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Statement: In this thesis, I used ChatGPT 4 on multiple occasions to enhance readability and academic style of the text. Additionally, I used Scispace to support my literature research. I take full responsibility for the content of this thesis.

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ANNOTATION

The thesis focuses on the cultural environment of 17th century Scotland, specifically the phenomenon of witch-hunts. The aim of the work is to examine how the historical and cultural circumstances of the period influenced the emergence and course of witch trials and how individual identities were exploited to reinforce power structures and marginalize certain members of society. Additionally, the thesis analyses Douglas Watt's historical novel *Testament of a Witch*, striving to identify the ways in which the author portrays and critically evaluates the historical and social mechanisms associated with this phenomenon.

KEYWORDS: Scottish literature, witchcraft, gender, identity, Scotland

ANOTACE

Diplomová práce se zaměřuje na kulturní prostředí Skotska v 17. století, konkrétně na fenomén honů na čarodějnice. Cílem práce je prozkoumat, jak historické a kulturní okolnosti této doby ovlivnily vznik a průběh čarodějnických procesů a jak byly identity jednotlivců využívány k upevnění mocenských struktur a vyloučení některých členů společnosti. Současně se práce věnuje analýze historického románu *Testament of a Witch* od autora Douglase Watta, přičemž usiluje o identifikaci způsobů, jakými autor ztvárňuje a kriticky hodnotí historické a společenské mechanismy spojené s tímto fenoménem.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA: skotská literatura, čarodějnictví, pohlaví, identita, Skotsko

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INTRODUCTION

In the seventeenth century, Scotland underwent tremendous changes which shaped the nation's identity and culture. During this era, the kingdom had to face significant challenges which was a result of major political, religious and social conflicts. The nation was dealing with the consequences of the Reformation, changes in royal authorities, and the continuous conflict between traditional beliefs and religious reformations, as they evolved with each new monarch. These events created a sense of uncertainty and anxiety, which fuelled widespread distrust within communities and resulted in one of the most intense series of witchcraft persecutions in Scottish history. The seventeenth century was marked by a rising interest in witch-hunting, fuelled by widespread charges of sorcery, which often appeared as motifs for collective fear.

The Scottish witch-hunts were a horrifying chapter in Scottish history. Its beginning is dated in the late 1500s, under the reign of King James VI, who later became James I of England. This period was characterised by widespread fear, fuelled by the king's personal interest in witches, demonology, and the mysterious. King James VI was determined to persuade the sceptical public that supernatural powers, such as witchcraft, were widespread in society. To prove this claim, he wrote and published the book *Daemonologie*. This work not only expressed his personal experience with the supernatural, but it also served as a tool for educating others about the dangers posed by witches. Over time, the witch-hunts became more vicious. By the end of the seventeenth century, during the reign of James II, the hunting process reached its peak. This era experienced some of the most violent trials and executions which were often made with little or no physical evidence. This master thesis aims to explore the ways in which witchcraft is portrayed in Scottish historical novel, *Testament of a Witch*, with a particular emphasis on the relation between historical fact and its literary depiction.

The master thesis is divided into five chapters. Each chapter combines both theoretical and analytical components of the topic. The aim of the theoretical part is to provide background information and context, while the analytical part examines how the issue is depicted in historical novel *Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt. The first chapter deals with the genre of historical novel, particularly its definitions, forms, and origin. It investigates the historical accuracy and fictional creativity, which influences readers' perceptions of the past. The second chapter describes the social, political, and theological elements that influenced the seventeenth century in Scotland. It explores how these aspects shaped people's perceptions of witchcraft and fuelled the growing popularity of witch-hunts.

The following chapter examines the Scottish witch-hunts and their trials. It describes the process of accusations, interrogations, and prosecutions, demonstrating how society and the legal authorities reacted to this phenomenon. Moreover, to provide even more realistic side of the trials, this chapter offers true stories of the accused people. The fourth chapter aims to observe the role of identity within the prosecutions of witchcraft. It explores the relationship between individual and collective identities and in what way these aspects interacted and influenced one another. The thesis's last chapter examines the approaches in which the process of demonisation, and the concept of the Devil impacted the everyday life in Scotland. It also investigates how people's conceptions of the Devil were greatly shaped by their religious convictions, which led to the notion that the witches were in tight relationship with the Satan.

The analytic part of the thesis investigates how the novel *Testament of a Witch* depicts and interprets historical events and social fears of the time. It also delves into major aspects that were significantly influenced by this dark series of events, such as the role of identity, the process of demonisation, and the involvement of political and religious forces that supported the witch-hunting throughout Scotland. Through this analysis, the thesis aims to provide a more profound comprehension of how literature reflects and transforms the history and culture of one of the most significant periods of Scottish history. This approach offers fresh perspectives and emphasises the complex ways that narratives impact how the past is perceived by delving into issues like identity, power, and religious beliefs. This section of the thesis provides a link between historical events and fictional depiction, increasing reader's comprehension of history and literature.

This master thesis deals with issues that put this historical phenomenon onto a topic defining the entire century. The purpose of this thesis is to explore people in power controlled society's beliefs, and general anxieties of people in the seventeenth-century Scotland. By integrating these methodologies, the thesis aims to offer new insights on social and political aspects of the witch-hunts, as well as highlight the role of literature in revisiting historical events through different depiction. These aspects provide an intriguing setting for examining the subject of how witchcraft is depicted in modern literature, particularly in historical novel *Testament of a Witch*, written by Scottish author Douglas Watt.

The overall aim of this thesis is, thus, to explore the relationship between history and literature by examining how the seventeenth-century Scottish witch-hunts are depicted and interpreted in historical novel.

1. HISTORICAL NOVEL AND ITS LITERARY DEPICTION OF HISTORY

The novel, as one of the timeless literary genres, provides a broad platform for exploring and addressing the complexities of the lives of communities, transcending their social and cultural boundaries. This chapter deals with the historical novel and its exceptional capacity to illuminate human experiences within significant events in history. The historical novel provides a connection between times by fostering an understanding of the past and its impacts on the present. The aim of this chapter is to explore the ways in which historical novels combine facts and imagination and their role in interpreting the past. Additionally, this chapter examines the settings, development of the characters as well as the recurrent themes and concepts depicted in the *Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt.

This genre's wide framework provides an opportunity to explore a variety of challenging notions, which allow authors to take on challenging subjects and present them in intriguing narratives. Therefore, novels may be found in various genres, each offers a distinct perspective on human experiences. Each genre offers a unique narrative framework that emphasises various aspects of life, society, fiction, and romance. This enables writers to develop complex characters that keep readers engaged and captivated their attention. Moreover, it offers a profound insight into the characters' social background. By doing so, the readers are given a chance to compare the dynamics of human development between the past and the present.

To completely understand the timeline comparison, it is essential for this thesis to define the term 'novel' from two different standpoints: a novel from a contemporary point of view and a historical novel. When it comes to the modern novel, there are two common interpretations of this genre that shaped its elements, each offering distinct perspectives on its composition and intentions. According to one perspective, Marxism, a critical theory that developed in the early 20th century, it is believed to be a significant influence of the modern novel.¹ Not only did it address themes that had previously appeared in literature, but it also provided a new analytic framework that transformed how these issues were depicted within the narrative of modern approach. This aligns with the notion that modern novels often deal with issues like class conflicts and unequal treatment within society, which all mirror Marxist ideas. Arjun N. Khobragade supports this belief by stating that the Marxist approach is set and cannot be separated from subjectivity. He also claims that literary works, such as novels, are formed by

¹ John Marx, *Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

human experiences and what we perceive through them. Despite different worlds, cultures, or political beliefs, human nature shares one specific aspect, known as time.² In this way, literature represents both individuality and society as a whole and promotes features of Marxist literature. It demonstrates how the larger dynamics can easily influence individual narratives, creating a connection between the group and the individual.

To fully understand the development of a historical novel, it is essential to distinguish between the differences between a classic novel and a modern novel, as these classifications represent significant shifts in literary emphasis, and relevance to history itself. According to Anithalakshmi, classic novels stresses on realism, depicting modern society and daily life with accuracy. The characters and locations were relatable, reflecting societal conventions and ideals at the time. Authors frequently used moral themes in their works to teach readers about ethics and values.³ Classic novels reflect historical environment by investigating cultural norms and shifting beliefs. By doing so, they address significant intellectual and existential themes. They aim to challenge and modify how people and their culture perceive themselves and the world around them at the time. As literature evolved, modern novels began to challenge these traditional approaches by exploring subjects as identity and life's uncertainties. Ludwig Lewisohn states that modern novel aims to depict everything from the perspective of one main character, with a close focus on how they feel within. Other characters are relevant only because they influence the primary protagonist's development. After their function in the narrative is finished, they disappear. This focus serves in the modern novel's comprehensive investigation of the character's life.⁴ This approach makes it possible to go deeper into the complexities of the mind and personal identity. It allows writers to move from broad communal concerns to the complex depths of individual experience.

While some credit the popularity of novels to Marxist philosophy, others argue that current novels no longer serve the same functions as historical novels. It is due to their lack of explanation of life and characters that make this argument compelling. As Fagan states, novels used to explain the life and characteristics of people in detail. However, now they only serve as a sort of reflection of current events rather than to provide a solution.⁵ Modern novels focus more on presenting the visuality instead of making the reader think and try to understand how

² Arjun N. Khobragade, *Marxism and Its Impact on Literature*, 24.

³ K. H. Anithalakshmi, "The Evolution of the English Novel: From Classic to Contemporary," 44.

⁴ Ludwig Lewisohn, "The Modern Novel," *The Sewanee Review* 17, no. 4 (1909): 471.

⁵ Edward R. Fagan, "Disjointed Time and the Contemporary Novel," *Journal of General Education* 23, no. 3 (July 1971): 151.

historical events shaped our world. On the other hand, historical novels provide a deep understanding of the struggles that the people had to endure. By doing so, they serve as a reminding tool for learning from past actions and prevent them from happening again.⁶ As a result, contemporary society can return to these writings for motivation and direction when dealing with today's issues. This demonstrates how literature shapes and influences today's world.

The genre of historical novel is always expanding its context due to the readers' shifting interests and authors' evolving writing approaches. Many different viewpoints have led to a variety of interpretations of what makes a historical novel. Author Jill Paton Walsh believes that regardless of the time that is portrayed in the storyline, a novel is considered historical if it fully or partially focuses on the social conditions and public events that form history.⁷ Not only does this approach support the development of readers' knowledge of the particular historical event, but it also provides a viewpoint into the past struggles of a certain social group.

On the other hand, some academics believe that the depictions of the past in historical writings serve as a tool for today's society to learn from their mistakes and, therefore, prevent them from happening today. Rodwell quotes Kantor who mentions that having the ability to look back and attempt to understand the reasoning of the past may help readers to confront themselves with the uncertainties and worries of the present and near future. Through its hardships, triumphs, hopes, and even disappointments, the historical novel allows readers to draw a perspective and gain valuable knowledge from history.⁸ By reflecting on these aspects, readers can compare past events with current ones and gain their own personal view on this significant moment in history. Furthermore, by encouraging readers to consider the moral aspects of history, it fosters a more purposeful and deep approach to education.

The historical novel is a genre which takes place in the past, where the characters are often historical figures, as well as the setting and story revolve around a significant historical event. As this chapter deals with various interpretations of historical novel, it is important to delve deeper into a phenomenon that remains quite unclear. This phenomenon emerged over time through the evolution of literature: historical fiction.

⁶ Kate Mitchell, "Australia's 'Other' History Wars: Trauma and the Work of Cultural Memory in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*," in *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth Century Suffering*, ed. Marie-Louise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi Press, 2010), 271.

⁷ Jill Paton Walsh, *History is Fiction*, 221.

⁸ Rodwell, Grant, *Defining the Historical Novel*, 48-49.

According to Dalton and Rodwell, historical fiction is a work of fiction where historical figures, events, or locals are major elements of the plot.⁹ This approach gives writers the freedom to invent even more intriguing stories.

Over time, the historical novel evolved as it began to incorporate fictional elements, resulting in the production of new and untold narratives. By blending fictional elements into the historical settings, it allows readers to experience and understand history from a different perspective. However, there is a rising question regarding how significantly the inclusion of such elements can change the interpretation of history. Dalton provides a compelling argument suggests that all historical events inherently contain elements of fiction, as the available sources are not always fully reliable. Nevertheless, she agrees that the potential misunderstanding of historical events in such novel might be considerable, and it's the author's responsibility to take on this issue. Dalton states that finding the truth through the haze of perception is a challenge shared by historians and authors of historical fiction. The main difference between the two, is in the scope and depth of their attempt to tell the truth, not the audience they try to reach. This is the main difference between the two parties, writers are more interested in the people – their characters, while historians whose concentrations are mainly on the history and events themselves.¹⁰ As this is a strong opinion, it is still appropriate to take into consideration. The inclusion of fiction in historical novels makes the narrative more compelling and accessible, helping readers to become more engaged with the past in a deeper sense.

There is another author who supports the perspective that by bringing fiction into historical events, it allows readers a better understanding of the feelings and experiences of those who lived them. However, it should follow a proper control over creative freedom to maintain a balance between accuracy and fiction. Clive King states that the writing method must be controlled to prevent it from becoming purely imaginative.¹¹ Historical fiction is both difficult and distinctive for the authors, as it requires maintaining balance between creativity and reality. The role of a novelist is quite challenging; being able to keep the story intriguing and engaging while staying true to the core of the historical facts is not an easy task for any writer. Historical fiction can respect the accuracy of historical events while still providing readers with a profound connection to past events by preserving this healthy harmony.

⁹ Dalton and Grant Rodwell, *Defining the Historical Novel*, 50.

¹⁰ H. Scott Dalton, *What is Historical Fiction? Vision: A Resource for Writers*, 50.

¹¹ Clive King, *The Historical Novel: An Under-Used Resource*, 24.

Two fundamental components must be considered as we examine the elements that make up historical novels in more detail: the setting and the characters. These elements are essential in forming the story and its historical occurrences.

As in any fiction, setting the scene in a historical novel is extremely crucial for capturing the reader's attention and enabling him to fully dive into a different time. The use of vivid descriptions of the environment, where the author even describes the smallest aspects, enables readers to fully shape a sense of immersion. Authors Martin and Brook state that the language in which the novelists decide to describe the setting sets the entire story.¹² The authors' ability to describe the scenes in detail, drawing attention to the aspects such as employing sensory impressions, enhances the world of the story and manages to develop imaginations of readers.

What should be stressed is that novelists should educate themselves on the historical background of the era they are recreating to ensure it feels authentic to its time. The author should be familiar with the era in a great detail in order to achieve an accurate portrayal. According to the Guthrie, the author needs to understand not just the general issues, social tension, political tensions, and economic issues, they also need to educate themselves on how the general public was clothing and how people spoke.¹³ Without this research, the setting may lack of level of authenticity and can result in an inaccurate representation of the past. Moreover, while doing their research, the authors often encounter situations where history has several interpretations. This requires not only the understanding of what truly happened but also why it happened and what were the living conditions of that era.

As for analytic part, this part of the chapter aims to provide a detailed analysis of the literary depiction of the historical setting in the historical novel *Testament of a Witch*, written by Douglas Watt. Watt's ability to create vivid and detailed scenes truly enhances the authenticity of the story. His prose is filled with a Scottish dialect and historical preciseness as he is taking the reader into time of a great unease and struggles: the 17th century Scotland. With major political, social and religious shifts, the 17th century is considered to be a turbulent time for Scotland. This period has had a significant impact on the country's history and the present. Moreover, it also reflects its cultural identity, which underwent several challenges. As a Scot, it is only logical that Douglas Watt attempts to promote the Scottish identity through his descriptive writing style.

¹² Dave Martin and Beth Brooke, "Getting Personal: Making Effective Use of Historical Fiction in the History Classroom," *Teaching History*, August 30, 2002, 31.

¹³ A.B. Guthrie Jr., "The Historical Novel," in *Essays on American Literature*, ed. Jane Smith (New York: University Press, 1970), 4.

One of the main issues discussed in *The Testament of a Witch* is the strong influence of religion on society. Watt highlights this issue by pointing out the fear and the power that took over the era: “A coven of witches! I hear they rut with the Devil! ...another shouted”¹⁴ The chaos and the accusations were part of the lives of many who did not fit into the society. To make the scenes even more interesting, Watt uses the Scottish weather to set the atmosphere and mirror the currents of the story:

The day was fine, the day possessing the freshness of Autumn,
the sky a glorious blue, the grass of Leith Links a lush green.¹⁵

In this description, Watt promotes the essence of Scotland’s nature. The phrase ‘freshness of Autumn’ may connote to the meaning of ‘fresh change’ or ‘new transformation,’ as the leaves change colour and the weather shifts during this season. By incorporating it into the text, the author may have wanted to pinpoint the changes in Scottish history. As already mentioned, the country underwent numerous transitions. Moreover, this may also lead to a different interpretation. The rainy and grey weather of autumn follows the summer season, which is associated with the sunny and warm climate. Author may have described it as a metaphor to highlight the dark times that Scotland endured.

She is in the woods in the bright light of summer, standing outside Janet’s cottage. The garden is alive with insects, bees buzzing from flower to flower. The butterflies are huge, the largest she has ever seen, their colours vibrant. Janet’s dog is lying in the sun by the door.¹⁶

Through this vivid description, Watt attempts to highlight the beauty of Scottish landscape that shapes the character of its people. The setting evokes a peaceful, almost as ideal place to relax. Through his writing style, he provides a great description of freedom and richness of Scotland’s land. By doing so, he endures the Scottish identity, which thrived for the independence from England for years.

When it comes to the characters in the novel, they often have a protagonist. This hero is often presented as an ordinary person caught in unusual events capturing the complexities of the time period. The battles of the hero’s timeline also influence them as they struggle with moral and social norms throughout the story. The protagonist plays a vivid role in presenting ways in which history and personal life are interlinked.

¹⁴ Douglas Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 128.

¹⁵ Douglas Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 20.

¹⁶ Douglas Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 166.

According to Foley, the typical hero in a historical novel plays a significant role in providing a space where opposing social forces can interact. Moreover, the author's perspective on how history develops is often reflected in the plot's conflicts and then resolutions.¹⁷ By making the past more relevant and personal, the authors draw throughout their work an emphasis on the link between personal issues and greater social shifts in the history.

While historical novels often follow the traditional pattern of a royal or upper-class protagonist, it is not always the case. Clive King mentions that even though the royalty and nobles are frequently portrayed in the novels, the variety is far wider. As an example of such range, she mentions Welsh novelist, Alexander Cordell, whose work predominantly focused on portraying working class life in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ As an example of his work, in historical novel, *Rape of the Fair Country*, Cordell shed lights on the struggles of working class in the 19th century society that is attempting to find resilience within the struggles of industrial revolution. His method challenges what is generally accepted and rejects the idea that history is shaped solely by the wealthy and powerful.

Another approach to portraying characters was emphasized by Sir Walter Scott. Hungarian Marxist literary critic, Gyorgy Lukács, provides a literary insight into one of the Walter Scott's novels, who is considered to be the founder of the historical novel genre. Lukács states that in Scott's work, the hero represents the atmosphere of the time rather than acting as a significant historical figure. The main character of the story reflects a historical movement, but in a more subtle way. In order to achieve this, Walter Scott depicts the complex and diverse aspects of daily life, from which the hero is revealed as a person who, by their deeds, captures and conveys historical significance.¹⁹ By bringing history to life via his characters, Scott connects their daily experiences with readers' lives, allowing them to relate to or see themselves in these individuals as a source of inspiration for personal improvement. As Foley also believes, the characters in historical novel, assert their validity through their role as representative types rather than by denying their own truthfulness.²⁰ By doing so, they enhance the story with relevance and humanity.

¹⁷ Barbara Foley, "The Historical Novel," in *Telling the Truth: The Theory and Practice of Documentary Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 144.

¹⁸ Clive King, "The Historical Novel: An Under-used Resource," *Teaching History*, no. 51 (April 1, 1988): 24.

¹⁹ Barbara Foley, "The Historical Novel," in *Telling the Truth: The Theory and Practice of Documentary Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 148.

²⁰ Barbara Foley, "The Historical Novel," in *Telling the Truth: The Theory and Practice of Documentary Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 144.

In the historical novel, *Testament of the Witch*, the characters are portrayed with complexity. Through his characters, the author places them into unpleasant situations, such as legal and religious prejudices. By going through these challenges, characters undergo a significant development throughout the story. As in every prose, each character symbolises visible qualities. For instance, the main character, John MacKenzie, an advocate based in Edinburgh, embodies the typical traits of an investigator. He is a moral person who is willing to do anything to uncover the truth during the witch trials. He gives the story a feeling of fairness and trust:

“I know my dear husband held you in the highest regard, as do I. I have no one else to turn to. I beg you to protect my children. Only a man of experience and wisdom can unpick the tangled threads which have led to this calamity.”²¹

As it is evident from the text, the character, Lady Lammersheugh, acknowledges her admiration for the advocate and puts her complete trust in him. In this letter, she pleads the advocate to take care of her children, as she has already passed away by the time he receives the letter. This shows that the character of John MacKenzie is a trusted person in the community.

To conclude this chapter, it is essential to emphasize that historical novels play a significant role in portraying the past of communities from various places and eras. They serve as a powerful tool, enabling readers to immerse into the world that seem impossible to experience in their time. Through complex themes, they provide a great insight into the challenges of the past while demonstrating their characters' growth. Moreover, by allowing readers to see the world through the perspectives of people who lived in various eras, this depiction promotes awareness and knowledge. It also preserves stories, from not being forgotten over time.

²¹ Douglas Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 30.

2. CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The seventeenth century was a period in Scotland that was characterised by significant historical upheaval. During this time, the land underwent various events that shifted the future of the kingdom to different directions. It was not an easy time for the Scottish kingdom as it was marked by political distrust, social tensions, and religious reformation. The combination of these issues resulted in social turmoil which needed a manageable source to give the impression of being in control. As a result, the groundwork for the national widespread of witch-hunting was laid. The aim of this chapter is to examine the cultural and historical background of the seventeenth century which shaped the process of witch-hunting in Scotland. This chapter also aims to provide a literary analysis of these factors and their depiction in *Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt.

To understand the roots and motifs of accusations of witchcraft, it is essential to understand the specific events and social dynamics that shaped the seventeenth century Scotland. Its beginning roots in the late 16th and early 17th century, when Scotland was ruled by James I and VI of Scotland. According to Yeoman, James VI's personal experiences and ideas significantly influenced whether witch-hunts continued or were ended.²² His obsession with witchcraft led to a series of witch-hunting and the creation of political policies.

The King believed that the presence of witches was vital on Scottish land and his determination to prove it allowed him a vivid role in the process of witch-hunting. His strong beliefs started during the time he was actively involved in the North Berwick Witch Trials. As Bercovice states, these witches were accused of conjuring storms to kill James VI and his wife as they were returned to Scotland from Denmark.²³ The outcome of the trials did not go as he planned. During the trial, alleged witches claimed that the Earl of Bothwell, a nobleman, wanted the King and his wife dead. Despite Bothwell managing to collect enough evidence of his innocence, the king was not satisfied with the results. He strongly believed that the witches were right and that they all collaborated with the Earl to plot his murder. According to Larner, James's rage at the witches attempting to kill him is why he introduced the concept of making a pact with the Devil to the public.²⁴ During his reign, there were significant witch-hunts, which

²² Louise Yeoman. "The Great Tranent Witch-Hunt: Manufacturing Imaginary Enemies of the Scottish State," in *The Scottish State and the Experience of Government, c. 1560-1707: Essays in Honour of Julian Goodare*, edited by Martha McGill and Alasdair Raffe, 223.

²³ Kimberly Bercovice, "Reginald Scot and King James VI: The Influence of Scepticism," in *Mount Royal Undergraduate Humanities Review*, ed. Erika Potter (2015), 133.

²⁴ Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, ed. Alan Macfarlane, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 10.

resulted in the torture and execution of many accused individuals, especially women.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the people's beliefs and morals were highly affected by their religion. As the nation was recovering from religious reformation, it created a wide space for witchcraft to be a highly discussed subject to debate. From a Protestant view, witchcraft shared one thing in common with Catholicism. They believed that they both were built on false beliefs. Protestants did not believe in transubstantiation; therefore, they accused Catholics of worshipping something that was not truly God. Knox claimed: "They servit thois whom thay judgeit to be Godis. Being sa taught and instructit from their antecessou."²⁵ This statement suggests that the Catholics were not worshipping the Devil; nevertheless, their religious techniques were unacceptable. Therefore, their religious practice was considered to be as unethical as witchcraft. With King James I's rising interest in witchcraft, and the support from Protestant Parliament, the legislative landscape of Scotland was marked with a new law.

The Witchcraft Act 1563 was already hunting witches under James's mother's reign, Mary Queen of Scots. However, once James became king of Scotland and gained full power over his nation, his obsession allowed the act to be intensified. The passing act was not detailed and even the term 'witch' was not specified. According to Goodare, the act highlighted that the courts should punish witches and sentencing them to the death penalty. However, there is no formal definition of witchcraft or witches in the act. In a life-or-death situation, one would expect a legislative statement to include such classification. The author points out that with a careful reading, the act reveals only an indirect and allusive definition.²⁶ There are other authors who criticize the less detailed description of what witchcraft is. Christina Lerner states that the act's phrasing was sceptical, like the repealed Witchcraft Act of 1735.²⁷ The lack of information on what should be imagined under such terms, might have been a reasonable decision during that time. It is also important to highlight the fact that the most cases of witchcraft accusations were raised towards people who might cure some illnesses with their practices. The main focus was the source of supernatural practices rather than discrediting their effectiveness. Therefore, it is not a place to put such name on the impractical records.

²⁵ Knox, Works, 4:231, citing 1 Corinthians 10:20-21.

²⁶ Julian Goodare, "The Scottish Witchcraft Act." *Church History* 74, no. 1 (2005): 51.

²⁷ Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 66-67, cf. 177, 188.

Protestant reformers placed a strong emphasis on moral discipline and the abolition of actions deemed sinful or even detrimental to the community's well-being. As the nation was undergoing a significant reformation, shifting from Catholicism to Protestantism, there were tight rules when attending mass. As Todd mentions, all community members were required to attend church, although this did not necessarily result in the development of the desired traits of self-control and focus. A few attendees even interrupted services by falling asleep or acting inappropriately.²⁸ These Kirk sessions were an ideal place for monitoring Scots and their behaviour; by doing so, the church and the government enforced social discipline. Although abolishing Catholicism and attending mandatory Protestant church services were the most common changes that the communities had to get used to, there were other things that the Scottish people had to undergo during the religious reformation. The nation had to deal with new aspects of their daily routines, which significantly impacted their personal lives.

During Reformation, the Kirk played an important role in a family life. The Church's belief was that families were the foundation of society and the Church. The Kirk was as involved as possible in ensuring that the people were living according to the Protestant's rules. He intervened to ensure that people adhered to rigid moral standards, especially sexual behaviour and marital issues. Moreover, the church was also punishing inappropriate behaviour, such as adultery. Additionally, the Protestant church also offered a helping hand to those who were affected by domestic violence, abandonment by family members and providing child support. At that time, these services were rather progressive, and people appreciated them as it led to abolishing immoral behaviour. Todd mentions, the percentage of single-parent households, which is associated with poverty and reliance on the parish, was decreased by the anti-fornication program. Additionally, it was meant to set up fidelity patterns that would sustain the marriage and serve as models of moral behaviour for the community at large.²⁹ All these actions served as a form of social control to maintain a community order and contribute to the spread of Protestant values throughout Scotland by emphasising both morals and public service.

Scottish aristocrats were given more authority by the Reformation, and they strengthened their position by using Protestantism as an ideological tool. Nobles frequently took on more authority over kirk sessions and other aspects of local government.

²⁸ Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 39–40.

²⁹ Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 39–40.

According to Maurice Lee Jr., the leadership of the aristocracy, which arose to prominence during this period, was crucial to the Scottish Reformation. The nobility gained more power as the Reformation eliminated the clergy's rivalry for royal support and political posts. Since Scotland did not have a Protestant king for 25 years after the Reformation's success, it fell to the aristocrats to promote religious reforms as leaders of faith. This provided them with a new justification for their power within the state. They were also permitted to take over the church property during the Reformation.³⁰ This was not always a pleasant view for Knox, who was a leading figure of religious restoration. Knox was critical of the aristocracy despite their partnership, frequently accusing them of selfishness and moral flaws. He thought they were more focused on gaining political power and material fortune than they were on enacting genuine Christian reform. According to Ryrie, in his works, Knox stressed that the clergy should not only teach but also live out the Reformed faith's tenets. He implied that he anticipated greater leadership and moral integrity from the clergy and criticised those who did not strongly oppose the old Church and its practices.³¹ John Knox's strong Protestant convictions contributed to Scotland's dread of witchcraft, which grew even greater under King James I, who personally believed in witches and exploited witch-hunts to boost his religious and political dominance.

King James I of England was a powerful ruler whose reign was defined by political unrest and religious uncertainty. King James I held a strong conviction that, as a Monarch, his entitlement to the throne was God's will. He recorded these strong beliefs and notions in his book "*The True Law of Free Monarchies*." This document is a collection of his views on the divine rights of monarchy. The book provides an insight into King James's mind and voices his theories on what is a true Monarch. There are several aspects that the document is concerned with, first is James's strong principle that the kings were chosen by God; "Kings are called Gods by the prophetic King David, because they sit upon God his throne in the earth, and have the count of their administration to give unto Him."³² In this statement, king James I draws a parallel between earthy kings and godly kings by mentioning King David. As he viewed his position to be divine, he presented himself as someone with both an aristocratic and a spiritual role. Therefore, any potential danger to the king was interpreted as a threat to the divine order.

³⁰ Maurice Lee, "Scotland and the 'General Crisis' of the Seventeenth Century," *The Scottish Historical Review* 63, no. 176 (1984): 140.

³¹ Alec Ryrie, "Congregations, Conventicles and the Nature of Early Scottish Protestantism," *Past & Present*, no. 191 (2006): 58.

³² James I, King, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1598), 10.

In his book, James VI mentions that any rebellion against a king is a sin against God. He states that: “He that will consider the order that God hath established in the world, and the ground whereupon both Monarchy and Kingdoms are founded, shall find, that no lawful actions can arise from unlawful grounds.”³³ In this context, witchcraft, which is frequently considered a sin, became a spiritual and political crime.

During James I reign, people were encouraged to be modest and to reject any actions or beliefs related to the supernatural that did not align with church teachings. This approach led to the increase of church masses and community control. During these times, the suspicions of witchcraft arose and made the king uneasy. He was sure of the presence of this demonic behaviour within Scottish people; however, he found it difficult to prove. As mentioned, the king’s approach was to believe in God’s justice to judge the guilty and protect the innocent. He advocated for pricking witches to detect the devil’s mark. Moreover, he strongly believed that the devil could not take on the form of an innocent human, since God would not allow such a terrible defection to harm innocent people.³⁴ By doing so, James I claimed that because God actively guaranteed the authenticity of the evidence, it could be trusted in witchcraft cases even though it was generally seen as unreliable.

Although the grounding foundation for series of witch-hunts in Scotland was set by James I, it did not reach its peak until early modern Scotland due to the socio-political changes made by the King James II. During the seventeenth century, Scotland underwent a major religious reformation, where Catholicism and Protestantism were a complex reason for creating tensions of power and identity. These religious changes strongly impacted the social framework of that time. It changed how people perceived and condemned themselves and others.

As a result of this shift, at the end of the seventeenth century, there was a greater emphasis on eliminating everything that was thought to be against religious teachings, such as witchcraft, which was considered a sign of heresy and devotion to the Devil. According to Hughes, during the early modern Scotland, the church became more concerned about sinful behaviour. The matter was frequently discussed by the church’s central organisations, as well as local kirk sessions and Presbyterians.³⁵ Witchcraft was considered a serious subject that sparked great concern. It portrayed a serious challenge not just for religious and moral order,

³³ James I, King, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1598), 10.

³⁴ Michael Wasser, “The Privy Council and the Witches: The Curtailment of Witchcraft Prosecutions in Scotland, 1597–1628,” *The Scottish Historical Review* 82, no. 213 (2003): 25.

³⁵ P. Hughes, “Witch-Hunting in Scotland, 1649–1650,” in *Scottish Witches and Witch-Hunters*, ed. Julian Goodare, Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 85.

but it also created hardships to maintain stability within the nation.

During the reign of James II, the Anglican Church dominated England, while other Protestant religions, including the Presbyterians, were subject to severe laws and social rejection. While Presbyterianism had flourished in Scotland, the monarchy also attempted to impose the Anglican Church at times, which led to harsh oppression of parties such as the Covenanters. According to Barnes, Presbyterians established unauthorised but very successful synods, and general assemblies as they started to firmly organise their church. Their influence grew as they continued crucial tasks like helping the underprivileged and promoting education.³⁶ The Presbyterian Church's strong moral convictions and emphasis on eliminating everything it deemed wicked became ingrained in everyday life. With rising influence of their church, the environment became ideal for witch-hunting as its purpose was to get rid of the society of evil and ensure that everyone complied with their religious laws that promoted biblical teachings and collective responsibility. Their reforms and laws had a strong impact on the religious and cultural environment in the communities and the government. Moreover, the implemented policies laid an effective groundwork for the widespread witch-hunts. The country was caught between tension and transformation.

Douglas Watt's historical novel, *The Testament of a Witch*, provides an impactful insight into the 17th century Scotland. The book highlights the importance of the setting and considers it as a shaping factor of the story. The novel examines the complex ways in which the environment and the historical background impact the character's development. The story is set in the 1600s, which were tremendous times for Scotland as the society was adapting to the previously mentioned religious transformation which was followed by political and social upheaval.

Watt's literary depiction of the Scottish kingdom is less detailed and disintegrating. Scotland appears as a country fuelled by paranoia supported by the government and church officials. The streets of Edinburgh, through the accused witches are being moved to the final court to find out what is going to be their prosecution, are described as a dark place which evokes feelings of fear and potential danger. The city becomes a character itself, with its gloomy alleys whose ends cannot be reached, are serving as metaphors for the characters' dark and hidden secrets which unfold within the story.

³⁶ Robert Paul Barnes, "Scotland and the Glorious Revolution of 1688," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 3, no. 3 (1971): 119.

In this novel, the city of Edinburgh does not only serve as a place where the main character, lawyer and aspiring detective MacKenzie, resigns. It also offers a place for justice since those accused of practicing witchcraft are moved to the highest court, where their destiny is to be decided on. Despite Edinburgh being described as the city of judicial process entangled with political corruption, the small village is isolated and steeped in old days. There is a strong social hierarchy, where the house of Hawthorne takes over the village by their power and money. Both places depict the fear and strong belief of the presence of witches within their communities. The novel demonstrates that such trials were motivated by the ideological hysteria, reflecting the impact of witch-hunts on the communities throughout Scotland. The two main characters of the book, the detective and advocate and Mackenzie and his assistant David Scougall describe that era in Scotland as the times of fear:

“These are dangerous times for Scotland,” Scougall interrupted.

“The Devil is amongst us. He seeks to lead us astray.”

Noticing Scougall’s morose mood, MacKenzie decided to say no more on the subject for the moment.³⁷

This conversation shows how the nation was drawn by the fear. The assistant David Scougall is portrayed as someone who gets easily scared and the fear of the presence of the Devil has a significant impact on him. He is not the villain of this story, however, his blindness and total devotion to the state and church, makes him a dangerous character. His character demonstrates how fear can make people change their ways of thinking, turning intelligent individuals into tools for tyranny. On the other hand, the character John Mackenzie, the detective, is portrayed as a man who seeks and rationality in the corrupted institution. John Mackenzie shows a distrust in the Scottish government as he is aware of its corruption. Since he is committed to his beliefs, he refuses to become obedient to the state. His opinions are centred around the disapproval of the church and its authorities whose intentions in Scotland are to only harm and spread unrest:

MacKenzie held no affection for such men, whether Protestant or Papist, Presbyterian or Episcopalian. “Priests of all religions are the same,”...The hypocrisy of the priesthood of all believers, the self-righteousness of men of God, putting themselves between the people and the higher power, if one existed; snuffing out joy; killjoys literally. He hoped that one day Man would be free from such bleak masters.³⁸

³⁷ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 21.

³⁸ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 52-53.

Detective MacKenzie holds a strong belief that all priests act only in their own favour and not for the people to whom they serve. It suggests that the “men of God” do not connect people to God, instead by their unlawful actions, they are blocking him away from them. MacKenzie believes that the priests should abide by the same values and live under the same conditions as others, instead of putting themselves above all. By “snuffing out joy,” Watt probably meant to highlight the negative impact of the church on people’s everyday life by taking the light and happiness out of their lives. In expressing his desire that humanity will be freed from “black masters,” MacKenzie exposes his belief that religious leaders in Scotland are evil people who abuse excessive power that was given to them by God. His desire for times when people will be freed from these men in power, showcases his humanist thinking and demonstrates his character as a man with moral position. Through these two characters, Watt highlights the potential danger of blind devotion to the oppressive government.

Since the novel is set in the aftermath of the restoration, it discusses several political events and issues that transformed Scotland into a place of instability and tensions. Throughout the story, Watt depicts these times by exposing the abuse of secular and sacred power and manipulation that led to the society being caught in the endless circle of chaos and distrust. The characters are used to represent the authorities and the repressive aspects of these establishments. For instance, Andrew Cant, the minister of Lammersheugh, who was convinced of the presence of Devil within the Scottish land. He even delivered a sermon against witchcraft.

Similarly, the character of Colonel Robert Dewar, Laird of Clachdean, serves as a clear illustration of the corrupting influence of power in the political scene of the time. Colonel Robert Dewar is a middle-aged man who used to fight for his nation as a soldier on the Continent. He is a smart but violent and aggressive man. He used his power and money to threaten Grissell Hay, Lady Lammersheugh, a widowed mother of two daughters who struggled to run the estate after her husband’s death. She faces pressure from Colonel Dewar who wishes her to marry him. However, she did not feel like marrying as the death of her loving husband was still a tragic event that made a negative impact on her life. Moreover, the idea of potential marriage was pleasing to her sister-in-law, Lady Girnington, who is a powerful figure in the community. Colonel Robert Dewar used his power and position to threaten Lady Lammersheugh to become his wife, so that he can gain access to her estate. The threats became more violent with time. At first he tried to convince her on generous terms, however, as Grissell’s disinterest in this marriage arose, so did the Colonel’s temper. During their session, where they were supposed to discuss Lady’s final decision, he raped her.

This violent act exemplified the full scope of Dewar's monstrous misuse of power, displaying a personal corruption that reinforced the societal violations he committed. Grissell Hay who was left utterly shattered and still did not agree on their marriage, received another letter, in which was stated that if she would not agree to marry Dewar, she would be accused of performing witchcraft. To make the threat even more terrifying, she was told that she would testify by the confession witch Margaret Rammage, who was their tenant.

Through characters, like Colonel Dewar and Lady Girnington, Watt shows that the true danger does not come from supernatural powers, but from those in positions of authority who use their power to exploit fear. People such as colonels, judges and ministers utilize fear of the Devil to control society, get what they think they deserve, and enforce rigid regulations within community.

Watt's literary depiction of the seventeenth century Scotland, shows that the witch-hunting and the fight between prejudice and rationality was worsened by the presence of King James II on the Scottish throne. His attempt to restore Catholicism in a fiercely Protestant nation took its leap. In the novel, *The Testament of a Witch*, the character of King James II does not play a prominent role in the story but rather builds up the background tension which makes some of the characters behave in a certain way. He is portrayed as a powerful character with a bad reputation that prompts characters to act under his influence. Throughout the novel, some of the characters show their hatred towards their king because they view him as an oppressive monarch who brutally takes advantage of religious conviction and terror to hold onto power. Watt's criticism of the abuse of power and the manipulation of faith is emphasized by the fact that they do not honour him but rather despise him.

“The King is not popular. His policies disgruntle many.”

“Do they disgruntle you, Mr Purse?”

“Politics is bad business for a lawyer. We must make money whichever way the wind blows. All I will say is that having a Catholic King is dangerous for this kingdom.”³⁹

This dialogue excerpt captures King's position. His Catholic views and his relentless attempts to propagate them in strictly Presbyterian Scotland are the main causes of his unpopularity, rather than his personal flaws. The monarch is viewed as the source of opposition rather than as a symbol of unity and respect.

³⁹ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 118.

Moreover, this conversation between Scougall and lawyer Mr Purse suggests that even experts who are usually expected to maintain objectivity and neutrality must act precariously. In the novel, the hatred towards the King is made apparent when Scougall, the detective's assistant, finds a hidden stash of weapons in Colonel Robert Dewar's home. Although the aim of the search was to obtain releasing evidence in a witchcraft case of Euphame Hay, the weapons strongly suggested a more significant and dangerous endeavour – a possible plot to overthrow the ruling monarch, James II:

Scougall had sympathised with the aims of the rebels. They wanted to re-established Presbytery, restore Godly rule to the kingdom and end the despotic reign of James Stuart. To remove a king who was the servant of Antichrist was surely just. But these weapons unsettled him.⁴⁰

When it is revealed that the owner of the house, Colonel Dewar, is involved in a plot against King James II, Scougall, despite his sympathies with this idea of killing the king, he responds with worry. This emotional reaction reveals deeper moral issues in the book and represents a significant turning point in Scougall's character. This response portrays the contradiction of moral implications and personal beliefs. On the other hand, it also demonstrates that hatred towards the monarch could develop into organised and armed uprising. This suggests that there were not limits for opposing James II, the hatred took many forms, from physical to verbal or nonviolent dissent.

In conclusion, to understand the complex political and religious conflicts that occurred in the seventeenth century Scotland it is crucial to analyse it through the power relations, prevailing views, and social structure. It describes how organisations, including the state and the church, control behaviour and uphold authority by using punishment and fear. From analytical perspective, Watt's novel exemplifies the practical implementation of the theoretical framework within the lived reality of Restoration Scotland. The novel depicts greedy officials using witchcraft allegations as tools to oppress weakened people while simultaneously reinforcing devotion to King James II's power. Moreover, it portrays how despite spreading the awareness of witchcraft, the unpopularity of James II was rooted in his religious influence on the restoration to Catholicism. Overall, Watt's offer a critical perspective on the complex dynamic between royalty, religion, and societal control during these uncertain times in Scotland.

⁴⁰ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 153.

3. WITCH-HUNTING AND WITCHCRAFT PROSECUTIONS IN SCOTLAND

This chapter, "Witch-hunting and Witchcraft Prosecutions in Seventeenth Century Scotland," investigates the methods used in the hunt and prosecution of members of society who were accused of performing witchcraft. It outlines the procedural aspects of witch hunts, providing an insight into the process of identifying, interrogating, and prosecuting a person suspicious of witchery during the peak period of witchcraft persecutions. The findings from this theoretical part of the chapter serves as a foundation for literary analysis of the historical novel *Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt. The analysis explores the way the author interprets this historical phenomenon, giving insight into the cultural memory of the witch hunting.

During the seventeenth century, the legal framework for identifying witches was not entirely clear. As stated in the previous chapter, in *Cultural and Historical Background*, the definition of a witch was not even made explicit by the Protestant Parliament in their legal act Witchcraft Act of 1563, where the term *witch* was firstly introduced. This lack of legal specificity made it difficult to properly label people as witches. However, strong cultural and religious beliefs about witches were prevalent among the communities in Scotland throughout that time, despite the country's ambiguous witchcraft laws. The difficulty was increased by the fact that suspected witches were frequently native to the same communities as their accusers, making the hunt for witches a test of loyalty and trust of social relationships. According to Dye, the suspected witches were commonly identified based on their reputations within the community. During the Scottish witch trials, a bad reputation was often considered enough evidence to arrest someone. This approach enables to distinguish between friends and enemies.⁴¹ This dynamic forced people in communities to act as both observers and accusers. Monitoring and watching over their neighbours meant that even the slightest personal bias may result in someone being falsely arrested or accused of witchery.

As there were not enough of clear legal rules that would support these allegations, the accusations only triggered the superstitions within the society. Moreover, these strong superstitions which were based on rumours, conflicts, or indications of strange behaviour allowed some individuals with power to hurt other people with spiritual corruption. These superstitions created a significant chaos and distrust in the communal cohesion. Once a person's name was linked to witchcraft, the raising accusations were hard to dispel as the charges were frequently accelerated by the general fear of the community.

⁴¹ Sierra Rose Dye, "To Converse with the Devil? Speech, Sexuality, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland," *International Review of Scottish Studies* 37 (October 2012): 14.

Aside from reputation or social conflicts, other elements prompted charges of witchcraft in the seventeenth-century Scotland. The role of gender played a significant part in who was accused of witchcraft. Most people who were prosecuted for performing witchcraft were women, which reflects the gender standards at the time. In the seventeenth century, men and women had radically different responsibilities within the society. Women played a variety of roles in society, including a domestic responsibilities and nurturing children. On the other hand, men dominated society both publicly and within households. Men were expected to be primary source of income, as their jobs usually involved farming, trading, or other more pursuing careers as is law and medicine.

As the society viewed women as the weaker gender, they were expected to be highly dependent on their husbands or fathers. Therefore, if a woman did not obey to these expectations set by the society, there were potential rising alerts that she might be a witch. Martin provides an example of a woman who was accused of witchcraft just for taking care of her farm. Martin states that witches' curses commonly targeted domestic duties including milk production, dairying, brewing, mending, and child-rearing, often from disagreements amongst female neighbours. The connection between women and witchcraft led to the demonisation of female dominance and a decrease in the value of women's position in society.⁴² Such narrative illustrates how everyday activities could be taken against one during times of social tensions and distrust. It shows that the accusations were quite often out of fear of something supernatural but also as a weapon to control over communal power within villages.

The gender studies of this phenomenon reveals that the majority of accused were women. As Goodare mentions, women made up the vast majority of those convicted of witchcraft. It is estimated that over 85% of the thousands of people in early modern Scotland who were charged with witchcraft were women.⁴³ This statistic reveals that within the victims, there were also men who were accused of witchcraft. It indicates the possibility that these hunts were not entirely in misogynist nature.

Although social status was a major factor in blaming women of having a pact with the Devil, there were other factors that may have contributed to the nature of accusation towards a female members of community. Goodare continues in her writing, that the church's and the government's encouragement of moral regulation, which frequently aimed to repress and

⁴² Sierra Rose Dye, "To Converse with the Devil? Speech, Sexuality, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland," *International Review of Scottish Studies* 37 (October 2012): 12, <https://doi.org/10.21083/irss.v37i0.1950>.

⁴³ Julian Goodare et al., "The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft, 1563-1736," archived January 2003, 59.

demonise sexuality within the society, is what led to women being associated with witchery.⁴⁴ In early modern Scotland, Church regained a significant power over public attitudes with changing monarchy. Therefore, the religious leaders were actively working on rebuilding the moral structure of society. As witchcraft was considered to be an illegal action or even a sin, their role in hunting or investigating processes became very active. As the church provided a strong moral authority, the public speech was strictly monitored. According to Dolan, the main way to convey dissatisfaction with the system was through speech, which was in the seventeenth century interpreted as proof of witchcraft or a curse.⁴⁵ The statements of women were particularly inspected as they were signs of a rigid moral standards. The Church's influence and present in prosecution only proved to the public that their demonic acts were illegal and sinful. In this way, the Church held a power over actively contributing to the systems that resulted in the persecution of women while forming the theological basis in the kingdom that supported the charges. For instance, scolding, which was primarily connected to women, was considered to be a crime and served as enough evidence for authorities to be accused of witchery.⁴⁶ By this approach, the Church had a dual role in Scottish witch-hunting. Their involvement contributed to the intersection of religion and morality in building a social norm, as the social control was a main aspect of the witchcraft trials in Scotland.

Allegations of witchcraft had a power to dramatically change a person's future and reputation in their community. After being suspected of practicing witchcraft, a person faced an unpleasant transition from being publicly accused to being formally interrogated by officials. The interrogation of alleged witches was both, crucial but also challenging task during the witch-hunting process. It required legal and extrajudicial way of prosecuting and punishing the potential threat to the society, the witches. The authority's goal was to gather evidence but also to obtain a confession from the accused. According to Levack, those in position of power – judges, magistrates, clergy, and local elites, largely influenced the course of the Great Scottish Witch Hunt by controlling the legal system and using it to compel confessions, depositions, charges, and conviction. Therefore, the beliefs, anxiety, laws, and deeds of this ruling class, served as the main source of motivation for the witch-hunt.⁴⁷ The power of those in charge was

⁴⁴ Julian Goodare, "Women and the Witch Hunt in Scotland," in *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 306–307.

⁴⁵ Frances E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 198.

⁴⁶ John Harrison, "Women and the Branks in Stirling, c. 1600–1730," *Scottish Economic and Social History* 18 (1998): 114.

⁴⁷ Brian P. Levack, "The Great Scottish Witch Hunt of 1661-1662," *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 20, no 1. (1980): 100.

not the only aspect that played a significant role in prosecutions. It was also the people's fear, which shaped the turns of charges. Levack continues, that some accusations could also be modified or even exaggerated by accusers.⁴⁸ During the witch-hunts, accuser often used the manipulation of public fear to achieve their own agenda, whether it was by focusing on a rival or just by acquiring influence and power in their village.

Larner provides a detailed description of the procedures of witch-hunting in Scotland. From accusation to execution, she details the entire system by breaking down the process into stages, such as accusation, interrogation, and the conviction. By her detailed analysis, she delves into the initiation of the presence of witchcraft within the Scottish society.

Firstly, Larner states that the process required to identify an unusual behaviour that would serve as evidence for the accusation. Once a person presented those necessary features of odd behaviour, it was necessary to approach the Kirk. The issues were handled in several ways. The accused individual may receive a warning, a fine, or perhaps sentenced to exile. In certain cases, slander issues began prior to formal accusations, frequently as a result of the spread of false rumours. Typically, these cases entailed a reversal of class dynamics, with the alleged slanderer holding a lowly position. The credibility of accusation was challenging unless the accused already had a poor reputation. The verbal conviction was a poor form of accusation, if the person had already good reputation. Larner showcases this case on an example, the trial of Janet Thomson and Marean Yool, who came to trial with a group of witches. The witches confessed to witchcraft, however, the Justice General, required more evidence. When village elders discovered there was no evidence of harmful acts and neighbours vouched in their innocence for their good reputation in the village, the charges were dropped. This examines how difficult it was to convict someone who has a good name of witchcraft, but it also shows that bad reputation can lead to false conviction. If the case needed a more evidence to be collected, the witch would be imprisoned in the tolbooth or outhouse. In seventeenth century, the prisons were not considered to be punishments, as they served as a way of pre-trial convenience. Therefore, during the time of collecting evidence, the witches were imprisoned into poorly built prisons, which were easy to escape from.

⁴⁸ Brian P. Levack, "The Great Scottish Witch Hunt of 1661-1662," *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 20, no 1. (1980): 100.

Once there was an occurrence of a deviant act identified, the next step was to take things further legally. In order to decide if an accusation required additional action or could be settled locally, the Kirk session was held as an eliminating filter. Since not all accusations would always lead to a formal trial in higher national courts, this was an important step in the witch-hunting process.

The third step of the witch-hunting process was the arrest by the High Court. Here, the confession was even more difficult to be accepted. Here, it was important that the accuser provide a confession of the Demonic Pact, which was regarded by the courts as the essence of witchcraft. To achieve such confessions that they are the Devil's servants, there were various torturing methods used. Officials employed outright torture, such as threats, pricking for the witch's mark, and sleep deprivation. Inflicting punishment or obtaining confessions of guilt or any information about the blame of others were the two main goals of torture. The sleep deprivation was the most common way of torture. However, there were some speculations regarding the possible misleading in investigations, as they were aware of hallucinogenic effects of this method, which could lead to false confession. On the other hand, this method was in favour of the king James VI, who strongly believed that this type of torture would lead to confession and the names of accomplices. He also strongly believed that the extreme pain from the torture was the only way how to get them break their silence. There were other extreme methods used, such as legs being crushed, burning them with hot irons, or using 'turcas' for tearing out their nails. There was also a process called swimming the witch. During this torturing process, the accused had her wrists tied to her ankles and then they threw her into the water. If she sank, she was pronounced innocent, if she floated, she was considered to be a witch, with the explanation that the Devil would keep her up. The records of ordeals, also shows the most common ways of making the person to confess. The method was called mark pricking. The person would be checked for marks on their bodies, and if they were insensible to pain, it meant the evidence of Devil.

As for the fourth stage, the most significant part of the whole process, the trial, in which the destiny of the witch was being decided. There were two possible commission. The first one was The Privy Council, which was a local court which did not require a witch to be transferred to Edinburgh. It was headed by the local sheriff who gathered the evidence and proposed sentence. The most common sentence was an execution. The court would set a date a few days before the hanging. It was a public event, where the entire community would gather and watch the witch hang for her actions.

The hanging did not kill the person straightway, sometimes burning was required as the body was only strangled. Sometimes witches were burnt even alive. The trial did not always lead to an execution, in some cases it led to banishment, suicide, or death in prison.

The people who gained from these trials were mainly the witch watchers, clerks, and members of the courts. The process of execution cost a lot of money, as it required to pay for a hangman, rope, and other equipment. The financial burden occasionally affected decisions about carrying out executions. If the accused did not have enough funds, the authorities sometimes charged the witch's surviving relatives.⁴⁹ This rigorous system of witch trials demonstrated that persecution was motivated not only by fear and superstition, but also by those who profited from accusing and murdering others.

Douglas Watt's *The Testament of a Witch* is a historical novel which provides a vivid inspection of the processes that drove witchcraft allegations to the trials. The novel depicts and investigates the main issues surrounding Scottish witch-hunting, including how easily someone's reputation could be harmed, and be easily influenced by the disagreements among neighbours. It also depicts how accusations frequently targeted who was viewed weak by the society, and how the domestic role of women could be easily turned into the accusation of having a pact with the Devil. Furthermore, it portrays the terrifying side of the interrogations targeting individuals accused of wrongdoings.

The book presents the character of Eupheme Hay, who is after her mother, Grissell Hay, the second victim accused of performing witchcraft in the town. Her character serves as a perfect example of falsely accused victims of witch-hunting madness. Eupheme is intended to demonstrate both the irrationality of collective guilt and the power of reasoned opposition to it. Douglas Watt challenges the social anxiety and collective concerns that resulted in false persecutions of women and men during these times.

From the first moment, Eupheme is described as a person of rationality and responsibility. After she and her younger sister, Rosina, became orphans, she was described as a protective. Even during the times when she was falsely accused of meeting with the Devil and lying with him, her primary concern was keeping her sister safe and reliable. The accusations made towards her persona, came from the same woman who accused her late mother, the confession witch, Margaret Rammage. With her both parents being dead, Eupheme as an eldest daughter, became vulnerable.

⁴⁹ Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 103–117.

In her village, a woman's position was frequently dependent on her family's reputation and financial support. Eupheme no longer had that sort of protection, she was left alone in a terrified and suspicious society which made her an easy target. Her vulnerability became even more fragile as she was known as a woman whose mother was already accused of having a connection with the Devil:

The accusation against Euphame troubled Scougall. Mothers and daughters had been known to sell themselves to Satan together. If Lady Lammersheugh was a witch, it seemed to him likely that Eupheme was one also.⁵⁰

This thought exemplifies the harmful way of thinking during the Scottish witch-hunts. A simple connection or personal association was enough evidence; no proof was required. The assumption that the Devil might be handed down from mother to daughter put people like Eupheme at risk. Author takes this opportunity to emphasize how easy it was to accuse someone and use injustice as a source for evidence. Scougall's thought shows that Eupheme is not being judged for her actions, but because she shared household with an already persecuted witch. After her arrest in her own home, she was put under unpleasant circumstances. She was locked up in the steeple of Lammersheugh Kirk where she was pricked as a part of torture. The process of pricking in the novel is described as "unbearable"⁵¹ by Eupheme. The pricker, John Kincaid performed a procedure on her, in order to find the Devil's Mark which would indicate by its bleeding whether she is a witch or not. As Kincaid prepared his torture weapons, Eupheme closed her eyes and remembered her father playing with her in the garden and the feeling of safety that she felt in his arms. This experience provides her emotional strength and a feeling of justice. In the situation of being treated as less than human, she holds onto a time of pure love that contrasts dramatically with the harshness she currently experiences. By this case, Watts shows that even though her body is being tortured, her mind remains her own.

In this approach, she silently criticizes and obeys a legal system which claims to seek the truth while creating a feeling of guilt. The pricker found a Devil's Mark on her body after applying a pin to every inch of her body. The Devil's Mark on her back was pinched but there was no blood coming out of it, this indicated to her accusers that she is a witch:

"Confess you are a witch! Whore of Satan! Fornicator with the Devil! Polluter of the parish – witch!"
"I am no witch."⁵²

⁵⁰ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 86.

⁵¹ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 87.

⁵² Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 96.

Despite this heavy torture, Eupheme refused to confess, by doing so she demonstrated a strong moral nature and a clear sense of identity. Her sister, Rosina, who was almost accused of witchcraft due to her uncontrollable actions. This possibility occurred because of Mr. Cant, the minister of Lammersheugh, who secretly admired her and was very fond of her. Rosina was aware of his deep feelings towards her, and she wanted to make a use of them. To free her sister from imprisonment, Rosina attempted to use her charm and his weakness to gain support from him in her sister's release:

Her voice was suffused with the disdain of her class for his. "I am sure there is something we can do for her, Mr. Cant." At that moment his mind seemed to explode. Satan was close, so close. He had been tempted. He was shown to be weak. He wondered if they had accused the right sister.⁵³

Rosina's soft speaking, made Mr. Cant lose control and he became overwhelmed by her presence. He was sure that Satan tempted him because he showed signs of weakness. He wondered about Rosina many times, but once she gave him the same affection back, he turned against her. Instead of taking responsibility for his feelings, he blames her for making him lose control. This interaction revealed how much society was corrupted in fear and blame. Watt attempts to show the character's shifting attitudes, from loving and envisioning to anxiety and distrust. It demonstrates how human weaknesses and suppressing emotion can have negative consequences in a rigorous, morally manipulated society.

Despite the brave attempt by her little sister to save her from the trial in Edinburgh, Euphame struggled with health in prison. She got weaker each day, as she was tortured by pricking, slapping and mainly by dehumanization that broke her spirit. In Watt's interpretation of the witch prosecution it is vivid and serves as an image of veil and cruel behavior done to those who were not given much evidence of potential witches. Through the cruel treatment of Euphame Hay, Douglas Watt attempts to emphasize that the prosecutions were held arbitrary and unfair. Euphame's suffering demonstrates that even a person who once was an upper-class member of society could easily become another victim of false witchcraft allegations.

As chaos grew, the community faced an increasing number of allegations, many of which came from the neighbors themselves. The town was rapidly overrun with arrests. One of the victims was Lady Grisell Hay's obedient servant John Murdoch who was falsely accused of warlock. He was ruthlessly tortured to provide confession, but his old body could not endure the brutality of the interrogation.

⁵³ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 115.

He died alone in the Kirk's steeple, as his final hours were filled with physical suffering and mental exhaustion. His wife, Mrs. Murdoch, who also worked for the Hay family, came to visit him one evening to ensure he was not going to confess. However, her hope of seeing her spouse fighting the system by staying silent was destroyed the moment she saw his dead body lying on the floor. He was discovered wearing sackcloth, no shoes, and his body was dirty and covered in his own excrement. His body was covered in small bloody punctures, which served as evidence of ruthless torture he had experienced. Moreover, his interrogator forced him to stay awake at night, pushing his body to its limits. The portrayal of his death embodies the cruelty of the system by not making his death dramatic and fast, but as a prolonged and humiliating.

The witchcraft accusations and prosecutions in Scotland were rooted in social and moral fears about justice, intersocial conflicts and reputation. The theoretical part of this chapter shows how these prosecutions were often related to complicated social dynamics within communities – where communal opinions arouse suspicion, regardless of gender, opinion or social status. The analysis of Douglas Watt's novel *The Testament of a Witch* and its depiction of this issue, provides a powerful view on the process of prosecution and how it impacted those accused and their relatives. Through vivid portrayals, it also shows how the legal system and harsh interrogations exposed the accused's agony and unfairness while emphasizing the cruelty of the process.

4. THE ROLE OF IDENTITY IN SCOTTISH WITCH-HUNTS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The issue of identity in the context of the Scottish witch-hunting has a close connection to the aspect of how people perceived themselves in their communities. It was the way society defined who was considered to be an outsider and who was accepted. The accusations were profoundly influenced by the community dynamics but also by individual characteristics. Regarding the individual identity, the qualities which made people vulnerable to accusations included age, gender, marital status, or behaviour traits. As for the collective identity, the most common accusations came from social norms which were set by the society. For instance, religious distrust or communal cohesiveness. By examining real-life accusation of witches, this chapter attempts to show how individual and collective identity were shaped during these tragic events. This chapter also delves into literary analysis of the identity issues portrayed in the Scottish historical novel *The Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt.

To explore the roles of identical and complex identities shaping the witch-hunting in the seventeenth century Scotland, it is essential to explain these two terms from the perspective of cultural studies. Garba explores the term individual identity from its nature. According to Garba, individual identity is a form of self-consciousness; a process of specific historical experience that is consistent with the emergence of modern states. In order to maintain people's distinct identities and protect them from being mistaken for another, continuity is essential for fostering this consciousness. One thing is foreshadowed by all of this: identity and its discourse are inherently fictional.⁵⁴ Through this process, the identity is a collection of experiences that shape person's life and characteristics throughout time. It is not a fixed, irreversible trait that people are born with. Rather, it is a product of creation and evolution. Garba's claim that identity is fictional does not necessarily mean that it is not entirely real. It emphasises the notion that the social interactions, and the stories that people create for themselves are the main sources of their identity. It highlights the variety of identities and how they are built by the different narrative.

During Scottish witch-hunting, the individual identity of an accused witch was put under a lot of struggles. The accusations did not only affect the individual's identity by physical actions, such as imprisonment or trials. Not only the arrest caused enduring physical pain to the accused individual, but it also affected their pride and belief in humanity.

⁵⁴ Ismail Bala Garba, "Individual Identity as Strategic Fiction," *Journal of Cultural Studies* 8, nos. 1–3 (2010): 55.

As described in the previous chapter, the procedure of accusation was a long process of collecting evidence. It required gathering witness testimony, observing the accused's behaviour, and documenting any odd suspicious events happening during the time of investigation within the community. This process aimed to build a convincing proof that would make charges seem consistent with social norms. However, if the person was falsely accused, it could ruin their persona and reputation forever. The false accusations created an intense and heavy atmosphere between the neighbourhood which made even those who were sure of their innocence, to confess to something they did not believe or did. This shows how much the pressure from society affected individual beliefs. Moreover, they no longer recognised themselves in the same manner as before being accused; their role in society was marked by their alleged connection with the Devil. Such accusations put some members of society into a position where they had to face a deep personal development which consisted of replacing their identity with a fabricated image of evil and supernatural malevolence given to them by those who surrounded them.

The identification of witches was also linked to the horrific punishments which were required to assert control. As for the worst outcome of the accusation was the death penalty in a form of execution or even in some cases the burning alive, this acceptance of death was not easy for their final sentence. As Lerner mentions in her book, each person's experience probably differed greatly, but for those who came to terms with the fact that they were deserving of death, it signified a tremendous shift in their identity and their connection with the community and God.⁵⁵ In this sense, the witch trials left a legacy of dread resiliency, and human complexity in addition to destroying lives. By doing so, they reshaped the structure of individual's identity. As they became threats to the community, their exclusion drove them to view themselves through the lenses of shame and distrust.

Since the accusing process was highly sensitive and filled with intense feelings, calling someone a "witch" could often had unintended and devastating consequences. Such allegations had a strong impact on the accused's safety and status in the community. Goodare mentions that while the insult weighed heavily in disagreements, it was also risky. If the accusation was not proven, the individual making the claim may suffer consequences, such as being charged with slander or even scolding.⁵⁶ The author Goodare illustrates a negative outcome of false

⁵⁵ Ismail Bala Garba, "Individual Identity as Strategic Fiction," *Journal of Cultural Studies* 8, nos. 1–3 (2010): 55.

⁵⁶ Julian Goodare, "Women and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland," *Social History* 23, no. 3 (1998): 298.

accusation by presenting a specific case where a woman's aggressive behaviour led to her own accusation. As she mentions, the story of Kathren Black is rather surprising.⁵⁷ Black insulted and threatened Jonet Read during a fight, accusing her of stealing and being involved in the deaths of their neighbour's children. Although these remarks might have suggested Jonet Read was the witch at first, it was Kathren Black who was ultimately charged because of her own hostile and derogatory actions, which were consistent with what society expected witches to do.⁵⁸ This example demonstrates how seriously was scolding treated at the time, even more seriously than accusing someone of murder. Kathren's story does not only showcase how much was the public speech controlled, but it also demonstrates that the individual identity could be easily overshadowed by accusations.

As much as the individual identity is frequently viewed as a highly subjective concept that is influenced by one's own experiences, personal traits and beliefs, it also symbolises how people see themselves from their own perspectives. Their social and cultural background contributes to their structure of identity; however, it does not completely construct a narrative of themselves. Despite identity being personal, it is not a singular entity.

The identity, which is impacted by the collective dynamics is called a complex identity. The positive impact of collective identity is to feel included. As Zamaraeva and Koptseva mention in their article, the perception of a collective identity creates an additional possibility to be included in a broad social identity, reducing negative stereotypes and allowing others to recognise the diverse social identities that lead to less biased relationships and more social interactions.⁵⁹ Being part of a group, provides people a feeling of shared interests and inclusion. Additionally, it influences expectations and behaviour, motivating individuals to act in a way that their actions improve their surrounding environment. According to Snow, the shared, communal "sense of we" is a potent force that influences people's thoughts, feelings, and occasionally even morals. This sense of oneness, which motivates people to act jointly in favour of the group's interests, is produced by a shared understanding and sentiments of a single purpose, threat, or destiny. Thus, a sense of collaborative agency is fostered.⁶⁰ Being part of collective identity does not only foster a sense of shared responsibility, but it also strengthens a desire for collective action.

⁵⁷ Julian Goodare, "Women and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland," *Social History* 23, no. 3 (1998): 298.

⁵⁸ Julian Goodare, "Women and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland," *Social History* 23, no. 3 (1998): 298.

⁵⁹ Yu. S. Zamaraeva and N. P. Koptseva, "History of Complex Identity Research," *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences* 13, no. 7 (2020): 1223.

⁶⁰ David Snow and Catherine Corrigan-Brown, "Collective Identity," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., ed. James D. Wright (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015), 175.

In the seventeenth century, the witch-hunting was tightly linked to the collective identity of communities in Scotland and England. This identity was based on shared moral values, religious beliefs, and social standards that were set by the Church or the government. For that reason, the sin of one individual was a sin of all. As Margo Todd states, individual wrongdoings were viewed as the collective duty of the community in the early modern period. For example, the Aberdeen elders thought that any personal sin brought shame onto the entire community. The wrongdoings of a few burdened the conscience of everyone in town, creating a situation in which the community suffered collectively for the faults of individuals, almost as a reverse form of scapegoating.⁶¹ This suggests that the shared responsibility of collective identity implies individual actions made by each member of the community. Their collectives foster a unity and desire for communal response to the issues that their society faces. Despite the positive impact of collective on the community, there is also a certain sensitive aspect in which collectives can cause harm, as it is in a case of witch-hunting.

As a result of the witch-hunts, communities suffered greatly in Scotland. The shared suffering within the communities came from the emotional and financial aspects. Regarding the emotional issues, the relationships were strained, trust was damaged, and general uneasiness resulted from the ongoing worry of being accused. According to Henderson, arguments between neighbours, conflicts over farm animals, and family conflicts put the community's resilience to the test.⁶² People were either connected by the accusation or distrained. The role of collective identity within the communities had both positive and negative outcomes. People were connected by the fear and strong belief of the presence of something supernatural in their communities. Existing social divisions were frequently brought to light by the fear of witchcraft. People who were marginalised, such as poor people, women living on the periphery of society, and people who behaved in unusual ways, were made into scapegoats. The reputation of those was not easy to be repaired.

During this period, the collective identity encompassed more than just common beliefs. Larger concerns like political unrest and economic hardships also influenced it. In times of uncertainty, witch trials provided a forum for individuals to voice their anxieties. In a way, the accusation and punishment of witches became a sinister custom that strengthened community bonds against perceived dangers. As Yeoman states, witches were viewed as a present enemy

⁶¹ Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 174.

⁶² Lizanne Henderson, "The Survival of Witchcraft Prosecutions and Witch Belief in South-West Scotland," *The Scottish Historical Review* 85, no. 219 (2006): 53.

of the state and the religious authorities.⁶³ Moreover, these times show how easily the collective identity can be manipulated. Political and religious leaders exploit and supported witch-hunting, in order to make them seem as the morality of the community.

The historical novel *Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt, portrays how people's lives were significantly influenced by the tremendous witch-hunting. This historical event left a significant impact on people's individual and collective identities. Deep religious beliefs, strict social rules, and spread of communal anxiety characterised this time period. These factors had a significant impact on how people perceived themselves and others. Additionally, it was a dangerous time when a single charge might ruin someone's reputation and undermine their sense of self. This section of the chapter emphasises on comprehending how these identity concepts are portrayed in the book. It examines the depiction of characters' identities and how they evolve over time. By examining these components, this analytical part of the chapter aims to provide literary evidence on how Scotland's witch-hunts were influenced, and in certain situations, destroyed people's identities.

The portray of collective identity in the historical novel is shown to be firmly rooted in a common fear of moral and spiritual decay, which encouraged a widespread suspicion of anyone who appeared unusual or even went against social norms set by the Church and the King. This collective identity, which was motivated by fear and the need to maintain order, frequently turned into witch-hunting mania, in which accusations were used to bring the people together against a shared threat, a witch or warlock, in spite of the personal expense to the targeted individual. In the novel, there is a particular character, the minister of town provides a powerful illustration of how a persistent environment of distrust and suspicion preserved collective identity in 17th century. Moreover, it showcases how those in charge, in this case the minister, had a powerful impact on the regular members of the society:

“I beseech you, be vigilant. Watch your neighbours. Watch your children. Watch your mother and your father. Watch your master and your servant. None are free from the stain that darkens the nation.”⁶⁴

This order is a frightening regulation that transforms the neighbourhood into a community filled with distrust in which every person is both a victim and a person covering someone else.

⁶³ Louise Yeoman, “The Great Tranent Witch-Hunt: Manufacturing Imaginary Enemies of the Scottish State,” in *The Scottish State and the Experience of Government, c. 1560–1707: Essays in Honour of Julian Goodare*, ed. Martha McGill and Alasdair Raffe, 223.

⁶⁴ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 16.

What is even more striking is that the minister's command carries an instruction to keep an eye on even the closest relationships, such as family members or servants. By this example, Watt reveals how deeply ingrained the widespread dread of witchcraft was in everyday life. It indicates that no relationship whether intimate or sacred, was immune to raising suspicion because of the widespread fear of witchcraft. The foundation of trust in families and communities was destroyed by this uncontrollable alertness, which turned family ties into easy instrument for societal policies. Douglas Watt successfully attempted to portray the cruel part of living in times where the constant fear of betrayal developed a culture in which the obedience to the collective fear was valued more than interpersonal relationships. In a dystopian setting where privacy is completely eliminated, everyone feels compelled to observe one another in order to prevent becoming targeted themselves. As minister himself refers to the witchcraft as "the stain that darkens the nation," he highlights its alleged moral downfall.

The role of collective identity is displayed in several forms, particularly through common values, social status, and family hierarchy. Regarding the concept of shared common values, the collective identity is shaped through religious beliefs. The rigorous Presbyterians, who uphold their moral supremacy by forcing their beliefs on the entire community, are one of the most dominant parties in the novel. Characters such as George Sinclair, the author of the book on witchcraft, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, is one of the vivid examples of religious authorities who held a strong influence. Sinclair's character is strengthened by his fierce and violent verbal attacks on sceptics; he mockingly calls them "Saducees and Atheists."⁶⁵ Therefore, the individuals who deny the witchcraft's existence are rejecting God's authority being present in the community. In the novel, the role of collective identity is not only vivid through their religious beliefs, but this is also seen on their strong and mutual disapproval of ruling King James II. Their united feelings are strengthened by this hatred, which is a crucial component of their fellowship. The characteristics of the Presbyterians is "men of the Covenant." They refer to themselves as a group that is united by a strong theological dedication to a Presbyterian Scotland, a country run according to the teachings of their church, without any outside political interference. This approach does not only support the collective identity but also a national identity. They are directly opposed to the monarchy, especially King James II, whom they view as a serious religious threat:

⁶⁵ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 33.

“Our King is a servant of Antichrist. A Papist King in reformed Scotland! Heresy spreads throughout the realm, Godliness is banished from our shores. Men talk of no God. They mock the world of spiritual!”⁶⁶

There are two main reasons why James II is portrayed in the story as the personification of spiritual evil. Firstly, it highlights the Presbyterians’ worldview, in which theological and political conflicts are conflated and seen as a conflict between good and evil. Secondly, it demonstrates the use of words to validate disagreement and strengthen collective identity. In addition to enhancing their moral reason for rebelling. The Presbyterians’ negative portrayal of their king serves to unite their society and reinforce their shared beliefs. George Sinclair is not the only character in the novel that uses his powerful words to overthrow the monarch. Even Colonel Dewar, takes advantage of the general distrust in King James II. Using the witch trials as an excuse, he arranges a rebellion aimed at destroying “the despotic reign of James Stuart.” As it was in the case of Mr. Sinclair, even this character aimed to use the collective chaos to overthrow a ruling monarch.

The collective identity is expressed within the social status and family hierarchy. The Scottish society is divided by their occupation, class, and the opinions of others. Such divisions produce separate groups with unequal power and frequently develop hatred for one another. Even during their hardships, the aristocracy and landowners are portrayed to hold onto their sense of significance and authority. For instance, Lady Girnington, whose personal and financial hardships did not stop her from referring to Margaret Rammage as a “common peasant.” Moreover, her social status makes her feel above others by calling “ministers are beneath me.” This example showcases that the collective identity was linked to inherited privilege and a strong sense of superiority over others.

The narrative’s exploration of collective identity highlights the strong impact on social connection by exposing the complex structure of society and demonstrating how firm hierarchies, family ties and shared ideas determine fate of individuals. Douglas Watt reveals the problematic aspect of collective identity while also highlighting how it promotes togetherness. The way collective identity is portrayed exposes its dual function as oppression and protection. Throughout its characters, the novel reveals how individuals search for connection, and deal with power. It also encourages readers to consider the characters from two perspectives: general setting and historical context of the story.

⁶⁶ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 126.

Although the novel mainly explores the impact of collective identity, it also explores the nature of individual identity. The story explores how individuals attempt to express their uniqueness, deal with personal issues, and someone question or go beyond the boundaries imposed onto them by their connections. Using this perspective, the narrative emphasises their individual goals, internal conflicts, and distinctive ties to their heritage that set them apart from the usual norms. Characters like Janet Cornfoot, David Scougall, and John MacKenzie provide complex interplay on how their inner conflicts and firmly held beliefs form their individual identity in the environment of strong influence.

The character of Janet Cornfoot, a close friend of the Lammersheugh family who promised Grissell that she will look after her daughters, distinguished herself throughout her language and unique beliefs on witchcraft. Being a long-time servant, Janet holds a unique position in the working class community, and her speech, which is a typical Scots dialect, serves as a defining characteristic of her national and personal identity:

“Ma faither wis a servant o Tweeddale’s at Yester. I served at Aikwood afore Grissell was born and stayed wi her. Ma man served the House of Lammersheugh.”⁶⁷

Her speech is clearly rooted in a linguistic history that predates the structured Presbyterian orthodoxy of her period. The author emphasises Janet’s special bond with the straightforward, traditional life of rural Scotland by making her the only character who speaks this way. Beyond just expressing her socio-economic status, Janet’s language reflects her values and ties to her Scottish heritage. Therefore, her specific language does not only serve as a means of communication, it is an expression of her moral principles and sense of identity, subtly upholding customs that go against the strict Presbyterian orthodoxy of the time. Through her speech, her character’s depiction is a person who refuses to be overwhelmed by the communal pressures that surround her. In society where rigid social order is dominant, the author portrays Janet as a character whose uniqueness stands out. Her distinctive speech style demonstrates her ability to remain loyal to herself and uphold her personal values. It provides an insight into how one’s beliefs can endure pressure to be integrated in. Her dialect asserts a dominant culture by staying true to herself. It upholds her values and traditions. Janet’s identity is quiet and mysterious, in sharp contrast to the way Euphame Hay’s individual identity is presented. Euphame’s elite upbringing, which grants her privilege and high social status, has a significant impact on her depiction. Her social background symbolises a life shaped by money, power, and

⁶⁷ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 68.

possibilities, guaranteeing her a prestigious position in the class system of that time.

However, when Euphame is falsely accused of witchcraft, her social position was put onto a test. Fear and distrust replace what once brought her respect and affection, demonstrating how fast public perception can be shifted. Her reputation was severely harmed by the charges of witchcraft, which destroyed her high hopes of finding an eligible marriage. Euphame held a prominent social status prior to these accusations, making a successful marriage not only possible but even expected from her. It was during the terrifying moments of her imprisonment that she realised she would never be able to fulfil her aspiration of a prosperous marriage. Her dreams which formed her identity were completely destroyed by this heartbreaking realisation, which also added an unbearable emotional burden to her physical suffering:

They had broken her life, destroyed it. If she lived, what man would want her? She recalled his handsome face. He would not have her as his wife now. No man in Scotland would.⁶⁸

Throughout Euphame's exploration of her individual identity, Watt carefully demonstrates how a societal thinking fuelled by pervasive fear and social unrest absorbs and transforms Euphame Hay's individual identity. Watt aims to illustrate the dangers of collective fear when it overcomes individual rights and rationality through Euphame's traumatic suffering. Moreover, it aims to reveal a profound moral flaw of the system that placed more value on collective chaos and control than on her personal truth. Her broken life serves as a vivid reminder of the serious injustices that a broken legal system supported. Through her suffering, this metaphor reshapes her identity and offers a critical view on the Scottish system of the seventeenth century. This act of resistance is a sharp contrast to the detective's assistant, Mr. Scougall, whose individual identity is profoundly defined by a personal self-doubt.

Initially, Scougall's identity is defined by how he views himself and engages with others. His position as "dull notary public"⁶⁹ is seen as beneath what advocates and lairds be. His inner monologue makes this self-doubt evident:

He was a little, unremarkable man with a ludicrous wig on his head. His face darkened as self-loathing grew within him. He was certain that he was not a catch.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 88.

⁶⁹ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 32.

⁷⁰ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 32.

Apart from his professional skills, his issues with self-worth frequently cause him to hesitate or respond impulsively. As he lacks self-confidence, he is more vulnerable to the collective's views and becomes easily influenced, accepting ideas like "the Devil is amongst us."⁷¹ However, his beliefs in these common ideas begin to weaken as he observes Euphame Hay's torturous interrogation and suffering. He is shocked and undergoes a profound transformation upon witnessing the injustice she endures. A significant turning point in his development of individual identity happened when he received a letter from the detective's daughter, Elizabeth MacKenzie, whom he is very fond of.

His sense of self is profoundly impacted by what appears to be a straightforward social invitation that serves as important external recognition. Having deep feelings of devotion for her, Elizabeth represents the world of praise and motivation that Scougall aspires to as he "fantasised about a future with her."⁷² Even though the letter was only an invitation to be more active in order to protect Elizabeth's father from any potential danger along the investigation, this acknowledgement gradually helps him get over his shyness and increases his desire to act. This transformation was revealed during the conversation with detective MacKenzie. For instance, Scougall does not merely remain silent when MacKenzie shows him a fallen feather discovered close to found body; instead, he actively participates and asks aloud, "Why would a killer carry a feather with them?"⁷³ As MacKenzie replies, "Why do you thin, Davie?" he boldly responds, "It may have fallen from a hat." This transformation from a shy young man whose job was only to write down what he hears during the interrogations to a confident man is a significant shift within his individual identity motivated by his personal desires. The narrative demonstrates how he creates a distinct identity in a culture where there are powerful group pressures through personal aspirations, evolving ideas, and outside validation.

In conclusion, this chapter explored the connection between individual and collective identities in relation to allegations of witchcraft. It demonstrated the impact of widespread chaos in communities, frequently fostered by religious influence. Moreover, this chapter showed how the intersection between the two identities, whereas the individual identity was strongly influenced by the collective identity. Finally, this chapter examined how societal anxiety reshaped people's opinions which demolished a true identity. Douglas Watt depicts this struggle in *Testament of a Witch*, demonstrating the conflict between the inner strength of personal beliefs and the expectations of society.

⁷¹ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 21.

⁷² Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 21.

⁷³ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 85.

5. THE DEMONISATION OF WITCHES IN SCOTLAND

In Scotland, the fear of the Devil and his alleged aides, the witches, arose with religious tensions and increased social pressure. A widespread belief that Satan sought to harm humanity by aligning with the weaker in the community and possessing them with his dark energy, engraved in the Scottish communities as the accusations grew with time. The hysteria was fueled by religious beliefs that were spread by the Church and government's officiants. These strong beliefs held by men in power, emphasized the danger of witchcraft within the society and its sinfulness. An uneasy atmosphere spread within Scotland as the picture of the Devil was as constant and impending threat. The aim of this chapter is to explore the factors that led to demonization of witches, in fuelling religious beliefs and shaping the communal narratives that led to moral chaos within the Scottish witch-hunt. This chapter also provides a detailed literary analysis of these issues portrayed in historical novel *Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt.

As stated in previous chapters, the depiction of witches as evil characters was profoundly rooted in religious conviction, economic struggles and instability of the political policies that were set by the government and the Church. Brock claims that because of the Presbyterians' reformed emphasis on human nature's sinfulness, the Devil had a major role in how religious Scots viewed themselves and their faith.⁷⁴ Reformed theology in Scotland considered individuals as weak, making them suitable targets for the Devil to mislead. This idea meant that people were encouraged to reflect deeply on their faith, own their sins, and realise that the Church's intentions were to protect them from the evil. This framework had a significant impact on public opinion, leading them to believe that temptation and sin were acts of evil. In addition to influencing personal beliefs, these widespread notions also sparked the development of new folklore interpretation of witches' powers. The once viewed perception of witches as harmless entities associated with gaining their power from nature, began to change significantly. According to Goodare, the role of traditional folklore belief that the witch got her powers from herself or nature weakened, as the belief of diabolism which claimed that the witch got her strength from the Devil himself arose.⁷⁵ This change from no longer perceiving witches as neutral individuals, to viewing them as a representations of evil corruption shows the radical change their acceptance within society. Witchcraft was perceived as a rejection of God and an

⁷⁴ Michelle D. Brock, *Satan and the Scots: The Devil in Post-Reformation Scotland, c. 1560–1700* (Routledge), 4.

⁷⁵ Julian Goodare, "Scottish Witchcraft in Its European Context," in *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*, ed. Julian Goodare (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 27.

embrace of evil since it associated their power with the Devil. This transition also fueled terror within the society as witches were perceived as workers for Satan and endangering the moral order of society.

With rising interest in identifying witches and ensuring the religious policies, the diabolical pact was created. In the seventeenth century, it became one of the significant indicators of witchcraft, partly due to Perkins's theory.⁷⁶ This idea portrayed witches to be Devil's willing companions, bound to him by a legal agreement to carry out his schemes, rather than just as people committing cruel actions. The diabolical pact also dealt with the form of Devil in which he appeared within the people and made people to join him as his servants. The Scottish society believed that the Devil had an ability of ambiguity and was capable of shapeshifting to manipulate his victims. As Ball mentions, the Devil usually combined two or more different entities at once, such as man's head but a horse's hooves. Or he takes on a human form to ensure his manipulation. Often, the Devil poses as a lovely woman, a gentleman, or someone who has been fooled to further his agenda.⁷⁷ This depiction of the Devil as a shapeshifter who could easily transform into someone else to blend in with the environment, only increased people's paranoia. What also added a negative depiction of witches was a strong belief of the King James I, who claimed that "God will not permit that any innocent persons shalbe slandered with that vile defection: for then the deuil would find waies anew, to calumniat the best."⁷⁸ This strong claim made by the head of the kingdom only emphasized how serious the threat of witches and the Devil was in Scotland.

The process of demonic pact was quite complex as it was a primary conduct that made someone a witch or warlock. This session was a horrifying element of witchcraft charges, which was a legally binding agreement between a person and the Devil. As Dye mentions, in order to obtain their supernatural abilities, witches would frequently have to take part in a ritual that formally constituted their union with Devil.⁷⁹ This notion of witches collaborating with the Devil, an enemy of God, fundamentally altered the perception of witch-hunting. It evolved into an organised cult that is based on destructive behaviours that do not collide with what Scottish

⁷⁶ William Perkins, *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. Ian Breward (Appleford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), 579–81.

⁷⁷ Kimberly Ball, "The Devil's Pact: Diabolic Writing and Oral Tradition," *Western Folklore* 73, no. 4 (2014): 396.

⁷⁸ King James VI, *Daemonologie, in Forme of a Dialogue, Diuided into Three Bookes*, reprinted in *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I*, ed. J. Craigie (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), 55.

⁷⁹ Sierra Rose Dye, "To Converse with the Devil? Speech, Sexuality, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland," *International Review of Scottish Studies* 37 (October 2012): 26.

community accepted. As a result of this change and with the support of written documents mentioning the diabolical pact, witchcraft became a crime that could be defined under the existing legal documents. This potent idea served as a strong motivation of Devil's presence in Scotland, as it tragically claimed many lives.

The concept of diabolical pact did not emerge suddenly; it developed over time as the accusations in Scotland arose. The demonic pact was influenced by societal concerns; folklore and theological discourse. As Lerner mentions, in the demonic pact, in exchange for number of advantages, the witch gave up her Christian baptism and dedicated her immortal soul to the Devil in a typically private ceremony. The receiving of the Devil's mark, which was applied to the witch's body by a bite a nip, and one or more sexual acts typically completed the Pact.⁸⁰ The pact itself had a several interpretations and forms. According to Begg, they would pledge to be the Devil's servant by placing one hand on top of their head and the other beneath the sole of their foot, thereby handing up everything they were from head to toe to him.⁸¹ This ceremony portrayed a total submission which required all body parts and soul to be given up to the Devil.

Other versions of the process existed, some of which included more explicit activities, and frequently emphasised sexual surrender as a sign of complete devotion to the Devil. As Lerner claims, the process of the pact was usually completed by getting the Devil's Mark, which was usually obtained by the image of Evil biting or nipping the witch, and then having one or more sexual affairs, if the witch was a female.⁸² In exchange for her soul to be given to the Devil, she received from him advantages. There were also some cases, where witches, who sacrificed their souls to him, even gave up their own names in exchange for a new name given by the Devil himself. These practices were often revealed during their confessions during the interrogative process by the local authorities. During the interrogation, some witches even claimed that they did not request anything in return, after the pact was completed.⁸³ This complete devotion which did not need any requests transformed the notion that witches made these agreements from a selfishness, such as to gain financial support or power were disputed by local authorities and the public. Because of this, the interrogations became more severe, and the authorities such as Church, made a greater effort to uncover reasoning for witches to willingly collaborate with the Devil.

⁸⁰ Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 11.

⁸¹ Robert Burns Begg, "Notice of Trials for Witchcraft in the Parish of Dollar," *Archaeologia Scotica: Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 3 (1831): 223–24.

⁸² Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 11.

⁸³ Robert Burns Begg, "Notice of Trials for Witchcraft in the Parish of Dollar," *Archaeologia Scotica: Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 3 (1831): 223–24.

Witchcraft appeared even more sinister as a result of the diabolical pact, which portrayed it as a direct threat to divine authority. This idea served as a justification for severe policies, which were viewed as necessary to uphold religious principles and protect society. Defining and prosecuting witches was extremely difficult due to its basic nature, particularly proving their negotiation with evil spirits. According to Gaskill, demonology had to have a physiological foundation in order to be used as evidence in court because idolatry was obvious while witchcraft was elusive.⁸⁴ Since this idea was fundamentally abstract and deeply connected to both religious beliefs and collective anxiety, it was challenging to collect concrete proof or set accusation standards for accusations. The task of providing a crime that mostly depended on spiritual interpretations and frequently unjustified report fell to authorities and prosecutors. These challenges brought attention to the continuous conflicts between authorities and requirement for concrete evidence when it came to the judicial process of collecting witchcraft claims.

The practice of obtaining evidence against suspected witches throughout this significant era of witch-hunting was frequently based more on local superstitions and beliefs than on a factual information. Suspicion was first based on accusations, which were frequently motivated by fear, hatred, or unexplained tragedy. Thousands of people were persecuted and found guilty as a result of these allegations, no matter how valid they were. The Devil beliefs of his existence were deeply rooted in oral traditions, which reflected the collective experiences and cultural anxieties of the general Scottish population. However, written documentation was essential for formalising charges and the presence of the Devil. As Lerner mentions, evidence of witch-beliefs in Scotland originates mostly from local and central court records, but it also came from literal references found in journals, sermons, histories, and tracts. There are three forms of evidence that are available in court document; the accused's admissions, the indictments and reports of the court, and the accusations of neighbours.⁸⁵ These documents were essential for establishing the legitimacy of allegations and incorporating them into the prevailing legal and ideological frameworks.

Following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Scotland experienced significant theological and political upheaval, which led many religious individuals to write autobiographies. They used their writings to document their personal struggles. According to Brock, most of the people who wrote religious self-narratives were either family members or

⁸⁴ Malcolm Gaskill, "Witchcraft and Evidence in Early Modern England," *Past & Present*, no. 198 (2008): 51.

⁸⁵ Christina Lerner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), 135.

members of the Scottish clergy. Given how literate this text-focused culture was, it was expected that they would publish their work. Their written works presented a complex and important viewpoint on Scotland's perceptions and most importantly, provided their personal experiences with the Devil.⁸⁶ Religious self-writings largely reflect the opinion of those who are very much a part of theological and intellectual circles. These narratives provide insightful information, but they also highlight the author's priorities and biases. These documents are notably absent of the viewpoints of the largely illiterate population, who may have been directly accused of witchcraft or held to strong beliefs of the Devil's existence on Scottish land. In addition to this, the lived experiences of the illiterate were often either misrepresented or even fully left out of the historical record.

Moreover, the Devil was viewed as a wicked entity that was always present in culture that was rooted in Calvinist theology and struggling with the upheavals of religious reform and political conflict. The Kirk, a powerful Presbyterian church in Scotland, played a key role in sustaining these ideas by depicting the Devil as God's and humanity's worst enemy, constantly working to corrupt people's souls and disrupt the natural order. Scottish communities were frequently prompted by this deeply held belief to look for the Devil's servants on earth, especially during periods of increased social unrest. According to Brock, the Devil was perceived as an external power that deceived morally weak people, mostly women, into abdicating their Christian beliefs, striking a deal with him, and carrying out wicked acts. However, in some cases, meeting the Devil might have also been a personal event. This frequently occurred as people battled with issues central to their Protestant beliefs, such as sin and salvation.⁸⁷ Therefore, in addition to being the object of public criticism and judicial action, the Devil also served as a personal spiritual opponent in the thoughts of the faithful, as well as a constant temptation to rebel and a major cause of spiritual agony. The notion that the Devil takes advantages of weak members of the society evolved into a strategy for social control within Scotland. The uncertainty of his negative influence served as a reminder and justification for severe moral policies, which kept people and communities strongly under the authority.

The historical novel *Testament of a Witch* by a Scottish writer Douglas Watt, delves deeply into the process of demonisation of witches and the negative influence of Devil. The novel does not portray them as supernatural entities, as it was revealed at the first part of this chapter. Instead, Douglas Watt portrays both components as representations of prejudice, social

⁸⁶ Michelle Brock, "Experiencing Satan in Early Modern Scotland," *Critical Survey* 23, no. 2 (2011): 27.

⁸⁷ Michelle Brock, "Experiencing Satan in Early Modern Scotland," *Critical Survey* 23, no. 2 (2011): 26.

panic, and power abuse. The accusations of demonic pact in the novel are not only legitimate, but they also represent the figurative presence of the Devil in society, which includes legal injustice, and the corrupting influence of authority. By creating characters that represent different types of oppression, Douglas Watt investigates these ideas throughout literary depiction. The novel also examines certain settings with symbolic resonance, highlighting that the presence of the Devil was not only visible through people's actions and decisions, but his existence was also captured in the environment that people live in. This analytic part of the chapter, aims to provide a critical literary analysis of how the process of demonisation and the role of witches formed accusations.

The literary depiction of demonisation is portrayed on the female character Euphame Hay. Her persona as well as her identity was wrongfully demonised by the superstitions raised by those who used a social manipulation and took advantage of social chaos. Her connection to the Devil stems almost primarily from the oppressive environment and popular notion of witchcraft. Euphame's character is subjected to a cruel process of torture where she is required to produce a confession of her relationship with Satan. The enduring pain during the torture caused her to create a narrative about her interactions with the devil:

“I confess that I am a witch. I have sold myself body and soul unto Satan. My mother took me to the Blinkbonny Woods where we met other witches. I put a hand on the crown of my head and the other on the sole of my foot. I gave everything between unto him.”⁸⁸

Her confession is not an admission of guilt, but rather a carefully prepared fiction driven on Euphame under a cruel torture. It contains all of the traditional characteristics of a typical witch confession from the time, mirroring the predicted screenplay anticipated by her accusers. The introductory line “I confess that I am a witch”⁸⁹ immediately identifies her as a servant of evil. By pronouncing herself a witch while being in unstable mental and physical conditions, her true belief of her role is not clear, as it could come from delusional declaration or a convinced nature. In Euphame's case, the diabolic pact highlights a complete devotion. In her story, the Devil is portrayed as a supreme and greedy power who demands her complete surrender. He is desired not only for her parts, but her complete being. This demonstration represents the popular belief at the time that witchcraft was a complete betrayal of God, both physically and spiritually. However, in this case, Watt attempts to demonstrate the strict and unfair control over Euphame that made her act this way and to confess, even despite her innocence, to witchcraft.

⁸⁸ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 181.

⁸⁹ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 181.

Her deal with the Devil was not her personal decision, but the forcing act made by the cruel actions made towards her humanity. Through Euphame's confession, the role of the Devil is supposed to represent the corrupted society and its fear and desire to control and manipulate others.

Euphame's confession to being a witch had a disturbing continuation, which with her detailed description of the event, made the interrogators even more ensure of her guilt. In her confession, she revealed that the process of diabolical pact, ended with a sexual relationship between her and the evil. The explicit sexual actions were certainly not true confessions but forced repetitions that she would use to free herself from the torture while being imprisoned. This description serves to thoroughly portray Euphame as evil, erasing any sense of humanity and dignity in the eyes of her accusers:

“I was told to kiss his manhood like a stallion's. I took his seed within my mouth. He told me I was beholden unto him. He lay with me in the position of a beast. He was cold within me like running water.”⁹⁰

In this excerpt, the presence of Satan is portrayed as a physical creature rather than a spiritual concept of evil. He is characterised as sexually aggressive and brutal, pushing his victims into humiliating and degrading obedience. This literary depiction of Satan also represents him as a threat, rather than a symbolic untouchable figure. What makes his presence even more alarming is Euphame's description of his “manhood like a stallion” and position “lying like a beast.” This characterisation evokes a dominant and wild, dehumanising creature. This dramatic depiction of his features and actions elevates him as a moral degradation, standing in direct opposition to the innocence. Douglas Watt purposely utilises frightening and disgusting imagery to show the accuser's excessive imaginations about Satan during witch trials. These illusions contributed to the creation of a definite antagonist in the body the devil, which explained a terrible punishment on anyone suspected of performing witchcraft.

The confession also revealed complex ways in which guilt and manipulation engage throughout the story. Moreover, it illustrates not only the enormous psychological pressure put on the accused to acknowledge to their role as Satan's helpers, but it also imposed the accused witches, to reveal the nature and the act of their crimes. In Euphame's case, it was not enough for the authorities to let her confess to being a witch, she was required to elaborate on the specifics of her demonic pacts as well as her crimes that led to her accusations:

⁹⁰ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 181.

“With my mother I planned the murder of my aunt, Lady Girnington. We prepared a wax painting which was roasted with brandy over a fire.”⁹¹

This Euphame’s testament powerfully depicts how people perceived evil and were concerned during the witch hunts. It demonstrates that when someone was accused of being a witch, the allegations were not merely ambiguous, they included comprehensive and frightening beliefs about the witches’ power to bring harm. The section of Euphame’s confession, in which she claimed using a wax figure to cause harm to her aunt, was very essential and frightening to her accusers and interrogators. It transformed the concept of evil from something abstract to something threatening. Her confession of planning to commit a crime on her family member made the community view both witchcraft and Euphame as a hazard and a danger to their community. Making a wax figure to do damage was a popular form of magic at the time. Scots believed that witches, who were regarded to possess the devil’s influence, might employ this type of sorcery to manipulate and harm people around them. This wasn't simply something people talked about; they believed in it and were confident it might happen in real life. The wax figure served as a physical demonstration of the Devil’s power that was operated through witches who were once a weaker member of the society before they were possessed by the Satan. The realisation of the evil powers being present only increased people’s fear within the village.

The demonisation of Euphame Hay, serves as the central focus of Douglas Watt’s investigation into how the demonisation spreads and the widespread impact of the Evil in the process of prosecutions. Her narrative demonstrates how even someone who is true to themselves and is sure of their innocence, can be unfairly perceived as bad or threatening. Throughout her character, Watt attempted to show that the fear and cruelty of accusation made individuals not true themselves. At the end, these pressures, caused by the accusers and people in charge, made even innocent people gave their hand to the Satan by choosing him as a way of escape from the cruel interrogations. Douglas Watt demonstrates that true evil does not originate from any magical being. Instead, it stems from people themselves, particularly from how they can abuse each other. He also highlights how simple it is for people to use other people as scapegoats for issues that are not truly their fault by projecting their own anxieties and fears onto them. This tendency to blame others can lead to a great series of pain and suffering, similarly to Euphame’s experience while being imprisoned. Overall, in her case, Watt highlights that the Devil’s presence is in human behaviour and attitudes, unlike in the form of

⁹¹ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 181.

supernatural beings and forces. Her agony and forced testament of her connection to the Devil only strengthen the community's beliefs and justification of their actions. This approach from the society and the local authorities, makes her a victim of their widespread fears and superstitions.

In the novel *Testament of a Witch*, the Devil is also depicted a manipulation tool used by individuals to control others. Some characters, particularly those who wish to maintain or increase their authority, invoke the devil to defend or explain their actions. For instance, Scougall, the detective's assistant, begins to see things that are not even there after reading Sinclair's book *Satan's Invisible World*. When he spots someone wearing a mask, he yells, "Satan is here! The Devil is here, sir! He will have us as his own!"⁹² This demonstrates how ingrained and powerful his fear of the Devil is. This example shows that his reaction is more than simply a concept, it is something that governs his world, leading him to confuse a regular individual wearing a mask for a supernaturally threatening entity. David Scougall's response reveals how fear may spread after being fostered by frightful legends and perceptions. By this approach, Douglas Watt aimed to show how much of the influence had the published material that promoted fear and made people perceive danger everywhere, even in place where none existed. Through Scougall's fear of the Satan, the author illustrated how superstition may alter people's perceptions of the world and take control of their thoughts. Scougall's mind was fueled by the stories about witches only prove how easily can a person become influenced:

'This parish is enthralled to the Devil. Satan walks amongst us' It was him. It was his pool. It was named after him. Satan had called him.⁹³

Moreover, this depiction of paranoia, reveals the nature of anxiety that arises from exaggerated notions and social pressure. The author aimed to recognise that the true threat came not from an external evil but rather from the way people's anxieties and fear could take control of their thoughts. These strong emotions had the power to hurt and damage entire communities as well as individual members of the society.

The literary depiction of the relationship between society and the Devil is constantly present. The book depicts that the religion and everyday life are strongly affected by the presence of the Evil entity among them. They strongly rely on God to save and guide them through these dark times as they are losing control over the demonic entities. The members of the community believe that the role of the Satan is to deceive everyone who rejects God.

⁹² Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 189.

⁹³ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 25.

As a result, people live in an environment where there is a constant and very present struggle between the good, God, and evil, the Satan. This intersection between the two forces shaped their entire view on life and affected their decisions and ideas: “Satan walks amongst us.”⁹⁴ This statement illustrates how people genuinely feared and firmly believed in the presence of the Devil in their town. This statement also served as a warning, to call out others for being careful and observe anything suspicious that might act as an indication of witches or the Evil himself. The rising accusations of witchcraft were enough evidence for the inhabitants of the town to believe in the realness of Satan and his harmful power. It also created a distrust and fear across the entire society. Even religious authorities promoted this ongoing worry and need for vigilance and urging everyone to be on guard at all times:

“We desire that God will bring their works of darkness to light so that His enemies may be punished. Satan blinds the mind of those that despise the Gospel. Show us, oh God – show us who they are.”⁹⁵

This excerpt shows the desire and despair that people required from God. People viewed those controlled by Satan not only as criminals but also as a Lord’s enemies. By putting their faith in God, they gave a duty to intervene and establish justice by identifying and punishing individuals who had been corrupted by the Devil. This approach gave some individuals the impression that remaining faithful to God would secure their safety. Additionally, it established a distinct line between good and bad, forcing everyone to take a side in this spiritual conflict. It strengthened people’s belief that their faith was part of the conflict between demonic corruption and divine justice. They saw God as a divine judge and protector who actively participated in resolving the fight against evil, rather than just a source of wisdom and compassion. Only God could identify wickedness and expose individuals who were under the Devil’s influence. For them, the faith was a vital defence against their fear of evil.

In conclusion, in seventeenth century Scotland, the process of demonisation and the role of the Devil strongly influenced how witchcraft was perceived. The proof of diabolic pact published in diaries and religious doctrines only proved the notion that witchcraft was morally and spiritually unacceptable. These theoretical aspects are critically portrayed in the historical novel *Testament of a Witch*, which shows how religious and societal beliefs were impacted by the fear of the presence of the Devil within the communities. The story portrayed Satan as a constant force that could cause detachment from a reality. This constant danger increased the

⁹⁴ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 13.

⁹⁵ Watt, *Testament of a Witch*, 15.

community's paranoia and made them more reliant on God for his protection and justice. Through an analysis of these anxieties, the chapter provided evidence of how the struggles between divine and demonic powers shaped social fears and the prosecutions of suspected witches in Scotland throughout the seventeenth century.

CONCLUSION

This master thesis has investigated the intersection between history and literature by focusing on the seventeenth-century Scottish witch-hunts and their literary depiction in the historical novel *Testament of a Witch* by Douglas Watt. It seeks to provide a deeper understanding of this era, its cultural significance, and its impact on the way these events are remembered by combining historical research and literary interpretation.

The theoretical part of the thesis presented a detailed exploration of the seventeenth-century Scotland's cultural, social, and political background, which highly contributed to the growing series of witch-hunting. This investigation revealed how deeply established societal fears, combined with religious and political conflicts, generated an environment receptive to distrust and persecution. This part also delved deeply into the nature and methods of accusations during the seventeenth-century Scottish witch-hunts, presenting them as a complex and varied phenomenon. Accusations were frequently based on weak and subjective evidence, such as unexplained disasters, illness, or a social injustice which communities blamed on demonic spirits. These events created fertile ground for suspicion, particularly in small villages where interpersonal connections were fraught with envy, bitterness, and mistrust. Conflicts over property, inheritance, and social positions also led to individuals being charged in order to hurt or eliminate them. Women, particularly those without male protection, were frequently targeted. In a patriarchal society, their perceived fragility was often misinterpreted as a social flaw, making them easy targets to be blame for societal misfortunes and local disasters.

The study of identity revealed its critical role in the acceptance of accusations made towards the individual. Both collective and individual identities played a significant role in determining who became a target. Women who did not follow traditional rules set by the society, like widows or those without any children, were frequently found at a higher risk of accusations. These individuals were often viewed as outsiders and therefore a danger to existing social structures. The individual identity was heavily influenced by the collective identity, as an individual's reputation relied on the opinions and observations made by their neighbours or family members. Once a person's reputation was touched with a false accusation of witchcraft, it was almost impossible to regain it back. This intersection between the two identities demonstrates how they played a significant part in prolonging and justifying witch-hunts.

The thesis also explored the dominant belief systems and religion and their significant role in witchcraft allegations in Scotland in the seventeenth century. During this time, religion was more than just a personal belief, it shaped communal policies, social behaviour, and notions

about good and evil. Clergy and community leaders played an important role in justifying witchcraft allegations by tying them directly to the presence and product of the Devil. This association gave a strong moral and religious rationale for persecution, as witches were viewed not only as criminals but also honest and reliable servants of the evil, endangering the spiritual well-being of the whole community. This approach allowed public to promote witch-hunting and resolved them through harsh trials often with not enough physical proof.

The analytic part of this master thesis demonstrated how *The Testament of a Witch* employs a variety of literary approaches to investigate and reinterpret the historical events surrounding the Scottish witch-hunts. The novel's narrative goes beyond relaying facts to explore essential topics such as identity, power, and faith. Through the book's characters and plot, the author challenges a typical depiction of witches while also implementing perspectives from historical records that have been marginalised. This literary depiction not only expands reader's understandings of the past but also encourages readers to consider the interpretation of history depicted in the literature. By doing so, this approach demonstrated how literature connects history and fiction, providing new insights on complicated social and cultural challenges.

In conclusion, this master thesis investigated the complex historical background of the seventeenth century Scottish witch-hunts, examining both the historical setting and its literary depiction in the historical novel, *Testament of a Witch* by a Scottish writer Douglas Watt. It has captured how religion, social norms, and politics about identity shaped allegations and trials, thereby affecting the lives of countless individuals. This study emphasised that behind each accusation was a human individual with hopes, and a story to tell. By delving into both harsh truths of the past and their literary interpretations, the thesis aimed to honour the suffering of those who were victims of false accusations while also addressing corruption within the legal and social systems of that era. It portrayed the accused witches as people caught up in a tragic and complex historical era, which presented them as criminals and outsiders of their communities.

RESUMÉ

Diplomová práce se zabývá tématem honu na čarodějnice ve Skotsku, které hrálo velkou roli v životech lidí v 17. století. Toto období bylo znamením velké nejistoty, která měla za následek chaos a strach, který byl hlavním motivem k tomu, aby se tento „fenomén“ zapsal do dějin (nejen) skotského národa.

Cílem této práce bylo oddělit dané téma od zkreslených představ, které vytvářejí tenkou hranici mezi tím, čemu by lidé měli věřit a čemu nikoliv. Text obsahuje podrobnou analýzu skutečných událostí a historických záznamů, které dokazují, že čarodějnice nebyly nadpřirozené bytosti, ale obyčejné ženy a muži. Ti se stali oběťmi společenské paniky a často i naivní důvěry v tehdejší autority a společenské mechanismy.

První kapitola se zaměřuje na význam historických románů a jejich roli jako ideálního nástroje pro interpretaci minulosti. Historické romány umožňují nahlédnout do historie prostřednictvím faktických událostí nebo fikčního vyprávění, čímž poskytují čtenáři hlubší pochopení kontextu, ve kterém se minulost odehrávala. Tato kapitola dále zdůrazňuje důležitost porozumění propojení mezi minulostí a současností, což představuje klíčový aspekt při studiu historie. Minulost zde vystupuje nejen jako zdroj poučení, ale také jako varování, které může pomoci předcházet opakování chyb a nevhodných rozhodnutí v současnosti. Historické události, jakým je například i skotský hon čarodějnic, představuje určitou pohled na odpovědnost a dopady lidského jednání.

Druhá kapitola se zaměřuje na kulturně-historický kontext, v němž se nacházelo Skotsko v průběhu 16. a 17. století. Základy fenoménu čarodějnictví se začaly formovat mnohem dříve, avšak tato kapitola podrobně rozebírá klíčové události, které ovlivnily společenský a náboženský život na přelomu těchto dvou století. Již během vlády Jakuba I. a VI. se objevují zmínky o nadpřirozených úkazech, přičemž samotný panovník byl přesvědčen o existenci čarodějnic v jeho blízkosti. Jakubova odhodlanost dokázat jejich existenci ilustruje, jak snadno může posedlost a víra ve vlastní představy vyústit v tragédii, která ovlivní celá desetiletí. Následné období bylo charakteristické náboženskými a politickými tlaky, které vedly k utlačování obyvatel napříč společenskými vrstvami. Kapitola se též věnuje roli církve, která v tehdejší společnosti zaujímal významné postavení, zejména v otázkách víry, výkonu spravedlnosti a společenské morálky. V této době panovalo přesvědčení, že právo vynášet soudy náleží pouze Bohu. Tyto soudy, často podněcované kolektivní hysterií, se staly zásadním faktorem při rozvoji tzv. honů na čarodějnice. Tento jev slouží jako varovný příklad toho, jak mohou obavy a společenské napětí přerůst v pronásledování a nespravedlnost.

Třetí kapitola podrobně popisuje způsoby mučení, které byly využívány k vynucení přiznání k čarodějnictví a k údajné spolupráci s ďáblem. Je zásadní zmínit, že zatímco dnešní popkulturní představa čarodějnic často vychází z jejich vzhledu, v období čarodějnických procesů hrála při identifikaci klíčovou roli pověst obžalované či obžalovaného ve společnosti. Převážná většina obvinění z používání magie směřovala proti ženám, avšak kapitola zahrnuje i případy, kdy byli z čarodějnictví obviněni muži. Jedním z nejčastějších důvodů stíhání žen bylo jejich chování, které neodpovídalo společenským normám té doby. Pokud se nepodřídily manželovi nebo se chovaly jinak, než jak se od nich očekávalo, mohly být označeny za čarodějnice. Je důležité zmínit, že samotná obžaloba nezaručovala trest smrti. Mezi nejčastější postihy patřily finanční pokuty, vyhnanství nebo žalář. Přesvědčení o špatném chování konkrétního člověka bylo často natolik silné, že vedlo k vynucení přiznání za pomoci mučení. Bolest, ponížení a fyzické i psychické vyčerpání představovaly základní prostředky na které se vyšetřovatelé spoléhali. Ačkoli byli mnozí mučení často nevinní, pod tíhou fyzického a psychického utrpení bylo získání jejich přiznání prakticky jisté.

Čtvrtá kapitola je věnována identitě mužů a žen v tehdejší společnosti a jejímu významu na určení viny či nevinu při čarodějnických procesech. Vzhledem k tomu, že hon na čarodějnice v sedmnáctém století s každým rokem sílil, rostla i paranoia a strach. Lidé si přestávali důvěřovat a vzájemně se obviňovali, což mělo zásadní dopad i na jejich identitu. Kapitola ukazuje, jak jsou individuální a společenská identita neoddělitelně propojeny a vzájemně se ovlivňují. Společenské postavení v sedmnáctém století hrálo velkou roli – právě společnost byla hlavním subjektem, který rozhodoval o tom, kdo z ní bude vyřazen a kdo nikoli. Tato kapitola se proto zabývala otázkou identity a tím, jakými vlastnostmi utvářela lidskou osobnost a jak byla ovlivněna ostatními. Toto téma bylo ve století čarodějnic podrobena těžké zkoušce. Společnost se obracela proti svým lidem a sounáležitost, kterou dříve cítila, se přeměnila v podezíravost a strach. Každý mohl být obviněn což vedlo k nejen finančnímu a fyzickému, ale i k psychickému utrpení. Toto „označení“ znamenalo okamžitou úplnou změnu jeho identity. Okolí takového člověka vnímalo jako nebezpečí a možnost jeho znovuzařazení do komunity byla navždy ztracena.

Závěrečná, pátá kapitola se zabývá spojením čarodějnic s ďáblem. Čarodějnice byly označovány za ďáblové služebnice. Podle církve to byl on, kdo způsoboval v životech lidí strast a bolest. Věřilo se, že se ďábel dokázal převtělovat a měnit svou podobu. Díky tomu mohl s lidmi lehce manipulovat a svádět je k hříchu. Osoby, které byly za čarodějnice označeny měly s ďáblem uzavřít pakt o vzájemné spolupráci. Tento pakt často vykazoval rituál, ve kterém mělo

mezi nimi dojít k sexuálnímu činu. Prokázat jejich službu ďáblu nebylo snadné, rozhodnutí tak bylo vázáno na názoru společnosti na obviněného. Přiznání o paktu bylo jedním z hlavních cílů mučení, ke kterému se za pomoci fyzické bolesti ve většině případů dosáhlo.

Tato práce dále obsahovala podrobnou literární analýzu díla *Testament of a Witch* od skotského autora Douglase Watta. Analýza se zaměřila na jednotlivá témata představená v předchozích kapitolách a podrobně je zkoumala. Získané důkazy ukázaly, jak tento román a jeho autor interpretovali daná témata a jak byly problematické otázky reflektovány prostřednictvím postav. Celkovým cílem práce bylo prozkoumat vztah mezi historií a literaturou prostřednictvím analýzy přístupu, jakým jsou sedmnácté století a skotské hony na čarodějnice zobrazeny a interpretovány v historickém románu.

Vědomí o probíhajících čarodějnických procesech posilovalo strach, který vedl k nárůstu počtu oznámení o podezřelém chování. Co je tedy hlavním důvodem rozmachu čarodějnictví? Je jím vypočítavost lidí, kteří zneužili nevzdělanosti ostatních, nebo spíše strach o vlastní bezpečí? Víra v nadpřirozené síly provází lidstvo po staletí a tato představa nás neopouští ani v dnešní moderní době. I dnes, o několik století později, se setkáváme s podobnými mechanismy, které podobně jako hon na čarodějnice v sedmnáctém století, vyvolávají v lidech strach a nejistotu.

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