

The Politics of *Pandaemonium*

Historians of witchcraft have often cited the letter sent by Sir Francis North to Secretary of State Sir Leoline Jenkins (dated 19 August 1682) from the Exeter assizes concerning the trial of the three 'Bideford witches', a trial which also generated several accounts in pamphlets and ballads and widespread contemporary comment. North, one of the two circuit judges (though not the one trying this particular case), wrote that "I find the country so fully possessed against them, that though some of the virtuosi may think these things the effects of confederacy, melancholy or delusion, and that young folkes are altogether as quicksighted as they who are old and infirme; Yet we cannot reprieve them without appearing to denye the very being of witches, which, as it is contrary to law, so I think it would be ill for his Majestie's service, for it may give the faction occasion to set afoot the old trade of witchfinding that may cost many innocent persons their lives, which this justice will prevent".¹ By the faction, North meant the Whig party, which was very strong in the south-west. In the life of Francis North written by his brother, Roger, these witchcraft cases are discussed immediately after a discussion of how the judge had to act very carefully when watched and tested by the factious. Specifically, he reports North's reprieve in a Taunton assize case of 1680 of an old woman who claimed to have been tried before during the civil war period. Roger North makes much of his brother's scepticism on such matters, contrasted with the credulity of the juries.² Yet, as Sir Francis noted, the law was clear about the reality of witchcraft, and the royal judges could not afford to appear to flout the law lest 'the faction' take advantage. The reference to 'the old trade of witchfinding' suggests that North at least was conscious of the precedent of Hopkins in the 1640s, and perhaps of the wider upsurge of witchcraft prosecutions during the interregnum in areas such as the south west. The three Bideford witches were thus sacrificed to prevent broader danger to the monarchy and the state, caught between rival political factions for whom witchcraft was contested ground.

In considering attitudes to the Act of 1604, and witchcraft more generally, between the Restoration and 1736, historians have become increasingly aware of the malleable and conjunctural character of responses, in the highly complex and rapidly altering ideological contexts of the period. Both religion and politics in general were dominated by disputes over the meaning of allegiance to crown, parliament and the Church of England (or Protestantism more generally), and by how to respond to the threats to national culture posed by social and cultural change, seen by many as requiring a 'reformation of manners'. Although one dimension of this change was often seen as the decay of religion as a force in public life (as opposed to a spiritual or moral guide), most people appear to have still held strongly providentialist views, linking national wellbeing with God's judgment on the nation. Moreover, all of these debates took place in an atmosphere of polarization and conspiracy, in which disputes regarding allegiance and cultural change were conducted, not through the

¹ SP Dom C2/420/24, cited in P.Q. Karkeek, 'Devonshire Witches', *Transactions Devonshire Association*, 6 (1874), pp. 736-63 at p. 742.

² Roger North, *Life of the Right Honourable Francis North, Baron of Guildford* (London, 1742), pp. 129-32.

acceptance of genuine differences between parties and opinions that could be resolved, but through the demonization of opposing viewpoints as expressions of faction at best, and of treason against the state and God at worst. As Bostridge, Elmer and the present author have shown, in this setting the language and accusation of witchcraft could be deployed by all sides and in many different settings.³

As North's letter demonstrates, the statute against witchcraft was itself a potent, yet highly contested, factor in this process. As a law, it represented the fusion of the authority of both crown (stressed by the Tory North) and parliament. Its close association with the first of the Stuarts, and his well-known attack on witchcraft as the ultimate crime against royal authority in his *Demonology*, gave it strong royalist credentials. Yet in practice the Stuart monarchs in England, and most of their judges and leading clergy, had proved highly suspicious both of the reality of witchcraft in specific cases and, in general, of the potential that witchcraft (especially possession) offered to critics of the established church to claim authority in matters of the spirit. Before 1640, this was a dual struggle against both Roman Catholics and Puritans, but after that it became ever more complex, with the emergence not only of more radical forms of sectarianism (themselves often seen as demonically possessed), but also of the fear of Hobbesian materialism and atheism. For the next 75 years, at least, it was far from clear to the establishment where the greatest threat to national security lay. The emergence of Tory and Whig political parties, and the association of each of these (by their opponents) with absolutist popery and republican fanaticism (respectively), with each party struggling to rid itself of these labels and to convince the nation that it could rid the country of atheism and enthusiasm and reform the nation's manners, meant that both the general debate about witchcraft and specific cases (both trials and reported happenings) became overlaid with ideological readings and meanings.

The aim of this article is to uncover as many of these layers of meaning as possible for a specific text, namely *Pandaemonium, or the Devil's Cloyster* published in 1684, and for the Bovet family of the Somerset/Devon border region who produced the text.⁴ Ian Bostridge has already sketched the potential of reading *Pandaemonium* from North's perspective as an example of a writer 'with Whig credentials embracing witch theory and with political ends in mind .. as the cover for an attack on Roman Catholicism', showing that 'the iniquities of the Restoration court, and the advance of Popery in the bosom of the English establishment, were, quite literally, diabolical'.⁵ In so doing, he focuses his account on the first part of the text, rather than the second part, which has normally been seen as the interesting part of

³ Ian Bostridge, *Witchcraft and its Transformations c.1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Peter Elmer, 'Towards a Politics of Witchcraft in Early Modern England', in *Languages of Witchcraft*, ed. by Stuart Clark (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), pp. 101-118; Jonathan Barry, 'Hell upon Earth or the Language of the Playhouse' in *ibid.*, pp. 139-158. See also the introductions by Peter Elmer and James Sharpe to volumes 4-6 of *English Witchcraft 1560-1736*, gen. ed. by James Sharpe (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003).

⁴ For ease of reference I will use the modern edition, with introduction and notes by Montague Summers, published by Hand and Flower Press, Aldington, Kent in 1951. The original editions are discussed below.

⁵ Bostridge, *Witchcraft*, p. 90.

the volume. This part 'giving plain Evidence concerning Apparitions, Spirits and Witches, proving by a Choice Collection of Modern Relations (never yet Published) their real Existence' consists of fifteen cases either from Bovet's locality and own experience or sent to him by friends (in Scotland, mostly) and several of these (regarding fairies and ghosts) have become standard parts of the repertoire of supernatural stories. Russell Hope Robbins dismisses the first part as 'unoriginal comment on witchcraft, violently anti-papist, some borrowed from Glanvill and the rest from the mystical theology of the unreliable Daniel Brevint', but considers that 'the second part, however, contains fifteen quite amusing ghost stories (including Poltergeists) .. In collecting such stories from his friends, Bovet shows the contemporary interest in experimental philosophy, in common with Dr Henry More (to whom the book is dedicated) and Glanvill'.⁶ Most other historians have echoed this last point, seeing Bovet as a follower or colleague of Joseph Glanvill, Henry More and the Scotsman George Sinclair, all publishing in the period 1681-5. Jo Bath and John Newman, for example, regard Bovet's subtitle (in the Walthoe edition, see below) 'being a further Blow to Modern Sadduceism, proving the Existence of Witches and Spirits' as showing 'that he was self-consciously following in [Glanvill's] footsteps' (pp.4-5).⁷ Only the eccentric Montague Summers, who republished the text in 1951, has used both parts of his work, citing him uncritically in his *Witchcraft and Black Magic* both as a serious demonologist and as a source of specific cases.⁸ However, Summers treats Bovet as schizophrenic - contrasting his 'religious eccentricities' with the 'plain and practical' work of the 'absolutely unmythical' Bovet, as 'an investigator of psychic phenomena'. He even argues that 'in one sense and in a very real way, the religious bias and prejudice of the author lend a certain weight to his pages. His eccentricities, although harsh enough and foolish, today we can set aside. His 'Relations' bear the hall-mark of truth'.⁹ I shall argue that this completely inverts Bovet's own order of priority.

To understand Bovet's text in its entirety, we need to understand the relationship between its two parts, and what relationship it actually bears to the work of Glanvill and More. We also need to consider its title, borrowed from the court of the fallen angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. We need to understand the two slightly different editions of the text, and their relationship to a pamphlet on one of the cases in part two, the 'Daemon of Spraiton' (Spreyton near Okehampton in Devon), which Bovet had published the previous year, and how his handling of this case in each publication compares with the account of it which John Aubrey received from his Somerset correspondent, Andrew Paschall. We also need to understand how this text fits in with the experiences of the Bovet family in the second half of the seventeenth century, including the radical lives and deaths

⁶ Russell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown, 1959), p. 59.

⁷ Jo Bath and John Newton, "'Sensible Proof of Spirits": Ghost Belief during the Later Seventeenth Century', *Folklore*, 117 (April 2006), pp. 1-14, at pp. 4-5. Cf. James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), p. 266; Gillian Bennett, 'Ghost and Witch in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Folklore*, 97 (1986), pp. 3-14, at pp. 10-11.

⁸ Montague Summers, *Witchcraft and Black Magic* (London: Studio Editions, 1995), pp. 18, 35, 98, 103, 200-1, 203.

⁹ Introduction to Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, pp. xvii and xx.

of Richard and Philip Bovet in civil war, under republican and Restoration regimes and finally in Monmouth's rebellion of 1685, and the participation of other Bovets in one of the last cases of witchcraft tried at Exeter, in 1696. This case brings home the question of whether we can or should separate the use of witchcraft as an ideological weapon against political and religious enemies, from its place in shaping the fears of families faced with everyday misfortune and tragedy, and their legal actions against their neighbours within the framework of the law. Ironically, these Bovets found themselves up against another royal judge, Sir John Holt, who was even more determined than North to use suspicion of fraud and sarcasm about the evidence to undermine the possibility of prosecution under the act of 1604. Holt passed on his notes about this and other late trials to Francis Hutchinson for his *Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft* of 1718, after which Whigs generally adopted the attitude which lay behind the new Witchcraft Act of 1736, in which the threat to the state from witchcraft was authoritatively declared no longer to be the actions of demons, but the frauds of conspiring humans and the credulity of the vulgar.

Bovet's text has normally been identified as part of the campaign to defend the existence of the world of spirits, and hence the truths of the Christian religion, against 'sadducism', revived in the form of Hobbesian materialism and fashionable skepticism. The two central figures in this campaign were Joseph Glanvill (Rector of Bath) and Henry More (of Christ's College, Cambridge), with the key work being Glanvill's 1681 *Saducismus Triumphatus*, which was More's edition of the revised and expanded version of Glanvill's earlier writings on this subject, left unfinished at his death in 1680. At the core of Glanvill's text were the details of a series of Somerset witchcraft cases from the period 1657-1664, given to him by the Somerset JP Robert Hunt, plus his own experience of the Wiltshire poltergeist case, generally known as the 'Drummer of Tedworth'.¹⁰ Glanvill corresponded regularly with More, and took from More's 1653 text, *An Antidote against Atheisme*, the characteristic mixture in all these books of theological debate with detailed accounts of specific cases of the praeternatural observed first-hand by the author or his trusted correspondents. Given that Bovet was also from Somerset, and drew his cases largely from that county and its close neighbours, and organised his book in a similar fashion, it is hardly surprising that his work has been seen as a minor contribution to the same tradition.

Indeed, Bovet goes to some lengths to encourage the reader to consider his book in this light. *Pandaemonium* is dedicated to More, praising 'with what irrefragable reason you have opposed and vanquish't the legions of atheistical and disbelieving pretenders who seem to be incredulous of discourses of the existence of spirits and their attempts upon lapsed and degenerate men'.¹¹ Bovet claims to be taking up

¹⁰ Michael Hunter, 'New Light on the "Drummer of Tedworth"', *Historical Research*, 78 no. 201 (August 2005), pp. 311-53, is the most recent contribution on Glanvill, More and their work.

¹¹ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, p. xxiii.

the invitation in *Saducismus Triumphatus* 'to contribute all I could to the asserting the reality of spiritual existencies [sic] and, by consequence, the advantages such subtle agents have to surprise the unwary and entrap the negligent disbeliever in inextricable snares; whil'st they who shut their eyes against the belief of daemons are imperceptibly hurried by them upon the unavoidable principles of sensuality and impenitence'.¹² Later he attacks 'the bold confidence of some of these Witch advocates that they durst affront that Relation of the Daemon of Tedworth, published by the Ingenious Mr Glanvil, and Attested by Mr Mompesson, a Gentleman, and a Divine, who (to all that knew them) were never over fond of crediting stories of this kind'.¹³ At the end of chapter V, before turning to the relations of witches, Bovet states 'that atheism, idolatry, sensuality, and debauchery, have a natural tendence [sic] to promote this impious and diabolical confederacy, hath been hinted in the forgoing pages. Which being so regularly, learnedly and largely treated of by the excellent pens of Dr H.M. and Mr J.G. before mentioned, in the second part of *Saducismus Triumphatus*; I shall presume to wade no further in the argumentative and philosophical part'. Bovet also compares his cases with those in *Saducismus Triumphatus*.¹⁴

A Narrative of the Demon of Spraiton, edited by Bovet in 1683, is even more emphatic in its attack on 'your Hobbs's, your Scots, your Websters, with their blasphemous denyals of the existence of spirits, or an eternal state in the life to come. Or how can they that deny the being of spirits suppose that there is such a thing in the world as a God? Here is one Account more of matter of fact, to those which the learned Doctor Moore, the ingenious Dr Glanvill (with divers others, the assertors of divine providence, and an eternal state) have printed in confutation of your brutish stupidity; which one would think were enough for ever to silence and confound the advocates of debauchery and sadducism and reduce their arguments into that nullity they contend for.'¹⁵ It continues 'we have not room in this place to enter into a disquisition of the nature of the apparitions hereafter mentioned; but shall for that refer the reader to the learned discourses of the reverend Dr Henry Moore and the ingenious Dr Glanvill, before mentioned, who have largely treated of the nature of spirits and daemons and with undeniable arguments proved the existence of such'.¹⁶

However, there is no evidence in any other sources that Bovet was known to Glanvill, despite their proximity, and he admits that he is dedicating his book to More despite being a 'stranger' to him. Apologising for his 'unpolisht' discourse, Bovet describes it as 'common prudence to list myself under the banner of so victorious a chieftain' and, anticipating attacks for his work, he claims to 'have this farther encouragement, that I have not only ingaged in a good design, but have put myself under the umbrage of so great a patron, that there can be no apprehensions of dangers from the attacks of the modern sadduces upon, sir, your assured humble servant R.B.'.¹⁷ This

¹² *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-8, 103, 113, 124.

¹⁵ *A Narrative of the Demon of Spraiton* (London, 1683), pp. 1-2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁷ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, pp. xxiii and xxvii.

suggests that the appeal to the More/Glanvill tradition is more a defensive mechanism than an acknowledgement of authority. It is also worth noting that Bovet, while not neglecting the theological dimension of 'sadducism', emphasises the degeneracy, sensualism and debauchery which are indelibly associated with it. This reflects the very distinctive character of the first part of his text, which offers, in the words of the title-page of the Walthoe edition 'a discourse deduced from the fall of the angels, the propagation of Satans kingdom before the Flood: the idolatry of the ages after, greatly advancing diabolical confederacies. With an Account of the lives and transactions of several notorious witches', which the other title-page identifies as 'confederacies of several Popes and Roman priests with the Devil'.¹⁸ Bovet's dedication anticipates that 'some, perhaps, may be offended at the method I have used in attributing to priestcraft, so much of the original and contagion of diabolical confederacy'.¹⁹ It is doubtful if the Anglican clergymen and apologists Glanvill and More would have approved of this strategy which, if it claimed to be attacking Hobbesian skepticism, seemed to reproduce much of the anticlericalism which underlay both Hobbes's own writings and the use made of them by both radical Whigs and court wits.

Furthermore, Bovet was very clear that the first part of his text took precedence over the second. Both title-pages privilege the first part, and Bovet notes that 'the collection of relations may by some be blamed for being too short, many delighting themselves more with novelty of story than to enquire, and pursue the drift of the design; to these I can only say, that being confined to such a volume, there was not room for more, tho [sic] many might have been added, which perhaps may be the subject of another volume; besides I could not without detriment to the whole have omitted anything contained in the first part, wherein I fear I have rather been too concise'.²⁰ If one compares the 'collection of relations' in the second part with More or Glanvill's publications, Bovet's can be seen to be highly sketchy, with fifteen cases related in forty-two pages of the modern edition (compared to ninety-seven pages for the first part), with the longest being the case of the 'demon of Spraiton', in a slightly amended version to that published in pamphlet form the year before. Although Bovet presents this collection in the empirical tradition of the Royal Society, hoping 'some sober and ingenious persons would undertake but to commend to the publick the occurrences of this nature in every county',²¹ his language quoted above emphasizes the subordination of the factual details to the 'drift of the design', and indeed denigrates the desire for more detail, not as the product of scientific interest but of delight in the 'novelty of story'.

If we are looking for a true inspiration for Bovet's work, a more likely answer is given by his title, borrowed from the name given to the court of the fallen angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. We are now so used to the word Pandaemonium that we tend to forget both its original meaning (literally an all-demon-assembly) and that it was a word coined by Milton: indeed the *Oxford English Dictionary* records no further

¹⁸ Ibid, p. xxi reproduces the Walthoe edition title page. The Malthus title-page is on p. vi.

¹⁹ Ibid. pp. xxiv-v.

²⁰ Ibid., p. xxvi.

²¹ Ibid., p. 99.

usages of the term until the 1690s.²² In 1691 John Wilson's *Belphegor, or, The Marriage of the Devil* begins with the reading of a paper dated 'At the Pandaemonium, or Common-Council of the Infernal'. Bovet acknowledges his use of Milton when discussing the spread of idolatry among the Israelites; 'nay, there was not any detestable idol among the heathens, though never so bloody and diabolical, which did not at some time or other obtain for a Deity among the hardned [sic] and back-sliding Jews. A list of which is excellently drawn up by the pen of the learned and profound Mr John Milton in his *Paradise lost* [sic]'.²³ Reading Milton's poem as a historical account of the interdependence of diabolism and idolatry, Bovet can clearly be seen as part of the radical tradition of reading Milton which was obscured by its absorption into the mainstream of literary culture in the eighteenth century.²⁴

There is no direct evidence that Bovet knew Milton except through his work, but one of Bovet's accounts in his second part suggests that he may have done. The eighth and twelfth accounts both refer to a 'nobleman's house in the West of England, which had formerly been a Nunnery'.²⁵ The only house which clearly fits this description is Wilton House, the home of the Earls of Pembroke. In 1667, when Bovet tells us he was staying there 'with some persons of honour' and ended up sharing a room with 'the Noblemans steward, Mr C', the Earl in question was the 5th Earl, Philip Herbert. Philip had been a Parliamentarian and President of the Council of State in the early 1650s, although he survived the Restoration. He had a reputation as a chemist and Behmenist and, at the very least, a sympathizer with Quakerism, and in 1665 braved the Restoration Court to warn Charles II that the end of the world would come that year (to which Charles responded by offering to buy Wilton House for seven years' purchase, since the Earl did not anticipate enjoying it for long!).²⁶ During the 1660s the Earl employed the radical Behmenist Samuel Pordage as his steward (presumably not 'Mr C'?) and the tutor to his children between 1665 and 1670 was Milton's nephew, pupil and literary heir, Edward Phillips.²⁷ If Bovet was indeed

²² For the name see R. Smith, 'The Sources of Milton's Pandaemonium', *Modern Philology*, 29 (1931), pp. 187-98 (which argues that Milton may have based his image on his memory of St Peter's in Rome) and *Poems of John Milton*, ed. by John Carey and Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), p. 505, which notes a possible precursor in Henry More's use of 'Pandaemoniothon' in his writings.

²³ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, p. 9

²⁴ For studies of Milton's early reception see R.C. King, 'Andrew Marvell', *Milton Studies*, 27 (1991), pp. 165-82; Joseph Wittreich, 'Under the Seal of Silence', in *Soundings of Things Done*, ed. by Peter Medine and Joseph Wittreich (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), pp. 295-323; Barbara Liewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', *Milton Studies*, 38 (2000), pp. 141-68 and especially Nicholas von Maltzahn, 'First Reception of *Paradise Lost* (1667)', *Review of English Studies*, 47 (1996), pp. 479-99 and id., 'Laureate, Republican, Calvinist', *Milton Studies*, 29 (1992), pp. 181-98, which considers the responses of another Somerset man, the royalist natural philosopher John Beale. A recent study emphasising Milton's attack on idolatry is Achsah Guibbory, *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 187-227, especially pp. 193-8.

²⁵ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, pp. 121, 132.

²⁶ David Masson, *Life of John Milton vol. VI 1660-1674* (New York: P. Smith, 1946), pp. 763-4; Stephen Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 52; Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, ed. by Robert Latham and William Matthews (11 volumes, London: Bell & Hyman, 1970-83), vol. V, p. 294 and vol. IX, pp. 150-1 (and notes); *HMC 78 Hastings II*, pp. 150-1.

²⁷ Nigel Smith, 'Pordage, Samuel (*hap.* 1633, *d.* in or after 1691)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22547>, accessed 31

a regular guest at Wilton in 1667, which was the year when *Paradise Lost* was published, he must have known both Phillips and Pordage, and perhaps met Milton: certainly he would have been encouraged to see Milton through the lens of radical dissenting republicanism.

Bovet's other acknowledged source is Daniel Brevint, Dean of Lincoln. He admits that he has chosen 'to make use of the allegations of the learned Dr Brevint' who 'had the advantages of being both an eye and ear-witness of the detestable idolatries of the Roman Church, by being so long in Italy amongst them'.²⁸ Summers and Robbins have identified the close use of Brevint's work in the first part of Bovet's text, but he may also have borrowed from Brevint the idea of using a text apparently about witchcraft to attack the idolatry of the Roman Catholic Church.²⁹ Despite its title, Brevint's 1674 work, which Bovet used, *Saul and Samuel at Endor, or, The new waies of salvation and service, which usually temt [sic] men to Rome and detain them there truly represented and refuted*, actually contains nothing about the witch of Endor. Brevint's work also formed the source for much of the material in another work which may have influenced Bovet more directly, since it was published in London in 1683 by Thomas Malthus, with a preface by Titus Oates, namely Christopher Ness's, *The Devils Patriarck, or, A full and impartial account of the notorious life of this present Pope of Rome Innocent the 11th wherein is newly discovered his rise and reign, the time and manner of his being chosen Pope, his prime procession, consecration and coronation, the splendour and grandeur of his Court, his most eminent and gainful cheats, by which he gulls the silly people, his secret and open transactions with the papists in England, Scotland, France and Ireland, and other Protestant countreys to this very day : together with the rest of the hellish policies and infamous actions of his wicked life / written by an eminent pen to revive the remembrance of the almost forgotten plot against the life of his Sacred Majesty and the Protestant religion*. Here again we have the association of diabolism with popery, set in the context of priestcraft, plots and hellish policies. Like most publications of this period, this can only be understood in the context of the Popish Plot and its aftermath, with 1682-3 seeing the highpoint of the press struggle to define whether the greatest threat to the country came from Popery or from Whiggery. The prosecution of the Rye House plotters and the full force of the Tory reaction over the next two years, up to James's succession to the throne and Monmouth's rebellion, drove much of this press controversy underground.

It is in this context that we may be able to understand the curious publishing history of Bovet's text. It survives in two editions, whose texts are apparently identical, but with different title pages and publishers. One was printed for 'Tho. Malthus at the Sun in the Poultry', while the second was printed for 'J. Walthoe, at the Black Lion, Chancery Lane, over against Lincoln's Inn'. The Malthus title page gives the title simply as 'Pandaemonium or the Devil's Cloyster, in Two parts' and then gives in full the chapter headings of part I,

May 2006]; Gordon Campbell, 'Phillips, Edward (b. 1630, d. in or after 1696)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22148>, accessed 31 May 2006].

²⁸ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, p. xxv.

²⁹ *Ibid*, pp. xvi-xviii; Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 59.

before describing part II as 'giving plain evidence concerning apparitions, spirits and witches; proving by a choice collection of modern relations (never yet published) their real existence'. The Walthoe edition has the subtitle, 'being a further blow to modern sadduceism, proving the existence of witches and spirits', before giving the details of the 'discourse' quoted above, and then 'also, a collection of several authentick relations of strange apparitions of daemons and spectres, and fascinations of witches, never before printed'. The Michaelmas 1684 edition of the *Term Catalogue* (under 'Miscellanies') gives a further variant of the title, identical to Walthoe's except that it replaces 'an account of the lives and transactions of several notorious witches' with 'an account of the lives of several notorious witches, some whereof have been popes'. No publisher is given for the work here, but the next item was an edition of Lucan's works sold by Malthus.³⁰ It appears that, as I have suggested was the case within the text, there was an ongoing tension about whether this book was primarily to be identified as an anti-papal or an anti-sadducist work.

The publishing careers of Malthus and Walthoe may suggest that this reflected two potentially different markets for the work. *Pandaemonium* was not their only collaboration, and they both also co-published with D. Brown, who combined with Malthus to publish *A Narrative of the Demon of Spraiton* in 1683. Walthoe was a newly established bookseller, whose location in Chancery Lane reflected the start of a long career marked by a focus on law publishing, with no obvious ideological bent.³¹ Malthus, on the other hand, although his career had also begun only in 1682, had a highly active record in 1683 and 1684, then just two publications in 1685, when he disappears from the record. John Dunton (who printed works for Malthus, including *The Devils Patriarck*) last remembered seeing him leaving for Holland in a hurry in 1685, 'his circumstances being something perplexed'.³² This must surely be a euphemistic way of describing the flight into Dutch exile which many Whig radicals (such as John Locke) made in 1684-5, some returning with Monmouth, others not until 1688. Dunton noted that Malthus 'midwifed several books into the world, ay! And that of his own conceiving (without help of woman). He made a shew of great trade by continually sending out large parcels, But all I can say of his industry is, He took a great deal of pains to ruine himself.'³³ Many, though not all, of his publications in 1683-4 were Whig in sympathy, including works praising the Duke of Monmouth and the Earl of Shaftesbury, Dutch and Scottish publications and other anti-papal texts, and none were Tory or Anglican. In June 1683 the *Term Catalogue* advertised another Malthus publication entitled *A Whip for the Devil, or the Roman Conjuror*, which was a swinging attack on 'the folly, prophaneness and superstition of the papists in endeavouring to cast the Devil out of the bodies of men and women'.³⁴ One might plausibly conclude that Malthus published Bovet as part of a body of work which used the sensational theme of

³⁰ Edward Arber, *The Term Catalogues, 1668-1709* (3 vols, London: The Editor, 1903-06), II, p. 102.

³¹ Henry Plomer, *Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers 1668-1725* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1922), pp 300-1; John Dunton, *Life and Errors of John Dunton* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1974), pp. 284-5.

³² Plomer, *Dictionary*, p. 196

³³ Dunton, *Life*, p. 297.

³⁴ Arber, *Term Catalogues*, II, p. 33.

witchcraft to sell to fellow Whigs a diet of anti-papal diatribes, but ones which, from 1683 onwards, were best disguised as fitting a moral and religious agenda which had the protective respectability of Anglican clergy such as More, and could be published, in that setting, by men such as Walthoe.

It is interesting, in this respect, to consider more closely the story of the 'demon of Spraiton', which Bovet had published the previous year, and how his handling of the case in each publication compares with an account of the same events which circulated among the real colleagues of Glanvill and More. This was later published by John Aubrey, from a letter received in May or early June 1683 from his Somerset correspondent, Andrew Paschall.³⁵ The story involved the appearance of various spectres to members of the Furze household, notably a young male servant, with increasingly violent attacks on his body, which was also carried into the air and around the countryside, ending with a bird attacking him with a metal weight while he was in Crediton. Both accounts refer to a 'person of quality' and a clergyman as witnesses to the events. Bovet names the former, who wrote the letter of 11 May to a 'gentleman his friend in London' (presumably Bovet) which formed the basis of the pamphlet, as 'T.C. esq a near neighbour to the place', and this is probably one of the numerous members of the Cary family of Devon and Somerset. He continues 'and though it needed little confirmation further than the credit that the learning and quality of that gentleman had stamp'd upon it, yet was much of it likewise known to and related by the Reverend Minister of Barnstable, of the vicinity to Spraiton'.³⁶ The clergyman to whom Bovet referred, and who was the author of the letter to Paschall which he then forwarded to Aubrey, was John Boyse, who also held a living at Cheriton Bishop, near Spreyton. Paschall expected Aubrey to pass on the account to Henry More via Benjamin Whichcote in Cambridge and also, intriguingly, expected Sir Francis North to find it of interest. More did not use this material in the later editions of *Saducismus Triumphatus* but did use Paschall's account of the haunting of his father's house in Soper Lane.³⁷ With the thoroughness of a fellow of the Royal Society, Paschall sought corroboration of the details of the story from another local clergyman, who had also spoken 'with a gentleman of good fashion that was at Crediton when Fry was blooded and saw the stone that bruised his forehead, but he did not call it copper or brass but said it was a strange mineral. That gentleman promises to make a strict enquiry on the place into all particulars and to give me the result; which my friend also promises me, with hopes that he shall procure for me a piece of that mineral substance which hurt his forehead'.³⁸

John Boyse, was, like Paschall, a former fellow of Queen's College Cambridge, now holding a living in the west country but still in intellectual contact with Anglican antiquarian and scientific circles. Paschall also refers to an earlier episode concerning an apparition in Barnstable where 'An account was given to me long since [by Boyse], it

³⁵ John Aubrey, *Three Prose Works*, ed. by John Buchanan-Brown (Fontwell: Centaur Press, 1972), pp 90-4.

³⁶ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, p. 107.

³⁷ Aubrey, *Three Prose Works*, pp. 389-90.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 93.

fills a sheet or two, which I have by me; And to gratifie Mr Glanvill, who is collecting histories for his Sadducism Triumphatus, I desir'd to have it well attested, it being full of very memorable things, but it seems he could meet only a general consent as to the truth of the things; the reports varying in the circumstances'. In May 1686, shortly before his death, Boyse was to write to Paschall again regarding 'new feats played by invisible powers in his own parsonage house in the countrey'.³⁹

There is not space here to make a detailed comparison of the three accounts of the same event. Although Bovet in 1684 justifies reprinting his earlier work, 'having likewise since had fresh testimonials of the veracity of that relation; and it being at first designed to fill this place; I have thought it not amiss (for the strangeness of it) to print it here a second time, exactly as I had transcribed it then', in fact there are minor textual variations.⁴⁰ There are also minor differences in the information provided between the Bovet and Boyse versions, mostly reflecting the different viewpoint of the relators. The Boyse letter provides names and further details on the relationships between the parties, reflecting its status as a private letter rather than a public document. The crucial difference, however, comes at the end. Whereas the pamphlet ends by stressing that it is a faithful account of the original letter, 'the truth of which will be attested not only by divers persons of quality in this city, but upon inquiry in the adjacent county will be confirmed beyond all exception', Boyse concludes his letter by adding details of several other afflicted people caught up in the same episode, and adds. 'Indeed Sir you may wonder that I have not visited that house and the poor afflicted people, especially since I was so near and passed by the very door, But besides that, they have called to their assistance none but Nonconforming ministers, I was not qualified to be welcome there, having given Mr Furze a great deal of trouble the last year about a conventicle in his house, where one of this parish was the preacher. But I am very well assured of the truth of what I have written, and (as more appears) you shall hear from me again'.⁴¹ Even though Bovet's 1684 version promises 'fresh testimonials', it offers no updating of the May letter, and indeed ends 'whether the young man be yet alive, I can have no certain account. I leave the reader to consider of the extraordinary strangeness of the relation'.⁴²

In short, Bovet's account is, even in his longest case study, lacking in any real depth of interest in the story related, except as a source of wonder. Furthermore, both Bovet accounts omit the crucial information that the incident takes place in a nonconformist house with nonconformist ministers involved, as well as Anglican ones. Glanvill and More, and their fellow Anglican clergy like Paschall and Boyse, were seeking to walk a line between popery and nonconformist enthusiasm and using witchcraft and the spirit world to vindicate Anglicanism against both threats. Can we see Bovet as treading the same tightrope?

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-4, 389-91; A. J. Turner, 'Paschall, Andrew (1631?-1696)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58459>, accessed 31 May 2006].

⁴⁰ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, p. 107

⁴¹ *Narrative of Demon*, p. 8; Aubrey, *Three Prose Works*, p. 93.

⁴² Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, pp. 112-13.

No. His texts are unequivocally aimed against Catholicism, with no parallel attack on any form of Protestant dissent. *Pandaemonium* offers, as Bostridge rightly saw, a devastating contrast between the evils of the Restoration regime and the virtues of the period before the Fall, which it is hard not to read as the period of the 'good old cause' of republicanism. At issue here were both morality and religiosity - a simultaneous critique of decadence and licentiousness which both created and reflected a lack of proper religion, and of a form of religion which was idolatry and priestcraft not true faith. Both these facets reflected the role of the Devil in inciting such corruption - forms of both behaviour and worship which he created and which led to his worship in place of that of God.

Both the pamphlet and the book are obsessed with the 'bestial sensualities' which would inevitably follow lack of belief in spirits or a future life, leading to an 'eat, drink and be merry' culture 'whilst with torrents of intemperate and libidinous debauches they overwhelm their pampered and deluded selves in an eternal gulph of inextricable misery'.⁴³ This world of licentiousness is seen as the product of constant falls from grace, in which the devil strives to 'seduce and draw off the subjects of the Almighty from their allegiance to their sovereign creator' and 'bring them into an estate of vassalage and subject to his infernal power'.⁴⁴ One form that this takes is the explicit compact with the devil made by witches, or what he calls 'those homages, offices and oblations made him by his miscreant hagg[sic] and confederates in their nocturnal cabals and night-revels'.⁴⁵ But the language of this extract makes clear that such witchcraft presents itself to Bovet as a form of a much wider tendency to false worship, confederacy and revelling which all amount to the 'worshipping that abomination', whether in pagan form or 'in temples and pompous ceremonies'. Throughout the ages Bovet portrays a cosmic battle between a 'righteous seed' and those 'still held captive in the chains of his diabolical enchantments and fascinations, notwithstanding the dreadful and terrible judgments of the Almighty'.⁴⁶ The Israelites 'had no temple erected to his infernal worship, but still he reign'd among atheistical priests, debauched courts and wanton cities' nor 'are the streets of Christian cities free, but rather too shamefully infected with the filthy riots of these lewd night rambles: whose shameless abominations (if not soon suppressed) will doubtless bring us under an amazing and tremendous desolation'. 'If the back-slidings of the Jews cost them so dear, what may we think will become of apostate Christians?' In pre-Christian times, this saw 'the first National Church of the Jews perverted to the abominations of the Gentiles'.⁴⁷ But worse was to come, as 'the idolatrous papists of later date have been and are the great promoters of this infernal and accursed defection...the great encouragers of Demonolatry as well as Idolatry' for 'idol priest-craft [i.e. the Roman Catholic clergy] and devil-worship are inseparable dependants one upon the other'.⁴⁸ Papal apostacy from 'primitive simplicity' involved one long series of confederacies with the Devil

⁴³ *Narrative of Demon*, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, p. 1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-1, 68.

leading to 'an adoration of images, altars and relicks'. 'Still the old confederacy is kept up, tho [sic] under new forms and notions. And perhaps it is none of the smallest policies of the agents of that communion to impose upon their credulous ones the belief that there is no such thing as a witch, so that their performances of that kind may the better pass under the notion of a miracle.'⁴⁹

Bovet's account of witchcraft itself is highly unoriginal and could have been written by any seventeenth-century English protestant. It condemns the full Biblical range of soothsayers, charmers, sorcerers and magicians, as well as witches both black and white.⁵⁰ Given the power of the gospel, 'in those countries where there is least idolatry and where the sincere preaching of the word of power is countenanced, there it is very rare comparatively to meet with instances of the Satanical craft and power'.⁵¹ Witchcraft appeals to the ignorant, the malicious and especially the superstitious 'for they often become witches, by endeavouring to defend themselves against witchcraft', but others 'take up the use of magical forms and simples by tradition'.⁵² He condemns the use of conjuring books and most judicial astrology, but notes that the latter, if kept 'within the modest directions of natural speculation' can be lawful and useful. Similarly, there can be lawful divination, as God can give true knowledge of future 'to such as truly fear him and call upon his name', such as 'the changes that may happen either to his Church in general or to particular countries, families or persons'. 'Approaching calamities' 'often shew themselves to us either in aerial or other prodigies', for example 'the dreadful desolations that happened in Germany and in England in the late unnatural warrs [sic] (which whether or no they were presaged by them, yet certainly had many tremendous apparitions in the air and on the earth etc before those calamities broke forth among them)'.⁵³

The witch is 'commonly understood' as 'a female agent or patient, who is become in covenant with the Devil, having in a literal sense sold her selfe to work wickedness, such whose chief negotiation tends to the spoiling their neighbours persons or goods'.⁵⁴ Bovet describes the witch's relationship to the Devil in terms of prostitution ('those hellish compacts therefore are managed like the filthy intrigues betwixt a fornicator and his strumpet').⁵⁵ But because 'it is very difficult to prove such and such a one to be a witch' 'it ought to be done with the greatest caution and tenderness imaginable'. Some 'may have been unjustly accused for witches; either by ignorance of causes meerly [sic] natural or misapplying causes that in themselves are supernatural' especially given the possible effects of the imagination. But 'even if it be supposed that some have been suspected for witches, barely for having deformed bodies, ill aspects of melancholy constitutions', this does not disprove the existence of witches.⁵⁶ That witches are 'commonly of the female sex' is explained by their Eve-like

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 72, 97.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 16-19.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 42.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 53-4.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 55-7.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 47-9.

qualities, and 'it has been a long time observed' that women excel in both virtue and wickedness.⁵⁷

There is no sense in Bovet's book that he is seeking to stir up the prosecution of witches, but in his commentaries on the cases in the second part, he is relatively quick to identify a witch at work. In the first case (a 1683 report from Bristol of a case c.1638) although 'there be no mention made of any suspected witch, by whose power the aforesaid children were reduced to that deplorable state, and some of the physicians that administered to them were of the common opinion that there was nothing of fascination on the case, but that was purely the effect of a natural distemper, I must crave their pardon if I dissent from them'. Many of the features of the case were preternatural (unnaturally powerful convulsions, levitation, vomiting of pins and sudden recovery) and revealed 'the cloven-foot of fascination' and the omission of any reference to a witch appearing to the children might just be because no account survived of that particular or 'the confederate agency might purposefully avoid shewing any personal figure to them, lest the relations upon such notice should detect and prosecute the peccant party'.⁵⁸ In the fifth case, a Somerset one, the 'suspected agent' was a 'woman that had been of ill fame among the neighbours and suspected of divers ill practices', and problems began when she was refused the loan of some small change. A 'great toad' and seven 'vast large' cats appeared, and the fits of the afflicted mother and son involved vomiting pins and needles. The mother saw the witch and got her husband to cut at it with sword and 'that party had a lame hand for a considerable time after', though the 'supposed malevolent' lived about five years after the afflicted. Bovet notes 'I do not understand for all this any Justice was applied to, but many Physicians who all agreed it to be notorious witchcraft'.⁵⁹ Two of the Scottish cases also involved witches, although only the first, the 1678 case of Sir George Maxwell of Pollock, had led to an actual prosecution.⁶⁰

However, there is no sign in Bovet's volume of the elaborate confessions of Sabbaths and other dealings with the Devil found in the Somerset cases published by Glanvill or in the writings of Hopkins and Stearne. Bovet's witch stories could have appeared in any of the maleficial and possession pamphlets published during the previous century. The 'nocturnal cabals and night-revels' of the dedication, or the elaborate idolatrous worship of the Devil of the first part, are conspicuously absent, as is any direct role for the Devil. One other case involves a falconer 'raising the Devil' by reading a book at night, but the Devil is called a 'frightful goblin' and it is far from clear what took place or how seriously it is meant to be taken.⁶¹ Another case, in which some maids hope to see their future husbands on Midsummer's Eve night, leads Bovet to discuss 'magical days and seasons', noting the Devil's 'aversion to the light' and concluding

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 102-3.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 114-17.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 134-8. See Michael Hunter, *The Occult Laboratory* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2001) p. 3 for the widespread interest in the Maxwell case, which appears in both *Saducismus Triumphatus* and George Sinclair's *Invisible World Discovered*, making it the only case in Bovet that also appears in these other volumes.

⁶¹ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, pp. 118-19.

that 'most probable this appointing of times, and hours, is of the Devils own institution, as well as the fast, that having once ensnared people to an obedience to his rules, he may with more facility oblige them to a stricter vassalage', but he leaves the 'learned to judge' whether the 'appearances were the spirits of two young men' or (as he is 'apt to believe') 'spirits of another nature, that assumed their likeness'.⁶² The 'demons of Spraiton' are also described by Bovet as 'ghosts', 'spectres' and 'spirits' and Bovet concludes that one came 'not upon an errand of uncharitableness, but to see the will of the defunct performed'.⁶³ The other stories all involve the preternatural, but cover a wide range of phenomena from apparitions and poltergeists of various kinds to what are labeled as 'fairies'. In discussing these, Bovet is cautious about drawing any firm conclusions about what is happening, and quite often reports the cases with no comment or explanation at all. Their common message would appear to be the moral drawn from the final case, which forms the last sentence of the book, namely 'let no man doubt of intelligencies [sic] in the world, besides what are hudled up in garments of clay: we see agencies above the reach of our comprehension; and things performed by bodies seemingly aerial, which surpass the strength, power and capacity of the most robust mortal'.⁶⁴

Once again, this returns us to the question of how we can link the two halves of the text, since the mild anti-materialism of the second part seems to have little connection with the anti-idolatrous radicalism of the first. Should the second part then be seen merely as a publishing ploy, drawing in the reader with the promise of strange wonders and orthodox anti-sadducism, to encourage him to read the polemical first part? To answer this question, we need to turn to the history of the Bovet family themselves, and consider the relationship between *Pandaemonium* and the family's experience. This will offer strong support for the supposition that radical anti-popery lies at the heart of the book, and suggest that a further motive for its publication, and for the inclusion of the second part, was a desire to vindicate the gentility and worth of the Bovets, but it will also suggest that it would be wrong to rule out the fear of witchcraft as a force driving the production of such a work.

Who was the 'Richard Bovet[t] Gent.', named on both title pages as the author of *Pandaemonium*? Most scholars have followed Montague Summers in identifying him as Richard Bovet junior, born about 1641 in Somerset, who matriculated at Wadham College Oxford in 1657 as 'Arm. fil' (the son of a gentleman) and the likely author of two later anti-Jacobite congratulatory poems, praising the defeat of the French fleet in 1693 and William III's escape from an attempted assassination in 1695. Both share *Pandaemonium*'s deep-seated anti-Catholicism and its tendency to uncover Jacobite conspiracies animated by devilish powers.⁶⁵ But

⁶² Ibid., pp. 129-30.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 107-13.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

⁶⁵ *The Registers of Wadham College Oxford vol I (1613-1719)*, ed. by Rev R.B. Gardiner (London, 1889), p. 225; R. Bovett, *A Congratulatory Poem To the Hon. Admiral Russel on his Glorious Victory over the French Fleet* (London, 1693) (the EEBO copy contains a handwritten dedication to the King by Bovett); R.B., *A Poem Humbly Presented to his Most Excellent Majesty King William the Third. Upon his most miraculous and happy preservation from that barbarous Jacobitish conspiracy to assassinate his Royal*

Pandaemonium's author could be his father (or possibly uncle) Richard Bovet senior of Bishops' Hull, near Wellington (Somerset) who, together with his brother Philip, was executed in 1685 for commanding a regiment in Monmouth's rebellious army.⁶⁶ Both had been prominent parliamentarians in Somerset, where Richard briefly became MP for Taunton in 1659: his purchases of sequestered property included a Duchy of Cornwall manor at Milton Falconbridge (purchased for £7150) and, from the Stawell family estates, both the rectory of Wiveliscome and the mansion at Cothelstone, outside whose gates he was hanged in 1685.⁶⁷ After the Restoration, 'Colonel Bovet' (or Buffet) was associated with numerous plots, frequently hiding before reappearing; Philip remained a significant local figure, but was refused the title of gentleman by the heralds visiting Somerset in 1672.⁶⁸ These Bovets were part of a larger clan of Bovets, most of them from the middling ranks of the countryside and small towns, who straddled the borders of west Somerset, east Devon and west Dorset, exactly the territory from which Monmouth was to draw his rebel forces in 1685. Monmouth's rebels included ten Bovets, from Yarcombe, Honiton, Axminster, Membury in Devon and Stockland in Dorset as well as Taunton and Wellington, whose occupations included yeomen, combmakers and an exciseman. Only Richard and Philip were definitely executed, but three others were transported to Barbados and one was reported 'slain in service'.⁶⁹ The family then lapsed into relative obscurity.

The clan leader was 'that beggar old Buffet', as Richard senior was described in 1685.⁷⁰ From his rise to prominence as a parliamentary officer in the 1640s in Somerset (especially his defence of Wellington House against royalist siege in early 1645) as a supporter of the radical John Pyne, 'Colonel Bovet', as he was regularly known, was a rogue figure in Somerset politics. By 1651 he was mayor of Taunton, and purchasing the properties noted above.⁷¹ By 1653 he had joined the county bench, his first meeting in April 1653 also featuring the first witchcraft case in Somerset in the Interregnum period, although there

person February anno 1695 (London, 1696). Although the latter fits Bovet's ideology, there are several other 'R.B.'s publishing at this period. Both poems are reproduced in Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, pp. 141-68. HMC House of Lords NS I, pp. 250-1 contains a letter of Richard Bovett (apparently from London) with information on a French privateer dated 12 October 1693. A Richard Bovett also signed the Taunton Association Roll in 1696 (PRO C213/226).

⁶⁶ Arthur Humphreys, *Materials for the History of the Town of Wellington* (London: Henry Gray, 1889), pp.75-6 summarises the history of the Bovets of Wellington. I am grateful to many people for references that have helped me trace the Bovets, notably Nancy Cooper, Peter Elmer, Ruth Fisher, Priscilla Flower-Smith, Richard Greaves and Stuart Walsh.

⁶⁷ *Victoria History of the County of Somerset vol.4*, ed. by Robert Dunning (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research, 1978), p. 91; *Proceedings of Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 29 (1883), Pt 1 pp. 32-3.

⁶⁸ Sir Edward Bysshe, *Visitation of Somerset and City of Bristol, 1672*, ed. by G.D. Squibb (Publications of Harleian Society, N.S. 11, 1992), p. 203.

⁶⁹ Walter MacDonald Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebels* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1985), pp. 17-18.

⁷⁰ Somerset Record Office, DD/SF 3109, letter of William Clarke to Edward Clarke 29 July 1685. The alternative spelling suggests that the 'o' of Bovet was pronounced as a 'u', as is still the case in Bovey Tracey in Devon.

⁷¹ *Somerset Assize Orders 1640-59*, ed. by J. S. Cockburn (Somerset Record Society, 71, 1971), p. 39; David Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), pp. 151, 159, 164-8, 171, 173, 176, 182, 187, 189-93. On p. 187 it is noted that Pyne and Bovet had been friendly towards the Quakers, unlike Cary and Hunt.

is no sign he was involved in it.⁷² In August 1656 Bovet was an unsuccessful candidate at the county elections (with 374 votes).⁷³ He operated as a JP alongside such prominent families as the Carys until 1660, although he was less active from 1657. This may have brought him into contact with the source of Glanvill's material on Somerset witchcraft cases, Robert Hunt, since Cary and Hunt worked closely as JPs (including in a number of witchcraft cases) from 1657 (when former Royalists such as Hunt came back onto the Bench), but there is no direct evidence of Bovet and Hunt collaborating. At the Restoration, whereas both the Presbyterian Cary and the conforming Hunt remained on the bench (until purges in 1672 and 1680 respectively), Bovet lost everything.⁷⁴ The sequestered royalist and crown properties were taken back, and Bovet entered a twilight zone. He was identified, rightly or wrongly, in every radical plot of the 1660s and 1670s, as the potential military leader capable of raising thousands of soldiers around Taunton, which made him crucial since Taunton was the most anti-royalist town in the west country. Time and again he was Somerset's most wanted man and disappeared, only to resurface when things had calmed down.⁷⁵ Finally, in 1685, his status was recognized when he was made a Colonel again to command the Blue Regiment in Monmouth's army, while his daughter Catherine was the leader (or 'captain') of the famous Taunton schoolgirls who greeted Monmouth, and became the particular objects of both popular memory and the revenge of Judge Jefferys.⁷⁶

So, everything we know about the Bovet family fits easily with the radical anti-popey and hatred of the Restoration regime displayed in part one of *Pandaemonium*. But what of the collection of relations in the second part? One way of reading these is to see them as an assertion of the gentility of the Bovets, establishing their linkages with a range of leading families in the west country. Presenting himself as the correspondent, confidante and frequent guest of these families, the author presents the marginal Bovets (often on the run from arrest) as regular members of gentry society. In addition to the 'noble family', these include the Ayshs of South Petherton, the Woods of Kitford (Devon), 'Sir J.F. near Sherburne', and several lesser but established families, as well as merchants in both London and Scotland. His Bristol informant, 'Mr J.R. a gentleman of good ingenuity and reputation' might well have been Colonel John Rumsey, the Customs Collector, a leading radical, involved in the Rye House Plot, though he

⁷² *Quarter-Session Records for the County of Somerset vol. III Commonwealth 1646-60*, ed. by E.H. Bates Harbin (Somerset Record Society, 28, 1912), p. 203 and *passim*.

⁷³ *Somerset Assize Orders*, p. 77.

⁷⁴ *HMC 51 Leybourne-Popham MS*, pp.157-8 contains a February 1660 letter from Bovet to Monck recording his efforts to prevent the Restoration.

⁷⁵ See, from numerous examples in the State Papers, *CSPD 1671-2*, p. 161 and *CSPD January-June 1683* pp. 104, 185. He is discussed in Robin Clifton, *Last Popular Rebellion* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1984), pp. 46, 60-1, 219; Richard Greaves, *Enemies under His Feet* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 33, 41, 223; id., *Secrets of the Kingdom* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 158.

⁷⁶ Walter MacDonald Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebellion* (Bradford-on-Avon: Moonraker Press, 1980), pp. 44-6, 92-3; *Glory of the West, or The Virgins of Taunton Deane* (London, 1685), which picked out 'Kate' 'the Collonel's daughter' for comment and claimed that she 'was the lass that had his [Monmouth's] heart'.

saved his life by turning informant.⁷⁷ The use of initials in this case (and that of 'T.C.' in the Spraiton case) and the coyness in naming the 'noble family' or discussing their cases in detail ('I could say much more, only for the regard and honour I ought to bear to the family, I dare not name them')⁷⁸ seem to be playing simultaneously with two conventions. The one, widely discussed in the history of science at this period, is the notion of using unimpeachable witnesses from the aristocracy and the professions to give credibility to testimonies, but avoiding compromising their 'honour' through the use of social descriptions and initials rather than full names. The second is the convention of the conspirator, who has to establish the strength of his potential connections, but without compromising their security. The bitter irony is that, a year later, the Whig gentry families of the south west failed to support Monmouth, and left the beggarly Bovets to lead the middling and lower orders of the region.

It would be perfectly plausible therefore to argue that for the Bovets, as for the bookseller Malthus, the publishing of *Pandaemonium* was shaped by the politics of anti-popery and the standing of the Bovets, not by a desire to contribute to an intellectual debate on the world of spirits, much less to 'the old trade of witchfinding'. Yet it need not follow from this, of course, that the Bovets were simply exploiting the fears of 'the country' without believing in the powers of the Devil or witchcraft. There is no evidence to link the Bovet family with any of the Somerset cases tried in the period up to 1684. But the story of the Bovets and witchcraft does not end with the events of 1684-5.

On 7 September 1696, an Elizabeth Harner or Horner, alias Turner, was tried at Exeter Castle, for killing Alice Bovett by witchcraft and bewitching her sisters Sarah and Mary Bovett. It has been argued by Humphreys, the historian of Wellington, that the family must have been based there, as both Horners and Bovetts were local names.⁷⁹ But in that case a trial at Devon's assizes in Exeter is most unlikely, and we have seen that Bovets were scattered across the region. From some of the names in the case it is more likely that this Bovet was from Yarcombe or Honiton, and that the father in the case, Thomas Bovet, may have been another of the Monmouth rebels, perhaps the one transported to the West Indies and then pardoned by William III, or his descendant.⁸⁰

Details of the trial are preserved in a letter written a week later by Archdeacon Blackburne to the Bishop of Exeter, who had commanded him to attend the trial.⁸¹ The parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Bovett, were the chief witnesses, reporting the strange ailments and physical contortions of their children, the bafflement of physicians, the vomiting of pins and stones, marking of the children's skin, levitation, and the voices and apparitions of the witch, who also

⁷⁷ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, p. 99; John Latimer, *Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol: William George's for the author, 1900), p. 418. Rumsey was named in 1686 as one of those, like Catherine Bovet, excluded from the general pardon of those suspected of participating in Monmouth's rebellion.

⁷⁸ Bovet, *Pandaemonium*, pp. 133-4.

⁷⁹ Humphreys, *Materials*, p. 237.

⁸⁰ Wigfield, *Monmouth's Rebels*, p. 18.

⁸¹ Reproduced in Humphreys, *Materials*, pp.237-9 and summarized by C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism* (London: Heath Cranton, 1933), pp. 377-8 (pp. 445-6 records the not guilty verdict on all three charges of bewitching Alice, Sarah and Mary Bovett).

prevented them from saying prayers and forced them to swear and curse: all classic symptoms of possession cases and all found in *Pandaemonium*. The children 'gave the same account sensibly enough', one adding details about Bett Horner playing with a toad in a basin. Four other witnesses, three women and a man, then testified in various ways. One repeated the classic story of refusing Horner drink, after which their brewing vessel began to behave oddly. A second recorded seeing the witch in the countryside when she was locked up in prison. The third reported a piece of counter-magic, driving a red-hot nail into the witch's footstep, after which the witch went lame and 'being searched her leg and foot appeared to be red and fiery' until the nail was pulled out and 'then the witch was well'. Finally the other male witness, John Fursey, deposed 'to his seeing her three nights together upon a large down in the same place as if rising out of the ground'. In court 'the witch denied all, shewed her shoulder bare in court, when there appeared nothing but a mole or wart', i.e. not a devil's mark, and also managed, despite some hesitation, to repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

It is tempting given the vagaries of seventeenth-century spelling, to associate the John Fursey who witnessed in this case with the Furze family who were involved in the Spraiton case (a nonconformist family, it will be recalled) and/or the Alice Furze against whom Alice Molland supposedly practised witchcraft in Exeter in 1685. At the Exeter Lent Assizes on 20 March Alice Molland was found guilty of witchcraft on the bodies of Joane Snow, Wilmott Snow and Alice Furze and hanged, probably the last witch executed in England. Four Somerset Furzes were Monmouth rebels.⁸²

Despite his neutral presentation of the evidence, Blackburne was clearly a little disturbed at the behaviour of Lord Chief Justice Holt, a notorious sceptic who presided over many non-guilty verdicts at this period, of which this was one. He notes 'my Lord Chief Justice, by his questions and manner of hemming up [summing up?] the evidence, seemed to believe nothing of witchery at all, and to disbelieve the fact of walking up the wall, which was sworn by the mother'. Holt passed his case notes onto the sceptic Francis Hutchinson, who used them in his brief account of the case in his *Historical Essay* of 1718.⁸³ Both Holt and Hutchinson, like North, clearly regarded the witchcraft statute, and the uses to which it could be put by factious politicians feeding on the passions of the people, as the real danger to the establishment in state and church. For all its complexities, perhaps the example of *Pandaemonium* suggests that they were right.

⁸² C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials* (London: Kegan Paul, 1929), p. 43 and plate opposite (Ewen wrongly states here that the judges were North and Raymond again, as in 1682); Wigfield, *Monmouth's Rebels*, pp. 63-4.

⁸³ Humphreys, *Materials*, p.239; Francis Hutchinson, *Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft* (London, 1718), p. 45. He wrongly calls the father William Bovet.