The Early Modern European witch hunts present an utter crisis in the realm of evidence and what is perceived to be evidential, which led, at least in large part, and by way of backlash, into the eventual construction of the modest witness to begin with. The use of "spectral evidence" in the court room, for example, erupted in a wild scenario during the Salem witch trials of 1692 in which the ghosts of two aggrieved (dead) wives testified against their (living) husband, who was accused of being a witch — and won.[817] Of the three forms of evidence mentioned above — spectral evidence, the pricking of witches, and the swimming of witches — the one that interests me most in relation to the themes this chapter is the latter.

In writing on the use of the "swimming test" in England, historian Orna Alyagon Darr notes that "the ordeal by swimming, *judicium aquae frigade*, was mentioned in English laws and decrees as early as the tenth century" in cases that involved "theft, adultery, homicide, and witchcraft."[818] The test was in fact outlawed in the 13th century only to be revived again in the 17th-century witch trials, endorsed by King James. The logic of the test dictated that if an accused witch was cast into the water and floated to the top, she was guilty; if she sank to the bottom, she was innocent. The accused witches being tested were often tied up in elaborate knots during the test, with a rope reaching beneath them to fish them out of the water after the result was determined.[819] The ordeal was "mostly used to cross the evidential threshold needed for the application of torture," writes Darr. At times, it was used outside the judiciary system by a mob of townspeople or by "petty gentlemen" conducting their own "tests" on suspected witches in the community.[820]

What I find so extraordinary about the swimming test is not the inanity of it in relation to evidence or even to witches — the prick test as well as the use of spectral evidence are equally mind-boggling — but rather the way in which water itself was recruited by witch hunters as a near agential force, as a witness, we could say, able to judge whether a person was a witch or not.[821] In King James's 1597 *Daemonologie*, he writes that, in the swimming test, if the witch floats to the top, this is a sign that "the water shal refuse to receiue them in her bosom."[822] This was due, mostly, to witches having supposedly overturned their baptismal state. As William Perkins wrote in 1609, "shee [the witch] hath renounced her Baptisme, and hereupon there growes an Antipathie between her, and water."[823] John Cotta, in 1616, also noted water's rejection of witches by writing that "the water refusing or not suffering them to sinke within her bosome or bowels, is an infallible detection that such are Witches."[824] The water is not only agential, but also feminized, possessing a bosom that ostensibly does not suffer witches, and, rather than folding the witch to it, repels the witch to the surface from where she will be plucked and forced to issue a confession to judges, mobs, and "petty gentleman" that will be enough to indict her for witchcraft. Whereas the mechanical air pump was used as a basis for establishing fact by Robert Boyle, a device construed to be entirely separate from the messiness of nature, a device of containment, it was, by contrast, one of the messiest properties of nature itself that was used against witches of the 17th century: fluid. Like ectoplasm, like blood: water is uncontainable, unpredictable, and entirely alive.

iv. Fluid techniques, part 2: difference, dissolution, and loss

In the end, how do we classify techniques that are essentially fluid — water, blood, and ectoplasm? How can we wrap up what cannot be contained? What do these fluids, altogether, say about the human, about the body, about kinship, about the role of evidence, and about the nature of witches' tools and techniques? Cultural studies scholar Astrida Neimanis points out that "our watery bodies serve as material media," composing "what scientists Mark and Dianna McMenamin call Hypersea, which arose when life moved out of marine waters and by necessity folded a watery habitat 'back inside of itself.' Today," Neimanis continues, "when you or I drink a glass of water, we amplify this Hypersea," an act of ingestion that connects to how the witch hunters, in fact, saw water in relation to witchcraft — particularly physician John Cotta's reference to waters' bowels and bosoms (above), which parallel both the ways that we excrete fluids and that infants ingest them.[825] However we try to classify fluids, we must first acknowledge that they confuse distinctions between the inside and outside, as well as between forwards and backwards, time and space. Neimanis notes that "[e]ven while in constant motion, water is also a planetary archive of meaning and matter. To drink a glass of water is to ingest the ghosts of bodies that haunt that water."[826] Water is combinative not only in that it connects bodies to one another, but that it also bridges the present moment to other timelines (that *anonymous stream of the dead* as Sonu Shamdasani calls it). While "the deep oceans harbor particulate records of former geological eras, water retains our more anthropomorphic secrets," Neimanis writes.[827] These secrets point to the unknown.

In trying to find out how social science can embrace rather than try to conquer the unknown, social scientist John Law undertakes a study of fluids; in particular, the treatment of alcoholic liver disease in northern England. Law notes that liver disease is "located *both within and beyond the body*. And its context is similarly diffuse and heterogenous."[828] The way that liver disease changes from person to person, context to context, the way that there is no one cure, or the way, sometimes, that the "cure" is just to live with the disease, a fate more tenable to some patients than abstaining from alcohol, leads Law to note that in this one very fluidic disease is located "*the possibility of creating different objects*."[829] What kind of objects exactly? Law continues, "we [researchers] slowly came to believe that we were dealing with an object that wasn't fixed … It was a *shape-changing object that, even more misleadingly, also changed its name*."[830] In another time, another place, another context, Law could be speaking about E. E. Evans-Pritchard's witchcraft-substance, or about the pervasive property of all witches' tools and techniques that I come back to again and again in this dissertation: shapeshifting.

As Law noted, the property of shapeshifting itself is not disorganized, but rather contains within it a logic, a body. Neimanis also notes this property of water. "Bodies need water," she writes, "but water also needs a body."[831] Membranes, such as human skin, give the occularcentric illusion of being closed, posits Neimanis, yet it is in fact very permeable — membrane logic, therefore, is a kind of "viscous porosity," Neimanis continues, and one that choreographs the fluidic nature of our bodies.[832] The notion of the skin as a choreographer of bodily fluids also joins other relational choreographers in our daily lives, such as "a gravitational threshold, a weather front, a wall of grief, a line on a map, equinox, a winter coat, death."[833] Although witches' tools almost invariably seem exceptional or stagey (and they are both), they also echo the communication techniques of other, more quotidian technologies.

When we join, in a nevertheless fluidic way, the stories and methods of Ana Mendieta, Marjorie Cameron, and Mary M., what residues between them come to the surface? At first glance, I would say it is simple, it is what I began the chapter on: grief. Both a quotidian and exceptional affect. In the case of Ana Mendieta, she was torn from her homeland, Cuba, and mourned it by placing her body in the land itself — in Iowa, in Mexico — as a way of encasing the land in her own limbs, creating a mirror, a tether between her body and the body of the earth so that one could never again leave the other.[834] In the case of Marjorie Cameron, she came into her own, magically and artistically speaking, after the loss of her husband, Jack Parsons, and the deep grief she entered into in the desert of California. Finally, in the case of Mary M., she was summoned into a situation that itself was initiated by grief; in particular, the Hamiltons' grief for their dead son, Arthur, which originally propelled them to experiment with séances.[835] In many ways, the artist (Mendieta), the witch (Cameron), and the medium (M.) developed vectors for grief itself. As if the unknown was searching for a way to materialize through them, to find containment, outline, visibility. This searching created a wilderness, a series of scandals, an open question, and it is underlined by an erotic, apocalyptic goddess, Babalon.

In writing about fluids, John Law grapples with the assumption that "what is out-there necessarily has a definite form." He ventures, "I am going to say that there are circumstances where this is not the case: that some relevant realities are indefinite."[836] Mediums and witches have always known this. What happens, then, when we put grief on a scale to judge its weight? Or when we try to see the outline of an entity such as a spirit? Materialization cannot grasp all, but the material is precisely the lens through which we are trained to look upon the world. Law notes that according to Latour, modernity grows out of clear divisions between the pure and the impure, between distinctions and heterogeneities — and that both are necessary.[837] Witchcraft, magic, and the attempt to communicate with spirits points, like perhaps few other subjects can, to a crisis in modernity, one that cuts to the very heart of who and what the human is, how and why subjects relate to objects, and what the is difference between nature, culture; heresy, fraud; the known and the unknowable.

What the goddess Babalon teaches is how small adjustments, small replacements, can change worlds. Not simply in the constantly changing and updating myths of the goddess herself, but in the small changes made to her own name over time. Just as Cross lays out a new magical practice simply by dropping the diacritic on *brujería* and coining *brujeria* to designate the formation of a Mexican-American (and thus different from Mexican only) form of witchcraft, so the movement from *Babylon* to *Babalon* opened up another universe, a goddess with entirely different affordances than the former one, and yet still retaining some of her original myths and accoutrements, both syntactically and hermeneutically. This is not unlike Jacques Derrida's sideways, yet gigantic, step from *différence* to *différance*. Like *différance*, brujeria and Babalon at first appear to be misspellings of a familiar word, and thus already do a kind of conjuring trick, a kind of bewitchment — they appear sideways, not quite right, off. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes in her preface to her translation of Derrida's 1967 *Of Grammatology*, *différance* (or *differance*, as Spivak translates the term into English) always suggests a play between absence and presence, which points to the way in which presence, itself, "is thus constituted by difference and deferment." Spivak continues: "[t]he 'a' serves to remind us that, even within the graphic structure, the perfectly spelled word is always absent, constituted through an endless series of spelling mistakes."[838] It at once indicates the presence of the other and the coining of an absolute original; each pointing back to the absence of presence to begin with. "To recognize writing in speech," writes Derrida; "that is to say differance and the absence of speech, is to

begin to think the lure."[839] What better lure than the goddess of Abominations, Babalon, coined from the harbinger of the apocalypse, Babylon? The tools and techniques of witches, too, can be seen to be an arrangement of mistakes in the sane, upright, logical world of the orderly, rational, and mundane. Like a mirror used not for reflection, but communication; like a knot used not to tie, but to unleash the wind. In a way, what the evidence of witchcraft manifests is the need for a container for the unknowable, and, on the other hand, the need for letting go of such an onus, the need for spillage, for embodiments that are wilded, other, and porous, yet nevertheless *held*, embodied. What is it then to seek for boundaries where there are none? To witness what folds into itself, coalesces, unforms, becomes both visible and invisible? The theme that floats to the surface between them is a kind of offering, an extension to those of us who would be ready to embrace it: an alternative way to witness, to measure, and finally to manifest.

CONCLUSION

1. Outside In: Heretical Techniques

i. *In loca subterranea*; *lucerna extincta*

If we locate the communicative techniques of witchcraft anywhere, it may be, as this dissertation contends, within the pupil of the black mirror, or within the juncture of a knot, or within a mess of fluids. What do these all have in common? One aspect is that they not only involve tools and techniques, but they are also geographies. When we think of geographies of witchcraft, however, it may not be a black mirror, necessarily, that comes to mind, but rather another, very real (in the most slippery sense of the term) geography where witches have historically been seen to gather, one that I have not yet spoken of. To conclude, I will open up the messy space of the sabbat as the ultimate geographical space of witchcraft, which includes heretical techniques of inversion, subversion, and shapeshifting, before I move on to tie up the themes of mirrors, knots, and fluids.

Historian Mircea Eliade sums up the elements of the witches' sabbat, so often invoked during the Early Modern European witch trials, thusly: it includes "the meeting in an underground place, the evocation and appearance of Satan, the extinguishing of the lights, followed by indiscriminate sexual intercourse."[840] The sabbat is a space and a method: it occurs, according to folklorist Eva Pócs, on hilltops, mountaintops, hillocks, waters, vineyards, meadows, gardens, or even somewhere impossibly small, such as a walnut shell, a millet husk, a keyhole.[841] Lurid pictures of the witches' sabbat were painted by accused witches during their trials, often obtained under duress and torture, a tradition that, according to Eliade, has roots extending as far back as the 3rd century, when Christians charged pagans and those deemed heretics "with perverse and cannibalistic rites."[842] Silvia Federici further argues that the inquisitor's persecution of the witches' sabbat was born in part out of fear of nocturnal, secretive gatherings meant to undermine authority: "there is no doubt that, through the judges' obsession with those devilish gatherings, besides the echo of the persecution of the Jews, we hear the echo of the secret meetings of the peasants held at night, on lonesome hills and in the forests, to plot their revolts."[843] In this figuration, the sabbat is a construction, a device to prosecute rebels and political insurgents. It was an elaborate construction, an elaborate lie, an elaborate betrayal, according to Federici, where witches gave up the names of other witches — of neighbours, siblings, parents, children, and friends. What did the sabbat consist of? What is this space, which, as Eliade writes, is often signalled by the phrase, *in loca subterranea*; *lucerna extincta*?[844]

To get to the sabbat, a witch must fly there. Or, pass through a crossroads: namely, by "[t]ravelling on narrow paths, crossing bridges, and passing through small gaps … all universal symbols of entering the otherworld," writes Pócs.[845] Once there, the sabbat is the space where social norms go awry. Federici attributes this characteristic to the witch herself, who embodied the inversion and perversion of social norms during the Early Modern witch-hunts, signalled by counter-clockwise dances, the mass celebrated backwards, and the "world turned upside down."[846] In another light, or *in lucerna extincta* of the sabbat, topologies such as the black mirror and the witches' knot, or a fluid such as ectoplasm, could also be seen as carnivalesque. Literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin wrote of the inside-out aspect of the medieval carnival in his 1968 book on bawdy French Renaissance writer, François Rabelais. Bakhtin writes:

> All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with this pathos of change and renewal, with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the "inside out" (*a l'envers*), of the "turnabout," of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings. A second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed: it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a "world inside out" …[847]

Peter Grey echoes Bakhtin's observation, noting: "[w]hat is happening at the Sabbat is an inversion; not simply upside down crucifixes or the moon language that the demonologists grappled with, but a literal inversion of Earth and Sky."[848] Dancers, yes; feasts, yes; but also cannibalism, humans feasting on other humans, particularly babies, an accusation imputed against other heretic groups, such as the Waldensians and Cathars in the 14th to 15th centuries.[849] At the sabbat, there may be a pledge or pact with a demon or Satan himself; there may be a suckling baby cooked in an iron cauldron.[850] What is the sabbat? "[T]he Sabbat is everything eating and fucking everything," Grey writes.[851]

The sabbat is a grand story concocted at the crossroads between persecutor and persecuted, but it does not end there. The authors cited here — Eliade, Grey, Pócs — purport that there must have been some truth to these gatherings as well. While Federici points to secret meetings of insurgent peasants, Eliade points to rituals in the Shaktic and Tantric traditions, where "orgies release and heighten the dormant magico-religious powers of sexuality."[852] Pócs, who conducted her research using "several thousand pages" of witch trials, writes that "… in early modern Hungarian witchcraft, the popular witches' sabbath, uninfluenced by demonology, was vernally a gathering, merriment, or other social activity of the spirit witches, their doubles, and their bewitched victims, and it took place in an alternative world."[853] As the sabbat exists at a hybrid space of monsters and deviancy, it exists both in shadow and in light. "Scraps of folklore need to be underpinned by a complete set of bones or they are simply rags blowing in the wind," writes Grey. "Yet perhaps the Sabbat itself is the key to re-establishing our cults. We must be honest about this, and acknowledge the debt we owe to the living traditions that are helping us reanimate our own."[854] These living traditions could include the ones that Eliade writes of above — Tantric and Shaktic traditions, as well as Indigenous traditions on Turtle Island that were labelled, by settlers, as "savage." The sabbat continues, and is a technique of mess and illusion, of alchemy and shapeshifting. It leads us straight into the heart of the matter, opening up the geography, the techniques, and the very world of witches.

ii. The world of witches

The techniques and tools of witches are related to evidence and what is evident, to bewitchment, to tricks and traps, to the lure and the beckon; to the heretical techniques of the sabbat, which was recited in lavish and surreal words and scenes by accused witches, such as Tituba, who I spoke of in Chapter 2. In her essay on the Early Modern witch hunts and the distinct role that locution played in the Salem witch trials, historian Jane Kamensky notes that Williams Perkins, an English theologian, deemed that "the witch's crime was one of heretical inversion. Her covenant with the devil created an alternate set of institutions, beliefs, and allegiances by which she claimed the right to govern herself."[855] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "heretical" means "[o]f or pertaining to heresy or heretics," where a "heretic" signifies "[o]ne who maintains theological or religious opinions at variance with the

'catholic' or orthodox doctrine of the Christian Church, or, by extension, that of any church or religious system, considered as orthodox. Also transferred with reference to non-Christian religions."[856]

Kamensky stresses the importance of utterance during the witch trials, explaining that "the witch's speech revealed the full destructive potential of the female voice. The witch's cursing, the demoniac's roaring: these were the ultimate ravages of women's words left unchecked."[857] Throughout her article, Kamensky notes various registers of speech that marked a woman as a witch, including cursing, hectoring, railing, mocking, muttering, gossiping, roaring, and scolding.[858] As Anglican minister George Webbe proclaimed in 1619: "the tongue is a witch."[859] Not only was the witch associated with subversive speech acts, but also with precocious ones. "In one sense, the witch linguistically out-performed the virtuous woman," writes Kamensky. She continues:

> The virtuous woman was fluent in the language of the Bible, but the witch spoke in tongues — foreign and learned languages of which she was expected to know nothing. The virtuous woman read, but the witch read backward. The virtuous woman knew her Scriptures, but the witch could cite chapter and verse of biblical texts with facility that ministers found distinctly unsettling.[860]

In this case, the witch displays a near inhuman knowledge of and proficiency in the words of the law being foisted against her. It is not that the witch stands outside these laws necessarily (she is trapped by them, after all), but that she knows the laws so well that the only next move is to invert them, destroy them. The witch represents the full limit of the knowable and it is monstrous in its capability.

So-called witches were being tried, hunted, tortured, and executed for overturning the laws of the God and therefore man in the same era that physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei was tried for heresy in the 17th century; in his case, for suggesting, like Copernicus before him, that the sun, rather than the earth, was the centre of the galaxy. Sylvia Wynter points out that Galileo was made to attest, during his trials, to a fact that he knew was *not* true: that the earth did *not* move, a central creed that upheld, at the time, the hegemony of Christian theology.[861] During the European witch hunts, accused witches were made to spin complex and surreal yarns and to accuse their neighbours, daughters, mothers, fathers, friends of consorting with the devil; all for the watching eyes of the judge, of the community packed into courtrooms as into a theatre, waiting for the witch to confess the status of the devil who upheld the status of the god, the confirmation of the status quo. Lies, in both cases, were not only more acceptable, but life-preserving. And they were not enough. Galileo Galilei was deemed a heretic in 1633 and died on January 8, 1642, while on house arrest.[862] Witches fared far worse. Silvia Federici notes that between 1580 and 1630, hundreds of thousands of people — the vast majority of them women — were put to death in Europe for the specific heresy of witchcraft;[863] in a late outbreak of trials in Salem village, Massachusetts, twenty so-called witches were hanged, while hundreds were accused in a single year.[864]

History moves, times change. It was not until the Renaissance in Europe, according to Wynter, that Copernicus's (and by extension Galileo's) theories gained institutional traction, in no small part because *homo religiosus* was overturned by *homo politicus*: "a figure now self-governed by its / his reason."[865] Where Galileo was concerned, the pendulum was swinging in the other direction by the mid 19th century: philosopher of science and positivist, August Comte, proposed a calendar in which Galileo was honoured on a Sunday as a "martyr of the religion of humanity."[866] In asking what ended the European witch hunt, Silvia Federici writes that it was

"the annihilation of the world of witches," a loaded sentence: in order for the witch hunts to end, the witch herself, as a concept, as a positionality, as a figure, had to be sacrificed for "the imposition of the social discipline that the victorious capitalist system required."[867] The entire *world of witches* had to be violently, bloodily dispelled.

The tale of Galileo, like the tale of the Early modern witch hunts, points us not only to heresy, but to the way that dominant forms of knowledge, or epistemes, hold on so ferociously to their reign. Federici asks: did "the rise of the modern scientific method" put an end to the world of witches? On this point, she remains ambivalent.[868] Citing the work of ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant, Federici surmises that the persecution of witches in Europe was related to a paradigm shift, which placed the mechanistic, material sciences against the mess of the natural world, instituting an alienation between the so-called human and the so-called natural — preparing the ground for the exploitation of bodies and the environment.[869] Yet Federici is aware of the ways in which this argument is the not the whole, nuanced picture. It is difficult to romanticize the "organic worldview" that predated the scientific method, for it also allowed for slavery and the killing of those deemed heretics, Federici points out (and as the case of Galileo attests to). Meanwhile, "Newtonian physics owed its discovery of gravitational attraction not to a mechanistic but to a magical view of nature."[870] Rather, Federici insists, witch-hunting arose as part of a *transitional* phenomenon, underlined by a bricolage of competing forces, "taken from the fantastic world of medieval Christianity, rationalistic arguments, and modern bureaucratic court procedures."[871]

What was more immediate than rationalism and mechanism in ending the European witch hunts, Federici asserts, was much larger: it was "the imperative to eradicate an entire mode of existence"; in other words, as her previous phrasing suggested, to eradicate the *world of witches*, one that posed a threat to the political and economic power of an emerging capitalist worldview.[872] As Federici writes, the witch is "the heretic, the healer, the disobedient wife, the woman who dared to live alone, the obeha woman who poisoned the master's food and inspired the slaves to revolt."[873] The methods of witches, we could say, are heretical methods, methods of inversion, and ones met with very real repercussions.[874] Béatrice de Planissoles, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, was sentenced to life in jail for carrying what was perceived to be a magic mirror in 1321 France.[875] Yet to say that this still holds true is a disputed statement. For times continue to move, history revises, catch up, folds in, peels out.

When the European witch-hunts ended and the witch was, in a way, eradicated, "[t]he belief in witchcraft could even become an object of ridicule," writes Federici, "described as a superstition, and soon put out of memory."[876] That is, until amateur anthropologist and eccentric magician-turned-witch Gerald Gardner put out his book *Witchcraft Today* in 1954, only a few years after the repeal of the Witchcraft and Vagrancy Acts in Britain, starting a massive shift in how the witch was portrayed, enacted, constructed, and produced in the Western world — not only as a villainous figure to be hunted, but also as a repressed figure representative of a supposedly ancient, pre-Christian religion, whose techniques, such as astrology, spell-casting, divination, and mediumship, could be followed and learned; could be identified with.[877] Covens sprang up. Witches started to emerge from the corners and crannies of society, outing themselves instead of being outed and hunted by an authority. Moving onto the North American scene in the 1960s and 70s, the term "witch" became a moniker of feminist empowerment, particularly with the work of Starhawk's Reclaiming tradition and Zsuzsanna Budapest's Dianic Wicca, for example.[878] In the mid-20th century moving into the 21st, the techniques of the witch were not only taken up by adherents of Wicca or neopagan witchcrafts, but the moniker of the "witch"

was also donned by activists, such as W.I.T.C.H. (Women's International Conspiracy from Hell), or artists, such as Yoko Ono.[879] Today, the witch has been subsumed completely, albeit controversially and hesitantly, into the marketplace: witches can be found in shops where healing crystals or Stevie Nicks T-shirts are sold; on social media, where WitchTok garners billions of views and #witch grows exponentially by the day; or even in present-day Salem, where one can join a witch-themed walking tour.[880] The lore and history of witchcraft does not only exist in books and covens, but also at the crossroads of commerce and production — these, too, are archives.[881]

Through all the iterations listed above — from heretic, to neopagan, to trend follower, to activist, to artist — the witch remains a tricky, ambivalent figure who elicits complicated reactions, whether fear, hate, empowerment, anger, delight, rebellion, or the cringe factor of a gothic trend stretching past its due date. In the witch's knack of being re-written throughout history, of never quite disappearing from the cultural, political, or historical imagination, the witch is the ultimate shapeshifter, one who can, therefore, be a guide through particularly knotted topics in interdisciplinary humanities, many of which I have tried to pull out in the pages of this dissertation — from the construction of the desirous mimetic subject, to cultural appropriation, to reproduction and replication, to the imbrications between technology, the body, and the spirit, the secular and the sacred, the witch leads us through the ins and outs of what we think we have rejected and what we have yet to unlearn.

In the present conclusion, I will leave my discussion of witches and witchcraft with a meditation on the most central ways that the techniques and tools of witches, witchcraft, and bewitchment, particularly in North America and in the contemporary era, convey the importance of alter-epistemologies and villainous ontologies in interdisciplinary studies with a stress on feminist media studies. In particular, I will put my focus on the act of re-writing; the act of listening, which includes a reclaiming of the fallow, the un(re)productive, or the so-called passive; and the act of communication with the dead or more-than human kin — the cultivation of non-familial, non-lineal kinships under late capitalism.[882] What do the tools of witches that communicate with the dead and more-than-human kin *do*? The answer is found in Sarah Kember quoting Hélène Cixous, writing that "when, finding her selves stuck between a rock and a hard place, the abyss and the Medusa, she declared: 'Let's get out of here!'";[883] it is found in M. Jacqui Alexander writing that she would prefer not to stand on her own two feet, but rather the three legs of a cauldron.[884] In being objects that rewire, they ask to rewire, in turn. Closed, open, and then, like the wink, neither one nor the other.

2. A Few Central Themes, Revisited

i. Evidence, (unreliable) narration, and the space of revision

Whether speaking of mirrors, knots, or fluids, there have been several connecting themes running throughout the present dissertation. In this section, I intend to highlight three of them: the way that witches are collocated with unreliable narration or are unreliable narrators themselves; the way that witches' techniques point towards what is and is not "useful" or even useable; and the way that witches' techniques reach towards a space of the conditional, teaching us how to learn the tricks of the *as-if*. To begin with, the story of the media of witchcraft — of fluids, mirrors, knots — points to the ways that stories are told and re-told, written and re-written, for better and for worse.

After the Salem witch trials of 1692, reparations were mincing if existent at all. Accused witches who were set free returned to houses that had been looted in their absence; young women were unable to marry after having had their names slandered; whole families spent years trying to simply have their falsely accused beloved dead exonerated.[885] Stacy Schiff notes that rather than issuing reparations after the Salem witch trials, bureaucrats were more interested in re-writing history altogether or scuttling it into the nearest fireplace; in short, changing up the evidence as if a whole, dire year could be erased (ironically, in this forced erasure it only, through the centuries, became notorious).[886] As Schiff writes, "most of what Essex County labored to forget is precisely what we want to know."[887] Not just literal re-writing of the evidence, but the entire episode that sparked the Salem witch hunts — that is, bewitchment and its symptoms — was also rewritten via the history of pathology. The symptoms that the bewitched teenage girls at the Salem witch trials were manifesting — including "prickling sensations, the twitching, stammering, and grimacing, the ulcerated skin and twisted limbs, the curled tongues and convex backs, the deliriums" — were (re-)classified in the 19th century as hysteria by Jean-Martin Charcot and, following him, Sigmund Freud. Hysteria, too, has now been written over, classified again as "conversion disorder," notes Schiff, where "the body [is] literally translating emotions into symptoms."[888]

Among the heretical techniques of the witch is her talent of being an unreliable, or at least tricky, narrator, spinning lurid and vivid tales, as the accused witches of the Salem trials discussing the sabbat shows us. Their tales do not point us to the fact that these particular women or men were unhinged, but rather that the systems accusing them, pointedly the judicial system that was so stringently demanding these narratives, was unhinged, fallible. The supposed illogic of witches constantly points to the illogic of the systems they are embedded in: capitalism, for example; a partial and rigged judicial system, for example. As astrologer Alice Sparkly Kat writes, "[Karl] Marx once said that capital is a social relation. However, capital is more than a social relation; it is a psychic relation. This means neoliberalism is not only defined in outer mechanisms of a hard economy but also in inner mechanisms of an imagined reality…. Capitalism is bad luck."[889] The witch, therefore, pitched as an outsider and a villain, has a great amount of power in helping to re-write the dominant narratives that she is written out of from the beginning. For witches spin fictions and know the power of the hold of the story. This is an endeavour that other alter-epistemologies are engaged in as well, such as Eve Tuck and C. Ree's 2013 essay, "A Glossary of Haunting," where the authors rework the so-called hero of American mainstream horror films as "the inventive settler, whose memory becomes history, and whose ideology becomes reason," while the hunted villain, often a ghost or demon, could be seen as "the Indigenous inhabitant present only because of her erasure" or "the chattel slave, whose body is property and murderable." Haunting, then, becomes "the relentless remembering and reminding that will not be appeased by settler society's assurances of innocence and reconciliation. … Alien (to settlers) and generative for (ghosts), this refusal to stop is its own form of resolving."[890]

The technique of revision is essentially editorial, but its implications are broad. In her book *Water in a Dry Land*, ethnographer Margaret Somerville writes that in order to create alternate stories, we need to create alternate maps.[891] Somerville's major concern is with water, "one of the most urgent and extreme cases of major resource depletion."[892] In order to reshape our relationship to land and to water, Somerville asserts, we must rewrite the stories of water, using ceremony, myths, and discourse.[893] Witches' tools that open up communication with more-

than-human kin primarily suggest an unmaking and an unwriting. "The interesting thing," said Ana Mendieta, "is that education is about un-educating yourself."[894]

ii. Listening, receptivity, and the space of the *un-*

The witch engages in the technique of unreliable narration, of reversing the supposed truth of things — a technique that does not seem to have a *use* save for that of engaging in a form of inversion. Having no use is, in a sense, extremely elucidative, and it brings us to the space of the *un-*. This is geographical, not unlike the black mirror. In her 2008 essay, "On Not Becoming Man," Claire Colebrook writes that "a criticism liberated from the concept of 'man' would acknowledge that fragile materiality of a work that resists comprehension, inclusion, recognition, and interpretation. Second, as a politics, we might recognize all the positive ways in which life issues in technologies that break with their original or lived intention."[895] The black mirror, in breaking with the mirror's lived intention of reflection, and in stepping into a world therefore outside of the laws of the mirror, points toward a break with the concept of Man, especially in the Foucauldian sense of Man as "a being whose material existence allows for the formation of cultures that enable him to know and master his reality."[896] While Colebrook argues that was has been overturned by feminism has been the gender hierarchy that attributes the active mind to man and the passive body to woman, "[w]hat we have not overturned," she writes, is a horror of the inert, the unproductive, and the radically different: that which cannot be comprehended, enlivened, rendered fertile or dynamic."[897]

How, then, do we as feminists overturn the horror of the inert and unreproductive? With what techniques? Witches' tools suggest that it is the simplest ones rather than the most complex. It involves shedding rather than adding on. One theme that crops up in the literature of contemporary witchcraft in the place of tools is an emphasis on a kind of multivalent listening, which has always, I would argue, been present in the soft gaze of scrying that I spoke of in Chapter 1. Juliet Diaz, who describes herself as a Cuban Witch Healer with Indigenous roots, and who runs the November Sage Herbarium — A Witch Healers' School, writes that "[c]ommunicating with your ancestors can be done in many ways …. The simplest way is to just ask: talk to your ancestors."[898] To open up a line of communication with the ancestors, Diaz suggests that one tunes in to the realm of the senses, primarily through meditation. Under her subheading "Listen," Diaz speaks of directing attention. "Be alert to things that grab your attention," she writes, such as "a shift in the wind."[899] The focus on "simply" listening seems especially apt when we consider Jane Kamensky's arguments that the Salem witch trials had a lot to do with which locutions were deemed civil and proper and which were not — an emphasis that made Puritan clergyman Cotton Mather refer "to himself and his fellow ministers as 'Ear-witnesses' to witchcraft" and an emphasis that placed a considerable importance on "careful listening."[900] Here, again, we see an act of heretical inversion, though likely unintentional — self-defining witches picking up tactics originally used with great consideration by those who hunted witches in the first place.

The emphasis on listening and the body in contemporary witchcraft points back to that part of receptivity that it is rarely given credit: not necessarily passive, but attentional, alert. Taking the risk of engaging in acts such as communicating with the dead or more-than-human kin is something, I believe, that is unique to those who work between the seams of the living and the dead to begin with. The witch's emphasis on listening presents a shift away from linear, extractive storylines and into an alternate interaction with temporality. As Derrida writes,

quoting from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "Enter the ghost, exit the ghost, re-enter the ghost." The ghost exists in a time that is always "out of joint," and from this space, teaches us how to know. Resounding throughout Derrida's text is not only how one may communicate with spectres, but how a scholar may be called to do so. "There has never been a scholar who really, and as scholar, deals with ghosts," he notes.[901] For Derrida, it is essential to know how to do so if one is in the knowledge game. For the ghost is revenant; it always, uncannily, returns.

It is precisely the themes of (non-)mastery, of (non-)production that scrying, and therefore listening, holds at its core that caused male ceremonial magicians to look down on practices of scrying. As Mary Greer observes in her book on the women of the Golden Dawn, scrying is often gendered; it "is an aspect of magic scorned by many male magicians," she writes, "who deem it to be a self-indulgent waste of time."[902] Self-indulgent, in this case, could be a synonym for unproductive, unfertile, inert. The space of the *un-*. A space that is in fact abundant, sonorous; it is the space of spirit — and perhaps it does not only open another world, as Derrida phrases it, but another way of living in this one.

iii. Techniques — or tricks?

Throughout the present dissertation I have focused on the techniques and tools and witches, yet I have kept my definition of what constitutes a "witch" quite loose — in the Introduction, I wrote how the witch themselves is an indexical figure who is very changeable, particularly in Peter Grey's definition of the witch where he writes that *you will find the witch at the end of a pointed finger*.[903] This indexicality proves to be the very stuff that witchcraft is built from, and this stuff is more like a motion, like fastening a knot. There is a playful interchangeability of signs and correspondences within communities of witches in which one thing can easily stand for another thing. Pointing and indexicality also make up an art of correspondences, which swaps up the mandated meanings and statures of objects and things. "Another form of the hollow mountain is the human skull," writes Grey, "and another form of the human skull is the rose."[904] This kind of (il)logic is the fluid (il)logic of the craft, likely infuriating to many, and beautiful and sensical to some, depending on where you stand in relation to mountains and skulls and roses. Depending on which side of the pointing finger you relate to. In their particular bewitchments, witches are adepts of the cultural techniques of the conditional. That is, cultural techniques of the *would* or the *what if*; the terrain of the speculative, non-empirical, or non-provable. I see this conditionality as spatial as well as temporal, not unlike Yoko Ono's 1967 installation, *Half-a-Room* (fig. 35), which Ono describes as a room with space between it.[905] The unfinished space, or space without total closure is also a space of the conditional, which can never, at least not quite, be known. Derrida writes that "[t]he *pharmakon*, without being anything in itself … keeps itself forever in reserve even though it has no fundamental profundity nor ultimate locality. We will watch it infinitely promise itself and endlessly vanish through concealed doorways that shine like mirrors and open onto a labyrinth."[906] Considering the aspect of the conditional, perhaps the word "technique" that I have been using throughout is not quite right (for it is too finished, too dexterous). Regarding the "tricks of the trade" of magic, Taussig

Fig. 35 Yoko Ono, *Half-a-Room*, 1967

asks, “are these tricks or techniques, I for the moment leave for you to decide.”[907] Perhaps tricks are not techniques at all, for tricks are always untame. The trick is always only half a room, and it keeps you guessing.

Referencing the work of clinician Magali Molinié, who works with patients mourning the deceased, Vinciane Despret suggests that noticing the dead lays not in erecting sides between the living and the dead, but rather following their conjunctions — to “meet them [the living and the dead] through what binds them, what ‘holds them together’”; as in a string holding a knot, as in a vessel that holds fluids.[908] Despret notes that the little phrase “as if” has a binding effect between the living and the dead, holding them together in gestures, such as “carefully choosing shoes for the newly deceased; preparing a favorite meal for a beloved wife on her birthday; writing letters addressed to an absent person; dedicating a work or continuing what the deceased started but could not complete; welcoming their presence,” all the while using the phrase “as if,” as in “as if the deceased wanted to give me a sign,” which “lets the question of the deceased’s intention remain open.” This is a move that Despret refers to as “ontological tact.”[909] The “as-if” is a refrain and it also lies at the seam / seem of Duchamp’s infrathin, keeping the space between the dead and the living hinging open. In this way, the knotted quality of the as-if could point to the intervals between life and death that are non-binary, such as Elizabeth Povinelli’s equation “Life (Life{birth, growth, reproduction}v. Death) v. Nonlife,” where life holds death and both stand vis à vis nonlife.[910] Here, death and life are not at opposite ends of a spectrum, but one is contained in the other, and loops off into other visceral and imperceptible directions. This is witchy logic, and it always cuts across and through.

2. Knots in the Hall of Mirrors

i. The secret and the sacred: closing notes on bewitchment

In his discussion of tricks, Taussig notices the infrathin between *secret* and *sacred* by relating a story of how anthropologist Irving Goldman, in looking over the papers of George Hunt, an informant for Franz Boas in his study of the Kwakiutl people in the late 19th century, notes that there is a peculiar slip of words in Hunt’s manuscript. Specifically, “a curious substitution of *secret* for *sacred*,” Taussig writes: “We are immediately alerted to a sort of game, even a conjuring game in which the sense of something as secret has to be maintained at a pretty high level … but the secret itself must remain secret. What is important is the demand here for the continuous evocation of revelation and concealment.”[911] The crossroads between the secret and the sacred is a constant give and take between different registers of knowledge, ones that do not have to be reconciled, but rather witnessed. One could go back and revise Hunt’s manuscripts so that “sacred” and “secret” are again swapped out, realigned, or one could enjoy the conjuring game and allow oneself to be affected. The latter involves a revivified way of looking at method and procedure

Unlearning, rewiring, and relearning again, these are important techniques (or tricks), and ones that I spoke of when contextualizing a methodology of bewitchment in Chapter 2. Ultimately, rewiring is a procedure of healing or seeing anew, which is more complicated than merely presenting a positive or benevolent state. “Healing” offers a tricky discourse in itself, often watered down as a desirous act — yet rituals of healing can themselves be harmful, such as the ancient Greek ritual of the scapegoat that Derrida associates with the *pharmakon*, meant to heal a city by violently expelling an individual.[912] Modes of healing and witchcraft, like the

witch or the *pharmakon* herself, is both medicine and poison, never only one or the other. Alexander writes that she is interested in "healing systems anchored in the idea of the constant manifestations of spiritual power" that "share the belief in the power of spoken medicine, the power of utterance, the literal power of Ashé, which means 'so be it,' as well as the Sacred healing power of physical elements such as water, fire, and plants, *fèy*." For Alexander, "Spirit knowledge / knowing" is "the medium through which a great number of women in the world make their lives intelligible. It is at these crossroads of subjectivity and collectivity that we sojourn to examine the pedagogic content to see how they might instruct us in the complicated undertaking of Divine self-invention."[913] These types of crossroads and knowledges are already being put together, largely by Indigenous, Black, and Queer thinkers and scholars, particularly women, trans, and non-binary scholars — those who have always had to seek out new methodologies that exist between, and suture the seams of what has always been left out.[914]

Secret / sacred methodologies are always springing into being with spirit knowing at its axis. The project *Poethical Readings* by Denise Ferreira da Silva and Valentina Desideri is an example of a crossroads practice that experiments "with 'reading tools' inspired by well-known and newly-designed practices — such as the Tarots, Political Therapy, Palmistry, Fake Therapy as well as Reiki, Astrology, and Philosophy" in order to navigate "the complex context constituting the situation, event, or problem that concerns a person or collective at a given moment and place. As such, it aims at expanding the horizon of interpretation, that is, to open up possibilities and unsettle realities."[915] This is a way of retooling and combining witchy methods with New Age methods with therapy with politics with scholarship. A knotted, fluid space indeed. In her work, Denise Ferreira da Silva in particular has noted the importance of reaching out to alternate methodologies and alter-epistemologies in order to create these spaces of engagement and possibility that are unpredictable and wild. She writes:

> If knowledge will provide us with any way into advancing a critique of the political effects of humanity in the global present, it will take more than merely bringing scientific knowledge to speak truth to power, as Wynter hopes; and it will take more than individual self-fashioning and the disrobing of the clothing of disciplinary power, as Foucault suggests. Furthermore, it will mostly certainly not be accomplished through a recitation of the very philosophical texts that produced this figure to begin with. What will help us to open up the path? I think it should begin with asking different questions, methodological rather than ontological ones: instead of the question of who and what we are, we need to go deeper into the investigation of how we come up with answers to the questions. That is, our approach to humanness and social justice will take systematic investigations of knowing — along the lines of what Wynter and Foucault have undertaken, but without the substitutes they provide…[916]

What will help us open the path? A methodology of tricks and traps takes us into a fabulated, multivalent zone. It is heretical precisely because it does not do what the construction of knowledge would have us do by any of its 10,000 names. A methodology of bewitchment does not follow proofs, it does not play by the rules, and as I write it out, I know I must also be receptive to the fact that it cannot serve even my theoretical agendas; if it is at all reflective it is only so in coruscations. Why would we choose to stay here, on this tricky precipice? I would argue, first, that we can't stay here; bewitchment is a method that asks us to constantly keep moving, wherein there is no stillness or solid anchor. Second, this shows us that it is an opening, a space of process, of force, and it is one that the media of fluids tackles more specifically, moving from shadow objects to shadows.

ii. Who walks with you

To walk the way that heretics have walked, to craft their tools, to sing their songs, to learn their ways — that is walking on a particularly thorny path. In the *Queer Art of Failure*, Jack Halberstam writes, "we may want new rationales for knowledge production, different aesthetic standards for ordering or disordering space, other modes of political engagement than those conjured by the liberal imagination. We may, ultimately, want more undisciplined knowledge, more questions and fewer answers."[917] Halberstam's call for different kinds of knowledge production can also be situated in the action of walking, especially in a gait that is not straightforward or able. Writer Maranda Elizabeth speaks about the transformative quality of changing their walking cane from a sterile, even shameful item, to a magical object in order to re-envision how they relate to their disability. They write:

> My first cane was black like tourmaline, a crystal used as an aid against jealousy, negative thoughts, destructive forces, and internal conflicts; I'd adorned it with Hello Kitty stickers. When I brought it home, I adjusted it to a comfortable height, anointed it with oils and prayers, and welcomed it into my life. It was a live creature come to help me out, lend me a hand, give me access to the spaces and activities that were slipping away. I used to walk for hours at a time, no destination in mind. I'm a city witch, I believe in city magic. I found signs of magic in plants growing through sidewalk cracks, symbols of encouragement in graffiti, charms and rocks found in alleyways, the sound of squirrels scurrying up old trees with fallen acorns, tiny free libraries on quiet streets.[918]

What stands out in this passage is the kinship that Elizabeth develops with their cane, making an object that is normally tangled up with "internalized ableism and fears about pain" into a talisman that works to connect rather than disconnect, that works to open an immanent and enormous world of acorns, free libraries, and sidewalk cracks that Elizabeth would not be able to experience without it. As they write, "[m]agic is resistance. Magic sees unbearable realities, unbearable emotions, and makes them bearable; magic moves us toward creating impossible futures … I will cast impossible spells."[919] This is a view of magic that is not de-politicized, that does not pit the sacred against the political, as Alexander so fervently argues against.[920] It is a politics of dreaming the impossible — "dreaming the dark" as Starhawk says — and making of it a craft.[921] The cane refabricates the world and places it in front of Elizabeth in a way that they can relate to, not only neutrally or benignly, but with awareness — interactive and full of energy.

Throughout this dissertation, I have embedded one seemingly ordinary technique of the body into each respective chapter — sitting, winking, and swimming — and shown how even the most ordinary technique can be made extraordinary by how it is activated and in which context, for what reason. As such, I would like to conclude this dissertation with the technique of walking, and especially of walking through a sort of midnight garden with a tourmaline walking cane, as I have been attempting to do in these pages with the experiment of putting the tools and techniques of witches alongside so many other voices and practices, from consciousness-raising feminists experimenting with speculums, through to sailors tying knots, to Satan sneakers, to psychical researchers, while giving voice to practitioners of witchcraft and magic that may not see the inside walls of too many academic articles or dissertations.

Witches are starting to encroach on academia in a big way, which is significant given the fact that an early president and several graduates of Harvard University, a massive academic institution, were the same people who hunted witches in 1692 Salem.[922] In the summer of 2021,

Queen's University hosted a six-day conference called *The Witch Institute*, which brought together scholars and practitioners working within the emerging area of Witch Studies, and included roundtables, workshops, screenings, and performances. In his talk, "Post-colonial Spiritwork," Chiron Armand, who describes himself as an "artist-scholar, author, and shamanic hacker," spoke about walking. "Are you walking in a good way?" he asked. "Are the stories you're telling yourself also walking in a good way? … How do we walk together and do this thing called 'witchcraft culture'? 'Magic university'?"[923] The process of walking intentionally is also stressed in Alexander's *Pedagogies of Crossing* that I have quoted throughout. For Alexander, rewiring the senses, which is so central to her conception of sacred pedagogy, is a gesture that is imbricated with community and involves an ongoing process rather than a singular event; it is part of cultivating an interior space that involves a dissonance with the construction of a singular self. In Alexander's words, it is "[k]nowing who walks with you and maintaining that company."[924] In this case, the "who" is not only human, and not only living. Knowing who walks with you, and walking intentionally, not only applies to practitioners of witchcraft, but also to scholars who choose to work within this tricky subject matter.

Witchcraft, as a craft, is neutral and broad, much like science, or philosophy, or even any of the media I have focused on, such as mirrors, knots, fluids. What matters when discussing it, as a researcher at least, is who one chooses to walk with, and how that affects one's research. Witchcraft presents an alternative take on kinship for neopagan witches such as Starhawk and, furthermore, tends to play with the concept of kinship altogether by forming relationships with spirits and entities not necessarily in their blood line (or even human) — i.e. what I termed witchkin in the introduction, taken from Donna Haraway's oddkin.[925] And yet this is the knot in the hall of mirrors: that which is reflected back to us through a skewed line or a black mirror is a difficult and tangled topology, not always a comfortable or predictable or even consistent surface. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said keeps coming back to the way in which neither the "Orient" nor the "West" are stable, or even "pure" categories; rather, Orientalism, as Said calls it, "is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans against all 'those' non-Europeans."[926] Said goes so far as to qualify Orientalism as a "grid for filtering through the Orient in Western consciousness."[927] Rituals found in magic and witchcraft can be used to see into this grid. For example, the fabricated languages used in Gerald Gardner's "Bagabi rune" or the 15th-century Mirror of Floron ritual show the way in which Western magic and witchcraft have no doubt problematically incorporated and even created mysterious and exoticized chants as a way to enter ritual state. This is complicated by the fact that the witch is also constantly an "other" herself, positioned outside of acceptable, normative, and sometimes even lawful behaviour.[928]

Any origin story that is sought by way of the witch, I would argue, turns up as inauthentic and fabricated, like a trap with no exit (or entrance), like a card trick with no "aha" at the end of the play. We could even take it one step further and say that witchcraft works as a critique of authenticity altogether, as well as what it means to clearly reflect or to be reflective. Magic, as I stated in Chapter 3, is an "impure" cultural form if ever there was one, a contagious force, which brings us often into the apex of a series of traps. From this place, bewitchment springs like an unexpected guest, like a story with no tidy ending and multiple unknown worlds, all functioning, not unlike suspense, to keep us on the edge of our seats, active, activated, not diverted by the awe of enchantment, but with our heads crooked to the side in anticipation and engagement.

What is at stake as a researcher looking at witchcraft, from any angle, is how it changes the research(er) altogether, how it allows us to be affected. Shelagh Roxburgh, in her 2018 article

on African witchcrafts, notes that researchers of witchcraft, in examining a contested subject, must not replicate the harm that has been historically perpetuated on those who have been hunted as witches. Witchcraft, she posits, "presents a realm that is unknowable and ungovernable, and therefore impenetrable to the modernizing efforts of Enlightened order, truncating the efforts of the state and capitalism to transform the world."[929] Therefore, for Roxburgh, "[i]f to know witchcraft is to be a witch, then researchers cannot simply step into the supernatural world and retain their subjecthood. To become a witch is to be that which is corrupted and evil, self-interested and unreliable. The witch cannot be known because witchcraft power is inherently deceptive."[930] There are witchcrafts and witchcrafts. I have chosen to focus mainly on crafts that arise in contemporary North America and that are practiced by self-defining witches — i.e. Wicca, Traditional Witchcraft, Hoodoo, Brujería, Reclaiming, ceremonial magic — but the moniker "witch" of course is not always chosen, but rather thrust upon a person accused of witchcraft. Essential work in witchcraft studies also lies in an examination of witches' tools and techniques on a more global scale, as well as in more pointedly examining the tools and techniques of accused witches and their accusers, an area that largely lays outside the perimetres of this dissertation. Roxburgh is addressing the (largely Western) study of African witchcrafts, yet the properties of witches that she names above — their deception, their unknowability, their corruption and evil — extends into ingrained notions of witchcraft in the Western world as well, as portrayed in media and culture, such as *The Witch* (Robert Eggers, 2015), *Suspiria* (Dario Argento, 1978, remade by Luca Guadagnino, 2018), or any number of Walt Disney films and fairy tales.[931]

Both Halberstam's call for more undisciplined knowledge (not only post-disciplinary, but also unruly, heretic) and Elizabeth's retooling of their cane is not unlike Isabelle Stengers's ecology of practices, which, as Stengers writes, "resists the master word of a progress …. It thus does not approach practices as they are — physics as we know it, for instance — but as they may become."[932] An ecology of practices favours emergence and surprise, like bewitchment. This is key in that witch knowledge when co-mingled with academic knowledge brings about surprising elements. Stengers's ecology of practices, furthermore, connects back to the methodologies of magic and to the positionalities of those who calls themselves witches. She writes:

> I started with the problem of ecology of practices as a tool for thinking, the need of which I felt while working with physicists. Physicists feel weak and they protect themselves with the weapons of power, equating their practice with claims of rational universality. But the tool, as it is not an instrument to be used at will, co-produces the thinker, as shown by the very fact that it led me from physics to the art of the witches. Doing what I did, my own practice was that of a philosopher, a daughter to philosophy, thinking with the tools of this tradition, which excluded magic from the beginning and which, rather unwittingly, gave its weapons to physicists and to so many others presenting themselves in the name of universality. Maybe this is why I had to go back to this very beginning, since as a daughter, not a son, I could not belong without thinking in presence of women, not weak or unfairly excluded women but women whose power philosophers may have been afraid of.[933]

Maybe this is why I had to go back to this very beginning. What Stengers is saying is crucial to the work that this dissertation has tried to walk with — that the tools and techniques we employ and align with co-produce the one who uses them, a sentiment John Law also cites via Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar — and not just the one as in an individual, but whole communities of thinkers and practitioners and the momentum, the beat, the choir that is crafted together.[934] The

reason that witches and magic have, as Stengers writes, for the most part — at least until relatively recently in the canon of intellectual thought — been excluded by the academy, is not because the knowledges of witches are weak knowledges, or somehow lesser, but because they hold considerable power. This is what it is to "walk in a good way," as Chiron Armand urges, which means not only falling into step with those who have walked the path before and who are yet to come, but also to choose a direction, a where, a why, and to go towards the bend in the crossroads, the beckoning of a crooked finger, a crooked stream, without knowing exactly where it will lead, what it will point to, or how it all ends.

APPENDIX: RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND GROUPS OF WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

A∴A∴ (Argenteum Astrum, or Silver Star): In 1907, Aleister Crowley (1875–947) founded the order A∴A∴ together with his Golden Dawn mentor, George Cecil Jones. It is separate from the OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis, see below), yet also uses *Liber AL vel Legis* (The Book of the Law) as a core text. The order combines ceremonial magic with yoga and elements of Buddhism and has an initiatory structure of eleven grades, portrayed as an ascent up the Kabbalistic Tree of Life; the goddess Babalon plays a role in the initiatory process. Jane Wolfe, who corresponded with Marjorie Cameron while the latter was holed up in the California desert, was a member of A∴A∴.[935]

Brujería: Along with Santería, brujería emerged as part of the transatlantic African diaspora of Yoruba-based practices into parts of the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Raquel Romberg notes that unlike Santería (see below), brujería does not involve theological teachings necessarily, nor a stable community, nor pre-established hierarchies or initiations. Brujería is more about works rather than faith, and could involve working with *manifestaciones* (manifestations or spirits) and / or with healing rituals (as the case of a *curandera/o/x*, who may or not identify as a bruja/o/x), and / or with *Hechiceria* (sorcery). J. Allen Cross describes brujería as a secretive system of folk magic, where one must be personally mentored by a bruja/o/x. Aisha M-Beliso-De Jesús translates "brujería" to "witchcraft," when she notes that to Spanish colonists (from roughly the 15th to 19th centuries), "[t]the term Santería was pejorative and used interchangeably with *brujería* (witchcraft), signifying the improper worship of Catholic saints." This points to the way that Santería was a term primarily used by colonists, and additionally shows us the conflations at times between religion proper and folk craft.[936] I speak about both Santería and brujería in relation to artist, Ana Mendieta and to Raquel Romberg's ethnography of Haydée in Puerto Rico.

Chaos Magic: Chaos Magic is often seen to be developed by Austin Osman Spare (1886–1956), a British magician and recluse who lived in poverty most of his life. Spare originally trained with the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO; see below) and desired to simplify the complicated system of ceremonial magic he found therein. Chaos Magicians do not necessarily form relationships with deities, but rather with the self. Ritual is designed by the practitioner and can include anything from ancient myth to popular culture. For a chaos magician, order is imposed on the universe and not natural to it; therefore, order must be subdued and chaos unleashed. A major publication in Chaos Magic is Peter J. Carroll, *Liber Null and Psychonaut: An Introduction to Chaos Magic* (San Francisco: Weiser Book, 1987).[937] Chaos Magic relates to a type of fictional magic practiced by Marvel's Wanda Maximoff, the Scarlet Witch.

Cochrane's Craft: After the repeal of the Witchcraft Act in 1951, many self-defining witches emerged in England; among them was Robert Cochrane (1931–1966), who was a blacksmith by trade and founded The Clan of Tubal Cain. Cochrane's Craft is essentially similar to traditional witchcraft (see below) in that it demarcates itself from Gardner's Wicca and claims to have a hereditary precedent, which in the case of Cochrane (like with many other self-proclaimed hereditary witches) vanishes upon close inspection. Cochrane's Craft does not define itself as pagan, and places an emphasis on the attainment of wisdom. Cochrane himself died of ritual suicide in 1966, leaving us with little original writings and information about his craft. Wiccan

High Priestess Doreen Valiente described Cochrane's rituals, according to Ronald Hutton, as "some of the finest such experiences which she had known in all her long and varied career as a witch." Cochrane's craft has had an enduring effect and inspired the formation of many covens, such as the Regency and the 1734 tradition, the latter founded by Joseph Wilson.[938]

Feri: Founded by Victor Anderson (1917–2001) in 1960s California, Feri is an ecstatic form of witchcraft, focusing on the development of the soul / self rather than an emphasis on fertility or the turn of the seasonal wheel, like Wicca (see below). According to the Feri website, the tradition includes elements from "various cultures and their magical systems including Huna; Conjure; Voodoo; Tantra; Celtic Folklore; Christian Mysticism; Yezidi Mythology; Greek Gnosis," but also, as Kelden notes, "Kabbalah, Native American spirituality, and Appalachian folk magic," not to mention, as T. Thorn Coyle writes, influences from British Traditional Wicca, which is already a dizzying array of sources. As Alex Mar tells it in *Witches of America*, Victor Anderson was just a boy when he was initiated by the fey people in 1929 in Oregon, after meeting an elderly, dark-skinned woman in the woods. Though he was mostly blind, "the ritual sparked a vision," Mar writes, and Anderson saw the woman "transform into God Herself … and the sky fill with a large green moon." Feri is significant in part because of its influence on contemporary North American witchcraft — markedly, Starhawk's own tradition, Reclaiming (see below) — and, though highly syncretic, it is more readily embraced by queer culture than Wicca due to the gender fluidity in "God Herself." T. Thorn Coyle, a feri practitioner, writes that God Herself is "beyond gender. She is all gender and no gender." The phrase was echoed on Beyoncé's 2016 *Lemonade* album in the lyrics, "When you love me, you love yourself / Love God herself."[939]

Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, The: Though short-lasted in its original form, The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn has had a significant effect on the practices of contemporary ceremonial magic as well as witchcraft. The Order was founded in 1887 by William Wynn Westcott, MacGregor Mathers, and Anna Sprengel, the latter purportedly an adept of the German Rosicrucians, who authorized the opening of the English branch based on the German, *Die Goldene Dämmerung*, which was essentially a form of Freemasonry at the time. The Order was formally dissolved in 1903, and yet some say it was taken up by the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO; see below) shortly thereafter. The original Golden Dawn had ten main grades, each associated with a degree system and symbolism from the Kabbalah (zelator 10°=100°, theoricus 20°=90°, practicus 30°=80°, philosophus 40°=70°, adeptus minor 50°=60°, adeptus major 60°=50°, adeptus exemptus 70°=40°, magister templi 80°=30°, magus 90°=20°, and ipsissimus 100°=10°), with subsequent admission to secret orders. Wicca, too, has a grade system associated with hierarchies, yet in a much simpler form — 1st degree, 2nd degree, and 3rd degree.[940]

Hoodoo: Writing for *The Encyclopedia of African Religion*, Garvey F. Lundy notes that "Hoodoo is part of the larger African American spiritual tradition that includes *conjure*, *rootwork*, *mojo*, *tricking*, *fixing*, and sometimes *Voodoo*. Indeed, these terms are frequently used interchangeably." Hoodoo largely emerged in the American South as part of the African diaspora as a "system of magic, divination, and herbalism," where a practitioner may use all, one, or some of these systems. Like brujería and many kinds of witchcraft, Hoodoo is not a formal religion, but rather a folk practice involving spiritual belief. Zora Neale Hurston's ethnography "Hoodoo

in America" (1931) was a seminal text in making Hoodoo known to a broader audience. She notes that "[v]eaudeau is the European term for African magic practices and beliefs but it is unknown to the American Negro. His own name for his practices is hoodoo, both terms being related to the West Africa term, *juju*." Tituba, one of the first people accused of witchcraft during the Early Modern witch trials in 1692 Salem, is mentioned in her deposition as being a practitioner of Hoodoo.[941]

Ifa: The term "Ifa" refers both to a significant *orisha* or deity (the god of destiny) in Yoruba traditions and to a system of geomantic divination that primarily works with cowrie shells. One can become an Ifa priest or priestess, which is a rigorous process that begins with a neophyte phase of between eight to twelve years, and which involves learning traditional curative methods, including local flora and fauna, divination, and oral history and lore, among other skills. Initiates of Ifa are referred to as *babalawo* or *iyalawo* (father or mother of secrets) and are oath-bound.[942] Patrisse Cullors, founder of Black Lives Matter, identifies herself as an Ifa practitioner.

Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) / Thelema: Accounts differ on when exactly the OTO was founded: Ronald Hutton claims 1904, shortly after the formal dissolution of The Golden Dawn, while Manon Hedenborg White claims 1912. The story goes that the OTO was founded, in any case, in Germany by either Theodor Reuss (1855–1923) or Austrian paper chemist and Freemason, Carl Kellner (1851–1905). Yet White has her doubts that the OTO existed at all before Aleister Crowley's involvement. The Gnostic Mass, one of the OTO's central rituals, was in fact not written (by Crowley) until 1913. Whatever the case, the OTO is often synonymous with Thelema (Greek for "will"), a new religious movement that began when Crowley, on his honeymoon with his new wife, Rose, received a divinely inspired text by an entity called Aiwass, thus recording *Liber AL vel Legis* (The Book of the Law). The central maxim of *Liber AL vel Legis* is "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law," which is encapsulated in the word "Thelema," and includes the qualifying phrase, "Love is the law, love under will." Hutton sums up the OTO as "an offspring of mystical Freemasonry, influenced by the writings of Eliphas Levi, Indian traditions of tantra and yoga, and the eighteenth-century myth of the medieval Knights Templar, as bearers of arcane wisdom taught to initiates."**[943]** The OTO held a significant amount of weight in Gardner's founding (/ discovery) of Wicca, and, therefore, subsequently in following contemporary witchcraft and magic movements.

Radical Faeries, The: According to Bill Rodgers, The Radical Faeries are a thriving, queer neopagan group founded in Los Angeles in the 1970s, who place emphasis on "a uniquely queer way of seeing and experiencing the world," and who originally ventured that "queer spirituality was something that not only could be explored, but had to be explored." The Radical Faeries shares inspiration from the early commune and free love movements of the 1960s, and mixes sexuality with politics with spirituality. One of the founders of the movement, Harry Hay (1912–2002), was a former organizer for the communist party and Mattachine Society, a gay rights organization. Rodgers notes the centrality of "Otherness" to Radical Faeries: "Otherness, far from being denied or diminished, is made central to the Radical Faerie identity. This is a positive, self-constructed Otherness, however, which allows queer people to construct and reconstruct, models of reality which are useful to themselves, and which emphasizes the nature of the Other as being good, functional and necessary."[944]

Reclaiming: Jody Logan and Patti Martin sum up Reclaiming when they write: "[t]he Collective, the Community, the Craft Tradition: this is the triple face of Reclaiming." The Reclaiming Collective arose out of a series of workshops and classes that Starhawk and Diane Baker gave between 1978 and 1980 in the San Francisco Bay area, and now has a thriving community of followers, particularly in California. It is a feminist and politically oriented practice of witchcraft that uses consensus decision making processes, follows a non-hierarchical structure, and has a history of participating in environmentally oriented and feminist activism. The adherents of Reclaiming celebrate the eight Sabbats of the year, engage in classes on magic and witchcraft, and are focused on community building and social justice.[945]

Santeria (*La regla de ocha* / Lucumi): What is known as "Santería" is most often called "*la regla de ocha*" or "Lucumi" by practitioners — it is a Yoruba-based religion that arose predominantly in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America following the transatlantic slave trade. In Cuba, where Africans were forced to practice Catholicism, they gradually came mix their religion into that of Christianity, progressively more so to hide it as laws came down against their practices in the 19th century. During this time, Santería was also influenced by spiritist doctrines, particularly those of Hippolyte Rivail (Allan Kardec, 1804–1869, see below). Despite significant syncretism, Santería retains a significant amount of its original Yoruba base, including Yoruba deities, divination practices, spirit possession carried out in ceremony, the veneration of ancestors, and the belief in the energy *aṣẹ* that moves through all things. Though there is a fastidious hierarchy encompassed in the religion, spiritual beings are not separate from nature.[946]

Spiritism / Espiritismo: Spiritism has been documented in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America as early as 1856, and it is based on the writings of Allan Kardac, who wrote under the pen name Hippolyte Rivail and was a student of both medicine and literature. Kardac's Spiritism includes the principles that a higher spiritual presence exists (God); that communication with spirits is possible and available to everyone; and that humans must undergo multiple lifetimes in order to attain perfection. This latter point differs from Spiritualism, which was practiced at the same time, predominantly in North America and Europe, where reincarnation was not part of the theology. Interestingly, Spiritism was becoming popular in Puerto Rico concurrently with Freemasony, Rosicrucianism, and Theosophy, due to Liberal leadership in Spain that was affecting the island. As Romberg writes, "both elite and lower-class Catholics ended up embracing Spiritism … as a way out of what they considered a repressive, dogmatic, classist, and often racist intuitional church." Romberg also points out that Spiritism caught on so well due to its tenet of spirit communication, which had already "existed among the native Taíno Indians and African slaves in Puerto Rico more than three centuries before Kardac's Scientific Spiritism was introduced." Contemporary North American witchcrafts, especially practices that have European roots, have been widely influenced by Spiritualism and Spiritism, but it is salient to note that Spiritism is an exoteric religion and philosophy, i. e. open to all, whereas Freemasonry, another building block of contemporary witchcraft practices, is esoteric, i. e. a hierarchical tradition that requires initiations.[947]

Spiritualism: Spiritualism "officially" arose in 1848, when the Fox sisters began communicating with a spirit in their house through a system of knocks. In a dissertation about communication

with the dead and more-than-human kin in North America, especially with heavy emphases on media studies, Spiritualism was and is a key movement to consider. For communication with the dead lay at the heart of what Spiritualism as a movement put forth in mid-19th-century Europe and North America, where proof of life after death was literally on the table. The movement emerged during a time "in which Christianity and biblical authority were being threatened by new scientific discoveries," historian Alex Owen notes.[948] The Spiritualist solution was to combine the two: what if science could prove the spirit world? The introduction of the scientific method into faith, belief, and religion espoused a materialism within the otherwise immaterial spirit realm. "The spiritualists' hypothesis that a spirit's body was composed of 'spirit matter' was therefore perceived as neither contradictory nor problematic," writes Owen.[949] Mary M., who produced ectoplasm in the psychic experiments of Dr. Thomas Glendenning Hamilton, was entrenched in and surrounded by the movement of Spiritualism.

Traditional Witchcraft: On one hand, Traditional Witches see their tradition as contiguous with the craft of the Cunning-Man or Cunning-Woman, particularly those located in the UK; on the other hand, they piece their traditions and rituals together from depositions of the accused witches of Early Modern Europe, with full awareness that these confessions were taken under considerable duress, and therefore are likely, to some degree, to have been constructed between the accused witch and the inquisitor. As Chas S. Clifton writes, the practices of Traditional Witches borrow from these depositions, including "communal meetings (whether in this reality or another), the organizational structure (e.g., the idea of initiation into a group led by a 'devil'), and the use of flying ointment." Practitioners of Traditional Witchcraft demarcate themselves from Wiccans, claiming "to follow a path which predates Gardner's Wicca," writes Shai Feraro. Confusingly, Traditional Witchcraft solidified after Wicca, arguably in the 1990s with Andrew Chumbley's occult current *Cultus sabbati* (Cult of the Sabbat). Many witches I've cited throughout define as Traditional Witches, including Daniel A. Schulke, Kelden, Gemma Gary, and Laura Tempest Zakroff. Schulke, furthermore, notes the dual ethos of both helping and harming found in Traditional Witchcraft, sometimes called the "crooked path." On the crooked path, poison generates otherness, which is transmutation, "the overthrow of Self," writes Schulke.[950]

Wicca: Wicca first came to attention in 1950s England, primarily with the writings of occultist and amateur anthropologist, Gerald Gardner, concerning a supposedly ancient coven he'd been initiated into called the New Forest Coven. According to Ethan Doyle White and Shai Feraro, Wicca is "a religion that is theologically diverse, containing duotheists, monotheists, polytheists, agnostics, and atheists within its midst … Practitioners typically identify as 'witches' and perform rites — either solitarily or in groups known as covens — which involve spellcasting as a common practice and which practitioners refer to as being 'magical' in nature. Wiccans often mark a series of seasonal festivals known as Sabbats, collectively termed the Wheel of the Year." Many of the practitioners cited throughout were or are Wiccans, such as Gerald Gardner, Ipsita Roy Chakraverit, and Doreen Valiente, often called the "Mother of Wicca." Wicca is widespread, and has many branches, such as Dianic Wicca and Alexandrian Wicca, named in the dissertation.[951]

Vodou and Voodoo: Vodou as a religion has its roots in Haiti and is also widely practiced in Haitian diaspora communities around the world. The word "Vodou" is the official Haitian creole

orthography for what is often called "Voodoo," but the latter can additionally denote a form of Vodou practiced in New Orleans, and can at times additionally be synonym with "Hoodoo." Even the term "Vodou" is one coined by outsiders, however, to denote a religion that eighty to ninety percent of the people of Haiti practice; the term was only subsequently adopted by practitioners. "Haitians prefer a verb to identify their religion," writes Karen McCarthy Brown, "they speak of 'serving the spirits.'" "Vodou" comes from the word *vodun*, which means "spirit" or "deity" in the language of the Fon peoples and is sometimes said to mean "sacred dance." Vodou rituals are primarily concerned with healing. Incidentally, Montreal, Canada, from which I write this dissertation, has one of the most thriving Vodou communities in North America, alongside New York and Miami.[952]

Yoruba: Yoruba is an ancient West African tradition highly concentrated in Nigeria, the Republic of Benin, and Togo. Yoruba is monistic, where the creator deity or first king, Oduduwa (or Odua), is especially important. Festivals and rituals are associated with Ọbatala, the deity or orisha who represents the human body. There are approximately twenty subgroups of the tradition, and 401 orishas, and it is highly festive, involving masquerades and seasonal festivities. John Pemberton III writes that for the Yoruba people, "[t]he universe of their experience is pervaded by *aṣẹ*, a divine energy in the process of generation and regeneration. *Aṣẹ* is without any particular signification and yet invests all things and all persons and, as the warrant for all creative activity, opposes chaos and the loss of meaning in human experience. Thus, for the Yoruba the universe is one, and it is amenable to articulation in terms of an elaborate cosmology, to critical reflection, and to innovative speculation."[953] Though historian Ronald Hutton stresses the importance of ceremonial magic in the conception of contemporary witchcraft, one could see its roots equally embedded in ancient traditions such as Yoruba.

ENDNOTES

[1] The tools and techniques of the witch exist in contemporary art, popular culture, and media, culture, and society. In contemporary art, where the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University showed the exhibition *Spellbound*, which explored, as laid out on their website, how "our ancestors used magical thinking to cope with the unpredictable world around them"; in popular culture, where WitchTok garners billions of views and where Katy Perry appeared before a crystal ball at the 2014 Grammy awards. The witch is equally prevalent in politics, where politician Hillary Clinton was accused of practicing witchcraft after her 2016 campaign chairman was allegedly invited to a "Spirit cooking dinner" hosted by avant-garde artist Marina Abramović, while in Canada, barrister Barbara Hewson declared that embattled entertainer Jian Ghomeshi was "the subject of a social-media witch-hunt." See Kory Grow, "Katy Perry Casts a Spell, Jumps in the Fire in Grammys Performance," *Rolling Stone*, January 27, 2014, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/katy-perry-casts-a-spell-jumps-in-the-fire-in-grammys-performance-184685/ (accessed February 9, 2022); *Spellbound: Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, curated by Sophie Page and Marina Wallace, among others, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK, August 31, 2018 – January 6, 2019, https://www.ashmolean.org/spellbound (accessed February 9, 2022); Natalie Zina Walschots, "This Isn't the Witch Hunt You're Looking For," *Buzzfeed News*, February 23, https://www.buzzfeed.com/nataliezinawalschots/this-isnt-the-witch-hunt-youre-looking-for 2017 (accessed February 9, 2022).

[2] Everywhere is the media of death and death is that which we would like to keep separate though it swathes and shimmers into the pores of our livingness: the thick fluid of fossil fuels is composed of the decay of animals, plants, humans, converted into crude oil to power our living world; they are as viscid as the blood in our veins and the ectoplasmic manifestations produced by mediums of the 19th century. We live off the dead, we could say, in a real, living, breathing way, and therefore are always already in communication with the dead on earth. We are surrounded by the tools of death and the need for transformation. Just as witches use cauldrons, so the earth provides calderas; as witches gaze into black mirrors, so many of us gaze into screens, whose elements are mined from the minerals of the earth.

[3] Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in American Today* (1979), revised and expanded edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 44.

[4] Starhawk and M. Macha NightMare, *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying: Practical Rituals, Blessings, and Meditations on Crossing Over* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), xviii. Born Miriam Simos, Starhawk was initiated into two distinct contemporary traditions of witchcraft — Dianic Wicca and Feri — before co-founding her own tradition, Reclaiming, with Diane Baker in 1979/80. Her publication, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*, catapulted her to (witchcraft) fame in 1979.

[5] John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999),14, 29.

[6] Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 269.

[7] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v., "mediumship, *n*." https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/115777?redirectedFrom=mediumship#eid (accessed February 11, 2022).

[8] Gerald Gardner writes, "witches are consummate leg-pullers; they are taught it as part of their stock-in-trade." Gerald Gardner, *Witchcraft Today* (1954) (New York: Citadel Press, 2004), 27.
[9] Qtd. in Ethan Doyle White and Shai Feraro, "Twenty Years On: An Introduction," in eds. ibid., *Magic and Witchery in the Modern West: Celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of 'The Triumph of the Moon,'* Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 4. Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "From the Devil's Gateway to the Goddess Within: The Image of the Witch in Neopaganism," in *Belief Beyond Boundaries: Wicca, Celtic Spirituality and the New Age*, ed. Joanne Pearson (Milton Keynes and Aldershot, UK: Open University and Ashgate, 2002), 304–305.
[10] White and Feraro, "Twenty Years On: An Introduction," 4.
[11] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?: Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations," in *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, ed. Katherine McKittrick (Duke University Press, 2015), 14.
[12] Wynter delineates how, in the Renaissance era, Copernicus dropped the very centre out of medieval Latin Europe's worldview. By moving the Earth to the periphery rather than the centre, Copernicus revalorized the Earth, states Wynter, putting it on par with the stars, the heavenly bodies. The Sun, in turn, which now took up centre stage, exalted that very centre by its occupation of it. This ushered in the era of the humanists, the secular scholar, the rational and biologically "natural" man. This is who Wynter terms Man2 or *homo oeconomicus*, and who McKittrick summarizes as "the virtuous breadwinner, the stable job holder, the taxpayer, the savvy investor, the master of natural scarcity." Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 14, 16, 9.
[13] Wynter, qtd. in McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 18, 14–15, 9.
[14] Isabelle Stengers, "Reclaiming Animism," *e-flux* 36 (July 2012), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/36/61245/reclaiming-animism.
[15] Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1982), 4.
[16] Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being / Power / Truth / Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation — An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 3.3 (Fall 2003): 257.
[17] Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 164–65.
[18] See, for example, in disability studies: Johanna Hedva, *Sick Witch*, video, 2016, https://johannahedva.com/sick-witch.php (accessed February 17, 2022); in decolonial methodologies in science: Kim TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); in media studies and the occult: Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan, "Mind the Gap: Spiritualism and the Infrastructural Uncanny," *Critical Inquiry* 42 (Summer 2016): 899–922; Simone Natale, *Supernatural Entertainments* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017); Peters, *Speaking into the Air*; Jeremy Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," *Theory, Culture & Society* 22, no. 4 (2005): 119–45; and Isabelle Stengers, "Experimenting with Refrains: Subjectivity and the Challenge of Escaping Modern Dualism," *Subjectivity* 22 (2008): 38–59.
[19] See Manon Hedenborg White, *The Eloquent Blood: The Goddess Babalon and the Construction of Femininities in Western Esotericism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Amy Ireland, "Black Circuit: Code for the Numbers to Come," *e-flux* 80 (March 2017), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/80/100016/black-circuit-code-for-the-numbers-to-come (accessed March 2, 2022); Studium Generale series, *Wxtch Craft*, The Royal Academy of Art

(KABK), The Hague, Netherlands, Fall 2020–Spring 2021 https://www.kabk.nl/studium-generale/wxtchcraft (accessed March 2, 2022); The Witch Institute conference, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, held online, August 17, 2021, https://witchinstitute.com/events/talks/post-colonial-spiritwork (accessed March 2, 2022).
[20] Tarin Towers, "How to Cast Spells Using Emoji," *Vice*, October 29, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ypa9em/how-to-cast-spells-using-emoji (accessed July 6, 2022).
[21] See Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 209; Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 170.
[22] Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, trans. Katharine H. Jewett (New York: Routledge, 1994), 10.
[23] I use the verb "outed" purposefully, as contemporary self-defining witches will refer to "coming out of the broom closet" when revealing to their friends and families that they are a practicing witch, a phrase that allies witches to queer positionalities, as I discuss further in the present introduction. See Wiktionary, s. v., "come out of the broom closet," last updated November 7, 2020, https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/come_out_of_the_broom_closet, accessed April 22, 2021.
[24] Margaret Murray (1863–1963) was the first scholar to provide evidential support for the hypothesis that the accused witches of the Early Modern witch trials were practicing a surviving and well-hidden pagan religion. Her findings were published as part of the Folk-Lore Society's journal from 1917 to 1920 and later in Margaret A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1921). She was inspired by early anthropologist James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1890). Much like archaeologists Marija Gimbutas and Jacquetta Hawkes, Murray's methods as well as her theories have been subject to misogyny and ridicule by her (male) peers. In the words of Risa Dickens and Amy Torok, Margaret Murray was "[a]n archaeologist before there were any. The point of origin for the idea that witches gather in covens. The mother of all subsequent covens, in a way. The first woman to unwrap a mummy. Author of *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*. Criticized for the way she worked, partially because she made flying leaps. She went following … something. Following her own intuition from what she saw and heard in primary sources, without relying on what experts had already said. Criticized for her cognitive leaps. Discredited for the way she pieced through sources, choosing what resonated, and for the way that, over time, the ellipses and some of her quotes go missing. A feminist who marched for the vote and ardently supported women scholars … A witch who cursed a peer in front of witnesses and became president of the Folk-Lore Society when she was in her nineties." For controversies surrounding Murray's scholarship, see Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 194–95, 362. For misogyny surrounding the discrediting of Murray's work, see Risa Dickens and Amy Torok, "Margaret Murray: What Science Calls Nature and Religion Calls God," *Missing Witches*, episode 69, October 18, 2020, https://www.missingwitches.com/2020/10/18/ep-69-mw-margaret-murray-what-science-calls-nature-and-religion-calls-god, accessed April 22, 2021.
[25] Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 93–94.
[26] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 165–69.
[27] See, for example, Peters, *Speaking into the* Air; Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[28] Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 100.
[29] Allison C. Meier, "Ectoplasm and the Last British Woman Tried for Witchcraft," *JSTOR Daily*, September 13, 2018, https://daily.jstor.org/ectoplasm-and-the-last-british-woman-tried-for-witchcraft (accessed September 27, 2021).
[30] Kathleen Harris, "Woman Charged with Witchcraft Just 2 Days before Offence Scrubbed from Law*," CBC News*, December 19, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/witchcraft-criminal-code-charge-1.4951071; "Bill C-51 (Royal Assent)," *Parliament of Canada*, December 2018, https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-51/royal-assent (both accessed September 27, 2021).
[31] Sconce, *Haunted Media*, 24.
[32] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 222. For more on the OTO, see appendix.
[33] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 227.
[34] See, for example, Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 60.
[35] Hutton, *The Triumph of the* Moon, 205.
[36] A pertinent example is how so-called wives' tales and folk tales have come to be subsumed under male authorship; for example, the 19th-century printing of folk tales by the brothers Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859). Contrary to the image that the Grimm brothers crafted of themselves, roaming the countryside and transcribing the folklore of peasants, the brothers gleaned their tales mostly from aristocratic women already in their acquaintance, particularly the daughters of the Wild, Hassenpflug, Haxthausens, and von Droste-Hülhoff families. The time when the brothers collected these stories peaked between 1807 and 1815, during the regime of Napoleon Bonaparte, when they believed "they were preserving the German past." Rather than crediting their female contributors, the brothers rather alluded to "the nameless, poetic soul of German culture and legions of 'simple folk.'" By authoring the folk tales under their own names, the German philologists "legitimized the folk tale," not unlike how Gerald Gardner legitimized the craft of so-called English witches about 130 years later in Europe. See Valerie Paradiž, *Clever Maids: The Secret History of the Grimm Fairy Tales* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), xi–xii, xiii, xiv.
[37] Sybil Leek (1917–1982) first came to the limelight in the 1960s, proclaiming herself "a hereditary priestess of the very Old Religion," and standing staunchly in favour of the Murray hypothesis, claiming in fact to be proof of it. Leek often appeared in public with her pet jackdaw (or her familiar), Hotfoot Jackson, who sat on her shoulder. Leek's legacy includes many books on witchcraft, prominently her classic, *Diary of a Witch* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968). Whereas Leek had a talent for making herself well known in both the UK and North America, Robert Cochrane (1931–1966) has left barely a paper trail behind him, making him less of a familiar name in general and more mythologized in occult circles. Cochrane, who worked as a blacksmith, founded a coven called The Clan of Tubal Cain, and, like Leek, proclaimed himself the inheritor of an ancient tradition, though this has been disputed. For more on Cochrane's Craft, see appendix. Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 300, 313–18.
[38] Ronald Hutton purports that almost every culture around the world and through the ages has had a conception of the witch as one to be feared. Interestingly, those who are exempt are cultures such as Ancient Egypt, where magic was perceived as an ingrained, embedded part of daily life; parts of Siberia, where shamans mediate the spirit world; and, for example, the Ndembu in Zambia, who attribute malevolent magical behaviour to ancestral spirits rather than to witches. See Hutton, *The Witch*, 46, 74–95, 11–12.

[39] Peter Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft* (London: Scarlet Imprint, 2013), 157. Peter Grey co-publishes the sumptuous occult press Scarlet Imprint in London with partner, witch, and dancer Alkistis Dimech. Throughout *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, Grey refers to "The Witchcraft," which points towards the Thelemite lodge by the same name, founded by Jack Parsons, who was an author, rocket fuel scientist, and occultist. In short, Parsons wrote *The Book of Babalon* in 1964, based on a series of magical workings called The Babalon Working, carried out with Marjorie Cameron (and incidentally L. Ron Hubbard), starting in 1946 in California, and he worked closely with Cameron on *Songs for the Witch Woman* (put out in a lavish edition by Fulgur Press in 2014). Grey's *Apocalyptic Witchcraft* is deeply indebted to the collaboration between Parsons and Cameron, the latter of whom Grey sees as a possible embodiment of the goddess Babalon. Grey believes that if Jack Parsons and Marjorie Cameron had continued together (if Parsons had not died), they would have taken over then dissolved Aleister Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis in the 1960s and replaced it with a sex-based, ecstatic practice of witchcraft. For an extensive discussion of Marjorie Cameron, Jack Parsons, and the goddess Babalon, see Chapter 3. See Peter Grey, "Strange Suppers & Spells Diverse: Jack Parsons & the Origins of The Witchcraft," *Scarlet Imprint*, October 2, 2015, https://scarletimprint.com/essays/strange-suppers-spells-diverse (accessed July 10, 2019).
Jack Parsons's *The Book of Babalon* and *The Book of Antichrist* can be found at *Sacred Texts*, website, https://www.sacred-texts.com/oto/lib49.htm.
[40] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 6.
[41] Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (1966), trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), 219.
[42] Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, 225.
[43] Jacques Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," in *Écrits* (1966), trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 430.
[44] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 7.
[45] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 157–58.
[46] Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 88. Originally publissed in *Tel Quel*, nos. 32 and 33 (1968).
[47] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 69, 70.
[48] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 115, 116.
[49] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 133.
[50] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 130, emphasis his own.
[51] According to Gerald Gardner, "[t]he only circle that matters is the one drawn before every ceremony with either a duly consecrated Magic Sword or a Knife, the latter being the Witches' Athame or Black Hiked Knife, with magic signs on the hilt…" The witch's athamé, a consecrated double-sided dagger used in ritual to energetically demarcate the witch's circle or to trace out sigils and signs on the air likely derives from the 14th or 15th-century pseudepigraphic work, *The Key of Solomon*: "The first disciple will bear the censer, the perfumes and the spices; the second disciple will bear the book, papers, pens, ink, and any stinking or impure materials; the third will carry the knife and the quill knife of magical art…" See Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 26; *Key of Solomon (Clavicula Salomonis)* (15th century), ed. S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, revised by Joseph H. Peterson (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 2000), 16.
[52] John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 1.
[53] Peters, *The Marvelous* Clouds, 2–3.

[54] Marshall McLuhan, "New Media and the Arts," *Arts in Society* 3, no. 2 (September 1964): 239.
[55] Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 96
[56] Ashon T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 3, 4.
[57] Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," 125.
[58] Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," 127.
[59] According to Murray, Operative Witchcraft includes charms and spells, while Ritual Witchcraft includes religious beliefs and ritual. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, 11.
[60] For example, Hurston writes, "I discovered a doctor who depended to a large extent upon the traditional 'works' of Marie Leveau. In fact I came to know that practically all of the hoodoo doctors of Louisiana know the Leveau routines, though most of them have developed also techniques of their own." Zora Neale Hurston, "Hoodoo in America," *The Journal of American Folklore* 44, no. 174 (Oct. – Dec. 1931), 327.
[61] Peter Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching-Other: Explorations & Meditations on the Existential Witch* (Wales: Atramentous Press, 2017), 12.
[62] Peter Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching-Other*, 12.
[63] Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, "Cultural Techniques: Preliminary Remarks," *Theory, Culture and Society* 30, no. 6 (2013), 11.
[64] Witches will often refer to witchcraft simply as "the Craft." See, for example, Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 10, 43, and throughout.
[65] Lucy Lippard, "Making Something from Nothing (Toward a Definition of Women's 'Hobby Art'), in ed. Glenn Adamson, *The Craft Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 484–85. Originally published in *Heresies* 4 (1978).
[66] Doreen Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft Past and Present* (1973) (Ramsbury, UK: Crowood Press, 2018), Apple Books, 681
[67] See, for example, Tatiane Schilaro, "The Radical Brazilian Artist Who Abandoned Art," *Hyperallergic*, August 11, 2014, https://hyperallergic.com/142956/the-radical-brazilian-artist-who-abandoned-art (accessed November 20, 2021).
[68] M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 307.
[69] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 309–11.
[70] For example, Alexander views drums as invested with the energies of the Orisha. Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 312, 320.
[71] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978), 25th Anniversary Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 4.
[72] Gertrude Stein. *Everybody's Autobiography* (1937) (New York: Cooper Square, 1971), 289.
[73] Said, *Orientalism*, xvii.
[74] Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology: Reading the Plants through Capital, Power, and Labor* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2021), 8, emphasis their own.
[75] Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, 2. Quoting Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (1942), fourth edition (New York: Meridian Books, 1974), 23.
[76] Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, 2.
[77] Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, 5.

[78] Shelagh Roxburgh, "Through the Scrying Glass: Defining Witchcraft in Academic Study," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 58, nos. 3–4 (2018): 1042.
[79] Risa Dickens and Amy Torok note that Margaret Murray herself came to the conclusion that in looking for the roots of any and all religion, we trace ourselves back to Egypt, to Africa, an assertion that was hotly contested by her detractors, such as archaeologist William Flinders Petrie, who, of all things, was a supporter of eugenics and believed that Egyptian civilization was created not by Africans, but rather somehow a renegade band of white people. Petrie, a respected archaeologist at the time, whose racist theories were much more harmful than Murray's, not to mention wildly implausible, was never publicly denounced for his research in the way that Murray, his female colleague, was. Jason D. Ramsey notes that William Matthews Flinders Petrie, "is remembered as a veritable genius, renowned for his powerful memory and intellectual abilities … Yet modern archaeologists are selective in deciding which parts of Petrie's legacy are to be highlighted." Ramsey continues that Petrie "maintained, for example, that the thirteenth dynasty Egyptian ruler 'Mermashau' had 'a high face of coarser type, with high cheekbones, quite unlike any of the earlier statues of kings, and suggesting a foreigner who had risen to be a general and thence reached the throne.'" Jason D. Ramsey, "Petrie and the Intriguing Idiosyncracies of Racism," in *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology*, 14.2 (September 2004):15–20. Quoting William Flinders Petrie, *The Making of Egypt* (London: Sheldon Press, 1939), 139; Risa Dickens and Amy Torok, "Margaret Murray: What Science Calls Nature and Religion Calls God," *Missing Witches*, podcast, episode 69, October 18, 2020, https://www.missingwitches.com/2020/10/18/ep-69-mw-margaret-murray-what-science-calls-nature-and-religion-calls-god, accessed April 22, 2021.
[80] Iyalosa Apetebii Olaomi Osunyemi Akalatunde, *Ona Agbani: The Ancient Path; Understanding the Implementing the Ways of our Ancestors* (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2002), 39. According to Asa G. Hillard III, "KMT is the name for the country that was used by the Ancient African people in what we now call Egypt. It means 'the black land' or 'the black people of the land.'" Asa G. Hilliard, "The Meaning of KMT (Ancient Egyptian) History for Contemporary African American Experience." *Phylon* 49, no. 1/2 (Spring / Summer 1992): 10.
[81] Gemma Gary, "The Witch's Cross," *Serpent Songs: An Anthology of Traditional Witchcraft,* ed. Nicholaj de Mattos Frisvold (London: Scarlet Imprint, 2013), 6. Practitioners of traditional witchcraft demarcate themselves from Wiccans, claiming "to follow a path which predates Gardner's Wicca," writes Shai Feraro. On one hand, Traditional Witches see their tradition as contiguous with the craft of the Cunning-Man or Cunning-Woman, particularly those located in the UK; on the other hand, they piece their traditions and rituals together from depositions of the accused witches of Early Modern Europe, with full awareness that these confessions were taken under considerable duress, and therefore are likely, to some degree, to have been constructed between the accused witch and the inquisitor. As Chas S. Clifton writes, the practices of traditional witches borrow from these depositions, including "communal meetings (whether in this reality or another), the organizational structure (e.g., the idea of initiation into a group led by a 'devil'), and the use of flying ointment." Confusingly, traditional witchcraft solidified after Gerald Gardner's Wicca, arguably in the 1990s with Andrew Chumbley's occult current *Cultus sabbati* (Cult of the Sabbat). See Shai Feraro, "Playing the Pipes of PAN: Pagans Against Nukes and the Linking of Wiccan-Derived Paganism with Ecofeminism in Britain, 1980–1990," in eds. Shai Feraro and Ethan Doyle White, *Magic and Witchery in the Modern West: Celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of "The Triumph of the Moon"* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 56

fn. 2; Chas S. Clifton, "Witches Still Fly: Or Do They? Traditional Witches, Wiccans, and Flying Ointment," in ibid, 228.

[82] Raquel Romberg, "A Halloween *Bruja*: On the Magical Efficacy of Stereotypical Iconic Witches," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 11, no. 2 (Winter 2016), 210, 212. The stereotypical Halloween witch costume itself has a tricky lineage. In her book, *Waking the Witch*, Pam Grossman discusses the origins of the black pointed witches' hat, noting that there have been several theories as to its heritage, including a connection to "the Judenhut or Jew's hat, which Jewish people were forced to wear in medieval times," or to conical hats that medieval beer brewers wore to stand out in the marketplace, many of them women. Grossman goes on to note that more recent research by Ronald Hutton and John Callow has connected "the witches' costume, hat and all" with "traveling gear worn primarily by working-class British women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" as well as the Welsh national costume of the 1820s, which was later parodied in illustrations such as Mother Goose or Mother Hubbard to suggest an outmoded "old biddy or country bumpkin." The costume is now so solidly codified to suggest "witch" that Haydée, a *bruja espiritista*, adopts the adornment as part of her contemporary ritual practice in Puerto Rico. Pam Grossman, *Waking the Witch: Reflections on Women, Magic, and Power* (New York: Gallery Books, 2018), 130–31.

[83] Concerning Haydée's particular practice of witchcraft, Romberg notes that in Latin America, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, *brujería* can designate "*espiritistas* (Spiritists), *curanderos* (folk healers), *santeros* (Santeria priests), and *chamanes* (shamans) who heal, cleanse, and exorcise by means of herbal medicine, divination, spirit possession, and magic works." The term *brujos*, however, is demarcated from all these in that it "suggests special powers," including a form of mediumship that not only allows the practitioners to communicate with benevolent spirits, but with malevolent ones as well. Romberg, "A Halloween *Bruja*," 214.

[84] Romberg, "A Halloween *Bruja*," 217.

[85] In their zine on witchcraft and cultural appropriation, The Anchor + The Star adopt the copyright model of the Creative Commons to discuss appropriation and witchcraft, noting that "adornment" falls under open-source. I would add that not all adornment can be considered open-source, but that, given its uncertain lineage and widescale adoption, the stereotypical Anglo witches' costume certainly can. The Anchor + The Star, *Witches, Pagans, and Cultural Appropriation: Considerations and Applications for Magical Practice*, zine, n. d., 10.

[86] Edgar Fabián Frias (@edgarfabianfrias), "Ancestors…," Instagram post, April 11, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/p/CNiESSCANvT/?utm_medium=copy_link (accessed February 15, 2022); Pam Grossman, "#51 — Edgar Fabián Frías, Prismatic Sorceress," *The Witch Wave*, April 29, 2020, https://witchwavepodcast.com/episodes/2020/4/28/51-edgar-fabin-fras-prismatic-witch (accessed February 15, 2022); *The Commons*, Season 2, created by Mireya Lucio, and Sallie Merkel, produced by Emily Alpren, Crystal Baxley, Mireya Lucio, Sallie Merkel, Whippoorwill Arts, and Emotional Labor Co., 2019, https://vimeo.com/thecommons (accessed February 14, 2022).

[87] Eliade writes, "[t]he very name of the goddess became in Romanian *ztna* (<*dziana*), meaning 'fairy.' Moreover, there is another word deriving from the same root: *ztnatec*, meaning 'one who is thoughtless, scatterbrained or crazy,' that is, 'taken' or possessed by Diana or by the fairies." Mircea Eliade, "Some Observations on European Witchcraft," *History of Religions*, 14. 3 (February, 1975), 160; Eva Pócs is interested in finding the "demonic ancestors of the witch," and for this she points to the "*mora* / *mara* / *mare* / *mahr* type of 'tormenting' incubi, or the figure of the demonic werewolf and vampire," all of which "had an important role in the

evolution of the belief figure of the European witch." Pócs speaks about what she terms "mora creatures"; what in German is *mara* / *mahr* / *mare* (but also *Alp* or *Trut*), in French is *cauchemar*, in southern Slavic is *mora* / *mura* / *zmora* / *morina* / *morava*, Romanian *moroi*, and probably coming the Indo-European word *móros* (death) — which "are in close relationship with the images of doubles mentioned above … generally human beings who are able to send their souls out at night while in a trance. Thus they can make journeys by assuming the shapes of animals (snakes, butterflies, mice, hens, cats). they infiltrate people's dwellings as incubi, confinement demons, or even as vampires, and they 'ride upon' or torment people." Mora creatures are generally "born with a caul, or in Eastern Europe even with teeth." They are "mostly female as opposed to the mostly male werewolf; one of their southern Slavic names is *noćnica*, meaning 'night woman.'" Eva Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead: A Perspective on Witches and Seers in the Early Modern Age*, trans. Szilvia Rédey and Michael Webb (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 16, 17, 32, 32–33, 33.

[88] Alexander, *Pedagogies of* Crossing, 323. Alexander practices Lacumi, Winti, Vodou, and Espiritismo, the former of which overlaps with Haydée's practice. She runs the Tobago Centre for the Study and Practice of Indigenous Spirituality on Mt. St. George, Trinidad. See http://latierraspirit.org/blog (accessed February 16, 2022).

[89] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 327.

[90] Adler, Drawing *Down the Moon*, 77.

[91] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 341–45.

[92] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 197.

[93] Arthur Evans, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture: A Radical View of Western Civilization and Some of the People It Has Tried to Destroy* (Boston: Fag Rag Book, 1978), 157, 169, 5–14, 15–28, 73, 89. The Cathars and Waldensians were heretic Christian sects that, according to Silvia Federici, "for more than three centuries flourished among the 'lower classes' in Italy, France, the Flanders, and Germany." In the Middle Ages, Cathars and Waldensians were hunted as heretics and burned at the stake. See Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 33. For more on the Radical Faeries, see appendix.

[94] Matt Baume, "Radical Faeries Have Been Pushing Queer Boundaries for More Than 40 Years," *The Hornet*, September 30, 2021, https://hornet.com/stories/radical-faeries-history (accessed February 18, 2022).

[95] For example, Gerald Gardner included the "Great Rite" in his rituals, which, in the words of H. B. Urban, "reflects a far less 'transgressive' ideal of sexual union than either the more extreme left-hand forms of Tantra or [Aleister] Crowley's OTO, which involved forms of masturbation and anal intercourse. Rather, Gardner's rite is a clearly heterosexual one — ideally performed with between a married couple." H. B. Urban, "The Goddess and the Great Rite: Hindu Tantra and the Complex Origins of Modern Wicca," in *Magic and Witchery in the Modern West: Celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of "The Triumph of the Moon,"* Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 33–34.

[96] Christopher Penczak, *The Mighty Dead: Communing with the Ancestors of Witchcraft* (Salem, NH: Copper Cauldron, 2013), see Table of Contents, and pp. 243 (Giordano Bruno), 244 (Hildegard von Bingen), 248 (John Dee), 247 (Isobel Gowdie), 263 (The Witch of Endor), 269 (Cuchulain). Christopher Penczak is the co-founder of The Temple of Witchcraft located in Salem, New Hampshire, and writes that their missions is "to aid the training of practitioners and clergy in the religious and spiritual traditions of Witchcraft, Wicca, Paganism, Heathenism and

other Earth based traditions." See "Bylaws," *The Temple of Witchcraft*, n. d., https://templeofwitchcraft.org/about/bylaws.

[97] Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 2.

[98] Witches as figures who are deviantly reproductive or non-reproductive is a theme I will keep coming back to over the course of this dissertation, especially in my discussion of witches' fluids, such as ectoplasm, in Chapter 3. Pam Grossman notes that fictional witches, such as the witch in the fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel" or the Grand High Witch in Roald Dahl's *The Witches* (1983) are "not part of any family unit to speak of, and they have no children of their own." Similarly, she notes that childless women were more likely to be seen as culprits during the Early Modern witch hunts in Europe. Grossman, *Waking the Witch*, 110–11.

[99] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 4.

[100] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 2.

[101] Romberg, "A Halloween *Bruja*," 211.

[102] Romberg, "A Halloween *Bruja*," 210, 213.

[103] Witchcraft can sometimes be seen in relation to appetite, especially appetites that seem exorbitant or unruly. Ronald Hutton quotes anthropologist Godfrey Lienhardt, "who summed up a general rule when speaking of one African people, the Dinka: that the witch 'embodies those appetites and passions in every man which, ungoverned, would destroy any moral law.'" See Ronald Hutton*, The Witch: A History of Fear from Ancient Times to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 22. Quoting Godfrey Lienhardt, "Some Notions of Witchcraft among the Dinka," *Africa* 21, no. 4 (October 1951): 303–318.

[104] Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, *Beloved Witch: An Autobiography* (2000) (New Delhi: LifePositive Books, 2016), 151. As she writes in her autobiography, Chakraverti is a descendant of Indian royalty and grew up in Montreal, Canada, where her father, a diplomat, was stationed in the 1960s. As a teenager, Chakraverti came into contact with an obscure group of women in the Laurentians called The Society for the Studies of Ancient Cultures and Civilizations, devoting themselves to initiating other women into spiritual and mystical traditions. After being given a preliminary introduction to a variety of world knowledges, Chakraverti was presented with the choice of focusing on one spiritual path; she chose Wicca.

[105] Starhawk and NightMare, *The Pagan Book of Living and* Dying, 9.

[106] *Daayani* is Bengali for "witch." Chakraverti speaks of spending time in a village in the Purulia district of West Bengal where women were accused of being *daayani*, i.e. of causing "sickness amongst livestock and [casting] evil spells on neighbours' children." Chakraverti brazenly declared herself a *daayani* to the men of the village and told the women that "[t]he witches of olden times were learned women. They were goddess worshippers. They were like doctors and wiser than the panchayat men." Chakraverti is no doubt using class privilege, yet she is also attempting to affect change around conceptions of witches and *daayani* in West Bengal. See Chakraverti, *Beloved Witch*, 228, 230.

[107] Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, "'Wicked Witch' Is a Creation of the Insecure Male," *Hindustan Times*, October 10, 1994. Chakraverti writes: "Wicca and witchcraft are the key to liberation …. India is very patriarchal, even today. When they saw me standing up to those they were trying to brand and destroy and saw that I was helping these women by calling myself a 'witch,' these lobbies erupted with fury. These were vested interests which could not tolerate me because I was saying that a woman who was an individual had her own rights." Jyoti Basu, now deceased, was

the co-founder of the Communist Party of India and former Minister of West Bengal. See Chakraverti, *Beloved Witch*, 200–07.
[108] Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching-Other*, 76.
[109] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 272.
[110] Cunning folk (or cunning-man / cunning-woman) is, according to Ronald Hutton, a term used particularly in 19th-century England to designate a self-declared worker of magic, also called a "wise-woman" / "wise-man" or, to the Cornish, a "pellar." Cunning folk "offered a range of skills: the treatment of human and animal illnesses, the finding of lost or stolen goods and the detection of thieves, the removal of destructive magical spells and the punishment of the person who had cast them, astrological calculations, and other divinatory techniques." Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 85.
[111] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 163, 164, 163–64. In Seton's *The Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore*, he includes a section on the campfire under "Nine leading philosophies" of the Woodcraft Indians, using the word "magic" to describe it: "*The Magic of the Campfire*. What is a camp without a campfire? — no camp at all, but a chilly place in a landscape, where some people happen to have some things." Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), 4–5.
[112] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 99.
[113] Seton, *The Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore*, v.
[114] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 101–02.
[115] Seton, *The Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore*, xii–xiii. Seton's *Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore* is, in a sense, an efficacious fiction all its own. His association with so-called Indian lore, furthermore, left him in an embattled position with his fellow white, male Americans attempting to carve out proper educations for their youth; Seton was eventually dropped from the Boy Scouts "for insufficient Americanism." Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 96.
[116] Rosemary Ellen Guiley, "Paganism," *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 3rd edition (New York, Checkmark books), 238–39.
[117] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 134.
[118] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 137.
[119] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 159.
[120] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 170.
[121] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 164. Deloria notes that, as emphasis on cultures and peoples gave way to a greater emphasis on text and its interpretation, absurdities arose, such as the widely cited "speech purportedly given by the Suquamish / Duwamish leader Seattle in 1855" that contains the lines, "If men spit on the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know. The Earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the earth. This we know." The speech, "which permanently planted Indians — spiritually at least — in the American landscape" was in fact the creation of a "white screenwriter from Texas" composing "an obscure television script on pollution" in 1972. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 166, 167.
[122] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 172.
[123] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 411.
[124] Monica Sjöö, *New Age and Armageddon: The Goddess or the Gurus? Towards a Feminist Vision of the Future* (London: The Women's Press, 1992), 4.
[125] Sjöö, *New Age and Armageddon*, 14.
[126] Sjöö, *New Age and Armageddon*, 16.
[127] Elissa Washuta, *White Magic* (Portland, OR: Tin House, 2021), 14.

[128] Washuta, *White Magic*, 5.
[129] Washuta, *White Magic*, 11.
[130] Washuta, *White Magic*, 15.
[131] Sarah M. Pike, "Neopaganism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsey Jones, 2nd edition (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 6470.
[132] Pike, "Neopaganism," 6473.
[133] Sabina Magliocco, for example, cites the work of Sarah Pike, who discusses an incident at the 1993 Parliament of World Religions in Chicago, where a Lakota elders objected to neopagans appropriating practices "such as the use of Native American chants, ritual sweat lodges, and smudging (purification using burning sage") by non-Natives" as well as dancing in a circle and "invoking the four directions." Members of the Covenant of the Goddess responded that ancient European traditions involved the latter two practices. The two groups ending up holding a public ceremony together, but I cannot find information that this alliance surpassed this one performative gesture. Sabina Magliocco, *Witching Culture: Folklore and Neo-Paganism in North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 216. Citing Sarah Pike, "Rationalizing at the Margins: A Review of Legitimation and Ethnographic Practice in Scholarly Research on Neo-Paganism," in *Magical Religions and Modern Witchcraft*, ed. James R. Lewis (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 352–72.
[134] Penczak, *The Mighty Dead*, 239. Black Eagle was the spirit contact of British magician and artist Austin Osman Spare, who is considered one of the original sources of Chaos Magic and was a recluse who lived in poverty most of his life. Black Eagle was passed on to Spare by his mentor, a fortune-teller by the name of Margaret Patterson who also served as a mother figure to Spare from a young age. According to Penczak, Black Eagle himself could have either been a "Native American shaman / sorcerer spirit guide who aided Austin Osman Spare" or "a South American sorcerer" or even Baphomet himself. See Rosemary Ellen Guiley, "Spare, Austin Osman (1888–1956)," *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 326–27. Penczak, *The Mighty Dead*, 239.
[135] Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 398, emphasis author's own.
[136] Sabina Magliocco, *Witching* Culture, 225, 234.
[137] Both asserting blood ties and F-keying through historical cultures present a dizzying array of issues within neopagan witchcraft, many of which Magliocco expands on in her chapter. For example, she writes of the San Francisco Reclaiming tradition, who uses mainly a Celtic pantheon in their rituals, and were criticized by members for not being more diverse in their approach. "However," writes Magliocco, "when Reclaiming has attempted to diversify its cultural symbol set, it has drawn criticism from Witches and Pagans who are sensitive to issues of cultural appropriation." Yet blood-right argument can be outright disturbing, with the example of the Asatru Norse reconstructionist tradition claiming that one must have "Teutonic heritage" in order to "practice Norse Paganism." Magliocco writes that "[n]ot surprisingly, such groups do not borrow from o her cultural traditions who practice might 'contaminate' the heritage they believe they are reviving." Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 229, 220, 221, 222.
[138] Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 209. Quoting Werner Sollors, "The Invention of Ethnicity," in *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. idem. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), xi.
[139] Stengers, "Experimenting with Refrains," 54. Referencing Susan Leigh Star, "Power, Technologies and the Phenomenology of Conventions: On Being Allergic to Onions," in *A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*, ed. John Law (London: Routledge, 1991) 26–56.

[140] Sabina Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 234.
[141] Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 216, 217. Citing Deborah Kapchan, "Possessed by Culture / Possessing Culture: Giving Flesh to Voice." Position paper, University of Pennsylvania Department of Anthropology Conference, Spring 2002: 4.
[142] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 34. Referencing Marilyn Strathern. For example, *Kinship, Law and the Unexpected: Relatives Are Always a Surprise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[143] The Anchor + The Star, *Witches, Pagans, and Cultural Appropriation*, 5.
[144] The Anchor + The Star, *Witches, Pagans, and Cultural Appropriation*, 14.
[145] Digital Witch Project, https://digitalwitchproject.tumblr.com, accessed May 8, 2021.
[146] Frances F. Denny, "Arist Statement," *Major Arcana: Portraits of Witches in America*, showing at The Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona, Florida, January 12 – April 17, 2021. See https://www.francesfdenny.com/portfolios/major-arcana:-witches-in-america/thumbs, accessed May 8, 2021. A series of portraits of witches has also been taken in Romania by photographer Lucia Sekerková Bláhová, whose series *Vrăjitoare* captures Roma witches in Romania who have taken their craft to the web, marketing their divinatory skills to digital clients. See Sophie Wright, "Vrăjitoare," *lensculture*, n. d., https://www.lensculture.com/articles/lucia-sekerkova-blahova-vrajitoare (accessed July 6, 2022).
[147] Journalist Sigal Samuel has explored contemporary intersectional witchcraft particularly in Baltimore, and puts it under the umbrella of "millennial spirituality," which, according to Samuel, is "common to both white and African American witches [who are] typically disillusioned with hierarchical institutions … and attracted to do-it-yourself 'spiritual but not religious' practices … the budding black-witch community also has unique traits, including a desire for 'safe spaces,' a wariness of cultural appropriation, and a penchant for digital religion." Sigal Samuel, "The Witches of Baltimore," *The Atlantic*, November 5, 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/11/black-millennials-african-witchcraft-christianity/574393, accessed May 8, 2021.
[148] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 157.
[149] See, for example, Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, vol. 2, third edition revised (London: John Murray, 1891).
[150] Starhawk, "Appendix A: The Burning Times; Notes on a Crucial Period of History," in *Dreaming the Dark*, 183–219.
[151] Stengers, "Reclaiming Animism," n. p.
[152] Claire Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), x.
[153] Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, vii.
[154] Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits*, x.
[155] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 164.
[156] Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 164–65, 177.
[157] Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) (Toronto: New Directions, 1980), 145.
[158] Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 168.
[159] Guiley, "Magic," *Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 215.
[160] Guiley, "Witchcraft," *Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 378.
[161] Akalatunde, *Ona Agbani*, 6.

[162] Kenneth Grant, *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* (London: Skoob Books, 1992), 5.
[163] Akalatunde, *Ona Agbani*, all 5.
[164] Michael Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism: Another Theory of Magic," in *Walter Benjamin's Grave (*Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 135.
[165] Hutton, *The Witch*, 74.
[166] Hutton, *The Witch*, 76, 309 fn 8. See Vilmos Diószegi, *Shamanism: Selected Writings*, ed. Mihály Hoppál, International Society for Shamanistic Research (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1998).
[167] According to Hutton, referencing the work of witchcraft historian Gustav Henningsen, "the *benandanti* and similar figures in south-eastern Europe differed from the 'classical,' Siberian, shamans in four key respects: they were not in control of their trances; they were usually alone when they entered them and only encountered other humans in the course of their soul journeys; they held no public position; and they normally in fact did not enter trance at all, instead dreaming of their journeys while sleeping." Hutton, The *Witch*, 77. See Gustav Henningsen, *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).
[168] Risa Dickens and Amy Torok, "What Is a Shaman?," *Missing Witches*, podcast, episode 93, May 11, 2021, https://www.missingwitches.com/2021/05/11/what-is-a-shaman-panel-fundraiser (accessed March 3, 2022): 28:27 and 36:08.
[169] Heike Behrend and Martin Zillinger, "Introduction: Trance Mediums and New Media," in Trance Mediums and New Media, eds. Heike Behrend, Anje Dreschke, and Martin Zillinger (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 4. Citing Jacques Derrida, "Above All, No Journalists!," in *Religion and Media*, ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 61.
[170] Behrend and Zillinger, "Introduction," 5. See Behrend, "Salvation and Terror in West Uganda: The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God," in *Millenarian Movements in Africa and the Diaspora*, eds. Jan Lodewijk Grothaars (Brussels: Belgium Association of Africanists, 2001); Deborah Kapchan, *Traveling Spirit Masters: Moroccan Gnawa Trance and Music in the Global Marketplace* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007).
[171] Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 140.
[172] Ruy Llera Blanes and Diana Espírito Santo, *The Social Life of Spirits* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 15.
[173] Blanes and Santo, *The Social Life of Spirits*, 30, 17.
[174] Blanes and Santo, *The Social Life of Spirits*, 6.
[175] In her 2014 book, *The Spectral Metaphor*, Esther Peeren notes that "the spectral turn" is not a movement so much as a "loose convergence of interest in the conceptual force of ghosts and haunting ... as analytic instruments." This has, she asserts, generated insight into themes such as "the supernatural, spiritualism, telepathy, the Gothic and the uncanny" as well as psychoanalysis, deconstruction, trauma, sexuality, the postcolonial, architecture, among others. Although these are discrete concepts, among their shared emphases are an invocation of the ghost as a figure of return, persistence, and repetition; the ghost as a kind of present absence, associated with "reknowing" or "unforgetting"; the ghost as a critique of the "un-mixed" or any assertions against hybridity, i.e. the ghost as radical alterity; and the ghost as an acceptance of risk or uncertainty. The phrase is not Peeren's own, but was first coined by Roger Luckhurst in 2002, who located Derrida's *Specters of Marx* "as a work that transformed the specter into a 'master trope.'" Esther Peeren, *The Spectral Metaphor: Living Ghosts and the Agency of Invisibility*

(Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 9, 9–10, 10–11, 11. See Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994); Roger Luckhurst, "The Contemporary London Gothic and the Limits of the 'Spectral Turn,'" *Textual Practice* 16, no. 3 (2002): 527.
[176] Behrend and Zillinger, "Introduction: Trance Mediums and New Media," 24.
[177] Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan, "The Spirit of Media: An Introduction," *Critical Inquiry* 42 (Summer 2016): 813. Referencing W. C. Brownell, "Matthew Arnold," *Scribner's Magazine* 30 (July 1901): 112.
[178] Romberg, "A Halloween *Bruja*," 215, 217, 223.
[179] T. M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4–5. Tanya Luhrmann's ethnographic study of witches in London in the 1980s remains controversial among practicing witches, and was one factor that affected Ronald Hutton's decision to study witchcraft. According to Ethan Doyle White and Shai Feraro, "Luhrmann's work was well received in anthropological circles, although as [Ronald] Hutton himself encountered, many in the British Wiccan community were offended by her book's suggestion that, due to 'interpretative drift,' magicians and Wiccans underwent a form of self-delusion, coupled with her apparent abandonment of Wicca and magic on the completion of her dissertation. Accordingly, there was a level of mistrust towards subsequent researchers who came after her." White and Feraro, "Twenty Years On: An Introduction," 8.
[180] Stengers, "Reclaiming Animism," n. p.
[181] Stengers, "Experimenting with Refrains," 52.
[182] James Hillman and Sonu Shamdasani, *Lament of the Dead: Psychology after Jung's Red Book* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 84, 84, 24.
[183] As Richard Kieckhefer lovingly notes, the *Codex Latinus Monacenssis* "is a rare example, essentially intact, of what must once have been a flourishing genre: the manual of explicitly demonic magic, or necromancy"; it contains "incantations, exorcisms and sundry bewitchments." Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 24–25.
[184] In medieval magic, the "medium," that is, the interlocutor between the worlds of the living and the dead, was often a virgin child, and even more often a virgin boy. Kieckhefer notes that "Johannes Hartlieb [physician of the mid 15th century] tells how a *zaubermeister* stands behind a child and recites secret words into his ear in the practice of hydromancy …. The master may take oil and soot from a pan and anoint the hand of an innocent girl or boy so that it shines brightly …. Alternatively the child may be made to gaze at a polished sword … or a crystal." Kieckhefer, with no doubt restrained wording, traces this practice to "a broader clerical fascination with the idea of innocent boyhood." Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 98, 103.
[185] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 105.
[186] The ten names are Latranoy, Iszarin, Bicol, Danmals, Gromon, Zara, Ralkal, Sigtonia, Samah, and Meglasar. Kieckhefer gives no attribution for the names. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 105.
[187] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 105.
[188] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 105. This is reminiscent of a chant that Gerald Gardner, the so-called father of modern witchcraft, later termed Wicca, included in his 1950 Book of Shadows known as the "Bagabi rune" and starts "Eko; Eko; Azarak..." Historian Ronald Hutton tries to track down the linguistic origins of the rune, which seem to be everywhere and nowhere — at once proclaimed (and unconfirmed) to be ancient Basque by Historian Michael Harrison, the rune also appears in fragmented form in ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley's work as an

invocation ascribed to medieval sorcerers (and these are but a couple examples). Just as Kieckhefer calls the conjuration of Floron "garbled," Hutton calls the Bagabi rune "gibberish." Though both Kieckhefer and Hutton are no doubt using these adjectives in a neutral to pejorative fashion, one could equally see this as an evocative and efficacious facet of both chants. Furthermore, it is notable that the English word "gibberish" was derived from the name of Arabic alchemist Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (c. 806–816), who wrote in code. See Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 232, 273. For full Bagabi rune, see Gerald Gardner, "The Sabbat Rituals: November Eve," *The Gardnerian Book of Shadows* (1950) (London: Forgotten Books, 2008), 19. For more on Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, see Samir S. Amr and Abdelghani Tbakhi, "Jābir ibn Ḥayyān," *Annals of Saudi Medicine* 27.1 (January – February, 2007): 52–53, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6077026, accessed April 22, 2021.

[189] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 105.

[190] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 106.

[191] Doreen Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* (Ramsbury, UK: Robert Hale, 1989), 99.

[192] Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 106.

[193] Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 114.

[194] Medium Geraldine Cummins, for example, had a control named Astor who served as a link between herself and any spirits she did not know but wished to speak with. In this way, there is not just one spirit that the medium communicates with at once, but at least two. Valiente herself notes that her encounter of Brakespeare reminded her of Spiritualist séances. See E. B. Gibbes, "'Controls' as Separate Entities," in *Psychic Science*, Quarterly Transactions of the British College of Psychic Science, 15, no. 2 (July 1937), reproduced in *Survival After Death*, https://www.survivalafterdeath.info/articles/gibbes/controls.htm; see Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 110. For a lengthier discussion of spirit controls, see Chapter 3.

[195] Oxford English Dictionary, s. v., "scry," https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/search?searchType=dictionary&q=scry&_searchBtn=Search (accessed June 16, 2020).

[196] Ronald Hutton*, The* Witch, 47.

[197] Recipes for spells and divinations at times sound like algebraic recipes, and algebraic prose at times sounds like recipes for spells. "I found that these three kinds; namely, roots, squares, and numbers, may be combined together, and thus three compound species arise," writes al-Khwārizmī circa 830. "1. Write or inscribe the letter 'N' (for 'no') on one side of the root. 2. Write or inscribe the letter 'Y' on the other side to represent the affirmative response … 3. Toss the root up in the air; the side that lands on top delivers the response," writes Judika Illes in her *Encyclopedia of 5000 Spells* 1,174 years later. See *The Algebra of Mohammed Ben Musa*, trans. Frederic Rosen (Charleston S.C.: CreateSpace, 2011), 8; Judika Illes, "Lotus Root Divination," *The Element Encyclopedia of 5000 Spells* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 316.

[198] Raymond Buckland, "Mirror," *The Witch Book: The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft, Wicca, and Neo-paganism* (Detroit: Visible Ink, 2002), 334.

[199] Roxburgh, "Through the Scrying Glass," 1042.

[200] Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 25–26.

[201] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, for example 310–11.

[202] Stengers, "Experimenting with Refrains," 48.

[203] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966), trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Routledge, 2002), 352, 356, 348, 355.

[204] George Makari, *Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2015), 4. Concerning the division between the soul and the mind, Sylvia Wynter notes that "the psyche has now transumptively replaced the soul." Wynter, qtd. in McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 55.
[204] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 30.
[205] Thomas Szasz, *The Second Sin: Some Iconoclastic Thoughts on Marriage, Sex, Drugs, Mental Illness, and Other Matters* (New York: Anchor Press, 1973), 120.
[206] Thomas Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement* (1970) (New York : Syracuse University Press, 1997), xx.
[207] Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness*, xxvi.
[208] Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 14.
[209] Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 14.
[210] Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 20.
[211] Quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 21.
[212] See, for example, Michael Cardenas, "Love Spells," *The Hoodwitch* (blog), February 13, 2017, http://www.thehoodwitch.com/blog/2017/2/13/love-spells, accessed, June 12, 2020; TBKelley, "Hathor's Mirror," *The Magickal Nook* (blog), March 14, 2019, https://themagickalnook.wordpress.com/tag/hathors-mirror/https://themagickalnook.wordpress.com/tag/hathors-mirror, accessed June 12, 2020.
[213] The first English translation from the 1812 German edition was called "Snow-Drop." See *German Popular Stories, Translated from Kinder und Haus-Märchen, Collected by M. M. Grimm from Oral Tradition*, ed. and trans. E. Taylor (London: C. Baldwyn Newgate Street, 1823), 128–139.
[214] Paul Koudounaris, *Memento Mori: The Dead Among Us* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2015), 19.
[215] The charnel house in Maria Worth, Austria, for example, includes skulls with numbers painted on them that were used to predict local lottery outcomes. But memento mori are not solely skulls, but can, rather, be whole bodies. Mummified Buddhist monks are venerated in various parts of Asia, a practice that was particularly alive in 11th century Japan, where the mummification process known as *Sokushinbutsu* bled into the world of the living in a significant way. The monk-to-be-mummified would begin with a 1,000-day diet, followed by a 1,000-day period of ingesting poisonous tea, followed by another 1,000-day period alone in a tomb. Some were gilded in gold after death. In Bolivia, skulls are collected from medical schools, archaeological sites, or evicted tombs, and decorated and enshrined in homes as *ñatitas*, which are treated as good luck charms, spirit guides, or even friends, and have a variety of specializations, such as helping with domestic problems, medical issues, or divination. See Koudounaris, *Memento Mori*, 145, 155–86.
[216] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 10.
[217] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 11.
[218] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 12.
[219] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 12.
[220] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 11–12.
[221] Blake Octavian Blair, "Shamanic Magic Mirrors," in Mickie Mueller, *The Witch's Mirror: The Craft, Lore, and Magick of the Looking Glass* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publishing, 2019), 24.

[222] James W. Fernandez, "Reflections on Looking into Mirrors," *Semiotica* 30, nos. 1–2 (1980), 28.
[223] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 19.
[224] Alan MacFarlane and Gerry Martin, *Glass: A World History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 204–05.
[225] MacFarlane and Martin, *Glass*, 206.
[226] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 17.
[227] *Two Way Mirrors*, "What are Beam Splitters?" https://www.twowaymirrors.com/beam-splitters (accessed May 10, 2021).
[228] Fernandez, "Reflections on Looking into Mirrors," both 31.
[229] Fernandez, "Reflections on Looking into Mirrors," 32.
[230] Gordon Jensen, "Left-Handed Theology and Inclusiveness," *Horizons* 17, no. 2 (1990), 208. Referencing Thomas Heywood, *The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels* (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1635), 472.
[231] Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, 63. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an archaic use of "sinister" denoted "a thing or part of a thing that is situated on the left-hand side from the perspective of the observer," a meaning dating back from the 15th century, around the time that The Mirror of Floron ritual was being performed. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v., "sinister, adj., n., and adv.," https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/180206?redirectedFrom=sinister#eid (accessed February 16, 2022.
[232] Fernandez, "Reflections on Looking into Mirrors," 32.
[233] Fernandez, "Reflections on Looking into Mirrors," 32.
[234] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring, 1986): 24. Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," 430.
[235] Mark Strand, "Keeping Things Whole," *Selected Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979). See https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47541/keeping-things-whole (accessed July 8, 2022)
[236] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 30.
[237] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (1966) (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 76.
[238] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," 76–77.
[239] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," 76, 77.
[240] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," 77.
[241] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," 80.
[242] Bruce Fink, "Commentary on the Graphs," in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, 862.
[243] Jacques Lacan, "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*" (1964), in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Karnac, 1973), 103.
[244] Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), xvi.
[245] European Graduate School Video Lectures, "Slavoj Zizek. Object Petit a and Digital Civilization. 2014," YouTube, accessed June 9, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ui7N1SZWJw (25:30).
[246] Lacan, "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*," 104.
[247] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 7.

[248] Fred Moten, "Chapter 3: Visible Music," in *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 173. Referencing Lee Edelman, "The Part for the (W)hole," *Homographesis* (NewYork: Routledge, 1994), 59.
[249] Moten, "Visible Music," 173. Forming a neologism from "maternal" and "material."
[250] Moten, "Visible Music," 183.
[251] Moten, "Visible Music," 178.
[252] Moten, "Visible Music," 185.
[253] Moten, "Visible Music," 187; Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 164–65.
[254] Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, xviii.
[255] Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, Signs 1, no. 4 (1976): 891.
[256] Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," 888.
[257] Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," 893.
[258] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 65.
[259] John Durham Peter's crisply defines Spiritualism as "the art of communication with the dead" "the art of communication with the dead," where "faith is replaced by evidence." Peters, *Speaking into the* Air, 97.
[260] Simon Costin and Sara Hannant, *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* (London: Strange Attractor Press, 2016), object 69.
[261] James W. Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," in James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 22.
[262] Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," 15.
[263] Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," 14.
[264] Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," 23.
[265] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 112. King Psammetichos was a king of Egypt, 26th Dynasty, who ruled from 664 to 610 BC.
[266] Rosemary Ellen Guiley, "scrying," *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 319.
[267] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 331.
[268] Oxford English Dictionary, s. v., "scry," https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/search?searchType=dictionary&q=scry&_searchBtn=Search, accessed June 16, 2020.
[269] Aleister Crowley, *Magick: Liber ABA, Book Four, Parts I–IV* (1913), eds. Mary Desti and Leila Waddell (Sacramento, CA: Murine Press, 2009), 254. Though this book is attributed to Crowley, and Desti and Waddell listed as editors, they were equally as important in compiling and putting together the content of this book as the attributed author. See, for example, Alice Gorman, "Hidden Women of History: Leila Waddell, Australian Violinist, Philosopher of Magic, and Fearless Rebel," in *The Conversation*, September 23, 2019, https://theconversation.com/hidden-women-of-history-leila-waddell-australian-violinist-philosopher-of-magic-and-fearless-rebel-122402.
[270] Raquel Romberg and Claire Fanger, "Shimmering Magic: Cross-cultural Explorations of the Aesthetic, Moral, and Mystical Significance of Reflecting and Deflecting Shine," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 12, no. 2 (Summer 2017), 151.
[271] Christopher Penczak, *The Mighty* Dead, 169ff.
[272] Guiley, "scrying," 319. Regarding his own scrying practice, Crowley wrote, "after choosing a spot where I was not likely to be disturbed, I would take this stone and recite the Enochian Key, and, after satisfying myself that the invoked forces were actually present, made the topaz play a

part not unlike that of the looking glass in the case of Alice." *Museum of Witchcraft and Magic*, s. v., "1162 — Scrying Cross," https://museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk/object/scrying-cross, accessed June 14, 2020. Quote ascribed to Richard Deacon, *John Dee: Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I* (London: London, 1968).
2004), 218.
[273] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 116.
[274] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 98, 103.
[275] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 103.
[276] Leek claimed to have descended from a traditional family of English witches and first came on the scene at the age of 40, mostly to oppose claims by academics that traditions of European witchcraft were invented or that no traditional lineages of witches actually existed. Purportedly, she kept a jackdaw as a familiar, who would appear on her shoulder in public. See Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 300.
[277] Sybil Leek, *The Sybil Leek Book of Fortune Telling* (Toronto: The MacMillon Company, 1969), 131.
[278] Theodore Besterman, *Crystal-Gazing: A Study in the History Distribution, Theory and Practice of Scrying* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1965), 3.
[279] Sybil Leek, *Fortune Telling*, 125–134.
[280] Doreen Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft*, 680–81.
[281] Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft*, 681.
[282] Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft*, 681–83.
[283] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 98–99.
[284] Deborah Harkness, *John Dee's Conversation with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 78.
[285] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 97.
[286] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 187.
[287] Margaret A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 22.
[288] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 197–98.
[289] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 12.
[290] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 30.
[291] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 30–31. The other six forbidden arts were geomancy hydromancy, aeromancy, pyromancy, chiromancy and spatulamancy.
[292] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 31.
[293] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 12.
[294] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 23.
[295] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 37.
[296] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 26.
[297] Risa Dickens and Amy Torok, *Missing Witches: Recovering True Histories of Feminist Magic* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2021), 18.
[298] Dickens and Torok, *Missing Witches*, 21.
[299] See, for example, "The Charge of the Goddess," doreenvaliente.org, https://www.doreenvaliente.com/doreen-valiente-Doreen_Valiente_Poetry-11.php (accessed July 2, 2022).
[300] Dickens and Torok, *Missing Witches*, 23.
[301] Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 11.

[302] Dee employed at least three other scryers in his time, yet his relationship with Kelly historically seems to be the longest. The two worked together on and off from 1582 to 1588, and even agreed for a period to "share all things between them," including their wives. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 21.
[303] Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 17, 31.
[304] Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 116, 99, emphasis her own.
[305] Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 118, 119, 72.
[306] Harkness points out that the piece of information that associates the black obsidian stone with Dee is a 1748 catalogue of Horace Walpole's collections of curiosities in which the mirror is mentioned and attributed to John Dee. See Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with* Angels, 30.
[307] Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 29–30. The origin of the obsidian mirror does not lie with John Dee, but with the Aztecs, and was associated with the god Tezcatlipoca, meaning "smoking mirror" in Nahuatl. "The smoking mirror had a dualistic nature," writes Mueller, "both a receiver of divine communication and a transmitter, much the way that the human eye sees and judges its surroundings, but is also a window to the soul. To gaze within the all-seeing eye of Tezcatlipoca's smoking mirror was to communicate back and forth with the deity himself." Mark Cartwright, "Tezcatlipoca," *Ancient History Encyclopedia,* August 14, 2013, https://www.ancient.eu/Tezcatlipoca (accessed June 14, 2020); Mueller, *The Witch's Mirror*, 23.
[308] Simon Costin, "Articles of Faith," in Simon Costin and Sara Hannant, *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* (London: Strange Attractor Press, 2016), 15.
[309] Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 243.
[310] Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching-Other*, 12.
[311] Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching-Other*, 12–13.
[312] Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching-Other*, 15.
[313] Rae Beth, *Hedge Witch: A Guide to Solitary Witchcraft* (1990) (Ramsbury, UK: Robert Hale, 2019), 17.
[314] Beth, *Hedge Witch*, 18.
[315] Isabelle Stengers, "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," *Cultural Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (March 2005): 184.
[316] Stengers, "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," 194.
[317] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 18.
[318] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 24.
[319] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 2.
[320] Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark*, xi.
[321] Michelle Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health and Technoscience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 68.
[322] Buckland, "Scrying," *The Witch Book*, 434.
[323] T. Thorn Coyle, *Evolutionary Witchcraft* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher / Penguin, 2004), 218, emphasis her own.
[324] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 67–69.
[325] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 72.
[326] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 72, emphasis her own.
[327] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 75.

[328] Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 24.
[329] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 74.
[330] Annie Sprinkle, "A Public Cervix Announcement," http://anniesprinkle.org/a-public-cervix-anouncement, n. d., accessed May 25, 2021.
[331] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 76.
[332] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 91.
[333] For more on The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, see appendix.
[334] Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction*, 95.
[335] According to Sylvia Federici, "[w]ith the persecution of the folk healer [during the European witch trials], women were expropriated from a patrimony of empirical knowledge, regarding herbs and healing remedies, that they had accumulated and transmitted from generation to generation, its loss paving the way for a new form of enclosure. This was the rise of professional medicine …" Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 201; see whole section, "The Witch, the Healer, and the Birth of Modern Science," ibid., 200–06.
[336] Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (1973), 2nd edition (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2021), 50.
[337] Ehrenreich and English, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, 8–9.
[338] Ehrenreich and English, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, 18.
[339] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 200.
[340] Ehrenreich and English, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, 20. Quoting John Demos, *The Enemy Within: 2000 Years of Witch-Hunting in the Western World* (New York: Viking, 2008), 120.
[341] Ehrenreich and English, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, 46.
[342] Elissa Washuta, *White Magic* (Portland: OR: Tin House, 2021), 11.
[343] Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, "Spectographies," *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory*, eds. María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 40.
[344] Derrida and Stiegler, "Spectographies," 41.
[345] Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 149.
[346] In response to King Lear's prompting, "you see how this world goes," Gloucester responds, "I see it feelingly." William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (1604/05), act 4, scene 6. For full text, see, for example, http://shakespeare.mit.edu/lear/full.html.
[347] Concerning the simultaneous use of ancient and contemporary media, Latour writes: "I may use an electric drill, but I also use a hammer. The former is thirty-five years old, the latter hundreds of thousands. Will you see me as a DIY expert 'of contrasts' because I mix up gestures from times? Would I be an ethnographic curiosity?" Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991), trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 75.
[348] Derrida and Stiegler, "Spectographies," all 42.
[349] Derrida states, in the same interview with Bernard Stiegler, "the dead no longer exist." The word *exist* here, however, could mean many things. See Derrida and Stiegler, "Spectographies," 49.
[350] Costin and Hannant, "98. Crystal Ball." *Of Shadows*, n. p.
[351] Gasché, *The Tain of the* Mirror, 13.
[352] Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 16.

[353] Starhawk and NightMare, *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying*, 9; Chakraverti, *Beloved Witch*, 151. For a wider discussion of these definitions, see Introduction.
[354] Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 25. Quoting Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 18.
[355] Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, 26.
[356] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 112.
[357] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 113.
[358] Laura Tempest Zakroff, *Weave the Liminal: Living Modern Traditional Witchcraft* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 2019), 140.
[359] Richard E. Lind, "Historical Origins of the Modern Mind/Body Split," in *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 27.
[360] Lind, "Historical Origins of the Modern Mind/Body Split," 23, 26.
[361] Alkistis Dimech, "Dynamics of the Occulted Body," *Scarlet Imprint*, May 16, 2016, https://scarletimprint.com/essays/dynamics-of-the-occulted-body?rq=alkistis. For more on "liquid crystalline," see Mae-Wan Ho, *The Rainbow and the Worm* (New Jersey: World Scientific, 1998).
[362] Hecate, writing for *Light Force Network* instructs the scryer to "blank out your wallpaper background [on your computer] into a basic black and clear your mind and surroundings of any distractions. Peggy Jentoft provides, below her text on scrying, "a modern computer graphic version of a classic black scrying mirror." See Hecate, "Using the Computer as a Scrying Mirror," *Light Force Network*, April 20, 2017, https://www.lightforcenetwork.com/forum/6/using-computer-monitor-scrying-mirror; Peggy Jentoft, "A Virtual Scrying Mirror," *pjentoft.com* (blog), http://pjentoft.com/virtual-scrying-mirror.html; Rick Blair, iScry, app, https://apprecs.com/ios/353440814/iscry.
[363] The instrument vanishes insofar as the instrument was, in the first place, the precondition for the technique that replaced the tool. Or perhaps it is the other way around: the instrument was figured on a technique of the body.
[364] Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," 125.
[365] Stolow, "Religion and/as Media," 129, 125, 127.
[366] Like Lacan's mirror stage, Moten's black mirror stage presents a "catastrophic break," one that is "augmentative of (dominant understandings or formulations of) identity." Yet it is a castration that can also be formulated "in terms of wounded kinships or phantom limbs," not only a loss, but an abundance, one that is neither hermeneutic or anti-hermeneutic, but rather "*ante*-hermeneutic, which is to say before (in every sense of the word) the psychoanalytic." Moten, "Visible Music," 176.
[367] See Costin and Hannant, "73. Selling the Wind," in *Of Shadows*, n. p.
[368] Bennett writes: "The story I tell is of a contemporary world sprinkled with natural and cultural sites that have the power to 'enchant.' It is a story born of my own discomfort in the presence of two images circulating in political and social theory. The first is the image of modernity as disenchanted, that is to say, as a place of dearth and alienation (when compared to a golden age of community and cosmological coherency) or a place of reason, freedom, and control (when compared to a dark and confused premodernity). For me the question is not whether disenchantment is a regrettable or a progressive historical development. It is, rather, whether the very characterization of the world as disenchanted ignores and then discourages affective attachment to that world. The question is important because the mood of enchantment

may be valuable for ethical life." Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 3.
[369] Raymond Buckland, "crossroads," *The Witch Book: The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft, Wicca and Neopaganism* (Canton, MI: Invisible Ink Press, 2002), 106. For more on Vodou and Voodoo, see appendix.
[370] Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 267, 268.
[371] Vinciane Despret, "Inquiries Raised by the Dead," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 9, no. 2: 241.
[372] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism: Another Theory of Magic," 132, emphasis his own.
[373] Michel Serres, *The Parasite* [1980], trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 229.
[374] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 8.
[375] Modernist artist Marcel Duchamp coined the term "infrathin" to speak of a nearly imperceptible sense or experience: "When the tobacco smoke smells also of the mouth which exhales it, the 2 odors marry by infra-thin"; or "[v]elvet trousers — their whistling sound (in walking) by brushing of the 2 legs is an infra-thin separation signaled by sound." According to Thierry de Duve, "these examples refer to sensory experiences that the readers are left to imagine or, if they so wish, to experiment with. But these experiences also work to isolate a difference that is not sensorial and to which sensation can only refer." The infrathin is, in a way, the very life of communication that is almost, nearly, incommunicable, but very much present. Thierry de Duve: *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade*, trans. Dana Polan, Theory and History of Literature 51 (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 160.
[376] Despret, "Inquiries Raised by the Dead," 241.
[377] To falter = to hesitate, to waver, to stutter; *Falten* (German) = to fold; *der Falter* (German) = a moth.
[378] Peter R. Cromwell, *Knots and Links* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press), xi.
[379] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v., "topology, *n.*" https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/203426?redirectedFrom=topology#eid (accessed March 16, 2022).
[380] *University of Waterloo*, "What Is Topology?" https://uwaterloo.ca/pure-mathematics/about-pure-math/what-is-pure-math/what-is-topology (accessed March 16, 2022).
[381] Cromwell, *Knots and Links*, xi.
[382] Celia Lury, "Introduction: Activating the Present of Interdisciplinary Methods," in ed. Celia Lury et al., *Routledge Handbook of Interdisciplinary Research Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 3. Quoting Alberto Corsín Jiménez, "Introduction," *Journal of Cultural Economy* 7, no. 4 (2014): 383.
[383] Clifford W. Ashley, *The Ashley Book of Knots* (New York: Doubleday, 1944), 1.
[384] Ashley, *The Ashley Book of Knots*, 2.
[385] Ashley, *The Ashley Book of Knots*, 3.
[386] Ashley, The Ashley Book of Knots, 4–5.
[387] McLuhan writes: "it can be enunciated that as a principle all new media or technologies, whatever, create new environments, psychic and social, that assume as their natural content the earlier technologies. Moreover, the content of these new environments undergoes a progressive

reshaping so that what had appeared earlier as dishevelled and degraded becomes conventionalized into an artistic genre." McLuhan, "New Media and the Arts," 242.
[388] Judika Illes, *The Element Encyclopedia of 5000 Spells* (London: HarperElement, 2004), 21. Concerning the word *heka*, Illes writes that the English language "lacks a specific word to name the power that radiates from all life. The ancient Egyptians called it *heka*; on the other side of Africa, the Yoruba, parent culture of myriad spiritual and magical traditions, call it *ashé*. The most familiar word may be the Polynesian *mana*. In Morocco, this radiant energy is known as *baraka*. For lack of a better word, let's just call it *magic power*." Illes, ibid., 2.
[389] Illes, *The Element Encyclopedia of 5000* Spells, ix.
[390] Illes, *The Element Encyclopedia of 5000 Spells*, 953 (psychic enhancement); for example, 305, 980 (divination and summoning); 773 (scholarly success); viii–xi.
[391] Pam Grossman, "#15: Judika Illes, Witch Supreme," *The Witch Wave*, May 9, 2018, 21:24, https://witchwavepodcast.com/episodes?offset=1527051324504 (accessed June 19, 2021).
[392] Illes, *The Element Encyclopedia of 5000 Spells*, 10.
[393] Guiley, "Knots," *Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 194.
[394] Chris Wingfield, "A Case Re-opened: The Science and Folklore of a 'Witch's Ladder,'" *Journal of Material Culture* 15, no. 3 (2010): 304. Quoting Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004): 225–48.
[395] Wingfield, "A Case Re-opened," 307. Quoting Abraham Colles, "A Witches' Ladder," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 5, no 1 (1887): 2.
[396] Wingfield, "A Case Re-opened," 308.
[397] Wingfield, "A Case Re-opened," 310. See Charles Godfrey Leland, "A Witches' Ladder," *The Folk-Lore* Journal 5, no. 3 (1887): 257–59; Sabine Baring-Gould, *Mrs. Curgenven of Curgenven* (London: Methuen & Co., 1893).
[398] Wingfield, "A Case Re-opened," 313.
[399] Wingfield, "A Case Re-opened," 317.
[400] Cromwell, *Knots and Links*, 2.
[401] Cromwell writes: "all knots are isotopic to the trivial knot. To see why this is so, imagine pulling on the thread really hard so that the knot becomes very small and tight. Because mathematical thread has no thickness, we can reduce a mathematical knot until it becomes a point and disappears." *Knots and Links*, 4.
[402] Wingfield, "A Case Re-opened," 317.
[403] Sarah Bartlett, *Knot Magic: A Handful of Powerful Spells using Witches' Ladders and Other Magical Knots* (London, Wellfleet Press, 2020), 6.
[404] Bartlett, *Knot Magic*, 7.
[405] Illes, *The Element Encyclopedia of 5000 Spells*, 1018.
[406] Hannant and Costin, "87. Plait of White Hair," *Of Shadows*, n. p.
[407] Williamson qtd. by Hannant and Costin, "87. Plait of White Hair," *Of Shadows*, n. p.
[408] Cromwell, *Knots and Links*, 1.
[409] Lewis Mumford, "Technics and the Nature of Man," *Technology and Culture* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 306.
[410] Mumford, "Technics and the Nature of Man," 307.
[411] *Britannica.com*, s. v. "Klein Bottle," https://www.britannica.com/science/Klein-bottle (accessed March 22, 2022).
[412] Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 57.

[413] Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 3.
[414] Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 4.
[415] Max Weber, "Science as Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and eds. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), both 139.
[416] Weber, "Science as Vocation," 139–140.
[417] Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 12.
[418] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 292.
[419] Sarah Kember, *iMedia: The Gendering of Objects, Environments and Smart Materials* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 28
[420] Kember, *iMedia*,107.
[421] Kember, *iMedia*, 19. On masculism, Kember writes: "I have suggested that the old and unfashionable problem of masculine disembodied knowledge practices does not go away because we no longer deign to speak of it — because we do not do epistemology anymore. Indeed this problem resurfaces with a vengeance, propelled, as I've suggested it is, by some familiar allies. Allied to the new masculinism — one that is by no means exclusive to *i*media theory but that certainly characterizes it — is a renewed recourse to scientism and to immediacy manifested as unmediacy …. I have contrasted, or rather, put into tension, a masculinist tendency to rightness and a feminist tradition of writerliness. Writerliness is akin to hypermediacy, the manifest display of mediation." Ibid., 107.
[422] Kember, *iMedia*, 24.
[423] Kember, *iMedia*, 25.
[424] Kember, *iMedia*, 110, 91.
[425] Kember, *iMedia*, 110.
[426] Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 7.
[427] For German to English translations, I used dict.cc.
[428] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s. v., "bewitchment," https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bewitchment, accessed February 4, 2021.
[429] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 242–43.
[430] Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, s. v., "The Enquiring Eye of the Witchcraft Research Centre," call for contributions, 2019, https://museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk/the-enquiring-eye-of-the-witchcraft-research-centre, accessed April 7, 2021.
[431] Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 244.
[432] Costin and Hannant, *Of Shadows*, object 72.
[433] Costin and Hannant, "Spirit House," *Of Shadows*, object 72.
[434] *Spellbound: Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, curated by Sophie Page and Marina Wallace, among others, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK, August 31, 2018 – January 6, 2019. The Ashmolean was founded by Elias Ashmole, a seventeenth-century astrologer and alchemist.
[435] Cunning-Men and Cunning-Women in 19th-century England were often employed to counter witches. Joseph Blathgrave, a friend of Elias Ashmole, wrote a detailed passage on the witch bottle in his 17th-century book, *Astrological Practices of Physick*: "Here followeth some experimental Rules, whereby to afflict the Witch …. stop the urine of the Patient, close up in a bottle, and put into it three nails, pins, or needles, with a little white Salt, keeping the urine always warm: if you let it remain long in the bottle it will endanger the witches life; for I have found by experience that they will be grievously tormented making their water with great difficulty, if any at all, and themore if the Moon be in Scorpio in Square or Opposition to his Significator where it's done." Quoted in Richard Parkinson, "Exorcists, Conjurors and Cunning

Men in Post Reformation England," in *Serpent Songs: An Anthology of Traditional Craft* (Scarlet Imprint, 2013), 129–30.
[436] Sarah Laskow, "6 Unusual Objects from the Macabre History of Magic," *Atlas Obscura*, August 29, 2018, https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/spellbound-ashmolean-museum-witchcraft (accessed July 8, 2022).
[437] For further connotations and historical roots of this term, see Introduction.
[438] Franz Bardon (attributed), *Frabato the Magician: An Occult Novel Based on the Life of Franz Bardon* (1979), trans. Gerhard Hansville and Franca Gallo (Wuppertal: Dieter Rüggeberg Verlag, 1982), 3. According to Bardon, Adolph Hitler belonged to an Occult order called the 99 Lodge or the F. O. G. C. (the Freemasonic Order of the Golden Centurium). Ibid., 3.
[439] Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 331.
[440] Chakraverti, *Beloved Witch*, 275.
[441] For example, see Lyn Gardner, "Harry Houdini and Arthur Conan Doyle: A Friendship Split by Spiritualism," *The Guardian*, August 10, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/aug/10/houdini-and-conan-doyle-impossible-edinburgh-festival (accessed July 8, 2022).
[442] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism: Another Theory of Magic," 132, emphasis his own.
[443] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 148.
[444] Robert Cochrane, *The Roebuck in the Thicket: An Anthology of the Robert Cochrane*, eds. Evan John Jones and Michael Howard (Chieveley, UK: Capall Bann, 2001), 39, 50.
[445] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 140.
[446] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 146.
[447] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 135.
[448] Jodorowsky's prescribed psychomagic acts range from very simple to extremely elaborate. In one case, Jodorowsky has an elderly woman, who has become cynical and detached from the world, simply pour tap water into a plastic bottle and walk every day to a large tree in her neighbourhood to feed it with the water, while realizing, in this act, that she is connected and vital to a larger community of living and breathing and ancient beings. In another psychomagic act, Jodorowsky heals a man with a stutter by, in part, coming up close to the man, who is painted and dressed entirely in gold, clutching his genitals, and making the man count in a very loud voice in the centre of a large, echo-y building, after a series of other acts. For more on these specific psychomagic acts, see the film, *Psychomagic: A Healing Art*, dir. Alejandro Jodorowsky (La Région Île-de-France: Satori Films, 2019).
[449] Jodorowsky writes in detail of the experience of acting as an assistant to Pachita's operations, which were incredibly visceral. "From a jar to the side, I passed her a heart from who knows where — from the morgue or the hospital — that she 'transplanted' to the patient in a magical way. Soon after being placed on the chest, the heart seemed to be absorbed and disappeared just like that, as if inhaled by the body of the patient. … There was an odour of burning bone, the sounds of liquid … The operations were not lacking in violence and constituted a rather shocking show, in Mexican fashion, but Pachita showed, at the same time, an extraordinary softness." When asked by the compiler and editor of the book, Gilles Farcet, to name one of the most important lessons he learned from Pachita, Jodorowsky spoke of the importance of contact. "Each time someone went to her [Pachita], she began immediately by touching hands with them, establishing a sensory relationship and putting people in her trust." Alejandro Jodorowsky,

Psychomagic: The Transformative Power of Shamanic Psychotherapy (2004), trans. Rachel LeValley (Toronto: Inner Traditions, 2010), 90, 102.
[450] Jodorowsky, *Psychomagic*, viii.
[451] According to Gemma Gary, the body of the witch itself is a house to carry spirits; a spirit trap all its own. "The very body of the witch was itself a spirit house for her familiar spirits, for she carried them within her. This was the belief of the modern English Cunning Man and Witchcraft Museum founder Cecil Hugh Williamson, who encountered and gained knowledge from many of the West Country's working wise-women and witches." Gary, "The Witch's Cross," 5.
[452] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 139.
[453] Bridle's piece was also shown as part of the aforementioned exhibition, *Spellbound*, at the Ashmolean Museum.
[454] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 320.
[455] Lou Cornum, "White Magic," *The New Inquiry*, February 5, 2018, https://thenewinquiry.com/white-magic (accessed April 8, 2021).
[456] Jo Freeman, "W.I.T.C.H. — The Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell," JoFreeman.com, n. d., https://www.jofreeman.com/photos/witch.html (accessed March 11, 2021).
[457] See, for example, Kaitlyn Wylde, "3 TikTok Witches Explain How Spells Can Help #BlackLivesMatter," *Bustle*, July 8, 2020, https://www.bustle.com/wellness/witches-on-tiktok-support-black-lives-matter-with-spells-hexes.
[458] Starhawk, "Prologue: Dreaming the Dark," and "Appendix A, The Burning Times: Notes on a Crucial Period of History," in *Dreaming the Dark*, xi–xvi, 183–219.
[459] "In numerous countries around the world, witchcraft related beliefs and practices have resulted in serious violations of human rights including, beatings, banishment, cutting of body parts, and amputation of limbs, torture and murder.… Often judicial systems do not act to prevent, investigate or prosecute human rights abuses linked to beliefs in witchcraft. This institutional failure perpetuates impunity." See "Experts Workshop on Witchcraft and Human Rights," United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/albinism/pages/witchcraft.aspx (accessed March 11, 2021).
[460] For a look into how the how the Christian right views the imbrication of witchcraft and Black Lives Matter, see Dean W. Arnold, who labels BLM cofounder Patrisse Cullors, a practitioner of Ifa, as a witch. "Black Lives Matter Deeply Aligned with Witchcraft," blog, July 17, 2020, http://dean-w-arnold.com/articles-blogs/witches. Cullors identifies herself as a practitioner of Ifa (see appendix).
[461] Maxine Wally, "For Artist and BLM Co-Founder Patrisse Cullors, Art and Activism Always Intersect," *W Magazine*, November 9, 2020, https://www.wmagazine.com/story/patrisse-cullors-black-lives-matter-artist-interview (accessed March 11, 2021). For a look into how the how the Christian right views the imbrication of witchcraft and Black Lives Matter, see Dean W. Arnold, who labels BLM cofounder Patrisse Cullors, a practitioner of Ifa, as a witch. "Black Lives Matter Deeply Aligned with Witchcraft," blog, July 17, 2020, http://dean-w-arnold.com/articles-blogs/witches.
[462] See Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, "The Witches of Purulia," in *Beloved Witch*, 224–32; Silvia Federici, *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women* (Oakland, CA: PM, 2018).
[463] Dickens and Torok, *Missing Witches*, 19–20.

[464] Kevin Roose, "What Is QAnon, the Viral Pro-Trump Conspiracy Theory?" *The New York Times*, March 4, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-qanon.html (accessed March 13, 2021).
[465] An example of how this particular conspiracy aligns with witchcraft-themed topics is the so-called QAnon shaman, Jacob Anthony Chansley, a.k.a. Jake Angeli, who donned horns and a fur hat when he stormed the Capitol with a group of rioters on January 6, 2021, and is now serving a 41-month prison sentence. In the *Missing Witches* roundtable "What Is a Shaman?," the panelists take issue with the term "shaman" being used to describe Angeli. Amy Torok, the co-organizer of the panel calls him "the cartoon character who stormed the Capitol," while panelist Granddaughter Crow, who belongs to the Navajo Nation and has Dutch heritage, says, "the cue that gave me this understanding that he is not of the same definition [of shaman] as I hold is that he says, 'you can *use* the world, you can *control* the energy, you can *change* reality." Crow states that "a shaman, to me, is an individual who works with energy, does not dominate nor control it, nor manipulate it … on behalf of the group. And when I say energy, I'm talking spiritual energy as well as mental, emotional, and physical energy." Chansley is a supporter of former US president Donald Trump and has appeared as a counter-protester at Black Lives Matter protests. Risa Dickens and Amy Torok, "What Is a Shaman?," *Missing Witches*, podcast, episode 93, March 25, 2022, https://www.missingwitches.com/2021/05/11/what-is-a-shaman-panel-fundraiser (accessed March 3, 2022): 20:44, 39:21, 18:36. For information on Chansley, see Jake Helm, "Jake Angeli: Who is the horned protester who stormed the Capitol?," *Evening Standard*, January 13, 2021, https://www.standard.co.uk/insider/jake-angeli-horned-protester-stormed-capitol-b848447.html (accessed March 25, 2022).
[466] Raquel Romberg, "A Halloween Bruja," 208–225. See Chapter 1.
[467] Gerald Gardner, a thorough trickster, was ambiguously political. Olive Greene, a student of Gardner's, formed the impression that Gardner was Conservative based on a book he used to help students form a magic circle called *The Left Is Never Right*. Hutton relays this story and also portrays Gardner as a Hermes-like character with a mischievous sense of humour. See especially, Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 251.
[468] Stengers, "Reclaiming Animism," n. p.
[469] Lou Cornum, "White Magic," n. p.
[470] The word "savage" is listed as a synonym for "heathen" according to Merriam Webster Dictionary. See *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s. v., "heaven, adjective," https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/heathen (accessed March 24, 2022).
[471] Weber, "Science as Vocation," 139.
[472] Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark*, 9 (emphasis her own).
[473] Eva Wiseman, "Are Crystals the New Blood Diamonds?," *The Guardian*, June 16, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/global/2019/jun/16/are-crystals-the-new-blood-diamonds-the-truth-about-muky-business-of-healing-stones, accessed April 10, 2021.
[474] Lou Cornum, "White Magic," n. p.
[475] Lou Cornum, "White Magic," n. p. In this sense, Cornum discusses cult 90s films such as *Practical Magic* (Griffin Dunne, 1998) and *The Craft* (Andrew Fleming, 1996).
[476] Chakraverti, *Beloved Witch*, 151.
[477] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 128.
[478] O*xford English Dictionary*, s. v., "cauldron, *n.*" https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/29090?rskey=iiaKpv&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid (accessed March 25, 2022).

[479] From Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1623), act 4, scene 1, lines 10–19:

> Double, double toil and trouble;
> Fire burn and caldron bubble.
> Fillet of a fenny snake,
> In the caldron boil and bake;
> Eye of newt and toe of frog,
> Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
> Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
> Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
> For a charm of powerful trouble,
> Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

See William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, for example, http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/index.html (accessed March 25, 2022). For more on the Welsh sorceress, Ceridwen, see Gregory Wright, "Ceridwen," *Mythopedia*, November 18, 2021, https://mythopedia.com/topics/ceridwen (accessed March 25, 2022). Ceridwen first appears in "The Tale of Taliesen" included in the epic cycle, *Mabinogi*, recorded in Middle Welsh in the 12th–13th centuries.

[480] Martin Duffy, *Rites Necromantic: The Witch as Intercessor between the Quick and the Dead*, Law of Contagion Monograph Series, 1 (Hercules, CA: Three Hands Press, 2020), 29–30.

[481] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 102.

[482] Grossman, *Waking the Witch*, 116.

[483] Colebrook, "On Not Becoming Man," 59. See Chapter 1.

[484] Colebrook, "On Not Becoming Man," 59.

[485] Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, 7.

[486] Gemma Gary, *Wisht Waters: Aqueous Magica and the Cult of Holy Wells*, Occult Monographs, 5 (Hercules, CA: Three Hands Press, 2013), 128.

[487] Kelden, *The Crooked Path*, 48.

[488] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 104.

[489] Homer, *The Odyssey* (8th century BCE), trans. Emily Wilson (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018), Book X, lines 234–36. According to Classics scholars Peter Webster and Carl A. P. Ruck as well as chemist Daniel M. Perrine, the drink that Circe mixes for the men, consisting of barley, cheese, and honey is called the *Kykeon*: a potion that was consumed by initiates of the Eleusinian Mysteries in ancient Greece at the outset of a ceremony to travel to the underworld and encounter the goddess, Persephone. In regards to Persephone, it is notable that Circe directs Ulysses to Hades, where Persephone reigns, in order to make one final quest before she directs him home. See Peter Webster, Daniel M. Perrine, and Carl A. P. Ruck, "Mixing the Kykeon," *Eleusis: Journal of Psychoactive Plants and Compounds*, New Series 4 (2000): 1–17; see Homer, Book XI, *The Odyssey*.

[490] See, for example, Maxfield Parrish's painting, *Circe's Palace* (1909); Rebecca Buchanon, ed., *Circe's Cauldron: Pagan Poems and Tales of Magic and Witchcraft* (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2020).

[491] Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson, Book X, lines 238–41.

[492] Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson, Book IX, lines 32–34.

[493] Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson, Book VIII, lines 447–48.

[494] Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson, Book X, lines 311, 227. The part of Circe's story that most pertains to the craft and power of bewitchment appears in Book X, when Odysseus finds himself and his men ashore on Circe's island, Aeaea. In *The Odyssey*, the scene where the

men enter Circe's palace is sparsely told; the men shout for her, she invites them in, and the reader goes from there to Circe poisoning the men. In her book *Circe*, Classics scholar and writer Madeline Miller paints in the details. Half goddess, half human, Circe — banished to Aeaea by her father Helios, God of the sun — begins to use her charms and poisons against lost and roaming sailors who show up at her door to take what they want from her person and her home. In protection, Circe begins to defend herself by pre-emptively poisoning groups of men arriving at her island. Miller writes: "They came, I cannot say why. Some revolution of the Fates, some change in trade and shipping routes. Some scent upon the air, wafting: here are nymphs and they live alone." I would point out that Miller's rendition is fiction, but so is Homer's rendition, and perhaps even Ulysses's rendition, who is over and again described as a trickster himself. His tales to Alcinous are introduced thusly: "Wily Odysseus, the lord of lies, answered." Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson, Book X, lines 350–51; Book IX, lines 1–2; Madeline Miller, *Circe* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2018), 192.

[495] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 94, 214 fn. 27.

[496] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 214 fn. 26.

[497] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 101, 103.

[498] Jane Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons: Witchcraft and Wordcraft in Early New England," in *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*, ed. Elizabeth Reis (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 26. Quoting Cotton Mather, *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion* (Boston, MA: Samuel Phillips, 1692), 49–51.

[499] Gabriela Herstik, "Ask a Witch: Sex, Magick, and Shadow Work," *Nylon*, May 10, 2018, https://www.nylon.com/articles/ask-a-witch-sex-magick-shadow-work.

[500] Lewis Wallace, "Trans and Intersex Witches Are Casting Out the Gender Binary," *them.*, October 30, 2017, https://www.them.us/story/trans-and-intersex-witches (accessed July 8, 2022). Bell writes: "Colonialism, driven by standardization and materialism to meet its productivity goals, has produced a reality dependent on the erasure of spiritual and energetic existence at large, and the eraser of diversity of genders and sexualities as part of that. This teaching offering is about unpacking what I have learned as a queer mystic about gender. I am a queer transgender witch…" Otis Bell, "The Witch Craft of Decolonizing Gender," *BC Witchcamp*, February 26, 2020, https://bcwitchcamp.ca/the-witch-craft-of-decolonizing-gender (all accessed March 23, 2021).

[501] Wallace, "Trans and Intersex Witches Are Casting Out the Gender Binary," n. p. With reference to Carlyle Murphy, "Lesbian, gay and bisexual Americans differ from general public in their religious affiliations," *Pew Research Center*, May 23, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/26/lesbian-gay-and-bisexual-americans-differ-from-general-public-in-their-religious-affiliations (accessed March 23, 2021).

[502] Angela Y. Davis, "Foreword," in Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black of Salem* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1992), xi.

[503] Katrina Hazzard-Donald, *Mojo Workin': The Old African American Hoodoo System* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 207. For more on Yoruba, see appendix.

[504] In her interview with Ann Armstrong Scarboro, Maryse Condé says, "In Africa, as you may know, the word *witchcraft* has a different meaning. In any given community, you have two types of individuals relating to the invisible forces. The first type is working for the benefit of society, i.e. is working, as they say, with the *right* hand. The second type is working evil on the individuals and the community. It is said that this type is working with the *left* hand. Only the second person is called a witch and is ostracized." Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black of Salem*,

trans. Richard Philcox (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1992), 206. Shelagh Roxburgh points out that, "Academic knowledge of African witchcraft began with and largely focused on colonial and post-colonial encounters, and is therefore steeped in the racism and imperialism that dominated these processes. The construction of Africa in the colonial imagination is intimately tied to racist notions of Western superiority that were rationalized through Enlightenment discourses of progress, science, and modernity." Roxburgh, "Through the Scrying Glass," 1033.

[505] Stacy Schiff, *The Witches: Suspicion, Betrayal, and Hysteria in 1692 Salem* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), 54, 53.

[506] Schiff, *The Witches*, 54–55.

[507] Miller's *The Crucible* was first performed on Broadway at the Martin Beck Theatre (now the Al Hirschfeld Theatre) on Broadway on January 22, 1953; Askland's *Witches!* debuted at the Lincon Theatre in Mount Vernon, Washington, on October 19, 2012.

[508] Condé, *I, Tituba, Black of Salem*, 200.

[509] Torok and Dickens, *Missing Witches*, 56. See Backxwash's album, *Deviancy* (Grimalkin, 2019).

[510] adrienne maree brown, "On Vulnerability, Playfulness and Keeping Yourself Honest," lecture, hosted by Melanie Bonjao, Studium Generale series, *Wxtch Craft*, The Royal Academy of Art (KABK), The Hague, Netherlands, October 29, 2020, https://www.kabk.nl/agenda/online-studium-generale-lecture-adrienne-maree-brown (accessed March 29, 2021).

[511] Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching*-Other, 61, 89.

[512] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 300.

[513] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 2.

[514] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 7.

[515] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 294.

[516] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 7.

[517] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 295.

[518] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 310–11.

[519] Cf. Isabelle Stengers: "the problem with theories is that they very often refer to what they do as 'constructions,' but lack the craft which a construction requires." In "Experimenting with Refrains," 52. See Chapter 1. Alexander writes: "Since the praxis of the Sacred involves the rewiring of the senses, the praxis for secular feminism would involve a rewiring of its most inherited concepts of home and formulations of domesticity, for instance." In *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 328.

[520] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 306.

[521] See, for example, Hurston, "Hoodoo in America," 327.

[522] See Chapter 1. "We must now collectively undertake a rewriting of knowledge as we know it. This is a rewriting in which, inter alia, I want the West to recognize the dimensions of what it has brought into the world—this with respect to, inter alia, our now purely naturalized modes or genres of humanness. You see? Because the West *did* change the world, *totally*. And I want to suggest that it is *that* change that has now made our own proposed far-reaching changes *now* as imperative as they are inevitable. As Einstein said, once physical scientists had split the atom, if we continue with our old way of thinking—the prenuclear way of thinking—we drift as a species toward an unparalleled catastrophe." Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 18.

[523] Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 10.

[524] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 16.
[525] For Wynter, if the way to move past *homo oeconomicus*, or Man2, is the full realization of the human as hybrid, or *homo narrans*, a being both *bios* and *mythoi*, then we must emerge from the particular *mythoi* or stories that are the legacy of Man2. This, to Wynter, is no easy task, for *bios* and *mythoi* are inextricably linked. Wynter argues that what she calls the first set of instructions, or the genetic code, is involved with implementing a second set of instructions, or the nongenetic code, i.e. our stories, our myths; but Wynter doesn't leave it there. The second set of instructions, our stories, our origin myths both religious and secular, are in turn implemented neurochemically. That is to say, the stories that are passed down through generations, are, to Wynter, "*alchemically* made flesh!" in that they are coded back into the chemistry of our brains, our bios. Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," all 27.
[526] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," for example 23.
[527] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 17.
[528] Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 11. Quoting Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 73.
[529] Thea von Harbou, *Metropolis* (1926) (Vienna: Milena Verlag, 2014).
[530] The reproductive asymmetry between Maria and her cyborg counterpart is highlighted in the film on the level of the image, as noted, and also in the intertitles. "Where are our children, you witch — ??!," demand the workers of Metropolis as they confront the cyborg. *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang, written by Thea von Harbou (1927; Berlin, Germany: Parufamet; restoration, 2010), 149 minutes, 2:13:11.
[531] The wink lasts an epic seven seconds in total (1:28:36–43). Hel/Maria continues to make winks and half-winks throughout the film; for example, when she is inciting the underground workers to abandon their machines and rebel: "Let the machines, starve, you fools —! Let them die —!!," she winks. *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang, 1:42:59.
[532] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 124.
[533] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 129.
[534] "Burn the witch — To the stake with her!!!," yell the underground workers before they light Hel/Maria on fire. *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang, 2:13:21. For more on the goddess Babylon, Babalon, see Chapter 3.
[535] The Alchemist, "Magical Knowledge Hidden in Plain Sight," *Magical Recipes Online*, blog, May 18, 2019, https://higherselfportal.com/magical-knowledge-hidden-in-plain-sight (accessed April 2, 2021).
[536] T. Susan Chang, "Blind Equilibrium: 2 of Swords" in *36 Secrets: A Decanic Journey through the Minor Arcana of the Tarot* (Anima Mundi Press, 2021), 129.
[537] Lexico Dictionary, s. v., "hookwink," https://www.lexico.com/definition/hoodwink, accessed April 2, 2021.
[538] adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017), 16
[539] brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 18.

[540] brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 7.
[541] brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 21.
[542] brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 46.
[543] brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 14.
[544] brown, *Emergent Strategy*, 27.
[545] Gerry Canavan, "There's Nothing New / Under The Sun, / But There Are New Suns": Recovering Octavia E. Butler's Lost Parables," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 9, 2014, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/theres-nothing-new-sun-new-suns-recovering-octavia-e-butlers-lost-parables, accessed April 2, 2021.
[546] Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism: A Politics for Alienation*, 2015, https://laboriacuboniks.net/manifesto/xenofeminism-a-politics-for-alienation.
[547] Hutton, *The Witch*, 262.
[548] Rebecca Giordano, "Keyword," *The Chicago School of Media Theory*, n. d., https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/keyword, accessed April 2, 2021.
[549] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 203.
[550] Hutton, *The Witch*, 273.
[551] Hutton, *The Witch*, 277.
[552] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 148.
[553] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 194.
[554] Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149.
[555] Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 162, 181.
[556] Joan Haran, "Bound in the Spiral Dance: Haraway, Starhawk, and Writing Lives in Feminist Community," *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 34.3 (October 2019): 428.
[557] Haran, "Bound in the Spiral Dance," 427, 439–40.
[558] Stengers, "Experimenting with Refrains," 51–52 (ellipses her own). Quoted in Haran, "Bound in the Spiral Dance," 439.
[559] On her decision to write on contemporary witchcraft within the milieu of academia, Stengers writes: "To think of subjectivity 'in terms of the milieu' is not a matter of theory. Indeed I could have chosen to deal theoretically with the Deleuze and Guattari concepts of assemblage, or of collective vs mass productions of subjectivity, but then I would have risked siding with 'know better' theorists, producing messages that advertise my professional territory and protect me from little smiles, from judgments about my lack of what critical academics in US often call 'sophistication'. I prefer to continue and relay, together with, and with the help of, contemporary witches, the (unsophisticated) cry of those who ask 'what did happen to us?,' knowing that philosophical concepts may help us only as they empower what is first experienced as a stammer affecting the 'adult know-better thinking,' when we become as children in the dark who need a refrain in order to summon the courage to walk." I take some issue, however, with the way that Stengers inadvertently categorizes contemporary witches as "unsophisticated," and seems to align (adult) witches with children. Stengers, "Experimenting with Refrains," 49.
[560] Haran, "Bound in the Spiral Dance," 440. Quoting Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 166, 228n.
[561] Serres, *The Parasite*, 224.
[562] Serres, *The Parasite*, 227

[563] Serres, *The Parasite*, 228.
[564] Serres, *The Parasite*, 225.
[565] Serres, *The Parasite*, 226.
[566] Serres, *The Parasite*, 229.
[567] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 93.
[568] In writing about the 10 of Pentacles Tarot card, ruled in part by Hermes due to is mercurial associations, T. Susan Chang notes, "[w]elcome to the realm of the psychopomp! But our chthonic guide is a god of interpretation and translation; a trickster and a fence. Although he may safeguard the light as it travels its netherworld, we can't expect it to emerge unaltered. Hermes, famous friend to man, takes our ghostly hand as we leave this world, conducting us on a one-way journey. Like the sun, we surely rise again, but never as we were before" Chang, "Return on Enfleshment," in *36 Secrets*, 120.
[569] Catherine Keller, *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement* (New York: Columbia University, 2015), 21.
[570] Keller, *Cloud of the Impossible*, 22.
[571] Keller, *Cloud of the Impossible*, 22.
[572] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 29.
[573] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 34.
[574] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 45.
[575] Sylvia Wynter, quoted in Katherine McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 49.
[576] Despret, "Inquires Raised by the Dead," 239.
[577] Qtd. in Yael Lipschutz, "Beacon in the Darkness: The Transcendent Art of Cameron," in ibid., ed., *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman*, exh. cat., The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (Santa Monica, CA: Cameron Parsons Foundation, 2015), 12. Contents of letter from Marjorie Cameron, letter to Jane Wolfe, August 23, 1953 (unpublished).
[578] Qtd. in Kaira M. Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am*," Woman's Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring – Summer 1999): 12.
[579] Curtis Harrington, *The Wormwood Star*, short film (1956); To view, see James J. Conway, "The Wormwood Star," *Strange Flowers*, blog, August 12, 2013, https://strangeflowers.wordpress.com/2013/08/12/the-wormwood-star (accessed June 30, 2021).
[580] Jack Parsons, "I was the wind of summer, the scent …," from Jack Parsons and Marjorie Cameron, *Songs for the Witch Woman* (1951), qtd. in Yael Lipschutz, ed., *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman*, 20.
[581] For example, see Maya Gurantz, "'Carl Broke Something': On Carl Andre, Ana Mendieta, and the Cult of the Male Genius," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, July 10, 2017, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/carl-broke-something-on-carl-andre-ana-mendieta-and-the-cult-of-the-male-genius (accessed October 20, 2021).
[582] Linda Stupart, "An Extract From 'Virus,'*" Where Is Ana Mendieta*, n. d., http://shadesofnoir.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/WHEREISANAMENDIETAPDF.pdf (accessed October 20, 2021), 3 (accessed October 20, 2021), 3.
[583] Lipschutz, "Beacon in the Darkness," 12.
[584] Lipschutz, "Beacon in the Darkness," 9.

[585] Joshua J. Mark, "Inanna's Descent: A Sumerian Tale of Injustice," *World History Encyclopedia*, February 11, 2014, https://www.worldhistory.org/article/215/inannas-descent-a-sumerian-tale-of-injustice (accessed April 25, 2022).
[586] Diane Wolkstein, trans., and Samuel Noah Kramer, ed., *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and hymns from Sumer* (Harper & Row, 1983), 57–59.
[587] Peter Grey, *The Red Goddess* (2007), 2nd edition (London: Scarlet Imprint, 2021), 44.
[588] William James, "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy," in *Pragmatism and Other Essays* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), 16.
[589] Bardsley notes that feminist new materialists, such as Stacy Alaimo and Susan Heckman, have offered critiques of poststructural feminism "for treating matter as a passive substrate for the inscription of culture rather than an active agent in its own right" and have rather offered "dispersed accounts of agency and relational formulations of ontology, which use materiality to highlight the networked complexity of contemporary existence." Bardsley points out that while feminist new materialists, such as Clare Hemmings and Sara Ahmed, offer radical theories of new materialism, they remain stuck in a definition of materiality that nevertheless treats time as static and even linear — in other words, while new materialism is seen as progressive, poststructuralism is seen as unfashionable and dated, which fails to utilize the full force of what a fluid mechanics could suggest. Jessica Bardsley, "Fluid Histories: Luce Irigaray, Michel Serres, and the Ages of Water" *philoSOPHIA* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 14, 15. Referencing Stacy Alaimo and Susan J. Hekman, *Material Feminisms* (Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press. 2008); Sara Ahmed, "Open Forum Imaginary Prohibitions: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Founding Gestures of the 'New Materialism,'" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 1: 23–39; Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
[590] Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 15. Both fluid mechanics and solid mechanics are taken from physics, where the latter "studies matter with a defined resting shape and explores the ability of that resting shape to maintain or deform when exposed to force" while the former "focuses on the study of fluids (liquids, gases, and plasmas); their properties, such as pressure and density; as well as the forces that interact with fluids." Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 16.
[591] Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 17, 18. Referencing Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 18. I should note that Irigaray also genders the fluidic as female, a point that Bardsley spends time on in her article, especially in reference to Naomi Schor's "This Essentialism Which Is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigaray." In Bardsley's words, Schor "argues that what might superficially appear as essentialism is in fact a critique of Western metaphysics, a 'radical materialism' that aims to destroy a metaphysics based upon solid entities." Bardsley continues: "Schor argues that woman and the fluid attain primacy for Irigaray because they are repressed within Western, patriarchal metaphysics. And while Irigaray does base part of her argument in the body (genitalia, bodily fluids, etc.), her interest is ultimately not a biological / physiological interest but a material interest in physics and its philosophical consequences. Schor writes, 'Physics is here placed in service of Irigaray's radical materialism, her desire to return to a Presocratic (but also post-Nietzschean and -Bachelardian) apprehension of the four generic elements as foundational, which is — I repeat — not the same thing as essentialism." Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 20. Quoting Naomi Schor, "This Essentialism Which Is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigaray," in idem. and Elizabeth Weed, *The Essential Difference* (Bloomington, IND: Indiana University Press, 1994), 56.

[592] Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 19. Another part of Bardley's essay has to do with Michel Serres, who, like Irigaray, calls on fluid mechanics, and does so primarily to paint time as liquid, particularly in his discussions of Epicurean poet and philosopher Lucretius (b. ca. 99 BCE) who figures "the world as fundamentally fluid," a worldview from which Serres argues "that 'relations between fluxes' are the basis of our world." Not only is all time contemporary time in the fluid mechanics that Serres puts forward, but "fluids ultimately govern all of life's unfolding." Bardsley ultimately criticizes Serres's reliance on physics, noting that Irigaray's project does not fall back on science. Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 21. Quoting Michel Serres, *The Birth of Physics*, trans. David Webb (Manchester, UK: Clinamen Press Ltd., 2000), 68.
[593] Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 20. Quoting Schor, "This Essentialism Which Is Not One," 56.
[594] Lury, "Introduction," 3.
[595] See, for example, the Brothers Grimm, "Die zwölf Brüder" ("The Twelve Brothers"), first published in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in 1812. Joyce Carol Oates's short story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" (1966) plays on the fairy-tale trope as well. Fairy-tale scholar and hypnotist Hillary Keel notes the reoccurrence of this line in fairy tales in general. See "The Twelve Brothers," https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm009.html (accessed July 20, 2021); Hillary Keel, "Fairy Tales and Altered States," Tompkins Square Library, April 15, 2020, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-6fqPNrw9s (accessed July 12, 2021); Joyce Carol Oates, "*Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994).
[596] Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 26. Referencing Victoria Browne, *Feminism, Time, and Nonlinear History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 27.
[597] Qtd. in Bardsley, "Fluid Histories," 33. Quoting Browne, *Feminism, Time, and Nonlinear History*, 297–98. Although falling back on physics, Michel Serres does gesture towards multiplicities over mechanistic unities: "[s]ea, forest, rumor, noise, society, life, works and days, all common multiples; we can hardly say they are objects, yet require a new way of thinking," he writes. Michel Serres, *Genesis*, trans. Geneviève James and James Nielson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1995), 6.
[598] Kim TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," in *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 54.
[599] Damien W. Riggs and Elizabeth Peel, *Critical Kinship Studies: An Introduction to the Field* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 4.
[600] Riggs and Peel, *Critical Kinship Studies*, 6.
[601] Riggs and Peel, *Critical Kinship Studies*, 8. Here, Riggs and Peel reference Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991), especially 22.
[602] Qtd. in Riggs and Peel, *Critical Kinship Studies*, 10. Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 37.
[603] Riggs and Peel, *Critical Kinship Studies*, 10.
[604] Riggs and Peel, *Critical Kinship Studies*, 14.
[605] John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.
[606] Law, *After Method*, 3.
[607] Law, *After Method*, 2.
[608] Law, *After Method*, 5.
[609] Law writes: "The need, then, is for heterogeneity and variation. It is about following Lewis Carroll's queen and cultivating and playing with the capacity to think six impossible things

before breakfast. And, as a part of this, it is about creating metaphors and images for what is impossible or barely possible, unthinkable or almost unthinkable"; "But what is most startling is their [Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar's] additional claim that in its practice science *produces* its realities as well as describing them. This is the cornerstone of my own argument." Law, *After Method*, 6, 13, emphasis author's own.

[610] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 1, 2, 7, 10, 16, 12.

[611] See especially Aisha M. Beliso-De Jesús, *Electric Santería: Racial and Sexual Assemblages of Transnational Religio*n (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

[612] Ireland, "Black Circuit," n. p.

[613] Orna Alyagon Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch: Evidentiary Dilemmas in Early Modern England* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 157–72.

[614] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 318.

[615] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 305.

[616] Hillman and Shamdasani, *Lament of the Dead*, 3.

[617] William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), throughout. See, for example, James's graph on p. 279 in which he depicts the sentence, "the pack of cards in on the table" as indicative of the stream of consciousness.

[618] Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," 16.

[619] Operation Peter Pan was "a project spearheaded by a priest in Miami that allowed approximately 14,000 children to leave the country and enter the United States under the guardianship of the Catholic Church." It was put in place from 1960–62 under the false suspicion that Fidel Castro and the Communist Party of Cuba would take children from their parents and place them in centres to be indoctrinated. Michael Rush, "Eros, Death, and Life: The Films of Ana Mendieta," in Howard Oransky, ed., *Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 17.

[620] Jane Blocker, "Ana Mendieta and the Politics of the Venus Negra," *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (October 2021): 48 fn 3; Bonnie Clearwater, "Introduction," *Ana Mendieta: A Book of Works* (Miami Beach, FL: Grassfield Press, 1993), 17.

[621] Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," 15. A.I.R. Gallery was founded in 1972 and is now located in Brooklyn, New York.

[622] Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," 14.

[623] Emily LaBarge, "Ana Mendieta, Emotional Artist," *The Paris Review*, March 8, 2019, https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/03/08/ana-mendieta-emotional-artist/ (accessed October 26, 2021).

[624] Christopher Partridge, "Occulture and Art: A Response," *Aries* 13 (2013): 137. Partridge is referencing Victoria Nelson, *The Secret Life of Puppets* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2001).

[625] Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," 13. One of Mendieta's *Siluetas* where she collaborates with water is called *Ochún* (1981). See *Ana Mendieta: Traces*, ed. Stephanie Rosenthal (London: Hayward Publishing, 2013), 66–67.

[626] Frances Denny, *Major Arcana: Portraits of Witches in America* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2020),104.

[627] Beliso-De Jesús, *Electric Santería*, 2.

[628] "Santería," Where Cultures Collide series, PBS, August 2, 2017, https://www.pbs.org/video/santeria-a7gmrm (accessed October 26, 2021).

[629] Beliso-De Jesús, *Electric Santería*, 2, 42, 41, 42.
[630] Beliso-De Jesús, *Electric Santería*, 66.
[631] "Santería," PBS.
[632] Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," 13. Cabañas notes that in 1981, an article appeared in *Newsweek* describing a "'disturbing' Cuban ritual witnessed in Miami" that incensed Mendieta. Ibid.
[633] Qtd. in Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," 16.
[634] Koudounaris, *Memento Mori*, 25.
[635] Koudounaris, *Memento Mori*, 27.
[636] Léon Chertok and Isabelle Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanlytic Reason: Hypnosis as a Scientific Problem from Lavoisire to Lacan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), xxv.
[637] Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 2–3.
[638] Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 157.
[639] See, for example, "A New Study Will Examine the Devastating Toll COVID-19 Has Taken in Long-Term Care Homes," *CTV News*, March 11, 2021, https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/a-new-study-will-examine-the-devastating-toll-covid-19-has-taken-in-long-term-care-homes-1.5342740 (accessed August 6, 2021).
[640] See, for example, Erin McCormick, Patrick Greenfield and Uki Goñi, "Revealed: 6,000 Passengers on Cruise Ships Despite Coronavirus Crisis," *The Guardian*, April 9, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/09/revealed-6000-passengers-on-cruise-ships-at-sea-despite-coronavirus-crisis; Andrew Freedman, John Muyskens, Chris Alcantara and Monica Ulmanu, "How Coronavirus Grounded the Airline Industry," *The Washington Post*, April 1, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/business/coronavirus-airline-industry-collapse (both accessed April 27, 2022).
[641] Publishers statement in Martin Duffy, *Rites Necromantic*, n. p.
[642] James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* [1890], a new abridgement from the second and third editions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 37.
[643] Raquel Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare: Spiritual Capital and the Business of Magic in Modern Puerto Rico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 18. Citing Michael S. Laguerre, *American Odyssey: Haitians in New York City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 131.
[644] Daniel A. Schulke, *Veneficium: Magic, Witchcraft and the Poison Path*, 2nd revised edition, Triangulum Lamiarum 1 (Hercules, CA: Three Hands Press, 2017), 35.
[645] Peter Bebergal, in his exploration of occult counter culture and music, explores the problematic mythologies of palingenesis, which is one way that occultism can lean into dangerous notions of purity. According to Bebergal, the occult notion of becoming a "perfected spiritual man … was easily conflated with the idea of Aryan perfection," in the 1930s, a connotation that "has long posed a problem in understanding the history of the occult." One origin of this myth is in Theosophist Helena Petrovna's 1888 book *The Secret Doctrine*, where she laid out a theory of what she termed "root races." As Bebergal summarizes, the first root race is "ethereal, without form, and the root races evolved over time …. With the next races, the Hyperboreans, Lemurians, and Atlanteans. The fifth root race is Aryan, which Blavatsky claimed was the peak of humanity at that time. A sixth race would rise above the Aryan, and then the seventh would see the perfect human being." While Bebergal notes that Blavatsky was speaking to her cultural milieu at the time, her words have been used as fuel to further racist ideologies, such as the Thule Society in Germany, which was founded shortly after WWI and upheld the core belief in a "racially pure people [who] arose in the mythical land of Hyperborea." Bebergal,

Season of the Witch, 161, 150, 148; H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) (New York: Tarcher Penguin, 2009), see especially 75–115.
[646] Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare*, xi.
[647] Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare*, x. Spiritism is different from Spiritualism, which is also a topic of the present chapter (see appendix for more information).
[648] Cross, *American Brujeria*, xxi.
[649] Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare*, xi. The inquisition Romberg is referring to implicates "the period of the Spanish Catholic state (1502–1860), when the administration of the state was legitimized by religion and brujos were persecuted as heretics." Ibid., 24.
[650] Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare*, xi. Romberg includes a note that her use of "postcapitalism" indicates a "transfer of control from shareholders to professional management … or 'state-owned' industries." She quotes Raymond Williams, *Key Words: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* [1976] (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).
[651] J. Allen Cross, *American Brujeria: Modern Mexican American Folk Magic* (Newbury Port, MA: Weiser Books, 2021), xviii.
[652] Cross, *American Brujeria*, xx.
[653] Cross, *American Brujeria*, xx.
[654] Cross, *American Brujeria*, xxiv.
[655] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 30.
[656] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 11.
[657] Cross, *American Brujeria*, 127.
[658] Cross, *American Brujeria*, 127–57.
[659] Cross, *American Brujeria*, 147–50.
[660] Cross, *American Brujeria*, 147.
[661] Serres, *The Parasite*, 228. See Chapter 2.
[662] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 82.
[663] Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am," 14.
[664] Stupart, "An Extract From 'Virus,'" n. p. (accessed October 20, 2021), 3. Aphrodite Andreou, dir., *The Revenge of the Witch in the 21st Century*, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPX2ObTBWzQ (accessed October 28, 2021).
[665] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 320, 322.
[666] Gurantz, "Carl Broke Something," n. p.
[667] For example, see artist Elise Rasmussen's *Variations*, which presents another manifestation or take on evidence: in this piece, the artist works as director to re-enact Mendieta's final moments, using actors "in an attempt to find a plausible scenario for Mendieta's death and to investigate general notions of revisionist history."[667] Elise Rasmussen, "Variations," https://www.eliserasmussen.com/variations (accessed November 25, 2021). For protests against Carl Andre's art being shown due to Mendieta's uncertain death, see, for example, Carolina A. Miranda, "Why Protesters at MOCA's Carl Andre Show Won't Let the Art World Forget about Ana Mendieta," *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 2017, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-ana-mendieta-carl-andre-moca-protest-20170406-htmlstory.html (accessed November 26, 2021). Andre was acquitted for the murder of Mendieta on February 11, 1988 based on lack of evidence. Being the only other person in the apartment with her when Ana "fell" out of the window, the death has remained an open question.

[668] Thomas Fechner-Smarsely, "Blood Samples and Fingerprint Files: Blood as Artificial Matter, Artistic Material, and Means of the Signature," in eds. Sonja Neef, José van Dijck and Eric Ketelaar, *Sign Here! Handwriting in the Age of New Media* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 202–03.
[669] *dict.cc*, s. v., "Lustmord," *dict.cc*, https://www.dict.cc/?s=lustmord (accessed April 28, 2022).
[670] Cabañas, "Pain of Cuba, Body I am," 12.
[671] For example, see George Grosz, *Lustmord in der Ackerstrasse* (1916–17) or Otto Dix, *Lustmord* (1922). According to Peter Holden Fox, Holzer was not only concerned with these works themselves, but the ways in which they were and are received. Fox notes that contemporaneous art critics such as Theodor Däubler were more interested in the formal components of Grosz's and Dix's work rather than the clear depiction of violence against women. This is a trend that has continued to the present era, Fox continues, due mainly to the Nazi inclusion of works by Dix and Grosz in the exhibition, *Entartete Kunst* (*Degenerate Art*), curated by Adolf Ziegler at the Institute of Archaeology in Munich, Germany in 1937. Fox quotes art historian Beth Irwin Lewis who claims that feminist critiques of the misogynist content of these pieces have been met by accusations that social commentaries harken back to those foisted upon the works by Ziegler's exhibition. Lewis writes: "a distinguished art historian accused me of voicing an interpretation that was dangerously congruent with National Socialist attacks on German avant-garde art and artists. Instead, he argued, these disfigured and dismembered bodies should be read as part of the symbolic vocabulary of political dissent raised by left-wing artists against a corrupt society." Fox goes on to note that there is a "gross oversight in the refusal to accept these works as evidence of violent sexual politics." This is not incongruent to how Holzer uses her work *Lustmord* in part to confront the way that audiences participate in the consumption of violence against women in their daily news feeds. Peter Holden Fox, "Textual Apparitions: Power, Language, and Site in the Work of Jenny Holzer," Pomona Senior Theses, 2007, http://scholarship.claremont.edu/pomona_theses/1 (accessed April 25, 2022), 61–62, 62. Quoting Beth Irwin Lewis, "Lustmord: Inside the Windows of the Metropolis," in Katharina von Ankum, ed., *Women in the Metropoils: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1997), 206; "1993: Jenny Holzer's Feminist 'Sex Murder' Raised Fury in Germany," *Artspace*, n. p.
[672] Taryn Cain, "Lustmord and the Three Perspectives of Murder," *Wellcome Collection*, June 16, 2015, https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/WqfvayUAAKsrVreh (accessed August 14, 2021). According to Cain, "Before the war in Bosnia, rape had been considered merely an unfortunate consequence of war and had not received much attention from the international community …. By 1993, pressure from the media forced aid organisations — who had previously remained neutral — to admit to the scale of the problem, and the newly set up International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to define rape as both a war crime and a crime against humanity. Despite this, by the end of the war in 1995, up to 60,000 women and girls had endured gang rapes, forced impregnation and sexual slavery at the hands of the Serbian army."
[673] See, for example, the constantly updated information on the flux of international border openings and closings concerning the virus. At the time that I write, the latest update is: "August 9, 2021: Border changes: Fully vaccinated foreign nationals will be allowed to enter Canada for discretionary travel on the following dates if they meet specific criteria: August 9: American citizens and permanent residents of the United States, currently residing in and arriving from the United States, and who qualify for the fully vaccinated traveller exemption September 7

(intended start date): All other foreign nationals who qualify for the fully vaccinated traveller exemption." "COVID-19: Travel, Testing, Quarantine and Borders," s. v., *Government of Canada*, travel.gc.ca (accessed August 14, 2021). On the AIDS epidemic, see "History of HIV and AIDS Overview," s. v., Avert.org, https://www.avert.org/professionals/history-hiv-aids/overview (accessed August 14, 2021).

[674] *Artspace*, s. v., "1993: Jenny Holzer's Feminist 'Sex Murder' Raised Fury in Germany — For All the Wrong Reasons," *Artspace*, May 17, 2018, https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/art-in-the-90s/1993-jenny-holzers-feminist-sex-murder-raised-fury-in-germanyfor-all-the-wrong-reasons-55438 (accessed August 14, 2021).

[675] Bryan Pietsch, "Nike Sues Over Unauthorized 'Satan Shoes,'" *The New York Times*, March 28, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/28/style/nike-satan-shoes-lil-Nas-x.html (accessed September 7, 2021).

[676] Oscar Holland and Jacqui Palumbo, "Lil Nas X's Unofficial 'Satan' Nikes Containing Human Blood Sell Out in under a Minute," *CNN*, March 29, 2021, https://www.cnn.com/style/article/lil-nas-x-mschf-satan-nike-shoes/index.html (accessed September 7, 2021).

[677] Guardian staff and agency, "Lil Nas X Satan Shoes Will Be Recalled as Part of Settlement with Nike," *The Guardian*, April 28, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/apr/08/nike-lawsuit-settled-lil-nas-x-satan-shoes-mschf (September 7, 2021). For the Jesus Shoe, see the MSCHF website, https://mschf.xyz (accessed September 7, 2021).

[678] "Lil Nas X — Montero (Call Me By Your Name) (Official video)," directed by Tanu Muino and Lil Nas X, Lil Nas X, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6swmTBVI83k (accessed September 7, 2021).

[679] "Lil Nas X Apologizes for Satan Shoe," Lil Nas X, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESf8Un3g9zM (accessed September 7, 2021).

[680] Montero (@LilNasX), "dear 14 year old Montero," Twitter, March 26, 2021, https://twitter.com/LilNasX/status/1375297562396139520 (accessed September 7, 2021).

[681] White, *The Eloquent* Blood, 127.

[682] For more biographical information about Parsons, see White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 124–27. For more on the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), see appendix.

[683] The comparison went so far that Parsons and Hubbard were involved in a similar "wife swapping" situation that Dee and Kelley also participated in, recommended to them by the angels they were working with in 1588. In the latter case, Dee and Kelley were instructed to sleep with each other's wives (which they purportedly carried out); in the case of Parsons and Hubbard, the literal affair was triangulated. Parsons was married at the time to Helen Northrup, while carrying on an affair with her younger sister, Sara Northrup, nicknamed "Betty," whom Hubbard subsequently also started a relationship with. In the words of Peter Grey, "Captain Hubbard and Betty absconded [from the OTO in 1946] taking all of Jack's savings which he had been persuaded to put in a joint venture called Allied Enterprises." See Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels*, 21; Grey, *The Red Goddess*, 152.

[684] Lipschutz, "Beacon in the Darkness," 9.

[685] Qtd. in White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 128. For original text, see John W. Parsons, "The Star of Babalon," in *Freedom is a Two-Edged Sword and Other Essays*, ed. Cameron and Hymenaeus Beta (Tempe, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1989), 77–84.

[686] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 128.

[687] Jack Parsons, *The Book of Babalon*, January 4–March 4, 1946, https://www.sacred-texts.com/oto/lib49.htm (accessed August 16, 2021).
[688] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 132.
[689] Alice L. Hutchison, "Scarlet Woman on Film," in *Alternative Projections: Experimental Film in Los Angeles, 1945–1980*, eds. Adam Hyman and David E James (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015), 91.
[690] Hutchison, "Scarlet Woman on Film," 98. Hutchison notes that Cameron's time in the war had a profound effect on her. In an interview, Cameron says: "[w]e were totally disillusioned. The public in general was not as sophisticated about the Second World War as most people who had been in it, and coming back we didn't find much sympathy or interest. So we kind of hung together as a group." Ibid., 99 fn 10. Quote from Sandra L. Starr interview with Cameron, *Lost and Found in California: Four Decades of Assemblage Art* (Los Angeles: James Corcoran Gallery, Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Pence Gallery, 1988), 63.
[691] Hutchison, "Scarlet Woman on Film," 98.
[692] Years passed between Cameron and Parsons meeting and the former's death. In 1946, after an on-again, off-again relationship, Parsons and Cameron had finally settled down together. At this time, Parsons had been investigated by the FBI on suspicion of socialism during the Cold War, and his security clearance had been revoked. By the time he died, it had been reinstated and he had started using his scientific savvy in service of Hollywood — specifically, producing special effects with the Howard Hughes Corporation. White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 138, 145.
[693] Steffie Nelson, "Cameron: Witch of the Art World," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, October 8, 2014, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/cameron-witch-art-world (accessed August 19, 2021).
[694] See "Home," Ecclesia Babalon, North America, https://www.ecclesiababalon.com (accessed April 28, 2022).
[695] @gabyherstik, "This Week's Events," Instagram, April 17, 2022, https://www.instagram.com/p/Ccdyk_nvxV0; jay, Babalon Rising, podcast, hosted for example on Anchor, https://anchor.fm/rhea77 (both accessed April 28, 2022).
[696] Wanda Maximoff, the Scarlet Witch, first appeared in the Marvel comic series with Jack Kirby and Stan Lee's *Uncanny: X-Men* 4 (1964). The character hails from a fictional Eastern European country called Sokovia, where she was raised together with her twin brother, Pietro, and, according to the *Marvel Cinematic Universe Wiki*, was "born with the latent mythical ability to harness Chaos Magic," which "is primarily indicated by a mist like red energy mixed with white and black hues" and "seems to generate large quantities of CMBR, relic radiation that dates back to the Big Bang." Through a series of experiments with HYDRA, a paramilitary terrorist organization, Maximoff developed psionic abilities while working with the mind stone, a "remnant of singularity … representing the element of mind." Maximoff's chaos magic, however, does not seem to be connected to the chaos magic developed by Peter J. Carroll and Ray Sherwin in 1970s England. "Why is Chaos Magic so powerful?" asks Blair Marnell, writing about the 2021 Marvel series *Wanda Vision*. "Because a master of Chaos Magic can literally rewrite reality around them." This reaches to the heart of the efficacy of magic in general as an act that has the power to (re)create worlds. There have been many iterations of the Scarlet Witch in comic and animation form, with one of them (*Iron Man* from 1994) veering far from the original Marvel comic series and positioning the Scarlet Witch not as a mutant but rather, according to Nat Brehmer, as "a genuine witch and Tarot-reading spiritualist." The introduction of the Scarlet Witch into the Marvel Universe also linked her to the Early Modern European witch hunts — in one scene in particular, Magneto, sometimes positioned as Wanda's father,

asks, "[h]ave you forgotten that day, not long ago, when I came to your village in the heart of Europe? Have you forgotten how the superstitious villagers called you a witch because of your mutant power?" See Jack Kirby and Stan Lee, *Uncanny: X-Men* 4 (1964); *Marvel Cinematic Universe Wiki*, s. v., "Scarlet Witch," "Magic," "Mind Stone," https://marvelcinematicuniverse.fandom.com/wiki/Scarlet_Witch, https://marvelcinematicuniverse.fandom.com/wiki/Magic#Chaos_Magic, https://marvelcinematicuniverse.fandom.com/wiki/Mind_Stone; Blair Marnell, "'WandaVision': The Scarlet Witch's Powers and Chaos Magic, Explained," *Collider*, February 28, 2021, https://collider.com/scarlet-witch-powers-chaos-magic-explained-wandavision; *Iron Man*, created by Stan Lee and Larry Lieber (Atlanta, GA: Marvel Studios, 1994); Nat Brehmer, "'Life's a Witch': A History of Scarlet Witch in Film and Animation," *That's Not Current,* March 21, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20180325194819/http://www.thatsnotcurrent.com/lifes-a-witch-a-history-of-scarlet-witch-in-film-animation; Alex Abad-Santos, "The Tragic History of Scarlet Witch, Who Will Make Her Film Debut in Avengers: Age of Ultron," April 28, 2015, https://www.vox.com/2015/4/28/8498521/avengers-age-of-ultron-scarlet-witch-explained (all accessed April 29, 2022).

[697] *Wanda Vision*, season 1, episode 8, "Previously On," dir. Matt Shakman (Atlanta, GA: Marvel Studios, 2021), 37:23.

[698] English scholar, politician, astrologer, and alchemist Elias Ashmole (1617–1662) is the hidden lynchpin in this constellation. According to Peter Grey, "[i]n 1662 the records of Dee's séances were discovered in the false bottom of a chest and given to Elias Ashmole, the founder of English Freemasony." From freemasonry comes many of the rituals that would inform the Golden Dawn, and subsequently the OTO, and subsequently (and controversially) much of what we know of as Western witchcraft, or Wicca. Grey, *The Red Goddess*, 99. For more information on the Golden Dawn, see Chapter 2; for more information on imbrications between Wicca and the OTO, see Introduction.

[699] Grey, *The Red Goddess*, 86.

[700] Rev. 17:3–6 (KJV), quoted in White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 1.

[701] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 51.

[702] Babalon is a central figure in Crowley's Thelema, the guiding religion and principle behind the OTO (Ordo Templi Orientis). For more on the OTO and Thelema, see appendix. For Parsons, Babalon would arrive as a kind of saviour in the *Æon* of Horus — he writes that she will "direct the blind force of Horus into constructive channels of understanding and love." According to White, Crowley developed an idea of aeons that derived primarily from theories of religious evolution (as per anthropologist James George Frazer) and dispensationalism, a hermeneutic concept that breaks down biblical history into administrative periods or units. Aeons were "periods of around 2,000 years, representing phases in human spiritual history. The succession of aeons is depicted in gendered terms of mother, father, and (male and / or androgynous) offspring, represented by the Egyptian deities Isis, Osiris, and Horus." See White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 46, 115 fn 1, see also 100; Parsons, *The Book of Babalon*, n. p. For Crowley's most influential writings on Babalon, see Aleister Crowley, "Waratah-Blossoms," *The Book of Lies: Which Is Also Falsely Called Breaks* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1981), 108–09; *The Vision and the Voice* (1900–09) (Dallas: Sangreal Foundation, 1972); "Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni sub figura CLVI," *The Equinox* I, no. 6 (1911): 23–27.

[703] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 4.

[704] Grey*, The Red Goddess*, 37–42.
[705] Grey*, The Red Goddess*, 187.
[706] Grey, *The Red Goddess*, 2.
[707] John W. Parsons and Marjorie Cameron, *Songs for the Witch Woman* (1951) (Lopen, UK: Fulgur Press, 2014.
[708] Grey, *The Red Goddess*, 3.
[709] In her introduction to Grey's *The Red Goddess*, a book which is itself a devotional tribute to Babalon, writer and dancer (and Grey's partner), Alkistis Dimech notes that "Peter Grey writes with an unashamedly male jouissance, yet he is left-handed, his writing in service of the goddess who is the harlot of Revelation, who we call Babalon." Alkistis Dimech, "The Work of the Hierodule," in Peter Grey, *The Red Goddess*, xiii.
[710] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 305. Grey's entire ritual is described in Peter Grey, "The Amfortas Wound," ed. Alkistis Dimech (London: Scarlet Imprint, 2008).
[711] Georgia van Raalte, *Approaching Babalon: Essays for the Abyss* (East Point, GA: Temple of Our Lady of the Abyss, 2020), 46. The sense of devotion Cameron had for her art work often meant she was difficult to view it as a commodity and to make a living off it. "Since her art was inexorably tied to her esoteric beliefs, it was always difficult for Cameron to sell it. She didn't see her work as a commodity but rather as part of her very existence. That prevented her from being able to detach herself from her creations, and also threatened the attachment itself. In response, she burned her art." Tanja M. Laden, "The Witch Woman Sings," *L. A. Weekly*, October 9, 2014, http://digitalissue.laweekly.com/publication/?i=228808&article_id=1834523&view=articleBrowser&ver=html5 (accessed November 24, 2021).
[712] Spencer Kansa, *Wormwood Star: The Magickal Life of Marjorie Cameron* (Oxford: Mandrake of Oxford 2011), 82.
[713] See appendix for more on A∴A∴ (Argenteum Astrum, or Silver Star).
[714] See Yael Lipschutz, *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman*, exh. cat., The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (Santa Monica, CA: Cameron Parsons Foundation, 2015).
[715] Parsons, *The Book of Babalon*, n. p.
[716] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 86.
[717] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 85.
[718] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 86.
[719] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 90, 97.
[720] Hutchison, "Scarlet Woman on Film," 95.
[721] The manifesto for The Witchcraft was included Parsons's posthumously published book *Freedom Is a Two-Edged Sword* (Las Vegas: Falcon Press, 1989).
[722] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 87.
[723] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 87.
[724] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 86.
[725] Here, again, I come back to the word "ruin" that Irigaray uses in her text on fluid mechanics. Cameron's technique of destroying her own artwork is a fluid mechanism in itself, especially in the way that it moves away from gestures of constancy and homeostasis that comprise a solid mechanics; it moves away from repetition as death / life instinct, it moves away even from form, thereby "jamming the works of the theoretical machine." Irigaray writes: "Consider this *principle of constancy* which is so dear to you: what 'does it mean'? The avoidance of excessive inflow / outflow — excitement? Coming from the other? The search, at any price, for

homeostasis? …. certain properties of the 'vital' have been deadened into the 'constancy' required to give it form." Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 107, 115.

[726] Hutchison, "Scarlet Woman on Film," 92. Fitting with the theme of Babalon, the Mother of Abominations, both Curtis Harrington and Kenneth Anger met Marjorie Cameron at a "Come As Your Madness"–themed Halloween masquerade party hosted by artist Renate Druks, where, according to Hutchison, "all the attendees concocted fabulous costumes around their own obsessions, Gods and Goddesses." Ibid., 94.

[727] Gerald Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*; Inauguration *of the Pleasure Dome*, dir. Kenneth Anger (no production company listed, 1954), 38 mins; Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Pocket Bookshop, 1957); Sun Ra, Sun R, the Vocal Groups featuring Nu Sounds, the Unitels and the Cosmic Rays, *Spaceship Lullaby* (Chicago: Atavistic, Unheard Music Series, 2003); Muddy Waters, "I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man," single (Chicago, IL: Chess Record Corporation, 1954); Arthur Miller, *The Crucible* (New York: Viking, 1953). A predecessor of Muddy Waters's song "Hoochie Coochie Man," and relevant to the themes of the present dissertation, was Robert Johnson's "Cross Road Blues," recorded at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas in 1936. There is considerable mythology associated with Johnson, an African American musician who died at the age of twenty-seven and was hugely influential on American music. Peter Bebergal notes that part of this mythology includes Johnson making a bargain with the devil at a crossroads, selling his soul in exchange for "uncanny proficiency on the guitar." Peter Bebergal, *Season of the Witch: How the Occult Saved Rock and Roll* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 2.

[728] White, "'One Magical Movement from Kether to Malkuth,'" 369. Quoting Christopher Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: Volume One* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004–05), 4. Partridge posits that the occult is a daily part of life in a contemporary secularized Western environment: "[f]rom the advertising of everyday products that claim to promote wellbeing to the ubiquity of a visual culture fascinated with 'rejected knowledge' and experiences of the paranormal," occulture is "everyday and ubiquitous. However it is disseminated, it is both the culture *of* and the culture available *to* ordinary people." Partridge recommends that "occulture" be added to Raymond Williams's definitions of "culture" to "include its [culture's] shadow side — those cultural forces that have always engendered enchanted spaces in everyday life." Though the portmanteau contains "occult" and "culture," Partridge is careful to demarcate "occulture" from "occult culture" or indeed "any particular zone of esoteric belief or popular religion." Rather, "occulture identifies the everyday processes by which rejected and marginalized ideas, the weird and the frightening, shape everyday imaginations and, indeed, contribute to the construction of lifeworlds and of milieux, as well as to the elasticity of plausibility structures. Occulture is that shadow side of culture fascinated by that which hegemonic religion, culture, and science marginalizes or rejects, but which is, nevertheless, ubiquitous, perennial, and important for the enchantment of the everyday. Discourses of the occult, of theosophy, of altered states, of experiences of the paranormal, of myths and legends, and a range of ideas from the familiar to the bizarre are processed and disseminated by popular culture, the media, and the arts." Christopher Partridge, "Occulture and Art," 131, 134, 135.

[729] Qtd. in Laden, "The Witch Woman Sings," *L. A. Weekly*.

[730] *Rosemary's Baby*, dir. Roman Polanski (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, 1968). For more on the Manson murders and the occult counterculture, see Aja Romano, "The Manson Family Murders, and Their Complicated Legacy, Explained," *Vox*, August 7, 2019,

https://www.vox.com/2019/8/7/20695284/charles-manson-family-what-is-helter-skelter-explained (accessed September 6, 2021).
[731] *The Holy Mountain*, dir. Alejandro Jodorowsky (New York: ABKCO Films, 1973); *The Wicker Man*, dir. Robin Hardy (London: British Lion Films, 1973). According to Ethan Doyle White, "The Beatles included the Thelemite prophet [Aleister Crowley] among the seventy-one figures adorning the cover of their 1967 *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album, [while] Led Zeppelin had 'Do What Thou Wilt' engraved on the vinyl of their 1970 album *Led Zeppelin III*." Ethan Doyle White, "'One Magical Movement from Kether to Malkuth': Occultism in the Work of David Bowie," *Correspondences* 7, no. 2 (2019): 375.
[732] White, "'One Magical Movement from Kether to Malkuth,'" 383.
[733] White, "'One Magical Movement from Kether to Malkuth,'" 385–86; Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 231.
[734] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 141.
[735] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 145.
[736] Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 141.
[737] See "Rapunzel," Hansel and Gretel," "Little Briar Rose," in *German Popular Stories*, translated from *Kinder und Haus-Märchen*, collected by M. M. Grimm from oral tradition, ed. and trans. E. Taylor (London: C. Baldwyn Newgate Street, 1823); Roald Dahl, *The Witches* (1983) (London: Puffin, 2020).
[738] Grossman, *Waking the Witch*, 110–12.
[739] In *The Eloquent Blood*, Manon Hedenborg White interviews a couple who work with the goddess Babalon, Steve and Ash, one of whom defines as genderqueer. To both, the goddess "allows a critique of the conventional gender binaries at play in "'conventional' forms of Thelema, and some branches of Wicca," writes White, especially in the latter where "many people appear to seek magical justifications for their own sexism by adopting binarized roles, such as (male) magician and Scarlet Woman." Ash, who defines themselves as femme and genderqueer, says, "I am taking testosterone, and what does that even mean in terms of my relationship with Babalon? … that deity that is also really powerful in her embracing of femininity and woman-ness?" It means, it short, that gendered concepts are blown up: "the goddess is also linked," writes White, "to a transgression and subversion of the meaning of those concepts." White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 251, 252–53.
[740] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 4.
[741] Grey, *The Red Goddess*, 97.
[742] Ireland, "Black Circuit," n. p.
[743] Ireland, "Black Circuit" n. p. It is worth mentioning that Jack Parsons's reading of the goddess Babalon was especially radical and feminist. As Manon Hedenborg White notes, "Like [Luce] Irigaray's divine feminine, Parsons's Babalon appears to transcend the sensible-transcendent binary … The goddess in Parsons's writings indeed appears to encompass a view of femininity and women not only as mothers but also as social revolutionaries, warriors, lovers, and magical initiators. It is relevant that Babalon is construed as the mother of a daughter." White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 147–48. Referring to Luce Irigaray, "Divine Women," in ibid., *Sexes and Genealogies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 55–72
[744] van Raalte, *Approaching Babalon*, 76.
[745] Marjorie Cameron's experiment The Children was inspired in large part by Aleister Crowley's fictional book, *Moonchild*, published in 1929. The premise of the book involves a couple, Cyril Grey and Lisa La Giuffria, using magical rituals to produce a child of the moon.

Whereas the fictional characters Grey and La Giuffria are elaborately invoking goddesses associated with the moon — Artemis and Diana — Cameron was invoking Babalon to produce, rather, a child of apocalyptic and emancipatory qualities. In Crowley's book, one of the central characters, Simon Iff, says the following to the couple when proposing the magical operation: "'Now I'm going to bring all this to a point,' went on the old mystic. 'The Greeks, as you know, practiced a kind of eugenics. (Of course, all tribal marriage laws are primarily eugenic in intention). But, like the mediaeval magicians we were speaking of, with their Homonculus, the Greeks attached the greatest possible importance to the condition of the mother during gestation. She was encouraged to look only on beautiful statues, to read only beautiful books.'" Aleister Crowley, *Moonchild* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1970), 109–10. As for Bowie, White notes that "Bowie introduced occultist elements into his work in the early 1970s, adding references to Aleister Crowley and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in songs like 'Quicksand' and possibly also 'After All.'" He continues, "[i]t is of little surprise that Crowley might interest Bowie, for there are clear parallels between their lives; both were counter-cultural figures rejecting societal norms through, among other things, their bisexuality." White, "One Magical Moment from Kether to Malkuth," 367, 375.

[746] Duke Franklin Humanities Institute, "Frank Wilderson: The Politics of Pessimism in an Anti-Black World," YouTube video, 1:28 minutes, November 11, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tug7UWedzrw (accessed May 5, 2022), 57:50.

[747] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 39.

[748] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 47, 32.

[749] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 48. Quoting Jonathan Marks, *Human Biodiversity: Genes, Race, and History* (New York: de Gruyter, 1995),127.

[750] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 44.

[751] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 54.

[752] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 63.

[753] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 45.

[754] See, for example, "Rosa Parks," s. v., *History*, https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/rosa-parks (accessed July 5, 2022).

[755] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 37–38.

[756] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 38.

[757] TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 48.

[758] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 12.

[759] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 57 fn 26.

[760] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 11, 136.

[761] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 17.

[762] TallBear, too, notes how "actual and symbolic blood [has] permeated discussions about and experiences in the social and political realms," on religious, scientific, and medical fronts. She writes: "In what is today Western Europe, during the rise of the medical sciences, there were live human dissections of criminals sentenced to death. Menstruating women, considered both taboo and powerful, preoccupied peoples around the world. In many cultures, menstruants were secluded, and blood signified contaminations of men by women. But menstrual blood also nourished. … The color and condition of blood preoccupied the minds of thinkers and represented the essence of life and personhood. Some believed it to be 'the seat of the soul.'" I mentioned in Chapter 1 that in Egyptian and Greek papyri, all the way up to the Old Testament, the heart was seen as the seat of the soul, before the "seat" was moved to the mind in the 18th

century. And yet perhaps all long, the seat of the soul has not been centralized in one particular place, but rather in the flow and stream of blood itself. TallBear, "Racial Science, Blood, and DNA," 47; Lind, "Historical Origins of the Modern Mind/Body Split," 23, 26–27. See Chapter 1.
[763] T. Glen Hamilton, *Intention and Survival: Psychical Research Studies and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Problem of Human Survival*, ed. J. D. Hamilton (Toronto: MacMillan, 1942), 139.
[764] Marlene Tromp, *Altered States: Sex, Nation, Drugs, and Self-Transformation in Victorian Spiritualism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 15; Shannon Taggart, "Introduction: Spiritualism, Photography, and the Search for Ectoplasm," *Séance* (Somerset, UK: Fulgur Press, 2019), 45.
[765] Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 94, 97.
[766] Taggart, "Introduction," 47.
[767] L. Anne Delgado, "Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm," n. p.
[768] Marina Warner, "Ethereal Body: The Quest for Ectoplasm," *Cabinet* 12 (Fall / Winter 2013), http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/12/warner.php (accessed September 27, 2021).
[769] This is widely discussed elsewhere. See, for example: Sconce, *Haunted Media*; María Pilar del Blanco and Esther Peeren, *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).
[770] Beth. A. Kattelman, "Where Were You When the Lights Went Out?: American Ghost Shows of the Twentieth Century, in eds. Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin, *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance, and Modernity*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 96.
[771] Natale, *Supernatural Entertainments*, 1–2.
[772] Karen Abbott, "The Fox Sisters and the Rap on Spiritualism," *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 30, 2012, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-fox-sisters-and-the-rap-on-spiritualism-99663697 (accessed October 14, 2021).
[773] There were, in the end, thirteen bewitched girls in total during the Salem witch hunts, seven of whom were domestic servants. Stacy Schiff, *The Witches*, 4, 140.
[774] Schiff, *The Witches*, 131.
[775] Taggart, "Introduction," 47.
[776] Taggart, "Introduction," 47, 41.
[777] Taggart, "Introduction," 48.
[778] Robertson, *The Science of the Séance*, 24. Quoting T. G. Hamilton to Mrs. J. Bonnizer, January 14, 1931, Hamilton Family Fonds, MSS14 (A.79–41), box 5, folder 1, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, Winnipeg.
[779] I have referenced T. Glen Hamilton as the author of *Intention and Survival* throughout, as that is what appears on the title page of the book. At times, however, this is a misnomer, for T. Glen Hamilton is also mentioned in the 3rd-person throughout, which could as seem as if he is speaking of himself; this is a product of the editor's voice coming in to describe events, as the book itself is based on Dr. Hamilton's notes. The interweaving of the voices of the Hamiltons throughout produces an effect that overall makes the question of voice in mediumship ever more present, even in the so-called scientific description of it.
[780] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 29.
[781] Previous to Mary M.'s ectoplasmic manifestation, Hamilton had been working with the medium Elizabeth Poole, who also served double shift as the family's nanny. Poole, referred to as "Elizabeth M.," produced loquacious amounts of automatic writing. See Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 236–50.

[782] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 4–5.
[783] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 30.
[784] Beth A. Roberton, *The Science of the Séance: Transnational Global Networks and Gendered Bodies in the Study of Psychic Phenomena, 1918–40* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 12.
[785] According to Robertson, Lillian not only acted as scribe or secretary to the séances but was the main reason for them beginning in the first place. Though Hamilton experimented with telepathy in 1918, he gave up his psychical research; without Lillian's prodding, he would not have continued it. "It was she who began to hold sittings with the medium Elizabeth Poole," writes Robertson. Poole was the first medium that the Hamiltons worked with (and who also worked as their nanny by day). Additionally, after the death of her husband, Lillian continued the experiments, yet "her investigations never received the recognition that his [Hamilton's] experiments had." *The Science of the Séance*, 34, 27; for more on Lillian, see also 20, 22. In *Survival and Intention*, Lillian's role is described thusly: "First, the only other person who was an active member of the group throughout the entire investigation besides Dr. Glen Hamilton was his wife, Lillian Hamilton. She acted simply as a member of the group — i.e., non-participating in the psychic sense — took notes occasionally and did much of the secretarial work involved in the maintenance and analysis of records." Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 25.
[786] Robertson, *The Science of the Séance*, 23.
[787] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 10.
[788] Not only did male spirits "control" female mediums, but gender-bending also worked the other way around. For example, the 1920s medium William Cartheuser had a control named Elsie, a little girl with a falsetto voice. Roberston, *The Science of the Séance*, 41.
[789] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 24, 26, 27.
[790] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 22.
[791] Roberton, *The Science of the Séance*, 6.
[792] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 33–34. As an aside, and parallel, the video for David Bowie's "Space Oddity" also represents an almost fetishistic view on technology: as Bowie sings, the camera consistently pans across an array of synthesizers and instruments. See video for David Bowie, "Space Oddity," produced and directed by Mick Rock, New York, December 1972, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYYRH4apXDo (accessed November 17, 2021).
[793] Robertson, *The Science of the* Séance, 5.
[794] Tony Oursler, "Notes on Mysticism and Visual Transects," in Taggart, *Séance*, 13.
[795] Darren Wershler, Lori Emerson, and Jussi Parikka, "Case Study: Hybrid Spaces of Experimentation and Parapsychology," in *The Lab Book: Situated Practices in Media Studies* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), https://manifold.umn.edu/read/chapter-5-lab-imaginaries/section/5c8749f4-5ec1-4c3e-8e66-b8657027776b (accessed November 8, 2021).
[796] Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 143, 145–46.
[797] See Jeffrey Kahan, *Shakespiritualism: Shakespeare and the Occult, 1850–1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 73–96.
[798] Taggart, "Introduction," 43.
[799] Taggart, "Introduction," 43.
[800] *Ghostbusters*, dir. Ivan Reitman (Culver City, CA: Columbia Pictures), 1984; Peter H. Aykroyd; *A History of Ghosts: The True Story of Séances, Mediums, Ghosts, and Ghostbusters* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale, 2009).

[801] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 192–94.
[802] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 38. Qtd. in Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 194.
[803] Delgado, "Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm," n. p. Quoting Barnard, *The Supernormal*, 88; Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Edge of the Unknown* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1930), 216.
[804] Delgado, "Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm," n. p.
[805] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 199.
[806] Delgado, "Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm," n. p.
[807] A notable side note here is female ejaculation. Social scientist Ada McVean examines the under-studied phenomenon in her work at McGill University in Montreal. She notes that female ejaculation "or the emission of a clear / whitish fluid from the female genitalia upon orgasm, was first referenced in Indian poems from the 7th and 11th centuries in rather stunning detail. Herophilos of Chalkedon made the first scientific description of what would later be named the female prostate in 300 BC, and Aristotle, Hippocrates, the Kama Sutra, and Galen all made further description of female ejaculation prior to 1700." Despite its prevalence, female ejaculation has been glossed over by the sciences, in part for the fact that it skews traditional gender categories. "Societal ideas of femininity, masculinity, gender and sexuality seemed to influence the scientific study of female ejaculation," writes McVean. "A lot of good studies on the topic got overlooked, and some bad science got overused." This "bad science" not only has had an effect on the discussion of female ejaculation, but also on disorders related to female genitalia. "In the most serious sense, cases of female prostate cancer and chronic UTIs have likely gone undiagnosed or untreated," McVean notes. "In a less life-threatening sense, many women have had to face a body of evidence that denies their everyday sexual experience." Ada McVean, "Can Women Ejaculate? That Depends on Whom You Ask," Office for Science and Society, McGill University, September 11, 2018, https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/health-history/can-women-ejaculate-depends-who-you-ask (accessed April 28, 2022).
[808] Delgado, "Bawdy Technologies and the Birth of Ectoplasm," n. p.
[809] Robertson, *Science of the Séance*, 14.
[810] H. A.V. Green, "Foreword," in Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, ix.
[811] Hamilton discusses how tricky it is to handle ectoplasm at all. "Both the substance and the form have been occasionally felt and handled," he writes. "[Williams] Crookes, [Charles] Richet and others had the experience of holding a materialized hand which slowly withdrew by some manner of disintegration from their grasp. Dr. Crandon and his associates have likewise grasped and photographed a supernormal hand." Yet he goes on to note that the medium herself "who is the organic source of this mysterious substance may suffer from nervous shock if the substance is handled too roughly or without regard to the substance's condition, as disclosed by the trance personalities who claim to produce it." The very fact that ectoplasm is difficult to handle, notes Hamilton, "marks one of the boundaries of his [the experimenter's] experimental technique." Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, 9.
[812] Robertson, *The Science of the Séance*, 14, 13, 22.
[813] Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 18.
[814] Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium,* 27.
[815] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*, throughout. In terms of how mediums were handled at seances, it is elucidative to look at British medium Florence Cook, who manifested a full-form

ectoplasm named Katie King. Cook was continuously authenticated by a leading scientist at the time, William Crookes, who was a Fellow of the Royal Society and, in his time, eventually knighted. Reading Crookes's reports of authentication, however, isn't exactly like going through an objective scientific account. By means of highlighting the differences between Florence Cook and her materialized spirit Katie King in order to qualify them as separate beings, and not, as was sometimes suspected, the medium dressed up as the spirit, Crookes wrote: "Katie's neck was bare last night; the skin was perfectly smooth to touch and to sight, whilst on Miss. Cook's neck is a large blister, which under similar circumstances is distinctly visible and rough to the touch." The kind of intimacy described in these passages seems a far cry from the detached observer that the modest witness was meant to portray and embody. Tromp, *Altered States*, 41. Quoting William Crookes, *The Phenomena of Spiritualism* (Mokelumne Hill, CA: Health Research, 1972), 107.

[816] Brian P. Levack, ed., *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (New York, Routledge, 2004), 140.

[817] The accused in question was George Burroughs, who would hang as a witch in 1692. Schiff, *The Witches*, 275.

[818] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*,158.

[819] See the swimming of Mary Sutton, who was accused by "a local gentleman," Mr. Enger, of "killing his cattle, bewitching his servant and killing his seven-year-old son." It appears in a 1613 pamphlet called *Vvitches Apprehended ...* (London: Edward Marchant, 1613). See Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*, 162.

[820] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*, 170.

[821] The prick test was used to find the "devil's mark" on the witches' body. "The belief was that the devil branded the bodies of witches with symbolic yet concrete corporeal malformations such as marks and growths," writes Darr. "The mark was *tangible*, *ostensible*, and … *insensitive* to pain. These traits made the mark subject to search and pricking, two techniques employed in the quest for physical evidence of witchcraft." Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*, 112, emphasis author's own.

[822] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*, 160. Quoting King James I, *Daemonologie: In Forme of a Dialogue, Divided into Three Bookes* (Edinburgh: Robert Walde-graue, 1597), 81.

[823] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*, 163. Quoting William Perkins, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft ...* (Cambridge, UK: Vniuersitie of Cambridge, 1608), 11.

[824] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch*, 164. Quoting John Cotta, *The Triall of Vvitch-Craft* (London: Samuel Rand, 1616), 104.

[825] Astrida Neimanis, "Hydrofeminism: Or, On Becoming a Body of Water," in *Undutiful Daughters: Mobilizing Future Concepts, Bodies and Subjectivities in Feminist Thought and Practice*, eds. Henriette Gunkel, Chrysanthi Nigianni and Fanny Söderbäck (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 97–98. Quoting Mark McMenamin and Dianna McMenamin, *Hypersea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 5.

[826] Neimanis, "Hydrofeminism," 98.

[827] Neimanis, "Hydrofeminism," 98.

[828] Law, *After Method*, 76, emphasis author's own.

[829] Law, *After Method*, 77, emphasis author's own.

[830] Law, *After Method*, 79, emphasis author's own.

[831] Neimanis, "Hydrofeminism," 103.

[832] Neimanis, "Hydrofeminism," 103. Quoting Nancy Tuana, "Viscous Porosity: Witnessing Katrina," in *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2008), 194.
[833] Neimanis, "Hydrofeminism," 103.
[834] In 1981, Ana Mendieta composed a poem that contains the ending lines: "And so, / As my whole body is filled with want of Cuba / I go on to make my work upon the earth, / to go on is victory." Qtd. in Cabaños, "'Pain of Cuba, Body I Am,'" 12. Originally printed in Nancy Spero, "Tracing Ana Mendieta," *Artforum* (April 1992), 75.
[835] For more on the Hamiltons's son, Arthur, especially in relation to Lillian Hamilton, see Roberston, *The Science of the Séance*, 36.
[836] Law, *After Method*, 70.
[837] Law, *After Method*, 82.
[838] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translator's Preface," in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1967), trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, corrected edition (Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins Press, 1997), xliii.
[839] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 139.
[840] Eliade, "Some Observations on European Witchcraft," 165.
[841] Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 76, 78.
[842] Eliade, "Some Observations on European Witchcraft," 166.
[843] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 176.
[844] Eliade, "Some Observations on European Witchcraft," 167.
[845] Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 80.
[846] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 177.
[847] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (1968), trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 11.
[848] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 108.
[849] Eliade, "Some Observations on European Witchcraft," 166.
[850] Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 84.
[851] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 104.
[852] Eliade, "Some Observations on European Witchcraft," 168.
[853] Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead*, 7, 73.
[854] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 103.
[855] Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons," 29.
[856] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v., "heretical, *adj.*," "heretic, *n.* and *adj.*," https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/86198?redirectedFrom=heretical#eid; https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/86197?redirectedFrom=heretics#eid (accessed February 1, 2022).
[857] Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons," 27.
[858] Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons," 25, 27, 28.
[859] Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons," 25. Quoting George Webbe, *The Arraignement of an Unruly Tongue* (London, 1619), 22.
[860] Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons," 32. Men, too, were accused of witchcraft in Salem, and here too speech was important; however, rather than railing or hectoring or gossiping, men accused of witchcraft were seen as weak or effeminate — "male 'witches' sounded wicked," writes Kamensky. "What this meant, in large part, was that they failed to sound masculine."[860] As we see again and again, the witch is one who cannot be fit into strict,

culturally sanctioned roles, and must be disposed of. Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons," 36.
[861] Wynter, qtd. in McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 14.
[862] Maurice A. Finocchiaro, "The Copernican Revolution and the Galileo Affair," in *The Blackwell Companion to Science and Christianity*, ed. J. B. Stump and Alan G. Padgett (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 19.
[863] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 164. This is number is high to account for the many trial documents that have not been examined or which were destroyed. As Stacy Schiff writes concerning the 1992 trials in Salem, Massachusetts, "[n]o trace of a single session of the witchcraft court survives. We have accounts of the trials but no records, we are left with preparatory papers — depositions, indictments, confessions, petitions — and two warrants. The Salem village record book has been expunged. No newspaper yet circulated in a North American colony. While the bewitched commanded a rapt audience for much of a year, their voices are lost to us." *The Witches*, 12.
[864] Jeff Wallenfeldt, "Salem Witch Trials," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 11, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/event/Salem-witch-trials (accessed January 12, 2022).
[865] Wynter, qtd. in McKittrick, "Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species?," 15.
[866] Pietro Redondi, *Galileo: Heretic*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 323.
[867] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 202.
[868] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 202.
[869] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 202–03. In particular, Federici points to Merchant's notes that Francis Bacon, "one of the reputed fathers of the new scientific method," demonstrates "that his concept of the scientific investigation of nature was modeled on the interrogation of the witches under torture, portraying nature as a woman to be conquered, unveiled, and raped." Referencing Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 168–72.
[870] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 203.
[871] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 203. Federici compares this pressure cooker to the forging of Nazim, in which "the cult of science and technology combined with a scenario pretending to restore an archaic, mythical world of blood bonds and pre-monetary allegiances." Ibid.
[872] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 204.
[873] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 11.
[874] This is, however, a complicated statement, given how witchcraft and the witch herself has been made into a commodity under the very system it once so threatened, as discussed in Chapter 2.
[875] Melchoir-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, 187.
[876] Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 204.
[877] See Gerald Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*.
[878] Zsuzsanna Budapest (or Z. Budapest) is the founder of Dianic Wicca, which is a branch of Wicca entirely for women. She founded the Susan B. Anthony Coven No. 1 in Hollywood in 1971. Not all feminist politics age well, and Budapest, like many people taking on the moniker "witch," is not necessarily on the side of what many in the contemporary era would consider "feminist." Budapest has spoken up widely against trans women and been described as a TERF (trans-exclusionary radical feminist.) For more on Budapest's biography, see Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 344; for more on Budapest's TERF politics, see Misha Magdalene,

"Washing the Clay Feet of Broken Idols: Confronting Paganism's TERF Problem," *Pantheos*, July 27, 2018, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/mishamagdalene/2018/07/washing-clay-feet-broken-idols (accessed February 1, 2022).
[879] See Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic*; Marian Jones, "Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell: What to Know," *Teen Vogue*, October 28, 2021, https://www.teenvogue.com/story/womens-international-terrorist-conspiracy-from-hell (accessed January 19, 2022); Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 341; Yoko Ono, *Yes, I'm a Witch*, Astralwerks, Apple, 2006.
[880] See, for example, Witch City Walking Tours, https://www.witchcitywalkingtours.com (accessed January 19, 2022).
[881] For example, in his book*, Magister Officiorum*, contemporary magician Julio Cesar Ody tries to trace back his particular mix of Obeah and Solomonic magic only to discover that much information was retained about Obeahmen through the phenomenon of Lauron William de Laurence's mail order magical supplies. In this case, Ody was surprised to find out that the availability of magical supplies that could be obtained in the Caribbean through mail order actually influenced and helped build an entire tradition, referred to now as Trinidad Kabbalah. Ody, like many practitioners of magic, however, does not only rely on paper trails and commercial networks for information about his tradition: these stories, he notes, have been "corroborated by spirits." ulio Cesar Ody, *Magister Officiorum* (London: Scarlet Imprint, 2018), xvi, xviii.
[882] Fredric Jameson defines late capitalism via Ernest Mandel, who qualifies three stages of capitalism: market capitalism, imperialism, and multinational capital. Jameson writes that Mandel "sets out not merely to anatomize the historic originality of this new society (which he sees as a third stage or moment in the evolution of capital), but also to demonstrate that it is, if anything, a purer stage of capitalism than any of the moments that preceded it." Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," in *The Jameson Reader*, ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 78, 55.
[883] Sarah Kember, *iMedia*, 109. Quoting Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," 255.
[884] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 9.
[885] Schiff, *The Witches*, 357–406.
[886] Schiff, *The Witches*, 364.
[887] Schiff, *The Witches*, 362.
[888] Schiff, *The Witches*, 386.
[889] Alice Sparkly Kat, *Postcolonial Astrology*, 114.
[890] Eve Tuck coins the co-author C. Ree as a "composite narrator / combined I" in order to "use the bothnesss of my voice to misdirect those who intend to study or surveil me." Eve Tuck and C. Ree, "A Glossary of Haunting," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacey Holman Jones et al. (Berkeley, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 643.
642.
[891] Margaret Somerville, *Water in a Dry Land: Place-Learning through Art and Story* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 3.
[892] Somerville, *Water in a Dry Land*, 5; Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," 22.
[893] Somerville, *Water in a Dry Land*, 5, 7.
[894] Cabañas, "'Pain of Cuba, Body I am,'" 18.

[895] Claire Colebrook, "On Not Becoming Man: The Materialist Politics of Unactualized Potential," in *Material Feminisms*, eds. by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Indiana University Press, 2008), 82.
[896] Colebrook, "On Not Becoming Man," 66.
[897] Colebrook, "On Not Becoming Man," 59.
[898] Juliet Diaz, *Witchery: Embrace the Witch Within* (Carlsbad, California: Hay House, 2019), 131.
[899] Diaz, *Witchery*, 132–33.
[900] Kamensky, "Female Speech and Other Demons," 29.
[901] Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, xx, 37, 11.
[902] Mary Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn: Rebels and Priestesses* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1995), 108.
[903] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 7.
[904] Grey, *Apocalyptic Witchcraft*, 100.
[905] "Yoko Ono. Half-A-Room. 1967," *MoMA*, https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/15/381#:~:text=Yoko%20Ono%3A%20One%20Woman%20Show%3A%201960%E2%80%931971&text=Yoko%20Ono%3A%20You%20see%20a,life%20of%20just%20being%20alone (accessed January 22, 2022).
[906] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 128.
[907] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 147.
[908] Despret, Inquires Raised by the Dead," 241. Referencing the work of Magali Molinié, *Soigner les morts pour guérir les vivants* (Paris: Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 2006).
[909] Despret, Inquires Raised by the Dead," all 242.
[910] Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (Duke University Press, 2016), 9.
[911] Taussig, "Viscerality, Faith, and Skepticism," 136.
[912] Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 130.
[913] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 299.
[914] See, for example, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Outer Worlds: The Persistance of Race in Movement 'Beyond the Human,'" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, nos. 2–3 (June 2015): 215–18.
[915] Denise Ferreira da Silva and Valentina Desideri, "Poethical Reading," *EHCHO*, n. d., https://ehcho.org/en/content/poethical-reading (accessed April 6, 2021).
[916] Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Before Man: Sylvia Wynter's Rewriting of the Modern Episteme," in Katherine McKittrick, ed., *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis* (Durham, CT: Duke University Press, 2015), 104.
[917] Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke university press), 2011.
[918] Maranda Elizabeth, "How Magic Helps Me Live With Pain And Trauma," *Medium*, April 19, 2016, https://medium.com/the-establishment/how-magic-helps-me-live-with-pain-and-trauma-bd56dcea5db5 (accessed January 26, 2022).
[919] Maranda Elizabeth, "How Magic Helps Me Live with Pain and Trauma," n. p.
[920] Alexander writes, "[t]here is a wide range of contexts that imbricate the Sacred with the political: the large-scale political movements that are based in liberation theology in Latin America; that phase of Indian anticolonial struggle inaugurated by Ghandi whose prayer life lay

at the root of mass politics; and the political party in Suriname that was formed by Renate Druiventak, introduced earlier, based on the prompting of Winti in her dreams." *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 323.
[921] Starhawk writes, "If there is to be renewal, it begins with us. We can touch — through these words, these pages. We can know the dark, and dream it into a new image." *Dreaming the Dark*, xvi.
[922] Notably, Increase Mathers, father of prominent witch hunter, Cotton Mathers, and the author of an early manuscript involving witchcraft called *Illustrious Providences* (1684), served as president of Harvard University from 1681–1701. Schiff notes that in the trial of accused witch Bridget Bishop, all known men who presided over her case were graduates of Harvard University. Ironically, the founders of Harvard also used what would nowadays be considered witchy techniques; as Schiff writes, "Harvard's 1683 commencement was postponed due to an eclipse." Schiff, *The Witches*, 71, 207, 101.
[923] Chiron Armand, "Post-Colonial Spiritwork, or Where No Being Has Gone Before," talk presented as part of The Witch Institute conference, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, held online, August 17, 2021, https://witchinstitute.com/events/talks/post-colonial-spiritwork (accessed January 24, 2022).
[924] Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 311.
[925] See Haraway, *Staying with the* Trouble, 2; see Introduction.
[926] Said, *Orientalism*, 7. Referencing *Denys Hay*, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968).
[927] Said, *Orientalism*, 6.
[928] See Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 105; Hutton, 232, 273; Gardner, "The Sabbat Rituals: November Eve," *The Gardnerian Book of Shadows*, 19. For the witch as "other," see Hamilton-Giles, *The Witching-Other*, 23 for example; Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, 11 for example.
[929] Roxburgh, "Through the Scrying Glass," 1040.
[930] Roxburgh, "Through the Scrying Glass," 1029.
[931] See, for example, Ursula in *The Little Mermaid*, directed by Ron Clements and John Musker (Walt Disney Pictures, 1989), adapted from Hans Christian Anderson's *Den lille havfrue* (1837), or Maleficent *in Sleeping Beauty*, directed by Clyde Geronimi et al. (Walt Disney Pictures, 1959), adapted from Charles Perrault's *La Belle au bois dormant* (1697).
[932] Stengers, "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," 186.
[933] Stengers, "Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices," 196.
[934] Law, *After Method*, 13.
[935] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 83–84; Kansa, *Wormwood Star*, 83–84.
[936] Raquel Romberg, "Sensing the Spirits: The Healing Dramas and Poetics of Brujeria Rituals," *Anthropologica* 54, no. 2 (2012): 211–212; Cross, *American Brujeria*, xix–xx; Beliso-De Jesús, *Electric Santería*, 82.
[937] Guiley, "Spare, Austin Osman (1888–1956)," *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 326–27.
[938] Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 313–18.
[939] See "Feri: American Traditional Witchcraft," http://www.feritradition.com (accessed April 4, 2021); Kelden, *The Crooked Path*, 23; T. Thorn Coyle, *Evolutionary* Witchcraft, 3; Alex Mar, *Witches of America* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2015), 56; T. Thorn Coyle, "God Herself: A Brief Meditation," *Feri: American Traditional Witchcraft*, http://www.feritrad.org/grimoire/deities/essay_god_herself.html (accessed April 4, 2021);

Beyoncé, "Don't Hurt Yourself," *Lemonade*, written by Beyoncé, Jack White, and Diana Gordon, produced by Beyoncé, Jack White, and Derek Dixie (Los Angeles: Parkwood Entertainment and Columbia Records, 2016).

[940] "Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, The," *encyclopedia.com*, https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/other-religious-beliefs-and-general-terms/miscellaneous-religion/hermetic-order-golden-dawn, accessed June 19, 2021; Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 75–77; Patti Wigington, "The Wiccan Degree System," *Learn Religions*, August 21, 2019, https://www.learnreligions.com/the-degree-system-2562830, accessed June 19, 2021.

[941] Garvey F. Lundy, "Hoodoo," in *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, eds. Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 316–17.

Hurston, "Hoodoo in America," 22.

[942] BioDun J. Ogundayo, "Ifa," in eds. Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama, *Encyclopedia of African Religion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications, 2009), 329–33.

[943] White, *The Eloquent Blood*, 87–88, 43; Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 222.

[944] Bill Rodgers, "The Radical Faerie Movement: A Queer Spirit Pathway," *Social Alternatives* 14, no. 4 (October 1995): 34, 35; Baume, "Radical Faeries Have Been Pushing Queer Boundaries for More Than 40 Years," n. p.

[945] Jody Logan and Patti Martin for the Reclaiming Collective, "Reclaiming: History, Structure, and the Future," *Reclaiming*, n. d., https://reclaimingcollective.wordpress.com/reclaiming-history-structure-and-the-future (accessed July 9, 2022).

[946] George Brandon, "Santería," in *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, 589–93. 316–17.

[947] Romberg, *Witchcraft and Welfare*, 57–58, 61, 59, 58; J. Gordon Melton, "Spiritualism," *Britannica.com*, n. d., https://www.britannica.com/topic/spiritualism-religion (accessed August 9, 2021).

[948] Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989), xv–xvi.

[949] Owen, *The Darkened Room*, xvi.

[950] Clifton, "Witches Still Fly," 228; Feraro, "Playing the Pipes of PAN," 56 fn. 2; Schulke, *Veneficium*, 19, 23.

[951] White and Feraro, "Twenty Years On: An Introduction," 3, 7; see Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 247. For more on Gerald Gardner, see Introduction.

[952] Karen McCarthy Brown, "Vodou," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsey Jones, 2nd edition (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 9634–39; Karen McCarthy Brown, "Voodoo," in *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, 5th edition (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 2001), 324–29.

[953] John Pemberton III, "Yoruba Religion," in *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, 9909–12.

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IMAGE CREDITS

Figure 1: Jesse Jones, installation shot from *Tremble Tremble*, Irish Pavilion, Venice Biennale, 2017. Photo by Anne Murray.

Figure 2: Gerald Gardner at his cottage and original Museum of Witchcraft and Magic, Isle of Man, UK, circa 1950s. From Gerald Brosseau Gardner, *The Story of the Famous Witches Mill at Castletown, Isle of Man*, guidebook, 12 cm, 20 pages (Tunbridge Wells, 1957).

Figure 3: Haydée, *Bruja de Villas de Loíza* (the witch of Villas de Loíza), 1996. From Raquel Romberg, "A Halloween Bruja: On the Magical Efficacy of Stereotypical Iconic Witches," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 11, no. 2 (Winter 2016), 211. Courtesy Raquel Romberg.

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Figure 5: Starhawk, making a speech on behalf of the Gualala River, California, 2013. Courtesy of Friends of Gualala River.

Figure 6: Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, posted by The Wiccan Brigade, Facebook June 29, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=419584206848016&set=pb.100063893192968.-2207520000..&type=3.

Figure 7: Photo of Charme et Sortilège, Montreal, Quebec. Taken by Yellow Pages user, at yp.ca, https://www.yellowpages.ca/bus/Quebec/Montreal/Charme-Et-Sortilege/2175632.html?redirect=autocomplete.

Figure 8: The Magic Mirror of Floren (or Floron), 16th century, iron, 18.5 x 10.7 cm. Mathematisch-Physikalischer Salon, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

Figure 9: Doreen Valiente, circa 1960s. The Doreen Valiente Foundation.

Figure 10: Cecil Williamson's Dark Mirror, 600 x 450 x 70 mm. From Simon Costin and Sara Hannant, *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* (London: Strange Attractor Press, 2016), object 69.

Figure 11: John Dee's crystal, used for clairvoyance and for curing disease. Front three quarter view. Blue background. Science Museum, London, 16th century. Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

Figure 12: Suzann Gage, illustration of DIY speculum insertion. From Authors Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers, *A New View of a Woman's body: A Fully Illustrated Guide* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981).

Figure 13: Selling the Wind, 360 x 15 x 5 mm. From Simon Costin and Sara Hannant, *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* (London: Strange Attractor Press, 2016), object 73.

Figure 14: A Witches' Ladder, illustration in Abraham Colles, "A Witches' Ladder," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 5, no 1 (1887): 1.

Figure 15: Klein bottle, Israel Medina 3D Modeller, 2018. Courtesy of Israel Medina.

Figure 16: Spirit House, 300 x 120 x 120 mm. Donated by Levanah Morgan. Photo by Sara Hannant. From Simon Costin and Sara Hannant, *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic* (London: Strange Attractor Press, 2016), object 72.

Figure 17: Glass flask reputed to contain a witch, 110 mm, East Sussex, England. Collected in 1915 by Margaret Alice Murray. Item 1926.6.1. Date unlisted. Pitt Rivers Museum, http://objects.prm.ox.ac.uk/pages/PRMUID25731.html. Courtesy of Copyright Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

Figure 18: James, Bridle, *Autonomous Trap 001*, performance of a salt circle trap, Mount Parnassus, March 14, 2017. Courtesy James Bridle.

Figure 19: Protestors dressed as witches protest white supremacy in Boston, MA, 2017. Getty Images.

Figure 20: Maxfield Parrish, *Circe's Palace*, 28 x 22 cm, 1908. Heritage Auctions, HA.com.

Figure 21: The deposition of Tituba, from Arthur Miller's 1953 play, *The Crucible*, with Lilian Oben in the role of Tituba, Olney Theatre Center, Maryland, 2018. Photo from *The Washington Post*, April 23, 2018.

Figure 22: Film still of cyborg Maria's wink (Brigitte Helm), Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1927. Metropolis, directed by Fritz Lang, written by Thea von Harbou (1927; Berlin, Germany: Parufamet; restoration, 2010), 149 minutes, 1:28:36–43.

Figure 23: Ana Mendieta, *Blood and Feathers (2)*, 1974, color photograph. © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SOCAN. Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

Figure 24: Ana Mendieta, untitled, from the *Silueta* Series, Iowa, colour photograph, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, 1976–78, 1991. © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SOCAN. Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

Figure 25: Jenny Holzer, *Lustmord*, on the cover of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, no. 46, November 19, 1993.

Figure 26: MSCHF and Lil Nas X, Satan Shoes, 2021. MSCHF

Figure 27: Jack Parsons and Marjorie Cameron, California, CA, circa mid 1940s. Cameron-Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica.

Figure 28: Marjorie Cameron, untitled (peyote vision), ink, paint on paper, 44. 5 x 58 cm, 1955. Cameron-Parsons Foundation, Santa Monica.

Figure 29: Queen of the Night, Burney Relief, fired clay, 49.5 x 4.8 x 37 cm, Old Babylonian (Southern Iraq), British Museum, London, UK, 19th-century BCE – 18th-century BCE.

Figure 30: Marjorie Cameron and Jack Parsons, *Songs for the Witch Woman*, ink on paper 25.5 × 20 cm, 1951–55. Layout from Yael Lipschutz, ed., *Cameron: Songs for the Witch Woman*, exh. cat., The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (Santa Monica, CA: Cameron Parsons Foundation, 2015), 23. Collection of Ordo Templi Orientis, New York.

Figure 31: Film still of Marjorie Cameron in *The Wormwood Star*, directed by Curtis Harrington, 1956.

Figure 32: Mary M. with ectoplasm / teleplasm, March 6, 1942. Photo by Thomas Glendenning Hamilton. "PLATE XXIV Mass of March 6, 1942," in "Chapter VII: The Doyle Face Miniature," in T. Glen Hamilton, *Intention and Survival: Psychical Research Studies and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Problem of Human Survival*, ed. J. D. Hamilton (Toronto: MacMillan, 1942), 139.

Figure 33: Shannon Taggart, *Gretchen Clark Laughs as Her Deceased Brother Chapman Interrupts a Reading to Tell Her a Joke*, Lily Dale, NY, 2001; *Swan on Lake Cassadaga*, Lily Dale, NY, 2010. Courtesy Shannon Taggart.

Figure 34: Installation view, *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future*, Guggenheim, New York, October 12, 2018 – April 25, 2019. Guggenheim Museum.

Figure 35: Yoko Ono, *Half-A-Room*, 1967, various objects cut in half, most painted white, dimensions vary. Installation view, *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, 1960–1971*, MoMA, New York. Yoko, May 17 – September 7, 2015. Yoko Ono 2015.