

Spirits, Witches & Science

Why the rise of science encouraged belief in the supernatural in 17th century England.

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When Michael Shermer reviewed the second volume of my *Science Deified and Science Defied* for the Summer, 1992 SKEPTIC, he began with an interesting passage from Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) which I would like to use as an introduction to this essay on the status of beliefs in spirit phenomena and witchcraft during the second half of the 17th century. In this passage Pirsig's protagonist explains to his son why he does not believe in ghosts (1974, pp.38-39):

They are unscientific. They contain no matter and have no energy and therefore according to the laws of science, do not exist except in people's minds. Of course, the laws of science contain no matter and have no energy either and therefore do not exist except in people's minds...It's best to refuse to believe in either ghosts or the laws of science.

The reason this passage jars us into thought is that it applies currently accepted criteria for what it means to be an object in the world, and uses those to reject the existence of ghosts; then it plays a mind game on us by somehow applying the same criteria to statements which everyone is presumed to assent to and arguing that if we shouldn't believe in ghosts, we shouldn't believe in science either.

The usual expectation among American intellectuals--certainly among those who view themselves as in the least bit skeptical--is that anyone who believes in "science" will not believe in such creatures of superstition as ghosts, spirit phenomena, or "witches." Indeed, the first paragraph of the first chapter of the first edition of Garvin McCain and Erwin Segal's immensely popular *The Game of Science*, begins with the claim that we no longer believe in witches precisely because we believe in science:

Why don't you believe in witches? That question may seem ridiculous but our ancestors, who were probably as bright as we are, did believe in them, and acted accordingly. Why are we so different and

superior? The evidence for or against witches is no better than it was 400 years ago. For us, it is almost impossible to believe in witches; for our ancestors, it was equally difficult to deny their existence. Our new beliefs exist, in part, due to the development of "scientific attitudes" (McCain and Segal, 1969, p.3).

Though this statement certainly reflects what most American intellectuals believe, there is a strange historical irony contained in it and in Pirsig's intentionally perverse argument that if one doesn't believe in ghosts, one shouldn't believe in scientific laws either. What I want to argue, is that beliefs in witches, ghosts, and demons were heavily under attack and on the wane in England at the very beginning of the 17th century before the rise of what we would usually identify as modern scientific attitudes. But witchcraft beliefs, and beliefs in other spirit phenomena underwent a remarkable revival among British intellectuals during the period after the Restoration of James II to the throne in 1660; and this revival of demonological beliefs was directly and self-consciously attached to the rise of modern scientific attitudes among the men who were members of the Royal Society of London. So at least for a time it may be true to say that men actually came to believe in witches as a result of the development of scientific attitudes.

In this case, the reverse of Pirsig's argument was taken with deadly seriousness by Joseph Glanvill, who argued that if one believed in the methods of modern science, one should also believe in ghosts and witches. It is probably also true (though here the issue is more complicated) that certain arguments in favor of witchcraft made mid-17th century intellectuals more favorably disposed to the new science than they would otherwise have been and that a general belief in spirit phenomena, for which witchcraft stood as a symbol (Schafer, 1969, pp. 55-85). In order to explain how and why the rise of modern science became tied to beliefs in spirit phenomena in mid-17th century England, I think we need to discuss briefly a continental phenomenon at the end of the 16th century, and look at the impact it had on early 17th century English religious developments.

Early Criticism of Belief in Demonic Possession

A serious and concerted attack on beliefs in witchcraft and demonic possession had been launched at the end of the 16th century in connection with a series of spectacular exorcisms that were quite literally staged before thousands of witnesses in France between 1566 and 1599. The goal of the Catholic priests who carried out these exorcisms was to promote the reconversion of French protestant Huguenots to Catholicism by demonstrating the power of the true Catholic religion; and they seem to have had substantial success. Understandably, these Catholics' claims were widely challenged by Protestant propagandists; but ironically, they were also strongly challenged by the French Catholic Crown as well; for during the 1580's and 1590's, public exorcisms were stirring up religious passions just at a time when the French Crown, through the Edict of Nantes, was trying to calm religious hostilities and establish official tolerance for Protestantism. As a consequence, in 1598, Henry IV ordered the physician Michael Marescot and a group of medical colleagues to investigate the popular claims to demonic possession of one Marthe Brosier in the expectation that they could establish that her "possession" was either a misdiagnosis of a natural disease such as epilepsy or hysteria, or that they could prove it to be a deliberate fraud. Marescot's *Discourse veritable sur le fait de Marthe Brosier de Romorantin pretendue demoniaque* appeared in 1599, to be translated immediately into English. The overall verdict of Marescot's investigation was stated in a memorable line: "Nothing from the devil, much counterfeit, a little from disease" (Walker, 1981, p. 35). Without totally denying the possibility of demonic possession, Marescot and his colleagues were able to establish to their own satisfaction, that of the king, and that of many readers, that in one of the most celebrated cases of "possession," an initially deluded and psychologically unbalanced woman had been exploited by her family and by a group of Catholic clergy, for both financial gain and for the seditious purpose of stirring up anti-Huguenot sentiment.

In the process, Marescot reviewed a series of experimental tests for legitimate possession which had become widely accepted by the late 16th century:

1. possessed persons were supposed to be able to understand and speak languages of which they had no prior knowledge;
2. possessed persons were supposed to be able to discern secrets and predict events of which they could have no natural knowledge--i.e., they had clairvoyance;
3. possessed persons had abnormal bodily strength and insensitivity to pain; and
4. possessed persons expressed revulsion at holy things, especially the reading of scripture or

contact with holy water or other blessed objects (Walker, p.12).

Under investigation by Marescot and four other physicians, it was shown that Marthe Brosier could understand neither Latin nor Greek, as her advocates had claimed; that she had no reaction to holy water that was passed off as ordinary water, but that she convulsed when she was given plain water that she was told was blessed; that she showed no special clairvoyant powers; and that when she was read passages from the Aeneid, expecting them to be biblical passages, she showed dramatic signs of disturbance. Finally, though during her fits Marthe could withstand the pain of the "deep pricking of long pins" in her hands and neck without showing discomfort, Marescot did find her responsive to normal sources of pain when not in convulsions; and he identified her reactions in this matter as typical of "melancholic" persons (Walker, pp. 34-35, 38).

Just a few years later, the English physician Edward Jordan, who was consulted in two cases of supposed demonic possession, published a treatise whose title discloses its major conclusions: *A briefe Discourse of a Disease called the Suffocation of the Mother*. Written upon occasions which hath been of late taken thereby, to suspect possession of an evil spirit, or some such like supernatural power. Wherein it is declared that diverse strange actions and passions of the body of man, which in the common opinion are imputed to the Divell, have their true natural causes, and do accompany this disease (1603). In this work Jordan identified almost all of those symptoms that had been traditionally identified with demonic possession and witchcraft--especially insensibility, convulsions, and fits brought on by the presence of particular persons or artifacts with symptoms of hysteria. Thus, by the early years of the 17th century there was a substantial medical literature which simultaneously denied the existence of possession and attacked virtually all of the traditional tests for its existence.

Anglicans Attack Demonology To Defend Their Religious Interests

Early 17th century Anglican attitudes toward demonic possession and witchcraft were shaped primarily by the existence of this medical literature, in response to the Continental Catholic propaganda, and in response to a series of cases in which both an English Jesuit priest, William Weston, and a Puritan preacher, John Darrell, claimed to have cast demons out of a number of possessed children between 1585 and 1598, (Walker, pp. 43-73). Weston's activities were commenced in 1585, but it was not until 1602 that a formal inquiry was held regarding his exorcisms. Darrell's castings out of devils began in 1596; but in 1598, he was tried in London, condemned for fraudulent practices and both deposed from the ministry and sent to prison for at least a brief stay (Walker, p.64).

In fact, Darrell's case seems to have been part of a major anti-Puritan campaign by Archbishop John Whitgift, his Bishop in London, Richard Bancroft, and Bancroft's chaplain, Samuel Harsnett. Like the French Catholic exorcisms of the late 16th century, Darrell's spectacular success casting out devils was drawing much favorable attention for his religion; but Darrell's demonics did most of the French examples one better by using their clairvoyance to name witches whom Darrell subsequently had arrested (Walker, p. 63). As a popular and visible Puritan, Darrell drew Whitgift and Bancroft's serious attention; and they apparently decided to discredit him by trying him for fraud. According to evidence given by William Sommers, the last of those he had dispossessed, Darrell taught several of his demonics how to simulate their symptoms, and at least in one case, i.e., that of Sommers, he even suggested the fraud to the victim (pp. 62-64). Sommers later recanted his evidence and there were apparently any number of irregularities in the trial, including a refusal to allow Darrell to speak; so the "trial" was continued in a series of publications for the next five years.

The major Anglican arguments were presented in Harsnett's *A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practices of John Darrell* (1599) and in John Deacon and John Walker's *Dialogical Discourses of Spirits and Devils* (1601-1602). In *The Trial of Maist Darrell* (1599), the Puritans responded by offering a largely scriptural defense of their claim that possession was possible and that it could be eliminated by appropriate prayers to God (Walker, pp. 67-68). But they also complained about the procedures used in Darrell's trial and they argued (quite rightly at the time) that the Anglican prosecutors of Darrell were more interested in destroying Puritanism than in eradicating Catholicism, otherwise they would have tried Weston the Jesuit. To this claim, Whitgift and Bancroft responded by ordering an investigation of Weston's claims and Harsnett responded by publishing *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostors*, to withdraw the Harts of Her Majesty's Subjects from the Truth of Christian Religion Professed in England, Under the Pretense of Casting out Devils Practiced by Edmunds, Alias Weston, a Jesuit (1603). Circumstances had conspired to give middle-of-the-road Anglican apologists an opportunity to simultaneously discredit both the Catholic and Puritan opposition by attacking their claims of dispossession. But in order to do so, the Anglicans had to act incidentally to undermine belief in both demonic possession and in witchcraft by almost completely accepting the medical views of Marescot, Jordan, and their colleagues. One of their most important converts was James I, who had defended beliefs in possession and witchcraft in his famous *Daemonology* of 1597, but who had turned into a strong opponent of witch persecution by 1616 (Shapiro, 1983, p. 199). Technically, neither Harsnett nor Deacon and Walker denied the possibility of witchcraft or dispossession, although Harsnett probably doubted the existence of either. What they did do was offer an explanation of how melancholia and hysteria might

cause persons to believe in both as well as a demonstration that in many cases, men like Weston and Darrell exploited those beliefs and used fraudulent techniques to delude people into believing in their power to exorcise or to dispossess persons who were possessed. The major concern which had held Harsnett and others back from taking an even stronger stance against belief in witchcraft and possession at the beginning of the 17th century was laid out in the dedication of *The Trial of Mr. Darrell*:

Atheists abound in these days and witchcraft is called into question. Which error is confirmed by denying dispossession and both these errors confirm atheists mightily....If neither possession nor witchcraft (contrary to what has been so long generally and confidently affirmed), why should we think that there are devils? If no devils, no God. (Walker, pp. 71, 72).

Puritans thus warned the readers of Anglican tracts that demonology and witchcraft were proof against atheistic materialism.

Demonic Power becomes a Natural Phenomenon

In order to protect themselves from the claim that their attacks on possession and witchcraft were simultaneously denials of the fallen angel and of God, early 17th century Anglican apologists insisted that the devil might indeed involve himself in human affairs, but that if he did, it must be through the use of natural rather than supernatural powers (Shapiro, pp. 200-204). In John Cotta's words:

Though the divel indeed, as a spirit, may do, and doth many things above and beyond the course of some particular natures: yet doth he not, nor is able to rule or command over general Nature, or infringe or alter her inviolable decrees in the perpetual and never interrupted order of all generations; neither is he generally master of universal Nature, but Nature [is] master and commander of him. For Nature is nothing else but the ordinary power of God in all things created, among which, the divel being a creature, is contained, and therefore subject to that universal power (Clark, 1984, p. 360).

One critical consequence of the "naturalization" of presumed demonic powers was that it brought the study of demonic activities clearly within the realm of natural knowledge. Thus, Francis Bacon argued in *De Argumentis Scientiarum* that well established "narratives of sorceries, witchcrafts, charms, dreams, divinations, and the like" should be included as legitimate data in

natural histories in order to establish "in which cases and how far effects attributed to superstition participate in natural causes" (cited in Clark, p. 355).

Even though he remained formally open-minded regarding the existence of witches and demons, when Bacon chose to discuss particular issues, he, like other Anglicans, explained beliefs in witchcraft as arising out of the misinterpretation of natural phenomena. Thus, for example, in the *Sylva sylvarum*, he argued that the hallucinogenic effects of some ointments produced a mistaken belief in real transvection (human flight) and metamorphoses; so that when women charged as witches confessed to being transformed into animals and transported to witches sabbaths, they were mistakenly reporting their hallucinations as reality.

For most of the first half of the 17th century, while the twin threats of Puritanism and Catholicism seemed more immediate and critical to the Anglican cause than philosophically-based atheism, Anglican intellectuals continued to express strong skepticism regarding specific claims of spirit phenomena and to insist that what had traditionally been attributed to supernatural influences was actually accomplished through natural ones. This was particularly true because as Puritanism and dissent became ever stronger, popular attempts at witch persecution intensified, and established authorities became ever more fearful of the religious enthusiasm which underlay them.

Atheism Reverses Attitudes About Spirit Phenomena

The problem faced by Anglican religious figures changed dramatically with the publication of a series of frightening works by Thomas Hobbes. Philosophical materialism and atheism had been a minor, though growing, problem in early 17th century England. But the publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan* in 1651, *De Corpore* in 1655, and *A Physical Dialog, or a Conjecture about the Nature of the Air* in 1661, deflected attention from Catholicism and Sectarianism alike, and made Hobbesian Atheism the new chief target of moderate Anglican apologetic literature.

Whether Hobbes was really an atheist is a topic on which scholars might differ--though just for the record, I believe he was--but no one can doubt that he was a bitter enemy of what he called priestcraft--or the authority of religious persons. Hobbes believed that priests had usurped power that rightly belonged to the secular sovereign. In order to justify his attacks on priestcraft he turned to a set of arguments that had been used by materialist philosophers, such as the atomist, Epicurus, in antiquity. According to the ancient materialists and Hobbes, priests exploit a natural human fear of the unknown to convince people that invisible powers and agents are at work in the world and that they (the priests) alone have the power to intercede on

people's behalf to control these "spirits." "Who," wrote Hobbes, "that is in fear of ghosts, will not bear great respect to those who can make the holy water that drives them from him" (cited in Shapin and Schaffer, 1985, p. 96).

Similarly, he wrote: "By their demonology, and the use of exorcism, and other things appertaining thereto, the priests keep, or think they keep, the people in awe of their power and lessen the dependence of subjects on the sovereign power of their country." Since it was the false belief in spirits, made possible by ignorance about the causes of events, that gave the clergy its power, according to Hobbes, the most effective way to fight the power of the clergy was first, to demonstrate that spirits, or "incorporeal substances" do not exist; and second, to demonstrate that all phenomena can and indeed, must be explicable solely in terms of matter in motion.

To undermine belief in immaterial spirits, Hobbes developed a logical argument that depended very heavily on ideas which owe their existence to Aristotelian philosophy. The meaning of the term substance, he argues, is derived from our experiences of physical bodies or "corps." The term "incorporeal substance," or "immaterial substance" is thus self-contradictory. To accomplish the second part of his goal, Hobbes purported to be able to give a completely materialist account of all natural philosophy. But in doing so he departed from ancient atomism in a way that turns out to play a major role in linking witchcraft and the experimental philosophy of the royal society.

The ancient atomists had posited the existence of atoms and void space, claiming that atoms move freely through the void. Descartes, however, defined Matter as that which has dimensions; and from this definition--which Hobbes accepted--it followed that there can be no void; because any space, no matter how small, has dimensions and therefore must contain matter.

Note here for future reference, Hobbes uses precisely the same kind of argument to deny the possibility of spirits and to deny the possibility of empty space. The question of whether empty space exists, like the question of whether immaterial spirits exist is not to be answered empirically. Both questions are to be answered by a purely rational analysis of definitions.

Hobbes's claim regarding spirits was, quite rightly, seen as an attack on almost all fundamental Christian beliefs, for it denied not only the existence of demons and witches, but also the immateriality and hence the immortality of the human soul. And if this weren't enough, Hobbesian Materialism took on an additional troubling aspect during the later civil war period when it was adopted by Richard Overton, a notorious political radical and one of the founders of the Levellers sect.

Joseph Glanvill and the scientific defense of witches

This now brings me to the central events of my story--events connected with a moderate Anglican apologist who became both a defender and a member of the Royal Society of London in 1662--a man by the name of Joseph Glanvill. Although Glanvill had a longstanding interest in spirit phenomena stemming from his commitment to the Cambridge Platonist doctrine of pre-existent souls, and though he had begun his investigations into the appearances of apparitions as early as 1662, it was not until 1666 that he published the first version of his often improved and expanded treatise on witchcraft, *Some Philosophical Considerations touching on Witches and witchcraft*. A friend, Justice of the Peace Robert Hunt, had tried to prosecute a coven of witches during 1664 in Somersetshire; but the local gentry were so skeptical that they mocked his efforts. In response, Hunt, who knew of Glanvill's interests, sent the depositions from the accused witches along with a description of the gentry's repose to Glanvill, and Glanvill responded with a refutation of the most common reasons for disbelief (Jobe, 1981, pp. 346-347).

Glanvill begins by explaining what is at stake if the belief in witches should be abandoned. Borrowing his theme from the earlier anti-Anglican defenders of Robert Darrell, he writes:

He that thinks there is no witch, believes a devil gratis, or at least upon inducements which he is likely to find himself disposed to deny when he pleases. And when men are arrived at this degree of dissidence and infidelity, we are beholden to them if they believe either Angel or Spirit, Resurrection of the Body or Immortality of Souls. These things hang together in a chain of connection, at least in these men's hypotheses; and it is but a happy chance if he that has lost one link, holds another (Glanvill, 1676, p. 2).

The central doctrines of religion are thus being endangered by those who do not believe in witches. Secondly, Glanvill immediately seeks to identify the disbelief in witches with the Hobbesian attack on experimental philosophy. The question of whether witches exist or not, he argues, is a question of fact; and as such it can only be settled by appeal to authority or sensory evidence. There are thousands of eye- and ear-witnesses who have attested to "things done by persons of despicable power and knowledge, beyond the reach of art and ordinary nature," and these include not only "vulgar" persons, but "wise and grave discerners...when no interest could oblige them to agree together in a common lie." Unfortunately, he argues, no amount of empirical evidence could convince those who do not believe in witches:

"since those that deny the being of witches, do it not out of ignorance of these heads of argument...but from an apprehension that such a belief is absurd, and the things, impossible....Upon these presumptions they condemn all demonstrations of this nature, and are hardened against conviction" (Glanvill, 1676, p. 3).

For Glanvill, then, the key issue was whether one placed greater confidence in well attested experiences or in metaphysical claims regarding the possibility of the existence of certain kinds of entities. It is not reasonable, he insists, "first to presume the thing impossible, and thence to conclude that the fact cannot be proved: On the contrary, we should judge of the action by the evidence, and not the evidence by our fancies about the action. This is proudly to exalt our own opinions above the clearest testimonies and most sensible demonstrations of fact: and so to give the lie to all mankind, rather than distrust the conceits of our bold imaginations" (Glanvill, pp. 5-6). Given his belief in the limitations of human reason and the inability of humans to possess more than probable knowledge of any causal account of any phenomenon, Glanvill says that humans have no right to insist upon the impossibility of anything. The most they can legitimately claim is that they cannot conceive or imagine how the actions in question take place, and this inability to conceive, "only argues the weakness and imperfection of our knowledge and apprehensions; not the impossibility of those performances" (Glanvill, p. 7).

Precisely the same kind of argument was being carried on simultaneously between Robert Boyle and Thomas Hobbes regarding the evacuated space created by Boyle in his air pumps. Hobbes denied that the space could be empty because he was committed to a conception of space derived from Descartes. According to this conception, matter, or body, is defined by extension, so that any extended region must contain matter, and a vacuum is literally impossible. Boyle, whose notion of matter and space were derived from atomist notions, was unwilling to fight on Hobbesian ground. Whether or not extension could exist without a material substance underlying, it was technically an undecidable question and therefore beyond the bounds of natural philosophy for Boyle. The key question was whether well attested experiments justified the claim that the evacuated region was empty of ordinary corpuscles of air; and he and his allies were convinced that they did.

The resolution of the problem of how to decide whether witches exist and how to decide whether the receiver of an air pump could be evacuated were understood by all parties to the 17th century debates to be clearly linked with one another. No one, least of all Glanvill and Boyle, doubted that every reader convinced by Glanvill's arguments about witches would also be driven toward acceptance of Boyle's arguments about the phenomena of the air pump, and vice versa.

Neither Glanvill and his allies, nor Boyle and his allies, wanted to encourage credulity and a lack of critical analysis of experience or experiments. To have argued that any individual's factual claims should be blindly accepted would have been, in their common view, to play into the hand of religious enthusiasts and philosophical charlatans. Instead, both sought to encourage "diffidence and backwardness of assent" to any such claims and to encourage the careful empirical investigation of all (Boyle, 1772, vol.1, pp. ccxx-ccxxii).

As early as January 19, 1663, Glanvill had begun to investigate claims of spirit phenomena when he and a gentleman friend traveled to Tedworth in Wiltshire, where a "drumming" spirit was said to haunt the house of a Mr. Mompesson. The two men first interviewed the servants and several neighbors, including two local ministers of impeccable reputation, all of whom had been present when the spirit made noises or threw objects about the house. Then they themselves experienced the noises that the spirit produced and tried to discover, "if there were any trick, contrivance, or common sense of it," but they could find nothing; so Glanvill was persuaded that, "the noise was made by some Daemon or Spirit" (Glanvill, 1689, p. 329). Glanvill delayed publication of his account of the "Drummer of Tedworth" at Mr. Mompesson's request until the strange phenomena ceased. (He was concerned that the spirit would become angered by the books!) In 1668, however, it became the first of 28 different detailed accounts of spirits and witches which Glanvill published as appendices to his philosophical treatments of witchcraft and demons in order to reliably establish the evidence for their existence. Summarizing his account of the drummer, Glanvill lays out a litany of criteria which such an account ought to have in order to be credible support for the belief in spirits:

[The phenomena] are strange enough to prove themselves effects of some invisible extraordinary Agent, and so demonstrate that there are spirits, who sometimes sensibly intermeddle in our affairs. And I think they do it with clearness of evidence. For these things were not done long ago or at a far distance, in an ignorant age, or among a barbarous people. They were not seen by two or three only of the Melancholic or superstitious, and reported by those that made them [to] serve the advantage and interest of a party. They were not the passages of a day or night, nor the vanishing glances of an apparition; but these transactions were near and are public, frequent, and of diverse years continuance, witnessed by multitudes of competent and unbiased attestors, and acted in a searching and incredulous age: Arguments enough, one would think, to convince any modest and capable reason (Glanvill, 1689, p. 338).

From the comments of Samuel Pepys, who had found the earlier versions of Glanvill's Witchcraft essay "unconvincing," it is fairly clear that the accounts of actual spirit events increased the impact of his arguments, making them in Pepys' view, "worth reading indeed" (Cope, 1956, p. 14). Whatever other impact they had, these "ghost stories" certainly made best sellers out of numerous editions of Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphans* and stimulated a whole tradition of dramatic and fictional treatments of spirit phenomena. In the 1668 *A Blow at Modern Saducism*, which saw the first appearance of Glanvill's account of the drummer of Tedworth, Glanvill also attempted to recruit the Royal Society to help in investigations of spirits and thus in support for the true religion:

Did the Society direct some of its wary and luciferous enquiries towards the world of spirits, believe we should have another kind of Metaphysics, than those [that] are taught by men that love to write great volumes and to be subtle about nothing? For we know not anything of the world we live in, but by experiment and the phenomena; and there is the same way of speculating immaterial nature, by extraordinary events and apparitions, which possibly might be improved to notices not contemptible, were there a cautious and faithful history made of those certain and uncommon appearances. At least it would be standing evidence against SADDUCISM, to which the present age is so unhappily disposed, and a sensible argument of our Immortality (cited in Prior, 1932, p. 182).

While the Royal Society offered no official response to Glanvill's request, many members contributed directly to Glanvill's collection of Spirit relations. Boyle sent a report of an Irish Witch, who he had investigated and confirmed his first-hand support of an earlier account of a demonic possession at Mascon in France, for example. And John Beale sent him letters on the possible effects of witchcraft on butter production. Perhaps more importantly, many Royal Society members began to incorporate spirits into their laboratory world (Schaffer, 1987, pp. 55-85).

It is not clear to me which group benefitted more from the mutually supportive arguments of Anglican demonologists and experimental natural philosophers after 1666. On the one hand, Glanvill and his Anglican colleagues, such as Henry More, reached a far wider audience; and many persons who welcomed Glanvill's "defence" of traditional Christian beliefs in the immortality of the soul, were probably swayed toward a sympathy for experimental philosophy. On the other hand, experimental philosophers, as a group, probably had a more profound impact in legitimizing Glanvill's views among intellectuals. In any event, for at least a couple of decades after the Restoration, the belief in

ghosts and witches--which had begun to decline in the late 16th and early 17th century--returned as a serious and popular topic for polemical discussions; and those

who argued in favor of beliefs in spirit phenomena simultaneously drew arguments from and promoted experimental science (Jobe, 1981, pp. 343-356).

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