

Flights of (In)Fancy: The Child-Witches of Salzburg

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Prologue

An average Westerner's common assumption that the tendency of victimizing children by labelling them as witches is something reserved solely for the unenlightened countries of the 'developing' world surely works wonders if one's disillusioned cultural ego needs a convenient way of determining itself against a Big Bad Third World Other who threatens to thwart his hegemony. Such an assumption would be both hasty and untrue. If, in our attempts to refute it, we wanted to locate a spectacular example in American reception history, we would have to travel less than forty years into the past.

William Friedkin's motion picture *The Exorcist*, based on a novel by William Peter Blatty, was released in the U.S. in 1973. It featured a then 14-year-old actress Linda Blair, who had spent previous two years of her life in the role of Regan, a girl possessed by the Devil. Not only was the film a blockbuster - Friedkin's virtuously shot horror scenes made it become a genre milestone. The footage perceived as most shocking by the contemporary audience included the pre-pubescent actress simulating masturbation against a crucifix (simulating being the exact word, since the director later affirmed that, at the time of the casting at least, Linda hadn't known what masturbation was¹), and a now legendary scene of Linda spinning her head around 360° in fit of diabolical possession.

However, the huge financial success of *The Exorcist* had its dark side as well. The apparently immaculate professionalism with which the film was created soon started giving rise to rumours which in themselves had nothing to do with filmmaking. It was suspected that the motion picture had been put together with the help of forces that law-abiding American Christians labeled as Satanic. Individuals spreading the hysteria claimed, for instance, that the director William Friedkin's wife had given birth to an eyeless baby. But the main target of these attacks was the little girl star herself. She would later say in an interview:

If they had recognized me, people crossed to the other side of the street. I could tell that they were afraid of me. It was a strange sensation, above all because I was just an innocuous little girl. It is unbelievable that one part of the public was not capable to make a difference between my role in *The Exorcist* from a person that I was. You don't know how many times I have been asked to spin my head!²

¹ Marc Toullec : „Les légendes du fantastique: Linda Blair. Le diable au corps“, pp. 96-101 in *Mad Movies N° 211*, septembre 2008, p. 96

² Marc Toullec, op. cit., pp. 98-99

A total lack of public support for a talented adolescent comedian takes its toll in the long run. After a couple of years, the 18-year-old Linda Blair gets mixed up in an unsavoury story of drug-trafficking, which earns her a three-year probation. She cites the judge's words: „You, Hollywood people, you all get on my nerves with your jokes about drugs. Somebody has to pay for it and it's gonna be you!“³ In Hollywood, Linda becomes a pariah overnight, a status she could not shake off ever since.

From the point of view of a 21st century Western European, this sort of benighted reaction on a work of art makes little sense. But the answer to what a ‚right‘ reaction to a curious phenomenon is lies in the domain of cultural conditioning. Had Linda been born in Early Modern times on either side of the Atlantic, she would have been forced (to put it mildly) to go to far greater lengths trying to explain to the superstitious folk the magic tricks behind her credible impersonation of the Devil. It is highly probable that the secular authorities, like their conservative, vindictive colleague in modern America, would try to make her pay regardless of the guilt. And it is very likely that she would have had to pay, maybe even with her life.

This book is about a group of late 17th-century children accused of committing transgressions which their contemporaries defined as crimes of witchcraft and sorcery.

³ Marc Toullec, op. cit., p. 99

INTRODUCTION

An overview of the hunt for Jackl the Sorcerer

This book is a case study of a large group of beggar children accused of being apprenticed to the Devil, and executed for it. The first attempt of legally pursuing Jackl the Sorcerer took place in 1675. That inquiry still had nothing to do with sorcery as such, since it concerned multiple crimes of *Opferstockdiebstahl* allegedly perpetrated by Jakob Koller and his mother, Barbara Koller(in). At that point the young petty criminal vagabond had not yet been allied to the personality of Jackl and was pursued under his Christian name. The second, main wave of the chase for Jackl happened between 1677 and 1681. The sources analyzed in this study belong in this period. The chase for Jackl was reignited by the arrest of a wandering boy named Dionys Feldner in the village of Großarl. From these hearings onwards Jackl started being referred to and talked about as a young man having powers of invisibility. This first supernatural characteristic ascribed to Jakob Koller was soon followed by a range of others, and in such a mediatized manner that it would not be an exaggeration to state that ‚the legend was born‘. It is not unlikely that the steps occasionally taken by the authorities with the purpose of steering and coordinating the course of the trials - such as the *Generalbefehle* issued by the archbishop Max Gandolph - were perceived by many inhabitants of Salzburg as signs of incompetence with which the state was facing Jackl’s mythical untouchability, a quality which the state in fact reinforced.

Although a mass witch hunt such as the one undertaken against the Sorcerer Jackl and his children ‚gang‘ in late 17th century Salzburg cannot be explained in a monocausal manner, the idea that the beggar children accused of colluding with the Devil were, for the authorities, essentially a religious threat seems to have been a major motivation. Here is why.

As many other territories of the Holy German Empire, the prince-archbishopric of Salzburg had to face a new set of difficulties after the end of the Thirty Years’ War. Tides of refugees and mass unemployment were symptoms of heightened social insecurity. As is generally known, periods of upheaval bring along value system crises, and this territory does not seem to have been an exception in this matter. The first post-war cases of heresy were documented in 1650’s. The notorious “bad books” (“schlechte Bücher”) confiscated from the alleged heretics were thought to be of Lutheran orientation, although it appears that, in some cases, these were nothing more than pseudomystical teachings in Lutheran spirit. Admittedly, various forms of protestant sectarianism must have been practiced prior to this point, too. However, it is only after the war years had been overcome that the authorities could finally confront such subversive phenomena. This seems to have been the case for

the entire geographical area, though one should not forget that Salzburg was not ruled by the Habsburgs. But, from this point on, the Habsburg rulers, too, could dedicate themselves to the task of “inculcation of Catholic orthodoxy and fervour among their subjects. This also proved to be the moment when concerns about diabolical witches rose to the fore.”⁴

According to Franz Ortner, Guidobald the Count of Thun, the successor of the ambitious archbishop Paris Lodron, known for his strict surveillance of the faith community, was not particularly interested in what was going on in the Archbishopric. Incidentally, it is during his reign (1616-1668) that the territory turned “zum klassischen Durchzugsgebiet der Bettler, Zigeuner und Vaganten, die, aus bayerischen oder österreichischen Gebieten kommend oder vertrieben, in Salzburg ihren Aufenthalt nahmen.”⁵ Nonetheless, over the course of Guidobald Thun’s reign, neither punishments nor banishments were practiced.

The next archbishop, Max Gandolf von Kuenburg, who ruled from 1668 to 1687, seems to have been responsible for a sort of a paradigm shift, in that he subjected the political, economical and social domains to regimented scrutiny. Among other things, he introduced thorough general visitations of the diocese, which seems to have given him insight into details from the believers’ private lives (weddings, infant mortality, extramarital children etc). In their report about the Werfen deanery, Max Gandolf’s messengers informed him of the dangers to which the “Bauerngesindel” exposed themselves during their seasonal work in Swabia and Württemberg. The dangers consisted in the peasants being made susceptible to accept ideas based on Lutheran and other harmful dogmas. One went so far as to suspect that, during their stay in the Protestant areas, seasonal workers were demanded to renounce Catholicism. Other deaneries as well, such as Goldegg or Gastein were suspected of being thus ‘infected’. The vicar of St Veit held wandering beggars, soldiers and folk healers responsible for indoctrinating the community, since individuals belonging to these three categories used to sell heretical books across peasant estates.⁶ It is interesting to note that Werfen, Goldegg and Gastein count among those villages in which beggar children were being arrested and interrogated for sorcery.

The idea that beggars were the ones who used to spread beliefs in sorcery seems, at least according to Franz Ortner, to have stemmed from desperate vicars complaining about the state of things. However, some historians raise caveats as to how justifiable complaints voiced by „discontented

⁴ G. Waite : *Eradicating the Devil’s minions*, p. 185

⁵ F. Ortner : *Reformation, katholische Reform und Gegenreformation im Erzstift Salzburg*, p. 142

⁶ This may have been another demonstration of the somewhat constipative attitude of the Catholic church towards the relatively new print medium; hence, the *Index librorum prohibitorum* could be interpreted as its most extreme manifestation.

clergymen“ actually were.⁷ At any rate, the situation appears to have markedly worsened due to the migratory pressures of beggars on the territory in between two visitations: the general visitation 1671/73 and the visitation in 1681, only to find its culmination in the so-called “Zauberer Jackl”-trials (1675-1690), a mass witch hunt which seems to have offered an ideal outlet for all the frustrations accumulated as a result of the overall crisis. Hence, vagabonds were promoted to scapegoats, and had to shoulder accusations not only for causing general moral decline, but also for seduction of children and youths. *Oddly enough, a grotesque, indistinguishing fusion of the notions of ‚vagabond‘ and ‚child‘ took place, so that children and youths belonging to the beggar stratum became the main culprits in this process, and came to be perceived not as victims (i.e. most logical targets of the aforementioned ‚seduction‘), but as malicious carriers of a social ‚infection‘.* Incidentally, the migrating poor seem to have been a factor in the Swedish (child) witch craze as well - as in Salzburg, the priests tended to express dissatisfaction over vagabonds amassing in the cities (especially Stockholm), while the authorities claimed that sorcery cropped up wherever homeless children trod.⁸

Depending on the way one adds the trials up, the hunt for Jackl and his young warlocks lasted several years (as good as 15 according to Heinz Nagl), and ended up in more than 120 people being executed. In light of William Monter’s categorization, the reaction of Salzburg authorities falls in with the second of the three possible ways to respond to children spreading Sabbath stories over the course of the 17th century: giving credibility to the accounts, as opposed to scepticism typical of Navarrese child-witch hunts and a middle road between the two alternatives, struck by the authorities of Sweden.⁹ It has also been pointed out that a tendency to persecute young vagrants had been visible in the southern Alpine region sometime before the Zauberer Jackl trials.¹⁰

The brief historical summary of the circumstances prevailing sometime before and during the witch trials in the prince-archbishopric of Salzburg surely does not exhaust all the possible factors which may have led to a discharge of multiple capital punishments. Locating any possible ‚causative traumas‘ in the shape of historical events would still be no guarantee that it was those exact circumstances that brought about the end effect. The only thing we can examine is the ‚pulse‘ of the moment: the given society’s perception of its own victimhood, which manifested in an urge to look

⁷ Marc R. Forster : Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque, p. 125

⁸ B. Angkarloo : Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige, p. 308

⁹ W. Monter : „Les enfants au sabbat : bilan provisoire“, in N. Jacques-Chaquin et M. Préaud : Le sabbat des sorciers en Europe (XVe-XVIIIe siècles), p. 388

¹⁰ R. Schulte : Hexenmeister, pp. 253-254

for scapegoats and and make them playact the tensions which needed to be resolved. For this purpose, small groups of wandering beggars dispersed across Salzburg and the adjacent territories were stylized into a huge, well-organized anti-Christian gang under the leadership of a charismatic dark magician.

The man who served as inspiration for construing the persona of Zauberer Jackl was a certain Jakob Koller, who, having been the son of a knacker (*abdeckher*), inherited the same professional occupation reserved for *unehrliche Leute*. In his thesis, Nagl uses a variety of written sources (such as local archival data from Golling and Mosham-St. Michael) to draw a plausible genealogy of the young knacker, and this reconstruction seems to be as exhaustive as it gets. Interested readers are kindly referred to Nagl's study. For the present discussion the Jakob Koller story becomes important from the moment when this young man in his twenties was accused of having participated in a theft of church goods (*Opferstöcke*) in Golling. The persons uttering the accusations were his alleged partners in crime: one Paul Kaltenpacher, and Barbara Kollerin, Jakob Koller's mother. According to Heinz Nagl, who had access to the Golling protocols, Paul Kaltenpacher claimed that Jackl had a posse of several boys, some of whom he was able to identify (as Hansl, Lippl, Jörgl etc). But it was apparently Barbara Kollerin who, during the hearing of 18th January 1675 fed the authorities with the idea that Jackl had a whole gang of acolytes: „Seine Komplizen seien junge, starke Leute, halten mit ihrem Sohn alles geheim, blieben aber nicht lange beieinander.“¹¹ Up until that moment, persons suspected of collaborating in Jackl's thefts of church goods were referred to by the term „Kondelinquenten“, so this is a rather important hiatus within the process of shaping the persona of Jackl the Sorcerer. Not only were they accomplices - they were *secret* accomplices. At some point during the Golling trial Barbara Kollerin admitted to be guilty of sorcery, for which reason she was transferred to Salzburg, to be tried at the Grand Aulic Court. Once in Salzburg, she started denouncing her son Jackl for the crime of *erkrumpung*. From this moment on, Jakob Koller was also a suspect *in puncto veneficii*. The introduction of this supplementary dimension would build up to an avalanche of far-reaching consequences...

Male witches preying on children

Though the bull proclaimed in 1484 by the Pope Innocent VIII „specified that men and women alike were guilty of witchcraft“¹², some historians consider as the theological starting point a work

¹¹ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGSL* (112/113), p. 400

¹² W. Monter : „Male witches“, in R. M. Golden (ed.) : *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft*, p. 712

that specifically condemned male sorcery: the *Flagellum maleficorum* by Pierre Mamoris, published in Lyon in 1490.¹³ The notion of the male witch, however, was both more erratic and less stereotyped than the female one, and apparently one less systematically targeted. For our theme it is relevant that men were more eagerly persecuted on the European periphery¹⁴ (‘periphery’ being the opposite of the witch hunt ‘Heartland’ discernible from Behringer’s hotspots-map¹⁵). Nevertheless, the relevant work of Petrus Binsfeld, the spiritus rector of legal persecution of children for witchcraft crimes contains a very important connection between warlocks and *children*. After giving *carte blanche* to the interrogation of minors, Binsfeld justifies his opinion: „Darumb laß ich mich bedüncke[n] / vnderweilen nicht ohn besondere vorsehung Gottes sich begeben / daß wenn die Zauberer solche Kinder verführen wollen / sie auß einfalt der Kinder gefangen / und also jre Rathschläge entdeckt vnd zerstreuet werden.“¹⁶ The inspiration undoubtedly stemmed from the witch trials at Treves (1585-1589) over which Binsfeld presided in his capacity of a religious theoretician, and which took place in an all-male environment of a Jesuit college.¹⁷ Although this circumstance may have accounted for why he thought that *sorcerers*, and not witches, were the real danger for children, the biblical dimension of the concept of ‘Verführung’, according to which the cunning Devil constantly preyed upon innocent, mindless lambs, weighed more heavily in ideological terms. This particular aspect is discussed later in the text.

Previous research of the ‘Zauberer-Jackl’-witch-trials

The first mention of these trials within a book-length study was Fritz Byloff’s *Hexenglaube und Hexenverfolgung in den österreichischen Alpenländern*, published in 1934. Byloff claimed that the hunt rested on the authorities’ fierce determination to eradicate beggars and vagabonds, and that the obsession with an outbreak of sorcery was just a cover-up for this unholy purpose. Criticised as imprecise and impressionistic, Byloff’s hypothesis is nowadays considered obsolete. In technical terms, however, the book offers a thorough documented overview of all the then known Alpine

¹³ M. S. Messina : *Inquisitori, negromanti e streghe nella Sicilia moderna (1500-1782)*, p. 172

¹⁴ K. Lambrecht : „Tabu und Tod. Männer als Opfer frühneuzeitlicher Verfolgungswellen“, in I. Ahrendt-Schulte *et al.* (Hg.) : *Geschlecht, Magie und Hexenverfolgung*, p. 208

¹⁵ W. Behringer : *Witches and Witch-Hunts*, Map 1 on p. 112

¹⁶ P. Binsfeld : *Tractat von Bekanntnuß der Zauberer vnnnd Hexen*, p. 241

¹⁷ W. Behringer : „Kinderhexenprozesse. Zur Rolle von Kindern in der Geschichte der Hexenverfolgung“, in *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 16 (1989), pp. 34-36

witch trials. Coupled with a compendium of witch trial motives, which we shall speak of later on, Byloff's contribution remains valuable nonetheless.

There will be another mention of the Zauberer-Jackl mass trials in 1957, with Herbert Klein's *Die älteren Hexenprozesse im Lande Salzburg*, but the real breakthrough happens in 1966, when the Austrian Heinz Nagl defends a doctoral thesis in law history, *Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690* is the first study devoted solely to this case. It consists of three parts, the first two of which were published in 1974 and 1975, in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde*. The third part of the analysis (55 pages entitled „Das Motiv des Zauberer-Jackl-Prozesses“), exists as a separate manuscript guarded at the Salzburger Landesarchiv, and can only be consulted on the premises. In it Nagl offers arguments for a refutation of Byloff's point of view: the motivation for the hunt, according to Nagl, had nothing whatsoever to do with targeting the poor in particular. My results are, however, not as apologetic. Moreover, Nagl himself concedes that „jeder verdächtige Bettler, der eingesperrt und vernommen wurde, gleich am Beginn des Examens die Frage zu beantworten hatte, ob er nicht den Zauberer Jackl gekannt hätte.“¹⁸ Although conscientiously written, Nagl's analysis remains somewhat monochromatic, in that it is largely determined by his vocation as a law historian; consequently, the aspects that necessitate a different approach are not taken into consideration at all.

Gerald Mülleder, an Austrian historian who has authored several articles on this subject, also wrote a dissertation *Zwischen Justiz und Teufel. Die Salzburger Zauberer-Jackl-Prozesse (1675 bis 1679) und ihre Opfer*, which was defended in 1999, but published first in 2009. Mülleder's overall Jackl-related input is, understandably, more up-to-date than Heinz Nagl's. However, his method of work is not conducive to problematizing the statements in the sources, at least in the way I have done it in this book.

Other studies of child-witches

For the purpose of the present research Bengt Ankarloo's study on the witch trials of Sweden, *Trolldomsproceserna i Sverige*, has been consulted as much as the material would allow it. Given that Ankarloo did not quote extensively from the sources, it has not been possible to make comparisons of the Sabbath feast with Ankarloo's material, since it is not clear which descriptions are attributable to children in particular. Not a single protocol is reproduced in its entirety, so as to enable the observation of the interrogatory dynamics at hand. *Satans raseri*, on the other hand,

¹⁸ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGSL* (112/113), pp. 479-480

given that it is directed to lay audience, is basically descriptive, hence offering a somewhat clearer overview. The individual childrens' testimonies get more space there.

Another relevant study from which this research has benefitted was Gustav Henningsen commented edition of the sources relative to the Spanish Basque witch craze that also involved a great number of children, *The Salazar Documents*.

One of the very few books dealing with child-witch-trials in general is Hans Sebald's *Witch-Children*. Its only shortcoming is its occasional reliance on the works of a German theologian Hartwig Weber, whose works on the subject I have found unreasonably subjective and theologically biased.¹⁹ However, another Sebald's book, a slim volume entitled *Der Hexenjunge*, based on a protocol kept at the Rare Books Department of Cornell University, has not proved as useful: apart from offering merely skin-deep insight into the matter, it features neither transcripts of the original document, or a complete facsimile, for which reason it is not recognized as a groundbreaking piece of research in relevant bibliographies.²⁰

A word on the sources

The sources consist of the protocols of the interrogations conducted both by the Inquisition court of the Grand Aulic Court of Salzburg, and a number of local courts (Großarl, Zell etc). These protocols are originally stored in BayHStAM, and marked as HeA 10a-c and 11. Although the state of preservation of these documents is very good, the overall picture suggested by this research cannot be too definitive, inasmuch as the activity of protocollizing interrogatories ends with the year 1681. As is indicated by the *Urgichten*, both the executions and related trials (in and out of Salzburg) went well beyond that date.

Analyzing every single protocol within the *Hexenakten* source corpus would not have been possible within the three-year time frame during which the research had to be completed. I consider the portion that has been analyzed admirably representative of the whole.

I have examined only children and young people. Grownups have been included only if they form a part of a child's testimony, i.e. if they were indispensable for it.

I used solely the court protocols as sources, and chose not to extend my research to correspondence conducted by the local court instances, as I presumed these not to have been essential for the topic as such. For this reason I was not in the position to gauge the level of interaction among the alleged

¹⁹ Notably H. Weber : *Kinderhexenprozesse* (1991), and „Von der verführten Kinder Zauberei“. *Hexenprozesse gegen Kinder im alten Württemberg* (1996)

²⁰ J. Macha : *Deutsche Kanzleisprache in Hexenverhörprotokollen der Frühen Neuzeit*, Band 2: *Kommentierte Bibliographie zur regionalen Hexenforschung*, p. 170

child-witches, except in cases when this was strongly indicated in the protocols. Fortunately, previous scholarship has already made plausible guesses regarding any connections that individual defendants may have had prior to incarceration. For the most part, the *Hexenakten* folios are ‚fair copies‘ (*Reinschriften*) of the original interrogation records (*Mitschriften*), and they were regularly enriched and enlarged by all sorts of information deemed relevant by the *Kommissar* in charge.²¹ This aspect alone makes any attempt of reconstructing the initial circumstances all the more challenging.

The purpose of the present research

At first sight, most confessions made by the Salzburg beggars may come off as uniform and monotonous. However, the analysis that follows will hopefully demonstrate just how polyvalent the motivation behind the statements could have been. The way I see it, the main problem with Heinz Nagl’s study is taking the statements at face value. It is precisely because I tended to question nearly every segment of a given confession that the reader will soon realize why this is neither an essay in *histoire événementielle*, nor a piece on the regional history of Salzburg. Earlier scholars have exploited the historiographical dimension of these events to such a thorough degree that addressing these issues anew would not have yielded substantial new information. Readers interested in the chronology of the Sorcerer-Jackl-trials are kindly referred to the work of Gerald Mülleder (2009). I believe that my methodology of handling the protocols bears the most resemblance to the kind of ‚history from below‘ pursued by Carlo Ginzburg in *Die Käse und die Würmer* and by Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie in *Montaillou*. Unlike these two authors, though, I consciously avoided ‚rounding up‘ the picture I realized I was creating, wary of the fact that the very act of forcing any contents into a marketable, sensationalistic story form automatically implies unwarranted simplifications. Hence, I shall not be aiming to detect whether a figure known as Jackl the Sorcerer really existed, or whether his alleged followers performed acts of host desecration. What I shall be looking at is the way particular information were tackled by the authorities and the young defendants from the vagabond stratum within the interactive process of an Early Modern court hearing. Put in extremely abstract terms, my theme is the *cultural construal of issues that plague a given community*.

²¹ G. Mülleder : *Zwischen Justiz und Teufel*, pp. 109-110

The present thesis does not aspire to be a groundbreaking piece of research in cultural history. It simply allows questions to outline themselves along the road of attempting to reconstruct some of the possibilities inherent to a particular situation. That the Damocles' sword of overinterpretation dangles above the head of every scientist boldly delving through the Early Modern *Lebenswelt* is a danger arising from any similar task. Paradoxically enough, after having voiced this caveat, Rudolf Vierhaus sends something that almost feels like an all-clear signal: „Historische Lebenswelten sind in ihrer komplexen Wirklichkeit weder vollständig zu erkennen noch zu beschreiben, sondern ‚nur‘ in der Reduktion als soziale und kulturelle Konfigurationen zu erklären“.²² On a similar tone, a prominent historical anthropologist reminds us that, ultimately, research never actually manages to grasp „authentic“ life.²³ Of course, taking these seemingly tranquilizing statements for granted would not strip us of responsibility; moreover, it would certainly lead to a kind of cultural relativism which is itself a *cul-de-sac*.

Frames of reference

Within the analysis, the psychological approach prevails. Anyone interested in decoding the role of children in the witch hunts will naturally resort to studies in child psychology. These may prove extremely useful in lightening up various aspects of children's development. However, by transposing these findings to a past that lies some 300 years behind, we risk committing gross oversimplifications. The children i.e. young adults whose witness statements we will be examining in this book are, understandably, not available for extensive interviews. The wide age range of the defendants should likewise compel us to consult child development studies when analyzing children, and adolescent development literature when analyzing older children i.e. younger youths. In terms of their age, however, a number of our samples can be counted only as adults, even though their confessions tend not to differ substantially from those of the child witches. Hence, the approach must remain sufficiently flexible, if the research is not to fall prey to a one-sided patchwork of conveniently selected theories.

The literature that deals with the problem of children's testimonies does it from the point of view of modern legal proceedings, the context in which – at least in modern Western countries - child hearings are undertaken with the utmost care and under supervision of psychology and pedagogy

²² R. Vierhaus : „Die Rekonstruktion historischer Lebenswelten. Probleme moderner Kulturgeschichtsschreibung“, in H. Lehmann (Hrsg.) : Göttinger Gespräche zur Geschichtswissenschaft. Band I: Wege zu einer neuen Kulturgeschichte, p. 22

²³ R. van Dülmen : Historische Anthropologie, p. 110

experts. One needs hardly emphasize that early modern hearings were normally carried out under extremely stressful circumstances, which sounds like a cruel understatement in light of torture measures used to extract appropriate “truths”, as well as of the capital punishment hanging over the heads of the presumed witches. Those are two very different starting points.

It is apparently wrong to assume that children are *a priori* less reliable as witnesses. In fact, „research has not shown that children’s accounts are less accurate, than those provided by adults, just that there is substantially less information recalled.“²⁴ A relevant study on repressed memory, however, mentions an example of schoolchildren giving fairly imprecise witness statements about a sniper shooting.²⁵ Different studies emphasize different aspects of the problem of obtaining a veracious, trustworthy statement from a child witness, but, given that the context is almost entirely dependent on personal variables (the child’s recollection abilities, stress factors etc), any empirical conclusions inferred are normally not conducive to our promoting them into a set of rules. The rule of thumb seems to be: the more complicated the case, the more prominent the uncertainty factor. This is especially true of the early modern trials involving child witches.

Modern children are said to possess the ability to differentiate between events they imagine and the concrete actions of another person.²⁶ It should be reasonable to surmise that the same ability applies to early modern children. The impression one gets from the *Hexenakten* is that this must have been the case for the child witches of Salzburg as well.

In the case that concern us here the problem does not primarily lie in distinguishing real events from imagined ones, even though it may be relevant for testimonies of some of the youngest witnesses. If this case is to be tackled adequately, the clear-cut distinction between the true and the false, which moderns take for granted will have to be done away with. The early modern man’s perception of the world is conditioned by his deep-seated religious-superstitious beliefs. To him, the Devil is not just some frivolous horny guy with hooves – he is real, and his intrusion into man’s life is far from improbable.

Questions touching upon individual and community beliefs are, by their nature, subjective. And so is the truth crystallized from them. Now, if such truth is assigned central role in a context that normally demands immaculate objectivity, a conflict of interests may arise. Or so it should be. We will see that this was mostly not the case with witch trials. In pre-Enlightenment times, a particular

²⁴ J. F. Meyer : Inaccuracies in Children’s Testimony, p. 10

²⁵ E. Loftus & K. Ketcham : The myth of repressed memory, pp. 77-79

²⁶ J. F. Meyer : Inaccuracies in Children’s Testimony, p. 26

belief could be accepted as truth if enough people embraced it. In fact, some scholars go as far as stamping the whole Baroque period as ‚an epoch that could not distinguish dream from reality‘?²⁷

We should not forget that Freud’s early reflections on infantile hysteria were influenced by a somewhat simplistic reception of isolated historical events involving large groups of children, such as medieval children’s pilgrimages and the Basque child-witch panic. The ecstatically coloured mass reactions that accompanied these occurrences, once suffused by the ideas prevalent in the second half of the 18th century, were supposed to testify of a penchant for hysteria presumed to be inherent to the child’s psyche.²⁸ Although we are nowadays incomparably richer in terms of new knowledge and insights, the irrationality of children postulated by Freud has spooked the discourse ever since. Recent discussions of Freud’s ‚seduction theory‘ demonstrate just how fluffy these concepts still are, the big part of the elusiveness being that ‚Freud’s thinking was always delicately poised between the literal and the metaphoric, a quality that goes a long way toward explaining its enduring power.‘²⁹

Combining various theories is usually subsumed under the term ‚interdisciplinarity‘, which I prefer to exchange for a slightly better one, that of ‚transdisciplinarity‘. In a recent interview to *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, literature and social scientist Jan Philipp Reemtsma has neatly summed up why the latter is better than the former: ‚[D]ie Idee der Interdisziplinarität, die immer herumgeistert, die Idee, dass man die Disziplinen fast fusioniert - das funktioniert nicht. [...] Ich neige jetzt eher zu dem Begriff der Transdisziplinarität, soll heissen: Man lernt, wie andere auf die Gegenstände gucken, wie sie ‚konstruieren‘.‘³⁰ Picking ideas from various disciplines makes for a heterogenous approach which, in the eyes of purists, may appear ‚unclean‘. Unfortunately, sources are seldom as ‚clean‘ as we would want them to be - if at all. Indeed, the nature of the protocols makes it very difficult to distinguish the fictional from the documentary. Jörg Schönert has observed that even the most formal Early Modern juridical text cannot be expected not to have been influenced by lay forms of interpretation.³¹ With this I am not implicitly condoning a relativistic standpoint of

²⁷ R. Habermas : ‚Wunder, Wunderliches, Wunderbares. Zur Profanisierung eines Deutungsmusters in der Frühen Neuzeit‘, in R. van Dülmen (Hg.) : Armut, Liebe, Ehre, p. 41

²⁸ C. Bonomi : Sulla soglia della psicoanalisi, footnote on p. 56

²⁹ J. Greenberg : ‚The Ambiguity of Seduction in the Development of Freud’s Thinking‘, in M. I. Good (ed.) : The Seduction Theory In Its Second Century, pp. 67-68

³⁰ ‚Der dünne Firnis der Zivilisation. Ein Gespräch mit Jan Philipp Reemtsma über Gewalt und Vertrauen - sowie die Wirkung von Wissenschaft‘, in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* Nr. 79, 4./5. April 2009, p. 32

³¹ Originally in J. Schönert (Hg.) : Erzählte Kriminalität. Zur Typologie und Funktion der narrativen Darstellungen in Strafrechtspflege, Publizistik und Literatur zwischen 1770 und 1920. Tübingen 1991, quoted from G. Schwerhoff : Aktenkundig und gerichtsnotorisch, p. 42

„anything goes“. My interpretative perspective is perhaps best described by Elizabeth A. Clark's paraphrase of Jacques Derrida, according to whom „[u]ndecidability [...] does not mean that we cannot make *some* determination among possible interpretations; undecidability need not leave the reader with *no* context. [...] from numerous possibilities, readers or listeners select what they believe the sentence/statement might mean in context [...] but their choice does not preclude other possibilities.“³² Fortunately, awareness of the necessity for transdisciplinary experimentation appears to rise among cultural historians. According to Mitchell G. Ash and Birgit Wagner, „es gibt keine Garantien epistemischer Art für das Gelingen transdisziplinärer kulturwissenschaftlicher Forschung, keinen methodologischen Königsweg. Kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung, wenn sie innovativ sein will, bewegt sich im Risikobereich des Unerprobten, daher auch des vielfach Kritikwürdigen.“³³

Methodology

My methodology is mainly based on ‚close reading‘ i.e. on evaluating each segment from the protocols against the background of the interrogatory situation as a whole. This cannot be done without investing oneself into the subject matter, and consequently risk clouding the issue with ‚subjectivity‘. In my opinion, the one - and only - solution to such an impasse is to remain constantly alert to one's own overinvestments during the analysis. Switching off one's inherently subjective responsiveness to the contents of the sources would imply switching off one's humanity. And since psychoanalysts are among those scholars who have sensitized themselves to these problematics rather conscientiously, it is from their ranges that I have gathered an insight I deem important for the practice of psychologically based historical research: „The scientific worker must combine sober observation with imaginative interpretation. There are pitfalls. Imagination may lead astray if it moves too far from the facts observed, but such a flight of fantasy is not more fruitless than the mechanical listing of facts without any imaginative work on the data obtained.“³⁴

³² E. A. Clark : History, Theory, Text, pp. 143-144

³³ M. G. Ash / B. Wagner : „»NO GUARANTEES«: Innovative kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung unter unsicheren Bedingungen. Einleitende Bemerkungen“, URL http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/fallstudie/MAsh_BWagner1.pdf [accessed 1st February 2010]

³⁴ P. Heimann : „Notes on the Theory of the Life and Death Instincts“, in J. Riviere *et al.* : Developments in Psycho-Analysis, p. 324

Finally, in a seminal article on the problems and possible solutions to the difficulties inherent in the historian's evaluation of ego-documents, Behringer reminds us that material truth - which is, after all, the focus of an interrogatory - must remain an individual truth.³⁵

The Age of Budding Paedagogy: Disregarding Comenius

Our analysis will make it abundantly clear that the authorities of Salzburg were not acting for didactic reasons, which is why the paedagogy issue is not of central importance for the present discussion. In fact, there was very little sensitivity for both the ways and the scope in which the defendants' age affected the nature and the course of the interrogations. Indeed, the defendants were thought of as beggars, some of whom just happened to be children as well. Neither childhood nor youth were ever paedagogically thematized. However, towards the end of the 17th century winds from the European Northwest had already been blowing for some time. The Zauberer-Jackl-trials namely took place approximately half a century after Johann Amos Comenius' *Česká didaktika* (1627-1632), in which the forefather of sectarian paedagogy elaborated on the differences between grownups and children, allowing the latter ones its own anthropological idiosyncrasies. My source material, however, does not mention educational background of either the ecclesiasts or the jurists involved in the trials. Comenius may indeed have been a name for them, but the protocols themselves do not indicate an appropriate reception, even though some of his ideas, geographically speaking, might have seeped through to the prince-archbishopric. Exactly a hundred years after the Salzburg hearings we shall be analyzing, in 1778, Johann Heinrich Campe published his work *Neue Methode, Kinder auf leichte und angenehme Art lesen zu lehren*, which contained a treatise „Erinnerung, daß Kinder Kinder sind und als solche behandelt werden sollen“. In itself, this illuminated title does not give away that Campe's attitudes were progressive in a premodern, rather than a modern, sense. What he actually believed (and advocated) was that disciplining the children's affects, drives and desires was a way to their inward purification.³⁶ This was a step forward compared to the Salzburg events, which seem to have reflected an ultimate need for *outward* purification.

³⁵ W. Behringer : „Gegenreformation als Generationenkonflikt oder: Verhörprotokolle und andere administrative Quellen zur Mentalitätsgeschichte“, in W. Schulze (Hg.) : *Ego-Dokumente. Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, [= *Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit. Quellen und Darstellungen zur Sozial- und Erfahrungsgeschichte*, Bd. 2], p. 293

³⁶ W. Böhm : *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, p. 66

Simplifying the text(s)

In order to address the thorny issue of communication during an Early Modern court hearing, one would have to delve deeply into the area of communication theory, which I fear would monopolize the main aim of the present research. Nonetheless, it would be well worth recalling certain core ideas on which communication theory rests:

In der Kommunikation werden weder Informationen noch Gedanken oder Bedeutungen übertragen oder ausgetauscht. Informationen, Gedanken und Bedeutungen werden ausschließlich im Gehirn von Menschen erzeugt, und zwar gemäß den individuellen und sozialen Bedingungen und Schemata die dabei im Gehirn jedes Einzelnen aufgrund seiner bisherigen Biographie in einer konkreten Kommunikationssituation operativ eingesetzt werden. In der Umwelt gibt es keine Informationen, sondern nur materielle Gegebenheiten, die zur ‚Informationsproduktion‘ genutzt werden können, also v.a. Medienangebote. Selbst Bücher, Filme oder andere Dokumente in Archiven sind keine Informationsspeicher, sondern Angebote, die zur Informationsproduktion genutzt werden können, die sie zwar beeinflussen, aber nicht kausal steuern können. - Dass wir trotz der hier unterstellten kognitiven Autonomie erfolgreich miteinander interagieren und kommunizieren können, liegt v.a. an unserer Sozialisation.³⁷

For our purposes suffice it to say that human language “distracts almost as often as it informs”,³⁸ and that text is not just that which is written on the document – every howsoever incoherent thought in the mind is a ‘text’. Therefore, the procedure underlying any transcript of an Early Modern hearing comprises of at least four phases: 1) text of the statement in the defendant’s *brain*; 2) the same mental text processed into a *verbal* statement; 3) the verbal statement as *received* by the listener, and 4) the received statement *translated* into administrative language (in this case, *Kanzleisprache*). In a recent work entitled *Redewiedergabe in frühneuzeitlichen Hexenprozessakten*, Anja Wilke has analyzed the syntax of various witch protocols, without pondering too much on the way such documents come into being. Her conclusion regarding the transmission of texts as I have outlined it above, is rather cautious: “Nur bei direkter Redewiedergabe, die dialektale Elemente enthält, kann man im Rückblick erahnen, was die Angeklagten wirklich gesagt haben [...], nicht aber wissen. So ist oft am Kanzleistil zu erkennen, dass es sich sicher nicht um die wortwörtlichen Aussagen der Angeklagten handelt, sondern um schriftsprachliches Nachempfinden des Gehörten bei der Wiedergabe“.³⁹

³⁷ A. Nünning (Hrsg.) : Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie, p. 370

³⁸ F. de Waal : The Ape and the Sushi Master, p. 310

³⁹ A. Wilke : Redewiedergabe in frühneuzeitlichen Hexenprozessakten, p. 180

At any rate, conscientious historians will be quick to point out that their guild belabours solely the traces that are actually there. What we see is what we have, and there is nothing more to it. In this perspective, the number and nature of distortions which an original message undergoes on its way into the ego document is an irrelevant question, since previous phases have left no traces anyway. Such a no-no is correct insofar as it prevents the scholar from embracing an absurdly improbable point of departure to make wild assumptions when analyzing the historical source. However, we do not need other point of departure than the document itself. Witch trial hearings teem with both visible and cryptic inconsistencies which, thanks to the aforementioned methodological caveat, tend to remain unregistered. The texts or ‘speech acts’ rendered into written form are often being taken for granted – how do we know that a sentence means what it ‘says’? – so that the “meaning” that seems most probable becomes *the* meaning. Once we have happily established that there is nothing ambiguous whatsoever about the interpretable information our source artefact contains, we can permit ourselves to get carried away by our historicist, pseudorational conditioning, a process during which we have risen up to being a “channel” that skilfully and professionally filters away everything but the barest facts. After having pledged an appropriate ‘oath of allegiance’ that is an introductory imperative of every piece of scientific research, we can pursue questionable reasoning with zero percentage of bad conscience. In a text on the role of psychology in history, published two decades ago, Peter Schultz-Hageleit diagnosed the unwillingness of contemporary historians to honestly confront themselves with their primordial habit, “nur die Tatsachen sprechen zu lassen”.⁴⁰ A merely nominal denial of any allegation to Leopold von Ranke’s obsession of unearthing “wie es wirklich gewesen” remains without effect if we nonetheless stubbornly follow the same hidden agenda. I therefore believe that Schultz-Hageleit is right when he pleads fellow historians to acknowledge the unconscious or rather ‘unconsciousnesses’ (*Unbewußtheiten*) which every artefact contains somewhere between the lines.⁴¹ In general, prominent witchcraft historians tend to concede only that „putting psychoanalysis into its historical context“⁴² is a desideratum, wisely avoiding suggestions as to how this can or should be done. The adoption of such a disparaging attitude to the use of psychology is, understandably enough, motivated by the impressionistic, indiscriminate theorizings of the early scholarship on witchcraft. Meanwhile, however, it appears to have developed into something of a self-serving *Habitus*, which yields in unfavourable judgments

⁴⁰ P. Schultz-Hageleit : „Die historischen Tatsachen und ihre Bedeutung. Plädoyer für die interdisziplinäre „Geschichtsanalyse““ in B. Loewenstein (Hg.) : Geschichte und Psychologie. Annäherungsversuche, p. 86

⁴¹ P. Schultz-Hageleit, op. cit, p. 78

⁴² H. C. E. Midelfort : „Charcot, Freud, & the Demons“, in K. A. Edwards (ed.) : Werewolves, Witches, and Wandering Spirits, p. 200

reserved for those scholars who, like Lyndal Roper, ‚psychoanalyze without contextualizing‘. Wolfgang Behringer coldly underlines that it cannot be *proved* that incestuous fantasies or sexual deviance were the motor of the Regina Bartholome case in 1670 Augsburg.⁴³ Nothing, indeed, can ever be proved when it comes to reconstructions of historical realities. There are only shades of probability which make a particular scholarly view appear in a favourable light, until it gets swept away by new, more progressive and more complex scientific insights of the future.

Leading judges, leading questions: techniques of ‚interrogatoria‘

The term *interrogatoria* signifies a set of questions posed during the hearing. Heinz Nagl explains this as

eine bestimmte Anzahl von Inquisitionalartikeln, die der Untersuchungsrichter in numerierter Reihenfolge auf ein Blatt Papier schrieb, und zwar nicht erst während des Verhörs, da die Ausarbeitung der Interrogatoria bereits vor der Verhandlung erfolgte. Die Interrogatoria zerlegten den gesamten Tatbestand in ein System von Einzelfragen und bildeten damit die Grundlage für die Vernehmung des Inquisiten.⁴⁴

Cleverer Early Modern contemporaries were apparently able to intuit to which extent witchcraft was essentially a subjective crime. This subjectivity, however, tended to spill over into the legal framework with such regularity and consistence that it was ultimately imperceptible for the majority of the targeted individuals. According to the Italian anthropologist Carlo Ginzburg, the accused would most often ply to these imposed, unfair rules:

Die Beeinflussungen von Seiten der Richter sind insbesondere in den an den Hexensabbat geknüpften Fragen deutlich, an jenes Phänomen also, das in den Augen der Dämonologen das eigentliche Wesen der Hexerei ausmachte. In Situationen wie diesen neigten die Angeklagten mehr oder weniger spontan dazu, die inquisitorischen Stereotypen zu übernehmen, welche Prediger, Theologen und Juristen in ganz Europa verbreitet hatten.⁴⁵

It has been observed that ‚[o]ne characteristic of early modern courts using inquisitorial procedure was that sweeping authority was often vested in one individual or one tribunal.‘⁴⁶ And that one

⁴³ W. Behringer : ‚Imperial free city of Augsburg‘, in R. M. Golden : Encyclopedia of Witchcraft, p. 66 [*my italics*]

⁴⁴ H. Nagl : ‚Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil II‘, in *MGSL* (114), p. 83

⁴⁵ C. Ginzburg : ‚Der Inquisitor als Anthropologe‘, in R. Habermas / N. Minkmar (Hgs.) : Das Schwein des Häuptlings, p. 45

⁴⁶ E. M. Kern : ‚Inquisitorial courts‘, in R. M. Golden (ed.) : Encyclopedia of Witchcraft, p. 226

single instance, positioned on ‚this side‘ of the law would always be chasing after a more or less exact *counterpart* of itself on the ‚other side‘. So, if we seek to understand how an anonymous Salzburg wanderer could have achieved such a cultic status, we must keep in mind that Early Modern gang trials were always about looking for gang *leaders*.⁴⁷ Contemporaries apparently believed that somebody had to have been the alpha male i.e. the genius diaboli of the group in question. It is therefore understandable that the Salzburg *Hofrat* needed the arch-criminal, „um den ganzen Prozeß ad acta legen zu können.“⁴⁸ Within the actual robber gangs, however, „[d]ie Führerschaft wechselte unter Umständen von Tat zu Tat.“⁴⁹ At any rate, in spite of the obvious advantage - even superiority - that interrogators had over the interrogated during witch-trials, many of them were deeply anxious over the immense deviousness of their interlocutors, who were often (and with little justification) imagined as diabolically shrewd counterparts. For example, Bernardo Gui’s handbook for inquisitors, *Practica (officii) inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis*, written and published between 1309 and 1323/25, warns its users against the intricate ways in which Waldensians construe their lies during interrogation. Though a number of various ruses is ascribed to this group of heretics, the following ‚smokescreen‘ is of particular relevance for our theme:

Man muß auch erwähnen, daß Ketzer dann und wann so tun, als seien sie Narren oder Verrückte, wie z.B. David for Achis (vgl. 1 Kön 21, 12-15). Und wenn sie ihre Irrlehren vorbringen, mischen sie Wörter darunter, die unpassend, lächerlich und geradezu närrisch sind, um dadurch ihre Irrtümer zu verdecken und den Eindruck zu erwecken, als sagten sie alles, was sie sagen, gleichsam im Scherz. Solche habe ich oft erlebt. Mit Hilfe dieser und vieler anderer Täuschungsversuche bei ihren Antworten, die zu beschreiben zu lange dauerte und zuwider wäre - täglich erfinden sie neue - beabsichtigen sie, sich selbst zu tarnen, um als Unschuldige und Unbelastete davonzukommen, oder daß die Inquisitoren, frustriert und erschöpft, aufhören, sie zu verfolgen, oder daß der Inquisitor bei den Laien in Verruf gerät, weil er einfache Leute ohne Grund zu quälen bzw. nur einen Grund zu suchen scheint, sie durch zu knifflige Verhöre fertigzumachen.⁵⁰

Gui’s Biblical reference points to two separate Old Testament episodes incompletely fused with each other. In one, David is bound to seek refuge in the court of an enemy, the Philistine king Achish, who hires him as a mercenary. In the other, David, anxious to ensure his release, ‚changes his behavior‘ i.e. feigns madness in front of Abimelech. According to Isaac Asimov, Abimelech is

⁴⁷ U. Danker : Räuberbanden im Alten Reich um 1700, p. 285

⁴⁸ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGSJ* (112/113), p. 441

⁴⁹ U. Danker : Räuberbanden im Alten Reich um 1700, p. 285

⁵⁰ P. Seifert / M. Pawlik (Hgs.) : Das Buch der Inquisition: Das Originalhandbuch des Inquisitors Bernard Gui, p. 144

either „a copyist’s mistake for Achish“, or „a general title for Philistine kings“.⁵¹ By extension, ‚David in front of Achish‘ is obviously meant to epitomize supreme cunningness of a believer who plays with fire while fervently holding on to his faith. In spite of this contemptuous parallel drawn between David and the Waldensians, the last sentence of the excerpt could be a hint to why the very few boy warlocks able to pass off as crazy or mentally retarded de facto managed to walk free: executing them, too, would have been a risky move for the Salzburg Inquisition. If some or all of these cases were just convincingly carried out simulations, then such acts of feigning lack of mental faculties seem to have been the only valid escape i.e. life-saving route that the beggar children could resort to, and, indeed, the only device that was actually used. The *Hexenakten* suggest of no other techniques of sabotaging a hearing (asking counter-questions, giving affirmative answers that are intentionally vague, ambivalent explanations, playing naive⁵²), perhaps also because these maneuvers would have been beyond the faculties of the young defendants caught between the desire to stylize themselves as powerful sorcerers and the urge to flee from the Inquisition’s iron grip.

Evasive witnesses, nebulous answers: techniques of ‚responsoria‘

The visible structure of a witch-trial hearing is the dialogue between the interrogator and the defendant (witness, or accused, as the case may be). If the defendant is a child, however, this structure may be exhibiting more intricate dynamics. Asking a child witness to describe what happened does not necessarily imply the same premises. I have reasons to believe that the imperative to confess may have been understood by some defendants as a cryptically glazed invitation to counterfactual thinking: “Had you and Jackl ever met, what would have happened?”. In fact, the court’s intention is not that cryptic at all, considering the fact that the children were forced to confess to what both parties knew was untrue! On the other hand, we do not know how conscious this ‘bargain’ could have been under the circumstances. But, the bottom-line is that just because the statement had to be *presented* as the truth does not mean that there was no variety of perceptual approaches on the part of the young defendants. Indeed, the issue becomes even more complicated if we introduce what to me seems like a relevant parameter, Sándor Ferenczi’s concept

⁵¹ Isaac Asimov : Asimov’s Guide to the Bible, pp. 496-497

⁵² P. Seifert / M. Pawlik, op. cit., pp. 138-143

of ‘identification with the aggressor’, first introduced at a lecture in Wiesbaden in 1932.⁵³ After Ferenczi fell out with Freud, the concept came to be erroneously attributed to Anna Freud as its originator.⁵⁴ According to Jay Frankel, who has recently commented on Ferenczi’s seminal text, it is “a component of our automatic and immediate reaction whenever we feel overwhelmed by a threat. Believing ourselves to be in danger, with no escape route, we consequently tend to make ourselves invisible, like chameleons, which, in order to protect themselves, simulate precisely what threatens them in the surrounding world.”⁵⁵ Frankel further specifies that there are two phases implied in the process of the identification with the aggressor: 1) guessing the aggressor’s wishes; and 2) satisfying those wishes.⁵⁶ Considering that even in the modern democratic societies our social interactions with symbolically potent figures tend to make us meek and submissive, it would be all the more worthwhile to explore this dimension in a highly hierarchical context of an Early Modern witchcraft investigation, which involves proverbially weak individuals – beggar children – into the bargain.

Habitual distortion of memory

The problem of data getting lost in transmission on the trajectory mind-mouth-ear-paper is of a mechanical nature. The process of memory retrieval is a separate problem. There are two phenomena relevant for evaluating ego documents: distorted memories and false memories. Distorted memory is a phenomenon based on human tendency for linguistic abstraction, which implies retaining only the essence of a story, forgetting or not recalling certain details, and fabricating new ones.⁵⁷ It was first observed by a Cambridge scholar Sir Frederic Bartlett in 1932. In Bartlett’s opinion, memories get distorted according to a principle he called *schema*, and which “refers to an active organization of past reactions or past experiences.”⁵⁸ More recent memory research labels this tendency *retrospective bias*, which “occurs when we think back to the past and change certain facts or fill in the gaps in our memories with exaggeration, speculation, or plain

⁵³ S. Ferenczi : „Sprachverwirrung zwischen den Erwachsenen und dem Kind (Die Sprache der Zärtlichkeit und der Leidenschaft)“, in J. M. Masson : Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, getan? Sigmund Freuds Unterdrückung der Verführungstheorie, pp. 317-330

⁵⁴ A. Nünning (Hrsg.) : Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie, p. 306

⁵⁵ J. Frankel : „Identificazione reciproca con l’aggressore nella relazione analitica“, in C. Bonomi / F. Borgogno : La catastrofe e i suoi simboli, p. 198 [*my translation*]

⁵⁶ J. Frankel, op. cit., p. 199

⁵⁷ R. L. Solso : Cognitive Psychology, p. 326

⁵⁸ R. L. Solso : Cognitive Psychology, pp. 325-326

wishful thinking.”⁵⁹ The issue has been discussed to some extent by Ralf-Peter Fuchs, in an article on Early Modern ways of evaluating the past.⁶⁰ It appears that capabilities of both memorization and memory retrieval depended on the cultural conditioning, which manifested in common people (as opposed to a ‚chrono-conscious‘ nobility) memorizing dates only if these were associated to events considered personally relevant⁶¹, and a tendency not to have exact knowledge of one’s own age.⁶² The latter observation puts an additional weight onto the already tenuous differentiation between children and youths (and, indeed, children and adults) in our theme corpus.

Mythomania and lies

In his famous 1925 study Ernest Dupré described *mythomanie* as an adult’s pathological tendency to fabricate lies, emphasizing that the same tendency in a child is a normal thing, due to human beings’ particular ontogeny.⁶³ Dupré pointed out that, when confronted with their parents’ leading questions, asked in an aggressive, bullying manner, children tend to deliver whatever they reckon is expected of them to say at a given moment. Repetition, then, helps a particular statement getting engraved in the child’s memory, ready for a parrot-like release whenever need arises. For this phenomenon, which he called *fabulation infantile par suggestion*, two factors are held responsible: the innate suggestibility of a child, and its lack of conscience for the consequences of its accusations.⁶⁴ Apparently Dupré’s theory had a certain impact on legal medicine practices of the early 20th century, in that it led to a permanent and lasting discredit of children’s testimonies, thus reverting the mainstream from the previously voiced tendencies of Ambroise Tardieu, convinced of the genuineness of child abuse.⁶⁵ Now, we cannot ascertain how ‘suggestible’ the little beggars of Salzburg really were, but, given the pressures of the hearings, the question seems to be somewhat beside the point. After all, witches – even adult ones – would not have been inclined to give self-

⁵⁹ E. Loftus / K. Ketcham : The myth of repressed memory, p. 177

⁶⁰ R.-P. Fuchs : „Erinnerungsgeschichten: Zur Bedeutung der Vergangenheit für den „gemeinen Mann“ der Frühen Neuzeit“, in R.-P. Fuchs / W. Schulze (Hg.) : Wahrheit, Wissen, Erinnerung: Zeugenverhörprotokolle als Quellen für soziale Wissensbestände in der Frühen Neuzeit, pp. 89-154

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 108

⁶² Ibid, p. 121

⁶³ E. Dupré : Pathologie de l’imagination et de l’émotivité, p. 5

⁶⁴ E. Dupré : Pathologie de l’imagination et de l’émotivité, pp. 20-22

⁶⁵ D. D. Vassigh : „Les experts judiciaires face à la parole de l’enfant maltraité. Le cas des médecins légistes de la fin du XIXe siècle“, in *Revue d’histoire de l’enfance irrégulière*, URL <http://rhei.revues.org/index34.html> [accessed 22nd August 2008]

undoing statements because of their suggestibility. The matter of self-denunciation is a complex one and cannot be dealt with presently. Suffice it to say that, in the interrogatory context, the state of being compelled to confess, accompanied with torture, did the trick.

Both adults' and children's lies, be they 'normal' or pathological, are, for a number of reasons, rather difficult to analyze. It has been remarked that what matters in the psychoanalysis of a pathological liar is not the truthfulness of his statements, but the truthfulness i.e. sincerity of his objects.⁶⁶ Drawing a line between truth and reality is, however, very difficult in cases when the situation itself demanded that the young defendant actively contribute to a social delusion supported and pursued by the examination authorities. This issue has been admirably synthesized by Francisco Fajardo Spinola in an article on interrogatories conducted by the Inquisition of the Canary Islands: „L'aspect proprement sabbatique naît du procès lui-même, bien que ce ne soient pas toujours les juges qui le suggèrent. Du moins, si ce sont eux qui introduisent la „démonologisation“ des faits, ce sont les accusés qui fournissent les détails, puisés dans leur propres représentations. Les récits les plus fantastiques proviennent souvent des auto-délations, et la torture n'a pas été toujours nécessaire.“⁶⁷ Hans Sebald suggests that the reason for this profusion of Sabbath-related fantasies may be an urge to compensate for the dreary life of the prison.⁶⁸ Finally, in light of the recently detected correlations between changes in metabolism and empathy⁶⁹, we are perhaps not far even from mapping the dialectic process of Sabbath fantasies on neurophysiological grounds.

Autobiographies as historical sources

Memory, however, is a tricky thing, even without group fantasies. Early Modern autobiographies, purportedly a 'first hand' reflection of a person's life, can, as ego documents, be of only limited value. For instance, the proverbial early 16th century childhood portrayal is the *Wanderbüchlein* by Johannes Butzbach. The autobiographer's intentions can hardly be labelled impartial, given that it is an edifying piece of work written by a monk in Latin. Hence, the trials and tribulations of a wandering pupil can also be viewed as entirely anecdotal, since the thematization of the self serves a number of purposes. This caveat has not warded off certain psychohistorians from reading

⁶⁶ C. Frank / H. Weiß : Edna O'Shaughnessy : Kann ein Lügner analysiert werden?, p. 61

⁶⁷ F. F. Spinola : „Des vols et assemblées des sorcières dans les documents de l'Inquisition canarienne“, in N. Jacques-Chaquin / M. Préaud, op. cit., pp. 312-313

⁶⁸ H. Sebald : Witch-Children, p. 155

⁶⁹ R. H. Adler : „Spurensicherung. Sherlock Holmes, Sigmund Freud, Charles S. Peirce, die moderne Neurobiologie und die „Diagnose“, in M. Spitzer und W. Bertram (Hrsg.) : Braintertainment, pp. 201-202

Freudian contents into a number of Medieval and Early Modern autobiographies. According to these scholars, the childhood reminiscences contained in these works can be structurally reduced to oedipal triads, consisting of the mother-, the father-, and the self-*imago*.⁷⁰ The ex-child's motivation for focusing on such a structure is namely a "Phantasma der eigenen Herkunft".⁷¹ One need not go that far in order to demonstrate how messy the human personal memory archive can be, given that even easily traceable recollections can be far less reliable than one would have thought.

Neuropsychology on autobiographical memory

The gradual emergence of neuropsychology is partly responsible for the scientific attention that autobiographical memory has received over the last 35 years.⁷² The new research has started differentiating between autobiographical knowledge and episodic memory. The latter concept is particularly relevant for the interrogation of the child-witches of Salzburg, asked to retell certain episodes from their recent past. "It has been suggested that only those episodic memories that are linked in some way to currently active goals become integrated with autobiographical knowledge in long-term memory."⁷³ From the perspective of the *Hexenakten* corpus, this should mean that episodes of joint wanderings of the defendant and his/her beggar companion can be said to have certain value. However, it has been remarked that "socialization experiences and the self-focus that predominates in a culture may influence the accessibility of earliest memories and their content."⁷⁴ Unfortunately, the lack of evidence does not permit us to fathom any predominant paradigms that would have influenced memory within the 'beggar subculture', especially since it is not certain that such a subculture existed at all.⁷⁵

„False memories‘

In 2004 the academic book market was enriched by a publication from which historical research methodology cannot but profit immensely - *Der Schleier der Erinnerung*, by the Frankfurt historian

⁷⁰ R. Frenken : "Da fing ich an zu erinnern...". Die Psychohistorie der Eltern-Kind-Beziehung in den frühesten deutschen Autobiographien (1200-1700), p. 346

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 347

⁷² M. A. Conway & H. L. Williams : "Autobiographical Memory", in H. L. Roediger III (ed.) : Learning and Memory: A Comprehensive Reference, p. 895

⁷³ M. A. Conway & H. L. Williams, op. cit., p. 900

⁷⁴ M. A. Conway & H. L. Williams, op. cit., p. 905

⁷⁵ T. Munck : Seventeenth-Century Europe, p. 195

Johannes Fried. The book is an ambitious, in-depth study of the various facets of memory, and, specifically, of historical memory. Well in the spirit of Brian Stock's *caveat* „Historical writing does not treat reality; it treats the interpreter's relation to it“⁷⁶, Fried warns historians not to take for granted those statements in the sources which rely on the recollection of the historical subject:

Wer sich in einem Fall an ein Detail deselben Falles zutreffend erinnerte, konnte sich mit einem anderen abgrundtief täuschen - ohne es zu bemerken und ohne dem späteren Historiker, der nur auf der gleichen Aussagen angewiesen ist, auch nur den Hauch einer Chance zu lassen, die Irrtümer zu realisieren und die zutreffende Angabe dem zugehörigen Detail oder Ereignis zuzuordnen, die falsche aber als solche zu durchschauen. Alles konnte der Verformung unterliegen: die absolute und relative Chronologie, die Beteiligten, die Handlungen, die Geschehensorte, die in die Darstellung eingeflochtenen Urteile, kurzum: die Gesamtheit der „harten Fakten“.⁷⁷

Thorough though Fried's study may be, it neither deals with fantasy production *per se*, nor does it address the matter of children as historical witnesses. When discussing the confessions of the child-witches, we have to differentiate between retelling an actual event, conscious and intentional confabulation, and the third category which is a combination of the two. This third category implies giving statements of events which the defendant believes have occurred, but which in fact have not been experienced at all. What I have chosen to call 'non-intentional confabulation' appears to be connected to a phenomenon known as 'false memory' (an issue to which Fried has devoted some space).⁷⁸ The most outstanding researcher in this field, Elizabeth Loftus, also makes use of the term 'imagination inflation', which is "the phenomenon that imagining an event increases subjective confidence that the event actually happened".⁷⁹ If we exploit Loftus' argumentation further, we can say that when a child-witch talks about an imagined event within the frame of imperative confabulation imposed from without, this situation itself increases the delusional potential. Eventually, the immature (i.e. not yet fully developed and therefore malleable) defendant starts believing his own statement about the untruthful event. The reason why this hypothesis may be transposed onto the context of witch hunts is because imagination, according to Loftus, "could even make people believe that they performed actions that would have been rather bizarre or unusual such as 'kiss a plastic frog' or 'rub the chalk on your head'".⁸⁰ Again, it should be emphasized that

⁷⁶ B. Stock : Listening for the text, p. 80

⁷⁷ J. Fried : Der Schleier der Erinnerung, pp. 175-176

⁷⁸ J. Fried : Der Schleier der Erinnerung, pp. 153-155

⁷⁹ E. Loftus : „Imagining the Past“, in *The Psychologist* 14, #11 (2001), p. 584

⁸⁰ E. Loftus : „Imagining the Past“, p. 586

my aim is not to get to the bottom of whether anything related to Jackl actually happened, but to examine the consequences that an obligation to confess to such ‘close encounters of the warlock kind’ could have had on the perception of the young people involved, i.e. on the nature of their statements. The huge body of witchcraft research has amply demonstrated how wide acceptance of psychologically construed beliefs in witches and sorcery in certain phases of Early Modern history thickened into spatial-temporal pockets of a kind of cultural autohypnosis. However, the phenomena of false memory and imagination inflation are still very much a source of legal and ethical problems. It was again Elizabeth Loftus who, in a recent article, examined the difficulties faced by the modern legal systems when passing judgments based on unreliable witness statements. She summarizes the legal aspect of the problem thus: “Law enforcement interrogations that are suggestive can lead witnesses to mistaken memories, even ones that are detailed and expressed with confidence.”⁸¹

A blatant example of suggestive interrogation is the case of one Paul Ingram, a fundamentalist Christian whom the authorities of the state of Washington in late 1988 / early 1989 led to believe not only that he had been practicing incest with his two daughters, but also that he had been a satanist. Loftus & Ketcham (1994) claim that “[t]aking off from a suggestion of satanism offered by his interrogators, Ingram began to confess to increasingly bizarre and bloody deeds. In a trancelike state, with eyes closed and head in hands, he mumbled about devils and fires, blood-drinking, and infanticide.”⁸² It is true that Ingram’s own obsession with religious imagery may have steered this process in its own turn, but the suggestibility of the accused raises questions we cannot afford to ignore in a debate on the confessions of child-witches. Ingram apparently suffered from what the New York psychiatrist Herb Spiegel named the “Grade 5 syndrome”, a phrase he coined to describe “the five to ten percent of the population who are so hypnotizable and suggestible that they can shift instantaneously and almost imperceptibly from normal consciousness into a deep hypnotic trance state. [...] Despite their confabulatory and fantastical nature, memories recalled in a hypnotic state will seem utterly real to a Grade 5; even after returning to normal consciousness, a Grade 5 will recall the memories with a compelling emotional quality, fervently affirming the truth and authenticity of the remembered experience.”⁸³ It is, of course, impossible to ascertain whether any of the warlock boys and girl witches of Salzburg could have been classified as Grade 5’s – provided

⁸¹ E. Loftus : „Our changeable memories: legal and practical implications“, in *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* Volume 4 (March 2003), p. 232

⁸² E. Loftus & K. Ketcham : *The myth of repressed memory*, p. 228

⁸³ E. Loftus & K. Ketcham : *The myth of repressed memory*, p. 255

that susceptibility, apart from being a psychological characteristic, is not also a pliable component of one's cultural Self – but the narrative flow of particularly long statements referring to the child's adventures supposedly experienced with Jackl the Magician may suggest that some sort of a 'trance logic' may have been at work.

All in all, it appears that a child or an adolescent's susceptibility to suggestion and, by extension, their auto-suggestive powers are especially activated in the context of a religious ritual, which presupposes that the subject stage-manage himself within an appropriately imagined (and imaged) scenery. As we have already mentioned, Christianity has always nurtured an odd sort of fondness for the 'innocence' of children. Whenever the Bible evokes the quality of children's innocence (as in the adage 'truth from the mouths of babes'), what seems to be implicitly praised is the quality of *passivity*. According to the writings of the French psychiatrist George Dumas, Jean Cavalier, the 16-year-old believer who supposedly fell into a prophetic delirium under the influence of fellow youths at a prophetic assembly in early 18th century, appears to have been previously conditioned to such a state by the prescriptions of his faith: „Les prophéties débutaient en général par ces mots qui étaient censés venir de l'Esprit : « Je te dis, mon enfant », et, comme chacun était enfant devant l'Esprit, la formule se retrouvait dans des prophéties d'adolescents et d'adultes.“⁸⁴ The ambiguity *child of man / child of God* was a vaguely outlined niche inside of which some Early Modern adolescent subjects were either ready to recognize themselves in, or prone to being forced into, depending on the circumstances.

Cross contamination

In relevant literature, cross contamination of witness statements is rightfully considered as one of major causes of a spontaneous development of false memories.⁸⁵ Already the first study devoted to the Zauberer-Jackl trials underlined this aspect. In the words of Heinz Nagl, “[w]aren Malefikanten in größerer Anzahl in einer Keuche beisammen, so konnten sie sich untereinander unterhalten.“⁸⁶ It is important to note that where this mass trial is concerned, cross contamination owed both to spontaneous constructs and to attempts of devising a strategy. The latter process is explicitly stated in the protocols: „Constituto bringt vor, das Simändl in der kheuchen zu ihm gesagt hab, er

⁸⁴ G. Dumas : *Le surnaturel et les dieux*, p. 170

⁸⁵ E. Loftus : „Our changeable memories: legal and practical implications“, in *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* Volume 4 (March 2003), p. 232

⁸⁶ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGSL* (112/113), p. 507

deponent soll nur sagen, er habe unsern herren in den shuech gethan, mit messer gestochen, das bluet daraus gerunnen und dergleichen mehres, so werde er von den herren bald lödig. Simänd bekhent solches geredt zu haben, iedoch zu khainem anderen ende, als das er es auch von dem Casperl gehört habe“.⁸⁷ In general, the inclination to conspire over the statements to be made is apparently an unavoidable aspect of other witch hunts that involved a great number of children. When writing of the witch panics in Sweden (second half of the 17th century), Bengt Ankarloo underlined the importance of ‘watch huts’ (*vakstugor*) in which child witnesses were kept during the process: “In the watch huts emotional orgies were celebrated. Besides that, the witnessing children used to hold conferences in the morning prior to their appearance in court, which helped them coordinate their statements.”⁸⁸ Once the authorities started unravelling the false confessions, the younger witnesses tended to crack, accusing their elder peers of indoctrinating them with made-up-tales.⁸⁹ It appears that in both instances - in Salzburg and in Sweden - the court did attempt to curb the cross contamination effect, but with little success, mainly for logistical reasons: in both cases it was impossible to impede communication among the children while holding them incarcerated or in custody.

But children involved in witch trials could just as well be influenced by grownups. For example, in the so-called Hoarstones hunt that took place in England in 1633 a boy admitted that his father had suggested names of alleged witches with an intention of doing away with personal enemies.⁹⁰ However, there were also instances of a grownup indoctrinating not just one child, but a large group of children, as the example from the Basque witch craze shows:

the parish priest of Vera, Lorenzo de Hualde, “summoned” a large number of child-witches from all quarters of the town [...]. According to Hualde it was the parents themselves who had sent their children to him in the hope that he could provide a remedy [...]. But be that as it may, for more than forty days he had the children staying with him in the presbytery with blessed herbs, candles and crucifixes and pictures of Our Lady in their bedrooms to protect them from the witches. During the daytime Hualde worked on the children to make them confess and reveal the names of those who were taking them to the witches’ sabbat. “I fetch them from the school”, he explains in a letter to the Tribunal, “and take them home to me, where I can ask them my questions.”⁹¹

⁸⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 342

⁸⁸ B. Ankarloo : *Satans raseri*, p. 235 [my translation]

⁸⁹ B. Ankarloo : *Satans raseri*, p. 255 [my translation]

⁹⁰ T. Munck : *Seventeenth-Century Europe*, p. 295

⁹¹ G. Henningsen (ed.) : *The Salazar Documents*, p. 75

The circumstances described by the Danish historian apparently sum up to the same situation which, according to Bengt Ankarloo, prevailed in the ‘watch huts’. Curiously enough, both Basque and Swedish child-witch panics have one episodic figure in common: a 12-year-old beggar boy characterized by denunciation enthusiasm. In Fuenterrabía, it was a certain Juanico de Aguirre, who “managed to mention a further one hundred and forty-seven” accomplices⁹², whereas the ‘Gävle-boy’ Johan Grijs gained notoriety over a more modest score of denounced witches⁹³, until he was forced to admit to the falsity of his accusations.⁹⁴ In Calw, during the Southwest German child-witch-hunt (1683-86), it was the teenager Veit Jacob Zahn whom the local commission came both to designate as the originator of the local witch panic, and to diagnose with severe melancholia.⁹⁵ The role played by the two notorious denouncers in the Zauberer Jackl trials, Veitl and Meister Hämerl, is of the same vein, although in this case the authorities openly availed themselves of their services, which, of course, did not prevent them from executing the two denouncers in the end. Needless to say, the influence of these two boys proved to be nefarious, as it appears that they jumped in with aggressive accusations whenever a possibility arose that the defendant in question could walk free.

Incidentally, it is hard to attempt polarizing a European witch-trial-related ‘periphery’ against the background of the harshness of sanctions to which bewitched and/or bewitching children were subjected. (Indeed, the term ‘periphery’ is, in my opinion, both imprecise and not particularly helpful in outlining the phenomenon’s profile). In a recent piece of research, the Norwegian historian Liv Helene Willumsen points out that the role played by several little girls in the 17th century witch trials of Finnmark was ultimately not deemed worthy of a bonfire. Of the six little girls accused of witchcraft, one was only eight years old.⁹⁶ All confessed to have been taught witchcraft by their mothers (in one case, an aunt).⁹⁷ Fortunately, „the presiding judge in the Court of Appeal ... acquitted all the children.“⁹⁸

⁹² G. Henningsen (ed.) *The Salazar Documents*, p. 334

⁹³ B. Ankarloo : *Satans raseri*, p. 247

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 253

⁹⁵ H. C. Erik Midelfort : *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany*, p. 161

⁹⁶ L. H. Willumsen : *Seventeenth-Century Witchcraft Trials in Scotland and Northern Norway*, p. 215

⁹⁷ L. H. Willumsen, *op. cit.*, p. 216

⁹⁸ L. H. Willumse, *op. cit.*, p. 225

In general, the Zauberer Jackl trials are the only major witch hunt during which children and young people accused of sorcery were actually *executed*. This was not the case with trials in other areas on the European periphery (Sweden [with some exceptions!], Northern Norway, Basque country).

Theorizing fantasy

Nagl himself takes a stand vis-à-vis fantasy issues, in that he quotes from J. Dahl's 1960 work *Nachtfrauen und Galsterweiber, eine Naturgeschichte der Hexe*. Other than this, however, Nagl does little to differentiate the elements of fantasy from those which may have been considered truthful within the confessions. Dahl's conclusion „daß eine ausschweifende Phantasie gewiß eine große Rolle bei allem gespielt hat“⁹⁹ apparently incites the Austrian law historian to stamp as ‚fantasy‘ only the most obviously supernatural aspects of the testimonies, without thinking of whether theoretically doable ones may not have been phantasized as well.

According to a philosophical lexicon, fantasy is, in a broader sense, the ability to represent and reproduce the memorized (especially sensory) contents; more specifically, it is a form of notional-cognitive combinatorics, a capability of creating new syntheses out of various elements of reproductive and abstracting consciousness.¹⁰⁰ This definition makes it clear that, without fantasy, there would be no civilisation. There is, of course, nothing inherently pathological about this human faculty. However, its nature tends to breed distortions with far-reaching consequences.

It is said that children are proverbial subscribers to flights of fancy, as they are prone to ‚substitute what has been experienced in reality with what has been evoked in the imagination‘ and the same is true of primitive (underdeveloped) tribes whose ‚lack of critical empirical realizations is substituted with imaginative syntheses i.e. objectivations of elementary affects‘.¹⁰¹

Psychologists, on the other hand, often strive to define fantasy through the medium of its alleged causes: “Fantasy is a creative activity which is essential to childhood, as the infant gradually leaves its psychic fusion with the mother and begins to function as an independent being. Fantasy serves a transitional purpose; it fills the dark void between the safety of the maternal embrace and the lonely, frightening world of autonomous existence, by generating images and feelings which build a bridge between the two.”¹⁰² This definition is based on an assumption that the process of the infant's

⁹⁹ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil II“, in MGSL (114), p. 95

¹⁰⁰ K. Krstić : „Fantazija (mašta)“ in V. Filipović (ed.) : Filozofijski rječnik, p. 103

¹⁰¹ K. Krstić : „Fantazija (mašta)“, in V. Filipović (ed.) : Filozofijski rječnik, p. 104

¹⁰² L. Greene : Neptune, p. 323

psychological maturation is really a separation from the 'primal fusion' of the child with the mother. This concept has recently been challenged by Daniel M. Ogilvie, who claims that the very nature of the infant's conquest of the new reality speaks against any longing for primal fusion that the infant allegedly yearns for, and supports this view with Daniel Stern's concept of *emergent self*.¹⁰³

Viewing fantasy solely through the lens of a helpless infant's needs, i.e. as a defense mechanism, indeed appears somewhat reductionistic. Moreover, it does not help us toward unravelling the phenomenon of witchcraft superstition, the mythology of which is grounded not only in the fact that an unfulfillment of one's primary needs triggers instinctual and delusional scapegoat-oriented construals, but, just as much, on mature, ideologically tinged reasoning. In other words, fantasy is not an exclusive privilege of children.

The Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky and his more famous Swiss colleague Jean Piaget shared some ideas on the general stages of child development. Unlike Piaget, however, the Russian scholar believed that speech is something learned from others, not arrived at through a „thinking aloud“ mode; consequently, the development of thinking should be seen as functioning from society to the individual, rather than the other way around.¹⁰⁴ Piaget's tendency to underestimate the environment's influence on cognitive development has been criticized in recent scholarship, e.g. in Stuart A. Vyse's study on the mechanisms of superstitious thinking.¹⁰⁵

An even more interesting aspect of Vygotsky's scholarship that has received only scant attention are his works on the nature of imagination. Relying on the work of Erich Rudolf Jaensch, Lev Vygotsky explores the difference between child and adolescent fantasy with the help of the so-called eidetic images, defined as "those visual representations which the child is able to create with hallucinatory clarity after perceiving some visual situation or picture".¹⁰⁶ Assumed to be characteristic of very early childhood, eidetic images are said to disappear around the age of puberty, as the mode of abstract thinking develops. In his attempt to differentiate between the two types of fantasy, Vygotsky comes to the following conclusion:

From the genetic point of view, imagination in adolescence is the successor to child play. [...] Images, eidetic pictures and visual conceptions begin to play the same role in the imagination as a doll representing a child, or a chair representing a steam engine, in childish play. This is the source of the striving of the adolescent's fantasy to have the

¹⁰³ D. M. Ogilvie : *Fantasies of Flight*, p. 123

¹⁰⁴ R. L. Solso : *Cognitive Psychology*, p. 387

¹⁰⁵ S. A. Vyse : *Die Psychologie des Aberglaubens*, p. 172

¹⁰⁶ L. Vygotsky: „Imagination and creativity of the adolescent“, in R. van der Veer & J. Valsiner (ed.) : *The Vygotsky Reader*, p. 271

backing of concrete sensory material and of the tendency towards figurativeness and use of visual images. But it is equally noteworthy that this use of visual images and this figurativeness have changed their function completely. They have ceased to be a support for memory and thinking, and have passed on to the sphere of fantasy.¹⁰⁷

Fantasy, therefore, is an activity attributable to a maturing, rather than a mentally undeveloped mind. Vygotsky concedes that imagination activity is indeed more prominent in the life of a child, but claims that it is neither as extensive nor as elaborate as fantasy consciously construed from adolescence onwards.¹⁰⁸

The most surprising insight I have come to during my research is that the horizons of fantasy of the young beggar captives are in fact more limited than it appears at first sight. In other words, even when the defendants are expected to fabulate freely, they do not strive very far from a certain set of notions. Some of them are children in the proper sense of the word, most are adolescents (given that they are in their ‚teens‘). And yet they are all *children* in the sense of being socially underdeveloped, and vulnerable because of their marginal status. And just the way children in general do not fantasize extensively on account of their narrow experiential range, individuals of any age, if conditioned to poverty from the very start of their existence, have little material upon which to build an elaborate fantasy. Peter Burke addresses exactly this inborn intellectual limitation of the Early Modern lower strata: „Dieser Mangel an Einbildungskraft, diese Unfähigkeit, sich anders geartete soziale Welten auch nur auszudenken, ist sicher das Ergebnis enger Horizonte, begrenzter sozialer Erfahrungen.“¹⁰⁹ However, we shall see that the essential ‚content providers‘ for the scenes described in the confessions are Roman Catholic rituals and Christian iconography.

Summary of the introductory part

In the following analysis we shall see that the suggestive questioning practiced at the Grand Aulic Court at Salzburg in many cases bordered on an outright implantation of false memories. But we shall be able to examine something else as well - namely the manner in which the accused beggar children actively, passively (occasionally passive-aggressively) contributed to the course, and not infrequently to the nature of the hearings.

¹⁰⁷ L. Vygotsky, op. cit., p. 275

¹⁰⁸ L. Vygotsky, op. cit., pp. 279-280

¹⁰⁹ P. Burke : Helden, Schurken und Narren, p. 190

PART ONE: CASE STUDIES

What follows is the central part of the thesis, which consists of a detailed analysis of the hearings of beggar children and youths charged with indulging in acts of sorcery under the guidance of Jackl the Sorcerer (*der Zauberer Jackl*). The interrogatories are, for the most part, those conducted at the Grand Aulic Court of Salzburg. However, initial hearings performed at the village courts have been interwoven into the analysis wherever possible. The cases stretch from late 1677 to the first half of 1681. They have been discussed in their chronological order (from the earliest to the latest), except where members of the Debellackh and the Khärfues family are concerned. The protocols referring to these individuals have been clustered together regardless of the hearing dates, since it was important to examine group dynamics within a family in those cases where all members are implicated into the sorcery accusations. Some subsections marked by the name of the main defendant contain hearings of another, closely related person charged for the same crime (e.g. Maria Willbergerin and her namesake daughter, Elias Finckh and his mother). Information regarding the execution dates stem from Heinz Nagl's *Alphabetische Liste der in die Prozesse verwickelten Personen*.¹¹⁰

Matthias Thoman Hasendorffer

Circumstances preceding the hearing of the 14/15-year-old Matthias Thoman Hasendorffer must be inferred from the Salzburg protocols alone. Though the beginning of the 3rd December 1677 hearing does contain a recapitulation of the confession made in front of the Werfen *Pfleggericht*, the record itself has not been preserved. Belonging to the initial phase of the hunt, the trial to Hasendorffer gave rise to one of the most exhaustively documented interrogatories. The first seven points of the aforesaid recapitulation refer to the Werfen deposition the judges (Zillner and Mayr) seem to have used as a guidance tool:

Nachdeme anfänglich den verdecktigen zauberey halber im pfleggericht Werfen zu verhaftt gebrachte, und alhero nach Salzburg in die verhaftt gelieferte Matthiaß Thoman Hasendorffer befragt worden, ob er beten oder das creiz machen khönne, hat er mit nain geantworth, massen sich dan solches, auch in affectu bezaigt hat, warauf die reassumierung der werfnerischen gethanen deposition vorgenommen worden, allermassen er dan
quo ad primum

¹¹⁰ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGS*L (112/113), pp. 524-539

in deme variert, daß er nit in Bayrn, sonder in Behamb zu Reitgrueb zu hauß, wisse aber nit, wogegent selibiges orth lige, noch weniger, daß er die behambische sprach mehr verstehe.¹¹¹

It appears that Matthias previously declared himself a native Bavarian, only to rectify this by claiming to stem from Bohemia. Being, as we shall see, part of a wandering beggar community, the boy was all but rooted in the Bohemian customs, which would explain his lack of appropriate language skills. The defendant's lack of integration is actually twofold: he is neither bodily rooted into a piece of native soil, (a place where, according to the authorities, his identity is supposed to be 'at home') nor spiritually nested in the bosom of ritual Catholicism. As we can see elsewhere in the corpus, those young sorcerers who know their prayers seem to outnumber their counterparts unable so much as to cross themselves. We should, however, allow for the possibility that fellow prisoners, inasmuch as they could communicate across the dungeons, may have given each other tips regarding the confessions to be given, and may even have taught each other prayers, if and whenever this was deemed conducive to enhancing the prospects of liberation. Hence, the few simple actions serving to confirm a child-witch's Christian identity do not necessarily have to be conclusive.

In comparison to later idle repetitions (which might have been co-created both by the scribes and the witnesses), Hasendorffer's first statement relative to actual sorcery is highly original. It features certain aspects that apparently have not found their echo in the statements of other warlock boys:

ad tertium

Non variat, ausser daß er zu den fledermaus machen weisse, zu den anderen meisen aber rothe salben gehabt, welche er in die hand schmieren müssen, davon die meis geredt, so er aber nit verstanden, dan hab er obige salben auch auf den bauch geschmirt, alsdan er zu einem hund, aber nit [und *is added above* aber] pockh worden sey, zu Werfen hab er sich nit mehr, vorhero aber disen sommer hindurch wol unsichbar machen können, dan er die salben zur unsichbarkeit alle verbraucht gehabt.¹¹²

This portion contains, to the best of my knowledge, the only mention of a bat in the context of 'creating mice'. The precondition for this term making its appearance in the first place functions at the level of word morphology, given that *fledermaus* is derived from *maus*. I am somewhat reluctant to contextualize this piece of information with common ethnological assumptions of the diabolical qualities this unusual beast may have been vested with. Neither does the conclusion drawn by Erich/Beitl, namely that "[a]ls unheimliches Nachttier wurde F[lledermaus] zur Teufels- und

¹¹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 a 47

¹¹² BayHStA HeA 10 a 47

Hexenerscheinung¹¹³, concur with the bat's underrepresentation in the sphere of German witchcraft, nor can their claim that bats have served as "Nachtschreck für Kinder" be applied with great success to Salzburg beggar children (in any case not to Matthias). This lemma is far more extensively dealt with in the famously-infamous reference work by Bächtold-Stäubli, who makes it clear that the function of the little beast in folk beliefs is expectably polyvalent, serving both as a tool for and an antidote to the dark forces.¹¹⁴

So why did Matthias include bats into his statements? It appears that he felt compelled to emphasize the 'extraordinary' aspect of the magical act. Therefore, the vermin created with the help of magical salves would have to be something different from usual mice. With this the boy's reasoning follows in the wake of pan-European folklore logic, whose German branch construes the bat principally as a 'flying mouse'.¹¹⁵ Opposed to the unmarked category of ordinary mice, we have the marked category of bats (*fledermeis*), zapped by the white salve, as well as mice talking an unintelligible language, zapped by the red salve. However, if we look at the whole chunk of his statement, we see that the last item within refers to invisibility. Curiously enough, beliefs relating bats to powers of rendering oneself invisible have been documented in Tyrol and Bohemia;¹¹⁶ given that the latter is Matthias' native region, it is not impossible that a lingering relic of such beliefs explains the defendant's parallel use of both of these 'superstition items', albeit without a mutual link. Let us not forget that the information given in *ad tertium* are basically confirmations of the counterpart statement in the Werfen confession, and that it consequently most probably featured bats and invisibility closely following each other (perhaps in reversed order). I suspect that bats are really a connection between the already established items in the repertory of sorcery crimes - that is, *meißl machen* and *unsichbarkeit* -, and that the idea of introducing them came about spontaneously, resulting from the boy's efforts to arrange information according to some kind of logic. One might assume he did not want to complicate matters further by blaming the bats for invisibility, as Bächtold-Stäubli claims the Bohemian belief goes.

Another curious point refers to the shapeshifting option, or, rather, the way it is voiced in the document itself: "alsdan er zu einem hund, aber/und nit pockh worden sey". From the relevant text portion one cannot deduce which of the two animals chronologically precedes the other i.e. on whose initiative they are brought into the story. Either Hasendorffer had to answer an unrecorded

¹¹³ O. A. Erich / R. Beitzl (Begr.) : Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde, p. 222

¹¹⁴ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.) : Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, Band 2, pp. 1594-1595

¹¹⁵ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.), op. cit., p. 1579

¹¹⁶ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.), op. cit., p. 1583

sub-question of the type “Did you transform yourself into a goat?” (to which he then replied in a corrective manner “No, not a goat, a dog”), or he intentionally underlined the differentiation, compelled to clarify that no ‘officially’ diabolical animals had been involved, in which case the meaning of this segment could be loosely interpreted as “Just so your Lordships know, the animal I turned myself into was by no means a goat, it was [merely] a dog”. Caught in a mechanism of sorcery accusations, even he would have been able to recognize the risk of self-incrimination implied by bringing the Devil’s own domestic animal into the story. A possible indicator that something needed to be sorted out here is the hiatus implicit in the scribbly word *und*, added in handwriting that does not seem to have stemmed from the scribe. It is probably a trace of Zillner’s own intervention, which there will be more of before the trial to Matthias ends.

The atmosphere in which the initiatory cut takes place is constrained and is depicted as happening against the defendant’s will:

ad sextum

Der schnit, so er am rechten wang hab, sey von dem grossen Jäggl mit einem messer beschechen, alsdan der bese feind khommen und der andern fünff bueben alß Jäggl, Hänsl, Simon, Geörg, Thoman, Philipp auch einen schnid in die fues geben, in dessen der groß Jäggl, alß die schnit geschechen, ihnen die hendt gehalten, volgents der teifel sie alle in das buech geschriben.¹¹⁷

Here we have another example of judicial reinterpretation of a bodily scar, which Hasendorffer has no choice but to attribute to Jackl. As we can see, two Jackls are mentioned here: the big one being the Sorcerer, the little one being one of the apprenticed boys. (The presence of *der kleine Jäggl* remains relatively insignificant for the trial in general; at some instances the two get mixed up by the defendants, at other by the interrogators). The influx of new ‚warlocks‘ tried over the course of 1678 would lead to the initiatory cut scene being treated with more laxity and optimism, re-creating Jackl into a virtual companion of the „Binker“ type¹¹⁸, but Matthias, reluctant to explore the iconoclastic aspect of the scenario, feels it necessary to insist on the aspect of dominance Jackl exerts as he holds the apprentices‘ hands while the Devil signs them up into his registry.

Though the boy confirms the next point of the Werfen-based interrogatory, the judges are dissatisfied, and for two reasons: „weilen er sonsten [...] starckh variert, auch die verstockung

¹¹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 a 49-48

¹¹⁸ R. Dawkins : The God Delusion, pp. 347-360; see paragraphs on Binker in the chapter „The ‚Zauberer Jackl‘ - who was he, what was he?“

seiner persohn sich erzaigt“.¹¹⁹ Whereas the former tendency seems to be well documented, the latter remark is something of a puzzle, since the defendant’s stubbornness *per se* is not readily apparent from his protocolized answers - unless these are two different expressions for Hasendorffer’s lack of cooperation, a trait that must have infuriated the zealous *Kommissar Zillner*. Consequently, the boy has to undergo a thorough body visitation, followed by severe branch strikes. Asked to account for the newly discovered scars, Matthias states „das ihm der bese feind auch etliche und zwar vier mail mit einer eßgabl, welche er maistens in den füessen hergezaigt, gemacht habe.“¹²⁰

With this the recapitulation of the Werfen statement gives way to the new section of the hearing entitled *Interrogatoria Specialia*. The judges seem ambitious to fill the gaps created by the unpleasantly stubborn beggar adolescent. He is to explain his wandering habits first:

Wan er von haus hinweckh und warumben?

Nechst verschinen fasching dis iahres sey er von haus der ursachen hinweckh, weilen seine eltern nit mehr im leben gewest, und vorhero lengst verstorben seind, sonderbar aber ihne die obrigkheit und herrschafft graff Khuniz zu Reitgrueben, welches ein dorff und schloß, umb willen er wetter gemacht, und der schauer das getraid alles erschlagen gehabt, nit mehr geduldet, sonder, nachdeme er ingelegen, hinweckh geschafft haben, allermassen dan sein vatter Gregori Hasendorffer und die muetter Regina als auch zauberer aldort hingericht worden seind, und nachdeme er abermall die rechte warheit an tag zugeben, wol empfindlich gestrichen worden, ist doch aus ihme nichts zubringen gewest, wie und wasgestalten seine eltern justificiert worden, sondern ganz verstockhter verbliben.¹²¹

The inquiry is obviously a trick question, as it appears that the court is already thoroughly documented on Hasendorffer’s background. The boy’s attempt of passing off as a common peasant orphan fails, not least thanks to a clumsy reference to a Bohemian count who has allegedly exiled him from Reitgrueben - a region whose language he has claimed to ignore. Considering that it will turn out his father and mother are alive after all, the boy’s claim may have been aimed not only at presenting himself as a stationary individual, but perhaps at protecting both the parents and the wandering community group - all of whom he will be forced to denounce. It appears his statement lacked credibility essentially for not having been complemented with necessary juridical information.

¹¹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 a 48

¹²⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 a 50

¹²¹ BayHStA HeA 10 a 48-49

Asked to retell the circumstances of his first meeting with Jackl, and to indicate itineraries, Matthias replies: „Der zauberer Jäggl sey bey dem see am Traun zu ihme constituto ungever khommen, und der Jäggl ihne angeredt, er soll mit ihme bekhant worden. [...] Disen sommer sey er alzeit neben obgedachten bueben bey dem Jäggl gewesen, niemals aber in die häuser gangen, sonder sich abseits aufgehalten, und in der nacht in die lufft gefahren.“¹²² It is to be inferred that Jackl has led a group of half-a-dozen boys as they wandered along the streets. The dichotomy ‚keeping away from people’s houses by day : flying by night‘ reads like a spontaneously voiced credo of a marginalized individual exiling himself into sorcery. The flight may function as a compensation for being shunned by people, which is what Matthias probably would have experienced in real life. The unconscious desire behind the flight fantasy is perhaps to ‚take off‘ socially. In relation to this, the performative acts involved in the magical actions are relevant inasmuch as they are precious to a higher instance - even if it were a lower instance. The next segment makes it clear just how confused those two are:

Was er vor oder hernach thuen müessen, alß ihme vom Jäggl der schnit in das rechte wang beschechen?

Alß ihm Jäggl den schnid im wang gethan, hab er meiß, razen und fledermeiß machen, und das vich thetten müessen.

Ob er nit die heilig dreyfaltigkeit, unser liebe frau, alle sacrament und heilige verlaugnen und hingegen dem teifl schwören müessen, was er ihme geben oder versprochen habe?

Hab nie beicht, unser lieber herr sey im himel oder wo, hab auch die heiligen sacrament nit verlaugnen derffen, und gibt auf bewegliches zuesprechen noch über dis vor, das ihme der teifl bevolchen, er solle unsern herren und unser liebe frau nit verspothen.¹²³

The initiatory cut is a step that precedes the acts of creating vermin on the one hand, and killing cattle on the other. However, the manner in which the question is formulated presupposes the cheek banding to be either a well-earned reward for a magical act performed by the apprentice, or - vice versa - its symbolical prerequisite („was er vor oder hernach thuen müessen“). Consequently, Hasendorffer obediently accepts one of the alternatives. But, once he has to tackle matters presupposing a substratum of commonly recognized notions, the defendant treads a far more slippery ground. His insistence on the Devil posing as a guardian of the Lord’s integrity - an explanation to which no one else appears to have resorted - is a great display of naivete. And yet, in

¹²² BayHStA HeA 10 a 49

¹²³ BayHStA HeA 10 a 49 and 51

light of the boy's lack of education in matters of the faith this is hardly surprising. It is partly because the defendant's God is a little more than a tenant of Heaven that his alleged respect for the Sacraments fails to persuade the judges.

Upon further inquiry the acquaintance with the Devil is construed as dating back to a period marked as *schon vorher*. Immediately afterwards, Matthias states „daß er in Neumarckh zu Rambsau im Khlaines Mändetal gebürtig“.¹²⁴ The information forms a part of the answer referring to the Devil. Since there are no side remarks to suggest any hints made by the judges, it is possible that the defendant decided to admit as much, maybe out of feeling pressured by his own lies. Mentioning Attersee as a meeting point with the Dark Lord was namely yet another reference point he would have to be able to incorporate in all the subsequent answers. At any rate, the boy's resistance seems to melt progressively, since he now claims magic salves to have served the purpose „das er sich zum pockh und dergleichen machen solle.“¹²⁵ The goat, shunned in the beginning, is openly recognized as a self-transformation option, and even the less diabolically charged animals take on a fiercer tone: „Soll sich zum vich alß hund und khaz machen, und winnig worden, sodan die leith beissen, das sie sterben müessen, wie er dan etlich beissen, die gestorben sein wie das vich.“¹²⁶ This is another highly original approach to lethal sorcery, apparently founded on an allusion to rabies, a notion that might possibly repose on the idea of ‚nature's vengeance‘. It seems to be the only instance of animal shape-shifting being used for black magic purposes. Hasendorffer hereby contradicts himself anew, as he has shortly beforehand denied having harmed people. Maybe he could think of no other justification for changing into a dog or a cat. Considering the totality of Hasendorffer's replies, all the disparate information taken together seem to imply that questions were answered on a case-by-case basis, with little care for consistency, inasmuch as the hearing tactics tended to make the defendant's task as difficult as possible. At some point, the boy must have understood that he would occasionally have to throw in a ‚bonus‘ of some kind, if only to justify his ‚stubbornness‘ and, more importantly, ward off the branch strokes. As we shall see throughout this analysis, detailed recounting was one of the best temporary self-protection tools, and it was ideally tailored for Sabbath accounts:

Seind vill und über tausent gleich denen paursleithen, welche er aber nit gekhent, dabey gewesen. [...] Haben mit lauter männer und bueben umb und umb tanzt, in der miten sey etwas blaichs im gsicht, der teifel gestanden, haben kleine

¹²⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 a 51

¹²⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 a 52

¹²⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 a 52

liechtl gehabt, ein mann mit einer sackhpfeiffen hab aufgespilt, und wan die liechtl ausgelescht worden, haben sie anfangen zurauffen, und auf den boden übereinander gefallen, mit der er constituto getanzt, sey ein weib, aber khain rechtes mensch gewesen,¹²⁷ dan sie lange negl gehabt, und hab ihne bißweilen khrält, wisse also nit, obs etwo die teiflin gewest, iedoch hab er deponent auch mit ihr geraufft, und auf den boden sie alle bey vier stund gelegen, und aines auf das ander gestigen, wie er dan in der miten, und sein tanzerin unten, auf ihme aber ein anderer gelegen, und die unzucht mit gedachter tanzerin in die sechsmal, der auf ihme aber gelegen, so der bese feind gewesen, auch etlichmall mt ihme constituto die unzucht und [*the following expression is crossed out*] zwar in dem hintern [*and replaced with*] also venere inversum getriben, welches alzeit khalt gewesen, (und dises erzelte er lachend, und mit sonderem wolgefallen), zuessen haben sie fleisch gehabt, und der teufel gerueffen, esset, esset meine göst, und wan sie zu dem tanz gefahren, hab der teifel zu ihnen gesagt, khombts khombts, legts euckh aufeinander, und wan sie Gott genant,¹²⁸ hab er sie gebriglet, und solches nit leiden wollen, sonst aber haben sie von dem catholischen glauben nie geredt, der teifel aber hab ihne constitutum alzeit bey seinem nahmen genant.¹²⁹

Hasendorffer's Sabbath report contains elements which have not survived the standardization implied by the numerous repetitions. Rather than coal-black, the Devil is described as 'somewhat pale in the face', a quality usually attributed to Jackl. Maybe this has something to do with ideas nurtured by common folk, to brand pale cheeks as marks of ill health, and, by extension, to explain it away as an obscurity that only the Dark Lord could be responsible for. Geörgl Schmalz's 'pale-looking woman' who he claimed had witnessed his initiatory cut(out)¹³⁰ may have been rooted in similar logic. Narration, too, imposes its own rules: before any lights can be turned off for the orgy, they must first be introduced into the story. In general, however, the defendant's Sabbath account seems to be based solely on the means of expression that the folk traditions have made available beforehand. The *sackhpfeiffer* is, at the end of the 17th century, apparently already a legitimate motif of the Faustus legend¹³¹, which may have eased its mythological 'transfer' from one arch-magus to another. Unlike with the fantasy of the rabid cat, Matthias does not invent anything new here, probably because the Sabbath story pattern is rather fixed, which may be why he resorts to the pool of diabolical associations - containing the bagpiper - in the first place. A major ingredient of this pool is the subsequent orgy, a four-hour session of group mounting on the floor, featuring, as is usually the case with warlock confessions, the defendant in a sandwich, simultaneously penetrating and being penetrated. More important than the sex or Zillner's prudish reformulation *also venere*

¹²⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 a 51

¹²⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 a 53

¹²⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 a 53

¹³⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 131

¹³¹ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.) : Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, Band 7, p. 866 (footnote 4)

inversum seems the notion that a long-nailed (and hence non-human) female occasionally scratches him with her claws, creating an inconvenience that is obviously worth the dance and the mating. Judging by the placement of the side remark indicator, as well as by the colon after „...wolgefallen“, the defendant’s change of mood ensues after the rather monotonous listing of sex positions. It appears that Matthias cannot suppress laughter while ‚quoting‘ the Devil’s hospitable enticements to gluttony and debauchery, although we cannot say for certain at which point this amusement attack exactly could have subsided. The Devil is described as a rich peasant governed by the principle of lust, but who gets ridiculously upset at the mention of God’s name. This automatically raises the question of what exactly the historical actor perceives as humorous: is it the contents of the Devil’s messages, the context in which they are embedded, or something else? Indeed, the boy’s laughter is perhaps not caused by a comical effect at all. It can be a nervous reaction to the totality of the interrogatory situation, or any of its components, or can result from the defendant’s artificial attempt of regaining confidence. In addition, it is difficult to guess what Zillner actually meant with *mit sonderem wolgefallen*. If taken literally, this modifier does not fit particularly well with the rest of Hasendorffer’s profile. Besides, the process of rewriting the records of the hearing sessions undoubtedly implied both cross-referencing them with previous protocols, and adding any delayed impressions (see the section *A word on the sources*).

Matthias makes it clear that the feast and the dance apparently take place at two different locations, an aspect possibly taken for granted in some other confessions, but nowhere as explicitly emphasized as here. The sequence „sonst aber haben sie von dem Catholischen glauben nie geredt“ may well refer to Hasendorffer’s nuclear family, as it concurs with the boy’s rudimentary notions of Christianity. That the defendant is apostrophized by his name - not the diabolical nickname, a custom to be introduced later - profiles him as a guest whose prominence among ‚over a thousand peasants‘ is guaranteed.

A large portion of Matthias’ testimony consists of detailed information on his ‘accomplices’. His quite lengthy answer to the initial question treats each one of the chums separately:

Wo seine übrige gspän der Jäggl, Simon, Georg, Hänsel, Thoman Philipp, item die Rosindl des Jäggl anhang? Soll sagen, wie ein und anders im gsicht, khleidung und sonsten aussechen thue?

Seine gspän gehen überall umb und maistens mit dem Jäggl (# haben ihne wegen seines aussagens am khopff, in bey--- [?], auch davon ---[?] zu werden, ausser Werfen fortgeschafft, und in ihrer gesellschaft nit mehr leiden wollen.), sein

gspan der khaine Jäggl sey ein khurzer bueb, hab ein khurz rothleichtes haar, ain braite nasen in der mite eingebogen, dickhe hendt, grauen rockh, weiß loderne hosen und strimpf, ain weissen huet.¹³²

After having given a description of little Jäggl, Hasendorffer supplies information on Simändl, Geörgl, Hänsl, Thoman Philipp, and Rosindl. This seems to have set the tone for subsequent questions on this matter. These are: “Ob, und was sie etwo für zaichen haben? An was für orthen des leybs?”¹³³, „Woher sie gebürtig, und was für eltern haben?”¹³⁴, and „Was er alles von ihnen und von iedem in specie von zauberey sachen gesechen?”¹³⁵ Placing a defendant into a position of describing bodily scars of third persons seemingly resembles a body visitation: initiatory cuts performed by the Sorcerer are the underlying issue. Furthermore, I see no indications in the court records that testimonies were cross-referenced with results of actually carried out body visitations. After all, the scars matter only insofar as they are indicators of a diabolical allegiance, and this is how Hasendorffer presents them. As far as the formulaic expression is concerned, the results furnished by Matthias do not really differ from those an official visitation would have yielded. Likewise, the remaining information – accurate or not – are so exhaustive that they do not fall short of data the court has otherwise collected from inculpated parties themselves, at least as far as quantity is concerned. Of all the information furnished by the defendant, those referring to the accomplices’ origins are perhaps the most relevant: “Wisse nit, wo die andern bueben oder die Rosindl dahaimb sein, des khlain Jäggl’s seines gspans vatter und mueter, so schwarze leith seind khenne er wol ein wenig, weil sie auch auf dem tanz gewest, wisse aber nit, wo sich dieselbe aufhalten, der andern ihre eltern khenne er nit.”¹³⁶ Although he elsewhere creates an impression of knowing these people well, the group seems rather loose, and the only cohesive force uniting the wandering beggars to each other is the alleged attendance of witch ceremonies.

Matthias’ attempt of answering the communion question in a somewhat reconciliatory manner fails. Once forced to admit having simulated the ritual, he gives a detailed account of it:

Ob er nie gebeicht? Und unsern herren empfangen? Wie offft? Ob er nicht etwo die hochheilige hosti übel tractiert, aus wessen gehaiß, und wie sich solche hernach bezaigt?

¹³² BayHStA HeA 10 a 52 and 54

¹³³ BayHStA HeA 10 a 53

¹³⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 a 55

¹³⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 a 54

¹³⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 a 55 and 54

Hab nie beicht, hab ihn sein vatter nie in die khürchen gehen lassen, wiewol er offt vermaint, er muesse mit gewalt hineinlauffen, über ernstliches zuesprechen bekhent er, das er dreymall sich speisen lassen, und hab der teifel ihm und den anderen bueben befohlen, sie sollen unsem herren wider aus dem maul thuen, deme er constituto auch nachkhommen, und zwischen beiden hend, (≠ solche gleichsamb als bett(?) und über sich und zum maul haltend, unvermerckht wider) heraus gelassen, sodan auf den stuel gelegt, und der teifel ihme ein messer gegeben, mit welchem er in dieselbe stechen muessen, so naß (≠ und blut) gewesen, geloffen, und diß hab er dreymal, und zwar das erstemall in St. Thoman khürchen thuen müssen.¹³⁷

It is interesting that the boy tries to transfer the responsibility for negligence of his Catholic duty to his father, and that he juxtaposes it to his own, supposedly fervent, urge of entering the sacred building in spite of the parental ban. It appears that the reason for the court's refusal of these explanations has less to do with the plausibility of such an excuse, and more with the needs of the process itself. It is nonetheless important to credit blaming the parents as a strategy used by Early Modern adolescents. Bracketed sections marked by ≠ and ≠ are Zillner's interceptions. It is to these we owe the accuracy of Hasendorffer's performative act of feigned communion.

The part of the interrogatory that would later on become standardized as a confession of sexual crimes is in Hasendorffer's case a personalized mixture of both incestuous and members-only orgies:

Ob er maleficant, nachdeme die liechter bey dem tanz ausgelescht worden, nicht etwo mit seiner mueter und schwester zuthuen gehabt?

Sey wahr, das er mit der muetter und schwester zuthuen gehabt.

Ob nicht auch der vatter ihne und seinen brueder gebraucht, und hingegen ein so anderer den vatter?

Hab aines das ander gebraucht, und sey die ursach, das er es neulich gelaugnet, weil er ihme nit getrauet, es zusagen.

Ob der Jäggele ebenfalß mit der muetter und schwester zuegehalten.

Ebenfals, und verstanden.

Ob der vatter auch die tochter sein schwester die Eva fleischlich erkhent?

Sey wahr, weil ers gesechen.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 a 50

¹³⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 a 57

The underlying idea seems to be that every participant should have been erotically crossed with every other. The section “es zusagen” is added in scribble; it appears that Zillner has at some point managed to persuade Matthias into confessing to this (the protocol euphemistically suggests the idea of winning the boy’s confidence), which catalyzed the orgy-related confabulation. As always, the incest allegations are based on leading questions and are far from credible. There are four ‘incest blocks’, the first involving Matthias as a seducer of his mother and sister, the second involving the father coupled with the two sons, Matthias and the Little Jäggl, the third accusing Little Jäggl of fornicating with his mother and sister, and the last one covering the only remaining alternative, that between father and daughter. Later Salzburg hearings would not be so thorough on this particular point, possibly because of the sheer magnitude of the mass trial.

Torture, as has already been pointed out, was not applied liberally during the trials. Rarely did the defendants need more than branch strokes to get their confessions going. In the following excerpt thumb screws are used to provoke a confession:

Was er bey machung der wetter für worth gesprochen, zumahlen nit glaublich, das er ichne in Gottes nahmen gehet alles umb und umb, gesprochen habe?

Verharret auf deme, das sie beym wettermachen in Gottes nahmen gesagt haben, nachdeme er aber in den daumbstockh geschraufft worden, hat er bekhent, das sie solche worth nit gesprochen, und reue ihn, das er’s nit vorhero bekhent habe.¹³⁹

With all the caveats regarding a historian’s attempt of reading ‘emotions’ into a piece of statement, the pain implicit in Hasendorffer’s repentance does appear genuine. However, though repentance is rendered authentic by the pain, it is made to refer to the defendant’s consciousness. Thus, the message ‘I am sorry for not having confessed earlier’ sounds as remorse uttered without the implicit modifier ‘otherwise I would not have had to go through this much pain’. In other words, the nature of the ego document seems to absorb away any unclassifiable aspects.

No torture is applied during the next hearing, dated 7th January. Crushed by the previous treatment, the defendant appears docile and cooperative. I suspect that it is out of this perspective that we should view the information furnished on the third folio page of the protocol. Asked about the diabolical nicknames of his accomplices, he answers: “Der teuffl hab sie vorhero am hirn abgewischt, aber nichts darzue gesprochen, sodan ihne Pinter Raz, sein vatter Georgen Raz, die muetter Rega Raz, den khlein Thamerl Thomaraz, und den grossen Thamerl Schmidhameraz

¹³⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 a 58

getaufft.”¹⁴⁰ It would perhaps be too far-flung to interpret these ‘rat names’ as a faint echo of the Pied Piper of Hamelin story. If so, the beggar followers of the Devil are imagined to assume the identity of a totemic vermin which has served as a conduit for a fatal journey of the seduced youth in the legend in question. But even if we reject this particular alternative as too strained, it appears that the marginalized position of the wandering beggars themselves is the one invoking identification with ‘expendable’ beasts, hence explaining why rats were chosen as emblematic. Though it might indeed deserve separate treatment, the issue of nicknames which the defendants tend to ascribe to themselves and each other during the alleged initiations is a somewhat barren aspect of the confessions, since neither these names, however outlandish they may sound, nor the alternate identities they would normally be expected to convey, are ever truly integrated into the fabric of the protagonists’ life story. On the other hand, Hasendorffer’s denunciation of his fellow wanderers is a long, continuous account which, as we have seen, features detailed descriptions of their physical characteristics, mobility habits, and alleged sorcery activities. Having thus worked himself into his own story, as directed by the interrogating judge, it is only logical that the boy stamps his co-travellers as a ‘family of rats’. (It is possibly that ‘Raz’ could have been an alternative family name, though).

The opacity of the highly formalized court protocols results in an additional aspect of the hearings being regularly overseen by historians: fluctuations in the defendants’ mental state. Their importance cannot be emphasized often enough, especially on occasions which unequivocally suggest that a defendant has reached some kind of a breaking point. Such moments have, to the best of my knowledge, not been taken into account by the previous scholarship relative to the ‘Zauberer Jackl’-trials. I believe they necessitate attention regardless of whether they are feigned or not:

Ob der bese feind under wehrender gefenckhnuß nicht zu ihme khommen, was er gethan? Und geredet?

Sey solang er alhier inlige, alle nacht zu ihme khommen, und ainer den andern unkheisch gebraucht, auch von ihme besen feind alzeit khalt empfunden, hab ihne deponenten mit ihme führen wollen, das er zaubern solle, deme er aber geantwortt, er wollte gern, khönne aber nit mehr sein, massen ihne dan der teufl mit einem messer, wan er etwas bekommen werde, in den halß stechen wollen, und als man ex parte commissionis wahr genommen, das constituto in his narratis bald da bald dort in die winckhl unversechens geschaut, auch dabey befragt worden, wer vorhanden, oder was er seche, hat er vorgeben, das der teufl vorhanden, und ain ewenig iedoch nit vill lache, auch da der amtman mit dem weichbrun in solches egg(?) spritze, er sich in ein anderen winckhl begeben, massen dan sein constituti hin und wider schauen solches mehrers glauben begeben.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 a 66

¹⁴¹ BayHStA HeA 10 a 67 and 66

How are we to evaluate the Devil's visits of the defendant's dungeon? They are certainly a part of a meanwhile fossilized corpus of statements to be furnished. Still, we cannot claim with any certainty if and to which extent a particular defendant was investing him- or herself into such a story. Some children and youths must have delivered these details without raising an eyebrow, while again some may have been led (or even auto-hypnotized themselves) into believing the truthfulness of such an episode. Unless the anxiety attack from the above quoted portion is merely a perfect simulation (an argument that obviously has its limits, too), it appears that Matthias is in the process of crumbling under the burden of the circumstances he cannot handle. I suspect that all the extended talk of the Devil, coupled with the guilt he must have felt for having outed his group, has made the boy internalize the Dark Lord so much that the figure has taken on a life of its own. Unlike Andre Taucher, who claims having solemnly refused Jackl's help to flee the dungeon¹⁴², Matthias nominally acquiesces with the Devil's proposal, which he resignedly writes off as undoable. This sequence might contain a hint to the evaluation of the fit as regards 'the Devil in the corner', as the boy's willingness to escape with him already points to some kind of liaison. In fact, that seems to be the maximum of a defendant's cooperation with the Dark Lord, a circumstance that can be beaten only by an actual escape – which, of course, never occurs. The episode is apparently introduced by Hasendorffer's furtive glances directed at the corners of the interrogatory room. It is impossible to gauge whether those glances were really that awkward, or whether they were mere overinterpretations of the judges eager to instrumentalize every gesture the defendant would make. The one thing that seems certain is that, once attention has been drawn to these gestures, they necessitate a *contextualized* answer, regardless of their actual cause. In other words, what would nowadays warrant an intervention of a psychologist, must have been regulated from the vantage point of a diabolical 'haunting'. And, like the beggar boy himself, the Devil is a nuisance. The marginality paradigm unfolds coherently as it makes the Devil's movements from one corner to another themselves resemble those of a cheeky rat not easily warded off. This bizarre moment has absolutely no match in the whole *Hexenakten* corpus. The entire episode might point to a hallucination, itself possibly a symptom either of a temporary derangement, or of a more serious psychopathological hiatus. Unfortunately, Hasendorffer's half-hearted laughter is the only accompanying reaction on his part, hence not nearly enough even for a roughly speculated diagnosis. The only thing that seems certain is that the situation has warranted enough attention for the court to order besprinkling with holy water, rather than to have the hallucination get beaten out

¹⁴² BayHStA HeA 11 442

of the accused. Matthias is only asked to date the occurrence of him being seduced by Jackl ('one year') before the hearing terminates. The end may have ensued for practical reasons, this being the sixth page of the 7th January interrogatorium. However, it is also possible that Zillner concluded he would not get much more from the boy on that particular occasion.

The next session, dated 3rd February, takes place in the town hall of Salzburg. It appears that, in the meantime, Matthias has undergone a religious indoctrination treatment involving several clergymen. The hearing is, in fact, entirely devoted to the boy's disturbed religious health. It is a unique example of the way the court deals with a weak renegade:

Was er von denen ihme zugeordneten geistlichen halte, ob er nicht glaube, das sie ihne vom teifl wider loß und auf den rechten weeg bringen mögen?

Sein guete leith, gehe ihnen nichts ab, und glaube wol, das die geistliche ihne auf den rechten weeg wider bringen khönnen.¹⁴³

This first answer/question sequence makes it clear that the responsibility for falling into i.e. escaping the Devil's claws lies entirely with the defendant, whose willingness to be treated against the evil influence is openly doubted. Quite conveniently, the doubt does not extend to the Christian remedies applied (*weichbrun*, priestly intervention), which makes sense in light of Susanne K. Langer's remark that, because past failures never discourage the savage's ritual practices, a magic rite can never fail, it simply remains *unconsummated*¹⁴⁴ – a stance that seems to be valid for both folk magic and Christian counter-magic. Actually, the remedies necessitate belief on the part of the religious 'patient', if they are to have a healing effect at all. That is why the next question is voiced along the lines of 'How, then, is it possible that...?':

Ob dan der teufl noch zu ihme khome, und ob selbigen die andern bueben seine mitgespän sechen? Ob er sie auch beunruhige?

Sey wahr, und sechen die andern bueben den teufl wol auch, allain thue er ihnen nichts, weil sie betten und das creiz machen.

Warumb nicht auch er das creiz fleissig mache und bette, damit er mit frid verblibe?

Der teufl verbiets ihm, wie er dan noch stäts zu ihm khomme, und das iehnige thue, was er vorhero mit ihm gethan habe.

¹⁴³ BayHStA HeA 10 a 66 and 68

¹⁴⁴ S. K. Langer : *Philosophy in a New Key*, p. 129

Was dan der bese geist zu ihme sage und thue?

Der teufel sagt, er deponent soll mit ihme gehen, fleissig folgen, und sein sein, sonst aber thue er ihne unzichtig brauchen.¹⁴⁵

The explosive potential of this question can hardly be underestimated. Matthias is brought onto the verge of accusing his prison inmates of the same delusion. Faced with this heavy challenge, he furnishes a reply that is as diplomatic as can be. Be it motivated by any affectionate ties that may have bonded them, or by mere precaution, it automatically profiles the other boys as impeccable believers whose Christian rite nurturance saves them from the clutches of the Dark Lord. Conversely, Hasendorffer's answer may be interpreted as a metaphor of the defendant's psychological state, as opposed to that of the other prisoners. He is namely the only one to have fallen prey to a cultural image of Evil serving as a conduit of his martyrization. While *they* are safe, *he* is lost. Since such a disturbing condition can be voiced solely in terms of a diabolical possession, he may be said to speak the truth. It is no wonder, then, that Matthias accuses the Devil of 'forbidding' him to pray and cross himself. In other words, nothing can be done, "damit er mit frid verblibe". Incidentally, it appears that the court is somewhat taken aback at the manner in which the defendant exploits the confessional 'strand' relative to the Devil. Paradoxically enough, Matthias attributes no substantially new nuisances to the Devil: it is all the same old familiar bundle of acts that seem to overwhelm the defendant. This sequence exemplifies a case in which the accused child sorcerer's reception of the possession belief seems to function at a level more profound than that represented by the authorities. Given that it is accompanied by actual psychosomatic symptoms, the discrepancy is hardly surprising. The boy's following statements clearly point to a medical problem:

Warumb er zu denen geistlichen gestert gesagt, es steckhe ihm etwas am halß, das er nicht echt heraus khönne?

Wisse es wol.

Was dasselbe seye? Und wie lang er's habe?

Es steckhe ihm etwas am halß, gleich als wans faul were, und laß ihn der bese feind nit reden, sonder befelche ihm, er soll seinem und nit der geistlichen gebett folgen, massen dan solches erst von zeither, als die geistlichen bey ihm sein und betten khomen, geschechen, und wolle lieber in der höll brennen und bratten alß im himel sein, so gar nichts schade.

¹⁴⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 a 68

Warumben er lieber in der höll als anderstwo sein wolle?

Ideò, damit er hinweckh khäme.¹⁴⁶

One could venture to hypothesize that this is a cleavage taking place along the fissure of two allegiances: to God and to the Devil. Attempting to liberate the emotional i.e. corporeal troubles of the unfortunate adolescent from their ideological straitjacket would probably be futile. The ‘rotten’ taste of a lump in the throat might suggest guilt over being thus ‘infected’ by the Devil i.e. by the evil thoughts that have irrevocably irrupted into the conscious mind. It is not unthinkable that this lump which (in the Devil’s guise) “laß ihn [...] nit reden” has something to do with repentance over the extensive denunciatory statements Matthias has so far been forced to make. Again, the careful discernment he seems to have invested into the answer regarding his prison inmates indicates that he had a sense of group identity. However, the boy appears to experience a sudden surge of dejection as he voices his explanation – could it be that, as in modern therapy, the mere mention of the problem raised bitterness and self-deprecatory emotions? – which entrenches him into a cynical, nihilistic assertion that he would rather be in hell than in Heaven. I suspect this has something to do with the eagerness of *die geistlichen* to win Matthias over with repetitive religious arguments. The document does not indicate how exactly many of them were involved in waking over the boy’s Christian soul, but, numbers aside, the proportion ‘one against many’ remains the same, and it is its overwhelming, suffocating effect (operative in the trial context) that is readable from the boy’s ultimate wish “damit er hinweckh khäme”.

But the court is deaf to these symbolical outcries. What matters is extracting a confession, and the town hall hearing goes, relentlessly:

Solle bekennen, was ihme dan aigentlich seye, das er mit der sprach nit heraus khönne, wan die geistliche was zu wissen verlangen?

Hab in der jugent etwas von fleisch gessen.

Als ihme nun ein wachsliecht an den finger gehalten worden, hat er wol etlichmahl gezuckht, und den schmerzen oder brennen empfunden, iedoch ain als anderen weeg nochmahlen widerhollet, das er lieber in der höll alles leiden wolle.¹⁴⁷

Hasendorffer’s ludicrous answer that is not really an answer (‘Because in my youth I used to eat meat’) may at first sound like an illogical, ‘unplugged’ response, but is really a continuation of the

¹⁴⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 a 68 and 67

¹⁴⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 a 67

self-effacing cynicism that the interrogatory dynamics has aroused up until that moment. It could also be a token of contemptuous rebellion against the obviously ridiculous counsels imposed to him by the priests in charge. If the latter applies, we may suspect that Matthias knew he would be invoking a new portion of torture, which, in light of his basically suicidal attitude, might even have been welcome as a kind of secondary gain. The torture, however, appears to be construed as an exact antidote to the boy's desire to 'burn in hell'. Such a perverse correspondence is featured nowhere else in the corpus. Apparently, Hasendorffer's stubbornness and lack of cooperation did manage to irritate the authorities a great deal. (It is also not to be excluded that Sebastian Zillner feared that his own recently acquired prestige¹⁴⁸ was at stake). After the candle torture has failed, the boy is repeatedly beaten, but to no avail. More precisely, he gives no information regarding the 'crimes', but rather solicits spiritual guidance (translated to modern language, this bespeaks seeking psychological help). The inner demons are obviously more terrifying than the outer villains. Then again, asking for prayer assistance could simply have been an emergency recourse that could not fail.

Ist doch nichts anders aus ihm zu bringen gewesen, als das er den geistlichen folgen, ihnen die hand geben, und bitten wolle, das sie ihn betten kenen und vorderrichten sollen, welches er auch ex post facto commissione und des geistlichen gethan.

Negst disem ist ihm constituto das heilige crucifix neben einem gewicht brinneten waxhörzen vorgestellt worden, darauf er bekent, das der bese feind alle tag bey ihm sey, und befelche, er soll die am hals tragende gewichte sachen von sich legen und ain wenig ausspiben, sonst er teuffl mit ihm nichts zuthuen haben khönne, über diß aber und auf bewegliches zuesprechen (✠ sowol der hochfürstl. commission, als) des geistlichen ist constituto auf die khnie gefallen, dem herren p. proba die hand geraicht, gekhust und gebetten, er soll ihm vom teuffl helfen, woll ihm folgen, entgegen dem besen feind nit mehr anhangen oder folgen (✠ massen er auch etlich tag zuvor conditionaliter wider getaufft worden), warauf h p. proba mit anhabender stollen ihm deponenten das crucifix in die hand geben, die zwen schwörfinger von rechter hand auf die heilige seitenwunden des crucifix zulegen und ihm nachzusprechen befolchen, wie beyligend des mehreren zusehen und zulesen.¹⁴⁹

From a torture instrument, the candle suddenly transforms into a conduit for a blessing. The prerequisites for a confession are, at last, finely honed. But, the humiliation is not complete without the repentant criminal being brought to fall on his knees. Only thus can his solicitation be taken seriously by those competent to intercede with the Lord on his behalf. What we are witnessing here is apparently a reversal of the diabolical baptism: the hand once stretched to the Devil repeats the

¹⁴⁸ He had ascended to the position of a *Kammerprokurator* on 29th January 1675 (H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil II“ in *MGSL* (114), p. 142)

¹⁴⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 a 67, 70 and 68

rite, this time ‘correctly’. The execution of Matthias Thoman Hasendorffer, performed on 15th February 1678, necessitated no further symbolic prerequisites.

Michl N. (Michael Mayr)

On 15th December 1677, a boy named Michl is interrogated at the Grand Aulic Court. Unable to give his surname, he claims to be a 16-year-old beggar, son of a late *Sagmeister* named Hauß (or Hanß).¹⁵⁰ From his answers we gather that he operated in several villages throughout the entire preceding summer, having been denied access to the city of Salzburg. He claims the cuts found on his body to have been made by Jackl, in the presence of little Thomerl and the Hunter. This is the only occasion in my selected corpus material in which giving description of the Hunter is deliberately omitted, for, to the question “Wie der jäger ausgesechen?”, the court notes merely “Hat solches stillschweigendt beantwort.”¹⁵¹ He does, however, proceed to give the description of the cutting scene:

Der jäger hab das bluet in beysein seines weibs in ein häferl aufgefangen, was er aber damit gethan, wisse er nit, ausser das er ein salben daraus gemacht, und darauf khlaine meissl herumb geloffen, im übrigen aber will er nit wissen, das ihne der jäger eingeschrieben habe.¹⁵²

The account itself is an unusual amalgamation of elements normally found elsewhere in the confessions. The idea of the Hunter making a lively mice flock out of a salve concocted from Michl’s blood may be a relict of the biblical belief that the blood is the life. And, naturally, since all the blood extracted from the cut was used for the salve, one can understand Michl’s denial of having been registered in a diabolical book.

The next day’s hearing brings a confrontation with the little Thomerl, who is supposed to fill the judges in about the details that Michl feels reluctant to give. Thomerl’s version, apart from the description of the Hunter, hardly differs from Michl’s, and is not particularly informative:

Ungehindert dieser Miechl über den sibenten puncten, wie nemblich angehalten worden, ist doch aus ihme nichts zubringen gewesen, biß er mit dem klainen Thomerl confrontiert worden, welcher dan hierauf bekhent, das ihne

¹⁵⁰ According to Gerald Mülleder, Michl was in fact 21 and his surname was Mayr. - G. Mülleder : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 311

¹⁵¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 391

¹⁵² BayHStA HeA 10 c 391-392

constitutum der Jäggl bey dem pfannhaus wol auch geschniten, und der Jager, welcher bainene herndl auf dem khopf, und in henden khrälln gehabt, das bluet in ein häferl aufgefangen, unwissendt aber, ob er ihn eingeschriben habe oder nit.¹⁵³

The section devoted to host desecration proves fairly barren, as the boy is disinclined to give in to confabulating. He simply states the stabbed host bled, with the ritual accompanied by non-specific swearing and denying god and the Holy Trinity. When asked about the salves received at the registration, though, he starts playing imaginative, stating that he smeared salves in four different colours on his hands and feet in order to create mice. The answer to the invisibility question is likewise tied to the salves:

Ob ihme der Jäggl nit gelehret hab, sich unsichbar zu machen?

Zu Khuchl und Veldkhürchen hab er sich mit der salben an der Brust geschmirt, sodan er unsichbar gewesen.

Warumben er sich unsichbar gemacht?

Gern, damit ihne die leith, wan er sie mit der faust zu den ohren schlage, nit sechen können.¹⁵⁴

The intended victims of this magic act are not specified. It reads more as joyful readiness to make pranks rather than bitter vindictive magic – he starts formulating the answer with an unwarranted “gern”. “Die leith” might refer to unknown people as well as to his peers.

In Sabbath description Michl’s sparse information on the Devil indicate a lack of eagerness to involve this figure into his confession: “Haben dabey gessen und trunckhen, auch umb und umb, und zwar der teufl allain”.¹⁵⁵ The Devil is no key figure to this defendant. The description of the unavoidable intercourse scene with the Devil is non-engaged, the accent being on the she-devil:

Er deponent aber mit einem schenen menschen, welche schwarz gewesen, auch herndl am khopf und khrälln an henden gehabt, getanzt, dabey auch liechter gebrunnen, und sobald der tanz zum ende khommen, hab er constituto die leichter mit den henden ausleschen helffen, und darauf zu seiner tanzerin gelegt, dieselbe angescherzt, und würcklich gebraucht [...] und weilen constituo von dem khlein Thamerl und Hausl, das sie mit ihme deponenten auch zu thuen gehabt, graviert worden, hat er solches auch bekhent¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 392-393

¹⁵⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 393

¹⁵⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 393

¹⁵⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 393-394

What seems remarkable is just how all-inclusive the perception of beauty is to these boys. The she-devil, though horned and clawed, is decidedly pretty in almost all such accounts. Could this notion have been influenced by the stories of beautiful dark-skinned women from the New World, if such reports truly had the chance of seeping through to uneducated lower strata of the Holy German Empire? On the other hand, it is possible that the geographic origin of the influence in question may not have been as remote as that: succinct parallels have already been drawn between the proverbial Sabbath beauty with clawed feet and the Moroccan *fata-jinn* named Aisha Qandisha, who bears close resemblance to the Sicilian *donne di fora*.¹⁵⁷ At any rate, Michl's statement of having helped extinguish the candles manually, a detail unique in the entire confession corpus, is probably to be viewed in the context of his impatience to have sex with his diabolical dance partner. Strangely enough, he succumbs to his two companions' accusations and confesses to having intercourse with them as well.

In the section devoted to animal abuse, a case of Jackl's necrophile bestiality is evoked:

Ob er nit gesechen, was der schinter Jäggl mit dem vich gethan?

Der schinter Jäggl hab ein roth und weisse Khue mit einer schwarzen Salben geschmiert, welche sodan umbgelauffen, nidergefallen, und todt worden, darauf Jäggl selbige geschendet und volgens die schinter bueben zu Adlstetten solche hinweckh geführt.¹⁵⁸

Accounts like these need not necessarily be stamped as fictitious. It is not unthinkable that individuals desirous of sexually abusing animals would have them drugged prior to having their way with them. The black salve could simply have been a herb concoction, made for the purpose of immobilizing, or even killing the animal. Here, the latter must have been the case, since a local "Schinter" squad is said to have removed the corpse. This last piece of information lends authenticity to the act, which, consequently, appears even more revolting, not least to Michl, who adds "Habs wol auch gethan, aber nit gern, und wols khünfftig, weil es gar schändlich, niderlassen."¹⁵⁹

The judges then concentrate on extracting information about Hiesl, one of the boys he has named as his companions, and whose brother, the little Jäggl, is supposed to have committed incest during one of the Sabbath feats:

¹⁵⁷ M. S. Messina : Inquisitori, negromanti e streghe nella Sicilia moderna (1500-1782), p. 147

¹⁵⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 394-395

¹⁵⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 395

Was Jäggels und Hiesl auch die mueter etwo miteinander gethan?

Der Hiesl und Jägl haben die mueter gekhüst, und dieselbe würcklich geuehrt, welches er deponent durch ein fenster gesehen, sonsten haben sie auch schwester.

Was der vater mit den zwey söhnen?

Sey alles unter und aufeinander gelegen, und die leichtfertigkeit begangen.

Weilen er vorgeben, das Jäggl ein schwester hab, und diese auch dabey gewesen, was etwo zwischen ihnen und sonsten beschehen?

Vatter und zwen söhne sein auch auf die schwester und tochter gelegen, und dieselbe geschendet.¹⁶⁰

This incest-cluster is probably insisted upon for the purpose of interrogating the family members in question, although I could find no traces of them in my sources. The name of the little brother, accidentally or not, equals the name of the major suspect.

At the end of this 15th December 1677 hearing, the judges seem to have been left discontent at Michl's lack of cooperation:

Solle die aigentliche wahrheit bekhennen, zu was ende ihme der teufel die zaichen gemacht?

Gern, und ob zwar constituto etwas närrisch und einfeltig aussehet, ist er doch dergestalt verstockht gewesen, das man ohne confrontation mit dem khain Thomerl und Hanerl nichts aus ihme bringen können, da er doch alles wol verstanden, und darauf antwortten mögen.

Auch schlisslichen, als er deponent den ambtman umb seine shuech gefragt, hingegen aber dieser zu ihme vermeldt, das er solche am hällein gstolen hab, hat er zur antwortt geben, das er sonst khain gelt gehabt, solche zukhauffen.¹⁶¹

The judges apparently believe that they are able to differentiate between real and simulated simple-mindedness. What can be deduced from the paragraph above is that a genuine example of "einfältigkeit" would have implied an impossibility to understand the questions and answer them. If this was partly the case with this boy, his stubborn unwillingness to cooperate counteracted any possible sympathy on the judges' part. Failing to convince the court of his naïveté, Michl seems to have sealed his doom. The last hearing he is subjected to takes place some three weeks afterwards, on 8th January 1678. He makes a statement regarding Jackl's two girlfriends, Traudl and Urschl:

¹⁶⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 395

¹⁶¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 396

Ob er constituto nicht der Traudl ein feurig huff---(?) abgelen, und mit ihr in die lüfft geflogen?

Sey wahr, das beide menschen ihme auf dem buggl gesessen, und er sie als ain feuriger hund, so fligl und federn gehabt, in die lüfft geführt, er constituto hab auch feur ausgespiben, welches ihne nie wenig gebrent.¹⁶²

The story of the fire-vomiting, feather-winged dog burned by its own flames is surprising in its excessive iconography. It may well be that, at the point of making a statement, Michl suffered from fever or other symptoms that had been induced by his winter captivity, since such vivid fantasies had previously not been a part of his repertoire. At any rate, the judges asked for no additional details regarding this exaggerated report, as Michl's guilt had already been established. Michl N. was executed in Salzburg on 15th February 1678.

Gertraud Gollingerin

The hearing of Gertraud Gollingerin at the Grand Aulic Court of Salzburg was conducted on 18th May 1678 by Sebastian Zillner and Johan Franz. Since the *Hexenakten* do not contain the protocol of the statements she made in front of the local court in Werfen, it is not possible to evaluate if and to what extent the initial confession was upgraded. Gertraud Gollingerin apparently declares herself to be an orphaned 18-year-old girl from St. Johans; on the other hand, her beggar status remains unspecified. In her Werfen confession she has obviously already confessed to an acquaintance with Jackl, which she now supplements with "Im aprill sey es ein iahr gewesen."¹⁶³ The two commissaries appear not to have been sure whether the girl should be classified as a grownup witch or a child-witch. Although their first contents-related question aims at the latter, the overall information supplied by Gertraud point to both:

Was er mit ihr gespilet?

Sey 8 wochen mit ihme umgangen in welcher zeit er sie unkheisch gebraucht habe.

Was sie von ihme für ein salben bekhommen? Was sie mit gethan?

¹⁶² BayHStA HeA 10 c 396

¹⁶³ BayHStA HeA 10 b 207

Ain gelbe, damit sie die hend anschmiren und sagen müssen, heindtl, meißl, khäzl und räzl, welches alles gleich also worden, sie deponentin aber sich selbst zum hund, bockh, storkh, stain und gaiß damit gemacht habe, die Urschl ihr gspänin auch sich in ein sau verendern khönnen.¹⁶⁴

The first thing the judges want to know is what sort of games the two of them played. Considering that it most probably leans back to the previous confession, the question does not appear to be double-layered, unless there is some ironic undertone to it – an approach that would not rhyme well with the clarity imperative of such a procedure. In other words, the court's starting point is that Gertraud is Jackl's playmate apprentice. Instead of an answer, Gertraud surprisingly launches an assertion that Jackl has taken advantage of her, but the claim, which apparently leaves the judges unmoved, is a shot in the dark, since it does not lead to any additional inquiry. The judges are after sorcery crimes, which is why the question of magic salves gets priority. Gertraud's list of animals involved in the magical action is certainly among the most comprehensive of its kind. Of the two discernable groups of animals, one refers to those the girl has supposedly created, whereas the other one lists self-transformation options. In comparison to this admirable menagerie, Gertraud's mention of her alleged friend Urschl's girl-into-pig powers reads either like peer rivalry or an attempt to involve an additional person into the forbidden act. She goes on to the obligatory part of the programme, which is the initiatory cut, an act that explains only one out of the 14 scars found on her body.¹⁶⁵ The details of the scene reveal an interesting perception of the Devil figure:

Was mit dem bluet geschechen?

Der Jäggl habs in ein gläßl aufgefangen, und ein jäger, welcher der teufl gewesen, ihne damit in ein groß auswendig schwarz, inwendig aber weiß und roth überschribnes buech geschriben, und hab sie der teufl gefragt, ob sie ihn kenne, deme sie aber anfangs geantwortt, nain, alsdan er sich zu erkennen geben und gesagt, er seye der teufl, darob sie erschrockhen.¹⁶⁶

This appears to confirm what we will see in Andre Taucher's confession: the anthropomorphic Devil, i.e. the one bearing resemblance to a human being (a Hunter, as it were) becomes scary only after having made his doctinary 'coming out'. The probable function of such a narrative arrangement might be the defendant's attempt to profile herself as a gullible Christian sheep whose genuine Catholic chastity deceives her into not suspecting the worst beneath the Hunter's

¹⁶⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 207

¹⁶⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 209

¹⁶⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 207

appearance. Gertraud is one of those interrogated child-witches who felt compelled to ideologically distance themselves from the Dark Lord upon making him enter the story. On the whole, however, the Devil is an inevitable part of the confession decorum. It is possible that a bona fide recognition and acceptance of this pattern on the part of children implicitly decreases a lot of the negative potential which normally stands at the disposal of pre-Enlightenment grownups.

The next item on the interrogation menu is the habitual blasphematory treatment of the holy pillars, and host desecration. But, even though the former confession cluster went smoothly, the latter obviously necessitated some persuasion, since the folio reads that „weil sie deponentin mit der sprach nit herauß gewolt, anzuzeigen, wie die heilige hosti hernach ausgesechen, ist sie mit etlichen rueten strachen gestrafft worden“.¹⁶⁷ Acknowledging the extorted answer that the host was ‚wet, red and bloody‘ (and subsequently covered with faeces) to be yet another ‚top down‘-type¹⁶⁸ exhibition of stuffing the little antichrists with transubstantiation doctrine, it is far more surprizing that the judges were this particular even after obtaining formal admittance to the crime of host desecration. There simply *had* to be blood on the sacred oblate, or the cookie ought to have featured qualities evocative of the desired state. That is why many desecrated hosts are bluntly referred to as ‚red‘ without being bloody *per se*; by means of a Pavlovian habitus typical of witch defendants, Gertraud, obviously motivated by the branch strokes, exhausts all the required signifiers by adding ‚wet‘ to the list. Her Sabbath account is likewise both succinct and out of the ordinary:

Sey lustig gewesen, haben tanzt und gsprungen, fleisch, brät, schniten und bratwurst gessen, wein und bier getrunckhen, welches alles nur gspensterey gewesen, dan, als sie ein bratwurst in sackh geschoben, und über ein stund essen wollen, sey es ein armb lange schlang gewesen, und sich gewunden, welche der Jäggl umb den halß genommen und umbbracht, zu ihrer ankhoft bey dem hexentanz hab sie sich von dem teufel bückhen und herren haissen, im hinten und sonst auch ganzen leyb leckhen, und auswischen müssen.

Dieweilen aber auß der deponentin nit zubringen gewesen, mit weme sie dem teufel im hintern, ausser eines teichls auswischen müssen, und ohne das etwas spathen abends gewesen, als hat man dieselbe zuscheren und der zaichen halber zubesichtigen, befohlen.¹⁶⁹

On the following day, Gertraud would, „Auf abermahliges zuesprechen“, amplify this last sentence by saying tat the piece of scrubbing cloth with which she has wiped the Devil’s behind had *das hochwürdige guet* wrapped inside it - the cloth alone was not enough. Indeed, how are we to

¹⁶⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 212

¹⁶⁸ The appellation refers to the ‚top down‘-model of witch persecution, see W. Rummel / R. Voltmer : Hexen und Hexenverfolgung in der Frühen Neuzeit, p. 86

¹⁶⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 212-213

evaluate the court's repeated attempts to extract 'the remaining' information from the girl? Confessing 'in instalments' might indeed have been some tactics of her own, though it appears more likely that each separate statement that Gertraud gave of her own accord had been thought through, and that occasional silence breaks simply signified shortage of ideas. Besides the snake story, the *Hexentanz* description above contains one essential notion: that everything about the witch dance is just a diabolical mirage (*gspensterey*). One can certainly interpret the bratwurst-come-snake as a derivative of that particular assumption. Hence, since the food really stands for something impure, it is no wonder that a desirable nutritional item turns out to be a disguise of the temptation reptile himself.

Unlike some other animals (cats, frogs etc), snakes have mostly acted as supernumeraries in the dramatics of witchcraft. It is something of a paradox that, despite its mostly negative connotations in the Christian culture, the snake generally is not an exploitable item of the European witch trials. Perhaps the reason for this is that snakes are not domestic animals whose immediate presence and obedience could be integrated into the dynamics of sorcery-related accusations. It is perhaps of importance that in regions geographically relevant for our study (Austria and southern Germany) snakes were considered as house spirits one was supposed to feed with milk¹⁷⁰; hence, the reptiles' apotropaic quality protected them from extermination. Let us have a look at a comparable episode featured on one occasion in Salazar's reports of the Basque child-witches:

A girl of fourteen said that she had seen a snake come down from the ceiling into a room where a certain [...] woman gave it milk (as is also noted among the general testimonies of the visitation). This appeared as an act of witchcraft. The said woman, when examined as a witness in default of others, denied it, and no further proof emerged from this investigation.¹⁷¹

What we have here is a piece of 'legitimate' superstition taken out of a non-witchcraft context and conveniently crafted onto a witch construct, according to the demands of the situation. Nonetheless, the snake in Salazar's corpus is still essentially a prop. It does not surprise that it is only in relation to the Devil that this shady beast can play a more prominent role. The snake/Devil relation is briefly thematized in one of the best known heresy trials of the Late Middle Ages, the 15th century process against Gilles de Rais. At one point de Rais' black magic accomplice, a self-proclaimed necromancer François Prelati, describes the outcome of one of their attempts to invoke the Devil. The episode merits being reproduced in its entirety:

¹⁷⁰ O. A. Erich / R. Beitzl (Begr.) : Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde, p. 710

¹⁷¹ G. Henningsen (ed.) : The Salazar Documents, p. 308

Item, bei der Rückkehr von Seigneur Gilles aus Bourges hielt der Zeuge in besagtem Saal von Tiffauges eine Beschwörung ab, bei der Barron in menschlicher Gestalt erschien, und von den Zeugen in Namen des Messire Gilles um Geld gebeten wurde. Und in der Tat sah er kurz darauf in einem Raum die Erscheinung einer großen Menge von Goldbarren; dieses Gold blieb mehrere Tage dort liegen; sobald der Zeuge es sah, wollte er es berühren, doch die Antwort des Teufels war, er möge sich zurückhalten, noch sei es nicht an der Zeit. Dieses berichtete der Zeuge dem Messire Gilles; und der fragte ihn, ob er es sehen könne und dürfe; welches der Zeuge bejahte; und alle beiden begaben sich in besagtes Zimmer, und als der Zeuge die Tür öffnete, erschien auf dem Boden eine große, mächtige Schlange mit Flügeln und dem Umfang eines Hundes; daraufhin sagte der Zeuge zu Gilles, er solle sich davor hüten, das Zimmer zu betreten, da sich dort eine Schlange zeige; Gilles zog sich erschrocken zurück, und der Zeuge folgte ihm. Nunmehr ergriff Messire Gilles ein Kreuz, in welchem sich Splitter des Wahren Kreuzes befanden, um mit diesem ungefährdet das Zimmer betreten zu können; aber der Zeuge sagte zu ihm, daß es nicht gut sei, ein geweihtes Kreuz bei solchen Anlässen zu gebrauchen. Wenig später betrat der Zeuge besagtes Zimmer, und als er das angebliche Gold berührte, merkte er, daß es nur Staub von fahler Farbe war und erkannte so die Falschheit des bösen Geistes.¹⁷²

Owing to its symbolism, this excerpt bears more resemblance to Gertraud's story than the aforementioned Basque example. Like its close relative guarding the golden fleece, the snake in Prelati's account watches over a heap of gold. But, like in Gertrud's report, the treasure coveted by a lost Christian soul is an illusion that cannot be consumed. It seems that the only thing which differs Gertraud from de Rais' acolyte is the nature of the unattainable goods - food vs. gold - the elusive nature of which is admirably symbolized by the snake's winding motion (itself the central reason of human fascination¹⁷³). A Freudian approach would interpret the snake as a conduit of erotic tension, both between the would-be magician and his rich patron, and between the beggar girl and Jackl the Sorcerer. Admittedly, the trial to de Rais is in many respects so problematic that it deserves an updated research of its own, and it seems fairly certain that such an attempt would reveal new, interesting moments. Gertrud Gollingerin, on the other hand, would hardly have directly (and bluntly) confessed to an intercourse with Jackl first, only to convey the very same notion encoded in symbols afterwards. More than anything else, the snake incident functions as a „damsel in distress“ scenario: what matters is that Jackl *saves* Gertrud by having strangled the nuisance reptile. The idea of being under somebody's protection must have had a prominent part in the orphaned girl's fantasy, otherwise it would not have gained such a central place, and at the expense of many „standard“ Sabbath details. The two anachronistic snake episodes share not only the belief that, within the Devil's realm, everything is just an illusion - their protagonists also know that this only refers to pleasures, and that harmful things are real.

¹⁷² G. Bataille : Gilles de Rais. Leben und Prozeß eines Kindermörders, p. 329

¹⁷³ O. A. Erich / R. Beitzl (Begr.) : Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde, pp. 709-710

How wrong would we be if we claimed that everything about these confessions was false? The reasonable is inextricably intertwined with the dubious. And yet, our efforts of analyzing the probability factor behind the performative acts described in the statements of the witch-children of Salzburg cannot help raising questions of whether we should not start to differentiate between the ‚real‘ and the ‚nominal‘ accuracy of the presented events. Just because a statement conveys a supernatural event does not automatically mean that everything about the episode is improbable. In fact, once we have sifted away the obviously incredible aspects of a particular story, what we are left with is a skeleton of Early Modern interaction modes with the self and others. Gertraud’s report of picking apprentices for Jackl is an adequate example:

Ob sie nicht dem besen feind versprochen, ihme andere zuzuführen? Was für eine sie deme zuegeführt?

Hab dem teufel ein khlaines dirndl nahmens Mariedl, und ainen bueben Cristian genant, so etwo im gebürg sich aufhalten, zuegeführt, und ihnen vorgesagt, sie sollen mit ihr gehen, sie wisse ihnen ein gueten herren.¹⁷⁴

Let us blend out the Jackl hype for a moment. Without the *Verführung* aspect, the statement above depicts a type of intrastratal, cross-age social interaction. It is far from improbable that such beggar children as Mariedl and Cristian could have inhabited the mountains, and that they would have been easily persuaded to follow a young grownup person who promised to find them prospective service opportunities. It is at points like these that the fear of the authorities comes across as somewhat understandable - all those unintegrated and easily misguided children and young grownups could, once recruited, mutate into a first class threat. The ‚existence‘ of Jackl the Sorcerer only lends a poetic shape to this anxiety.

Witch persecutions follow a paranoid logic that exploits any given from a misplaced perspective, and the most suitable application area is the body of the witch. In Gertraud’s example, we are again faced with the question of the vaginal growth. On the whole, the *geschwulst* issue is not too frequently brought into play during this mass trial - in cases when it is, it is apparently used against defendants whose vaginas are less than impeccable. Gertraud, a representative of this unfortunate group, resorts to a typical response, making the Devil responsible for the circumstance: „Khomb von brauchung des teufls her, zumahlen er grob und wäß(?) seye.“¹⁷⁵ Jackl, regularly imagined to be physiologically a man, is not supposed to be capable of provoking such bodily symptoms. On the whole, however, the girl’s many scars are suitably instrumentalized towards a kind of self-

¹⁷⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 214

¹⁷⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 215

poeticization. When asked „Warumben sie so offft gemerckht worden?“, the defendant simply accepts the confabulatory challenge by answering „Damit jäger und Jäggl sie khenne“.¹⁷⁶ At that point, it is already too late to offer a natural explanation for the scars. Hence, Gertraud, having long since abandoned the sphere of pure facts, explains them within the context of the sorcery tale through the medium of which she interreacts with the authorities.

The hearing ends with a piece of information that Gertraud supplies of her own accord, as it seems:

Endlichen gibt deponentin auch zuvernemen, das die von ihrem alda verhafften landsman Veitl Rainer gehört, das der teufl ihme gesagt, der Jäggl hette nit länger mehr frist, als auf khonfftige sonabenten, alsdan werde er einkommen, dan der teufl schlage ihne Jäggl aniezo immerdar, und als man ihne Veitl fürkhommen lassen, hat er nit allain bekhent, das er die deponentin woll khenne, und bey ihr geschlaffen seye, sonder auch, das ihm solches der jäger und Jäggl selbst gesagt, sein Jäggl's zeit sey auf khonfftige sonabenten aus.¹⁷⁷

It is possible that the girl included this ‚bonus track‘ in order to appear cooperative, or even to contribute towards accelerating the end of the Zauberer-Jackl-trials altogether. Before we turn to the contents, we should examine the context of the ‚news‘ itself. Gertraud’s referring to a fellow prisoner, Veitl Rainer, as a source of information, does not make it clear when exactly she was supposed to have heard this - before or after the incarceration? At any rate, the story capitalizes on the relations within the Evil Hierarchy - Jackl, who normally apprentices children to the Devil, is nothing but an apprentice of the Dark Lord himself, and in this capacity he is pictured suffering molestations on a daily basis. His condition is so unenviable that he confides in one of the warlock boys, i.e. one of those whom he is supposed to dominate. The idea of the Devil punishing Jackl by doing away with him merges with the sort of punishment implied by the Sorcerer’s imprisonment. After Veitl has been brought along, he confirms having been acquainted with the girl, and - though the judges do not inquire about that in particular - that he has known her physically, too. Perhaps admitting to interaction with a peer member of the opposite sex without the actual coitus involved would have had an emasculating undertone; this should be viewed in light of Veitl’s dry denial of having been as much as *angeriert* by Jackl.¹⁷⁸ His enhancement of Gertraud’s story consists of naming both the Hunter and Jackl himself as first-hand sources. (The Hunter’s role in the conflict, or in the hierarchy as such, remains undefined). Still, even as concerted as this, both of the efforts appear desperate, not least against the background of a date close at hand: 17th May 1678 was a

¹⁷⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 215

¹⁷⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 215-216

¹⁷⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 a 319

Tuesday, with the following Saturday falling on 21st May. Indicating it as a day of the week suggests that the date as such was of secondary importance. What mattered was to locate a closely approaching time limit the surpassing of which would allegedly trigger Jackl's undoings. The sequence „der Jäggl hette nit länger mehr frist“ is perhaps another projection that the Sorcerer figure must shoulder - not Jackl, but rather his co-creators are those whose time would soon end. For Gertraud Gollingerin, that time ended on the day of her execution, 26th May 1678.

Gregori Landtmann

Some basic information relative to this defendant can be gleaned from Mathiaß Purgegger's confession, according to which Gregori Landtmann is a 15-year-old from Piesendorf.¹⁷⁹ The hearing of Gregori Landtmann, conducted by the authorities of Zell, on 1st July 1678, contains a lively interaction of *interrogatoria* and *responsorica* which offers a valuable insight into interrogation dynamics of the local courts. Already the second court's question reveals their intention of levelling Landtmann's confession with an already established sorcery crime of his accomplice:

Er habe aber in gedacht seinem nechten(?) examen vorgeben, das ihme der Jäggl in nächster fassten oberhalb gehen leitten geschnitten, welches darumben ungläublich, weil er schon ferndten oder vorigen sommer mit Mathiaß Purgegger, welcher schon damahlen ein zauberer gewesen, petlen ganngen, soll die rechte warheit sagen, wie lang es seie, das er mit disem laster behafft, auch wo? Wann? Unnd mit weme er geschnitten worden?¹⁸⁰

Ob er zwar über vilfeltiges zuesprechen und ernstlichen betrohen, weiter nichts bekennen wollen, sagt er doch endtlichen, als man ihne bindten, und strachen haissen, es seye nunmehr zway iahr, das er und der Haiß Purgegger von dem Jäggl in beysein des jäger oder teifls, geschnitten worden, ungefehr umb 3 uhr nachmittag, zu Prämberg in des tanzlochners veld.¹⁸¹

As we can see, sorcery is perceived as a disease that spreads easily within the community of lowlives. Hence, Gregori's joint wanderings with Mathiaß Purgegger is deemed contagious.

Asked to describe what happened next, Gregori furnishes an answer that would immediately put him in trouble: “Haben wie vorgemelt Gott und alle seine h. verläugnet, auch dem teifl anglobt und versprochen, ewig sein zusein, alßdann habe sie der Jäggl das raz und meißlmachen gelehrt, auf weiß wie er nechst gesagt, darnach sein sie gleich verschwunden.”¹⁸² The defendant appears to have

¹⁷⁹ G. Mülleder : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 340

¹⁸⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 b 372

¹⁸¹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 379

¹⁸² BayHStA HeA 10 b 379

adopted a strategy of economizing with information, however rudimentary this approach might have been. This is visible from the sequence in which he solely *anticipates* an explanation of the rats and mice creation act. It seems as though the boy wanted to give a succinct description of everything that supposedly happened on that occasion, leaving the preternatural details for later. There may be two reasons for this: either he had troubles thinking up the particularities of the scene at such a short notice (possibly because the ‘magical’ dimension did not appeal to him), or he was simply eager to make the self-incriminating statement as short as possible. However, Gregori would not get the chance to explain the mice episode, mainly because the court is interested in evening out the more salient irregularities in the boy’s confession:

Er habe zum nechsten vorgeben der Jäggl hete ihne bei der hanndt gefasset, gleichsamb es were mit gewalt und ohne sein willen geschehen, nitweniger gemeldet, das sie gleich nach dem schnidt auf ein schnidtl in rottenauer turn gefahren, nun sage er aniezo sie seindt verschwundten, was das variieren bedeite?¹⁸³

Sein nit mit gewalt geschechen, habe woll sein willen zuvor darein geben und wahr das sie gleich nach den schnit verschwunden, aber inner 14 tagen darauf sein sie ihme und dem Purgegger zwischen 10 und 11 Uhr mittags in den pämberger velden wider begegnet, und gleich auf einer schnitl in den rottenauer thurn gefahren, aldorten es herganngen, wie er in nechsten examini (ausser das mann, weill es umb mittag zeit gewesen, khein Liecht braucht) erzölt, solches wolleben hab gewehrt seines gedunckhens biß umb 1 uhr nachmittag, dann er selbigen abent noch auf Mittersill khommen und aldorten übernachtet.¹⁸⁴

In addition, the defendant is asked to confirm that this latest statement is the truth, which he subsequently does. The most significant rectification implies that the act of pledging allegiance to the Devil was consensual after all. We cannot know what the outcome of the hearing would have looked like had Gregori Landtmann insisted on having been overpowered by Jackl and forced to undergo the initiation. Instead of being bullied into saying an ‘appropriate’ thing, he was, at least according to the document, given a chance to opt for one of the versions of the statement. The consequences of such a freely made concession are far-reaching, although we cannot be sure how clear this would have been to the accused. In fact, the scribe’s juridically flat paraphrase (“Sein nit mit gewalt geschechen, habe woll sein willen zuvor darein geben”) may have considerably watered down the actual meaning of the defendant’s refutation. For, indeed, what would this ‘consent’ have consisted of, performatively speaking? Here we collide with the mythological make-up of the Jackl-construct. The Magician is namely rarely depicted as resorting to force. Subtle persuasion is one of

¹⁸³ BayHStA HeA 10 b 372

¹⁸⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 379

his ‘officially recognized’ powers – but why? Is it because this is exactly the crucial character trait in a cult leader capable of successfully gaining over God’s innocent (or, in this case, not so innocent) souls to his cause? Where there is no immediate attraction for the group fantasy, there has to be at least an established consent of the alleged follower. In the eyes of the court, the worth of such consent, however unconvincingly uttered, is – for legal purposes – equal to the ebullient fascination experienced by some other defendants. The next question would be what Gregori’s fascination consists of? This he has already announced when answering what promises he had received from the Devil. And though his reply “Guett leben und gelt genueg”¹⁸⁵ entices one to laconically explain it away as „Reflex auf Entbehrungserfahrungen“¹⁸⁶, there is no guarantee that the boy’s genuine attitude can be readily observable from it. It is to be supposed that a beggar would want those things, but the context itself (outlined by the mechanism of interrogatoria) already imposes such an answer, allowing no other. Moreover, given the overall profile of this hearing, Landtmann does not appear to be prone to circumlocution, his replies being reasonably short whenever possible. The probability that ‘Good life and enough money’ could just as well have been the first idea that popped to his mind is enhanced by the explanation he gives to the question why he has not spoken truthfully from the start: “Wisse es selber nit, seye ihme gleich also eingefallen.”¹⁸⁷ Though this is a strategy that could not have been declared more clearly, we have no reliable way of knowing how often it was used.

The somewhat colloquial character of the manner in which the scribe protocollized Gregori’s answer might suggest a proportionally smaller difference between the actual statement and its counterpart in the document. With this, the defendant openly admits having said the first (made up) thing that came to his mind. Although we must guard ourselves against stylizing the spontaneous responses uttered ‘on the spur of the moment’ into a strategy common to all child-witches of the prince-archbishopric, such reactions must, by virtue of being classifiable as confabulations, have had a prominent place in the totality of the interrogatoria. The difference in the hearing dynamics between the local courts and the Grand Aulic Court seems to suggest that resorting to this technique encountered more opposition on former than on latter occasions, at least by the look of the judges’ reaction at Zell. But the sequence “Wisse es selber nit” is even more intriguing. Apart from serving essentially as a vacant expression, it seems to reflect the state of being blank when confronted to an atypical request. By extension, it might also point to a different persona who, in the context of an

¹⁸⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 379

¹⁸⁶ G. Mülleder : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 235

¹⁸⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 380

arrest and subsequent hearings, takes over the defendant's responses, making him (or her) 'tick' differently from the 'usual' self. Likewise, being 'blank' or 'at a loss for words' implies that nothing in the previous experience has prepared the defendant for a reaction which, under these extraordinary circumstances, could be labelled 'appropriate'. Within the group memory of the Salzburg beggars, there is no such thing as a territory-wide hunt for an individual with cultic pretensions and supernatural qualities. And because the absence of an attitude – particularly with regard to such a polarizing matter! – was not an option for any of the accused warlocks and witches, one may suspect that corresponding 'blanks' may be hiding underneath many more acceptable answers pronounced along the lines of 'I was afraid to admit' and the like. In fact, the ideational void may be the Shadow of every confabulation ever uttered during the Zauberer Jackl trials. By this I do not mean to say that beggar children were indifferent either to the Jackl issue, or to the troubles they underwent on that account. The researched ego-documents, and Gregori Landtmann's hearing in particular, indicate that, at some point, these individuals were compelled to create a new file in their mental software, and relate to it the best way possible, essentially by construing confabulations with a minimum of coherence.

This appears to have been no easy task for Gregori. When the court moves on to the issue of the witch dances, the defendant has to imagine all the other participants (besides Jackl and himself):

Wer noch auf dem tannz gewesen?¹⁸⁸

Vier in peyrischen claidern sauber aufgepuzte mädl, unnd die zway alte weiber, so khocht haben, wie auch die zwen spilleith.¹⁸⁹

Weill es tag gewesen, ob sie ohne scheid die unzucht gleich der nacht getriben, und ob er unter disem vier mädl kheine oder vielleicht alle khent?¹⁹⁰

Hab kheine ab/ob(?) den annderen sheuch getragen, khennt hab er niemandt.¹⁹¹

Weill er schon vor zway jahren mit dem Heiß Purgegger geschnitten worden, wie oft er die gannze zeit hero auf dergleichen tännzen gewesen?¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 b 373

¹⁸⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 380

¹⁹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 b 373

¹⁹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 380

¹⁹² BayHStA HeA 10 b 373

Erstumbt hiriber unnd widerholt allein sein nechste aussag, das, das übrige was er nit iezto erleittert, wahr seye, wisse weiter nichts aber nach etlich gegebner strachen mit der ruethen, sagt er, mechte etwo bei 20 mall gefahren sein.¹⁹³

Worried over his unenviable situation, Gregori is not keen on surrendering to saucy daydreaming. Still, the proposed matrix is irresistible even from the perspective of cultural history. The judges build their question on one of Gregori's previous statements, according to which the relevant witch dance session has supposedly taken place during daylight, and consequently derive their own premises out of it. Hence, what is implied by the sequence *die unzucht gleich der nacht getriben* is the notion that eroticism turns into obscenity when banished from the nocturnal into the diurnal sphere. In spite of the fact that daylight debauchery renders its participants uncomfortably observable, the witches know no shame – this much is clear to the defendant. This is the one information he can furnish without further ado, as it has more to do with believing than with knowing. But, once asked about the total number of the witch dances, he slides back into his self-defensive mode, until he is thrashed to his senses into stating *bei 20 mall*. These numbers, of course, are valuable only inasmuch as they point to a *relative* quantity. The arbitrarily stated number of occasions on which a defendant allegedly indulged in sorcery-related activities could, for instance, have been expressed in tens, a formula used by the 12-year-old Stephan Vestlberger, who 'crippled 10 people, made 10 storms, and recruited 10 boys'.¹⁹⁴ The most vivid exaggeration regarding *unzucht* is the confession of the 18-year-old Christoph Kienberger, whose forced copulations with Jackl amounted to approximately 20 times - the repetitiveness perhaps explicable by the sequence 'und er von disem warmb empfunden'.¹⁹⁵ (He liked it so much that he compounded the number). In Landtmann's case, however, this unfortunately thought up digit would not hold the interrogators' attention:

Er habe in seinem nechsten examen widersprochen, das er die drey verhaffte pueben auf kheinem tannz gesechen, da sie doch ihrer ansag nach ihne gesechen, was ihm dann zuglauben seye?¹⁹⁶

Erinnert sich unnd sagt zwaimahl hab er sie im rothenauer turn und zu Weyer gesechen.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ BayHStA HeA 10 b 380

¹⁹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 115

¹⁹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 87

¹⁹⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 373

¹⁹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 380

Wie oft Sie in der wochen gefahren unnd welche tag oder nacht?¹⁹⁸

Vermainelich dreymall, am erchttag pfinstag und sambstag.¹⁹⁹

Nun habe das jahr 52 wochen, wann sie alle wochen dreymahl gefahren, welches ein grosse anzahl mache, warumben er dann nur bei 20 mahl ansage?²⁰⁰

Seyen nit alle wochen gefahren, wisse selbsten nit wie er darinen(?).²⁰¹

Entangled in the web of his poorly constructed, inconsistent lies, Gregori Landtmann can hardly fail to awaken our sympathy. The portion quoted above adequately illustrates the tightrope walk between harmonizing generally known facts (such as the number of the weeks in a year) with the oneiric imaginary constructs that a young socially disfavoured person accused of witchcraft had to perform during interrogations. But, however desperate this embarrassing situation might have rendered him, Gregori Landtmann remained amazingly resilient to all the accusations. Until the end of the 1st July hearing he would admit solely to two religious crimes (having placed the host to Jackl's disposal on a few occasions, verbal blasphemy) and one sorcery crime (flying solo to the witch dance). And yet, Landtmann laconically refutes each one of the remaining accusations i.e. refers the interrogators to the previous confession. This seems to have been done so self-assuredly that the scribe, when protocollizing the last but one question, appears to let a bit of the judges' desperation get transferred into the document: "So khönne er *aufs wenigist wettermachen*, wo es beschechen, wann? Und was er darmit für schaden gethan?" [my italics].²⁰² The court may have gained an impression that, in the face of the defendant's meanwhile re-established resoluteness its conscientiously prepared question list has backfired. The defendant is sent off to his cell, and with a warning, too:

Dieweillen weder mit ernstlichen zuesprechen, noch betrohung deß hauens, für dißmahl weiter nichts aus ihme zubringen gewesen, hat mann denselben an sein ohrt fiehren lassen, anvor aber bedeitet, mann werde ihne wegen der widersprochnen puncten nechstens widerumben fürnemmen, soll sich gleichwollen erinnern und die wahrheit sagen, oder man werde ihne vill gröber, alß bißhero beschechen, mitfahren?²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 b 373

¹⁹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 380

²⁰⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 b 373

²⁰¹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 380

²⁰² BayHStA HeA 10 b 374

²⁰³ BayHStA HeA 10 b 374

After this *territio*-like prelude to the next hearing, the session ends.

The hearing of Gregori Landtmann continues on 8th July. At first it looks as though the boy would be able to maintain his hard stance. Asked whether he can recall and rectify what he has previously refuted, he innocently answers “Khönne nit auf alle Puncten aufdenckhen.”²⁰⁴ But, the judges, having already burned up their supply of patience seven days before, waste no time in exhortations:

Läugnet nit allein disen, sonndern auch die in nechsten examen negierte und ihme de novo fürgehaltene puncten oder fragstückh, derhalben wider gestrichen worden müessen, und bekhent darauf, das der teifl zwaymahl zu ihme in die gefenknuß khommen, das erstemahl nachts zuvor, alß mann ihne annderen tags mit der ruethen gehauen, und habe gesagt er solle nur frei läugnen und nichts bestehen, das andere mahl, seie er gar beß gewesen, das er sovil bestanden. [...] Habe bevolchen, soll das am hals habende agnus dei weckh sich umbkehren und auf das gesicht lögen, darauf er widerumben wie auf den tänzen beschechen sodomitisch gebraucht, darnach hab er ihn gleich verlohren.²⁰⁵

At first glance, it is curious that Gregori’s resistance cracks precisely along these lines. Instead of turning back to the disputed points, he construes a new situation: that of being visited by the Devil in the prison cell. However, if we choose to interpret the Devil as a voice of Gregori’s conscience – a role which this figure is admirably equipped to play at all epochs – we might read this explanation as a sort of self-reproach: the boy is angry with himself for having confessed as much as he did. In general, it is not unthinkable that mentioning the Devil in this context may indeed have had a cathartic effect, making it possible for the defendant to make his or her frustrations appear as stemming from the Evil One. In fact, the ambiguity of the sequence *seie er gar beß gewesen, das er sovil bestanden* (the first *er* expectedly referring to the Devil, the second *er* to Gregori Landtmann) further underlines this possibility. The subsequently described act of sexual submission to the Devil is, on the surface, the Grand Tempter’s belated act of power, ultimately based on powerlessness. What it aims to provoke is the defendant’s own state of impotence against the double adversity of imprisonment and satanic abuse. But, since on such occasions the Devil invariably disintegrates – if this is the way we should read the vague sequence *darnach hab er ihn gleich verlohren* (is it a reciprocal loss?) – the young warlock is left at the mercy of the authorities, nurturing hope that his martyr episode has struck the appropriate chord in the interrogators’ hearts. The typical reaction, though, is always reduced to an act of readjusting the sacred amulet, and no exception is made for Gregori Landtmann: “Hierauf hat mann ihme die agnus dei vom halß genommen, unnd an die arm

²⁰⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 381

²⁰⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 381

dergestalten gebundten und zusammen gemacht, das sie es nit mehr von sich legen khönnen.“²⁰⁶ It is, in fact, quite the opposite of sympathy, since the use of the plural (‘sie’) indicates suspicion that the boy and the Devil might, on some future occasion, jointly attempt to remove the agnus dei.

The court’s next question, “Ob es beidemahl, auch auf den tänzen alzeit beschechn?”²⁰⁷, seems to refer to the sodomitic intercourse between the Devil and the boy. This assumption is briefly confirmed by the defendant, who gives the impression of being anxious to move over to something else. He therefore eagerly lists additional witch dance hotspots:

Seye beidermahl auch allzeit auf den tänzen beschechen, dann erinnere er sich dass er vormahls gesagt, alß weren die tanz alzeit am rottenauer turn zu Weyer, Neukirchen und Heiberg geschechen, seye aber auch anderstwo gewesen, nemblichen am plesendorffer Sonperg, beim Langegger törl(?), auf der Khetting scharten, unnd auf der Alten Nisserach.²⁰⁸

Wie ers alzeit zuvor wissen khönnen wo die tänz angestellt seindt?²⁰⁹

Habs nit wissen derffen, wann er das sheit oder shnitl geschmirbt habs ihn schon an das rechte ohrt getragen.²¹⁰

The sequence *dann erinnere er sich, das* implies that the information has not been solicited. Perhaps Gregori simply wanted to attain a bonus that would somewhat compensate for the unsatisfactory voids in his previous confessions, or, as suggested, did not want to dwell on the matters relating to sodomy. The prompt reaction of the interrogating judge, however, forces him into another tightspot, which he cannot escape other than by resorting to ‘magical’ thinking again. Hence, knowing one’s witch itinerary in advance is superfluous, because all one has to do is apply an appropriate salve (provided by Jackl), and the ‘smart log’ – a Harry-Potter-broomstick *avant la lettre* – flies directly wherever the witch action is. Interestingly, Landtmann’s excuse *Habs nit wissen derffen* might signify both ‘I did not *have* to know’ and ‘I was not *allowed* to know’. However, considering the generally autocratic nature of Jackl’s orders as construed by e.g. Elias Finckh²¹¹, I suspect that the ‘knowledge taboo’ aspect of the story overshadowed all the other alternatives, since that was what the *Erzmag*-hunting court was after. Still, it is possible that these two meanings are often

²⁰⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 381

²⁰⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 375

²⁰⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 b 381-382

²⁰⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 375

²¹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 b 382

²¹¹ BayHStA HeA 11 416

simultaneously present in every such explanation; guessing this out of the context does not always bear fruit.

The question dealing with Gregori's sorcery crimes is rather syncretic. The court apparently wants the defendant to confess to the 'whole package':

Man habe ihne schon zum öfftermahl gefragt, ob der zauberer Jäggl nit das vich angangen, und er deßgleichen gethann, nit leith und vich erkhrimbt oder gar umbs leben gebracht, auch wetter gemacht, und in mehrere weinkheller gefahren?²¹²

Ferdigen sumner seie er mit dem Jäggl, jäger und dem Purgegger 4 mall in deß Hansen Lechners zu Salfelden, item 4 mall in deß würths bei St Georgen kheller gefahren, dann widerumben 5 mahl beim specher zu Prugg die viermahl habens pranndtwein die übrige mahl aber wein getrunckhen, der anndern fragstuckhhalben seye er unschuldig.²¹³

With amazing consistency, Gregori again manages to neutralize the supernatural element as much as the situation allows (as we can see from the use of the verb *gefahren*, instead of *geflogen*). Apart from the presence of Jackl (who is, at best, a semi-historical figure) and the Hunter (who is entirely imaginary), the numerous expeditions to various wine cellars are in themselves perfectly plausible events – regardless of whether they actually happened. We do not need a crutch in the shape of Muchembled's theories of Early Modern youths 'on the loose' to recognize the picture of four chums enterprising an inebriation foray into a place where alcohol is stored as a valid experience modus of the times. In other words, this type of experience is exactly, perhaps even *exclusively*, what Gregori Landtmann is capable of admitting in terms of his own antisocial behaviour. As for the weather magic, evil spells and other 'witch stuff', the boy's only possible plea is *unschuldig*. The answer, though not entirely satisfactory, seems to have pleased the court nonetheless, since the 8th July session ends here.

The introduction to the 11th July session makes it clear that Gregori's statements have been cross-referenced with those of other imprisoned beggar boys:

Er habe nechstens auf gewisse puncten sich unschuldig angeben, nun haben die anndere pueben sich hierzue bekhennt, derhalben woll zuvermuethen, weill er solang das handtwerckh khönne, er nit unschuldig, mann wolle ihme zum überfluß widerholter gefragt haben²¹⁴

²¹² BayHStA HeA 10 b 375

²¹³ BayHStA HeA 10 b 382

²¹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 375

Now, what is exactly meant by the sequence *weill er solang das handtwerckh khönne*? It might signify that the judges' reliance on the few crimes to which the defendant has already confessed: flying on a log to the witch dances, thwarted communion etc. However, viewed within the context of the introductory paragraph, it more probably refers to the indications made by Gregori's prison mates, and by means of which the court strengthens its suspicions. Therefore, considering that the sequence is introduced with *derhalben woll zuvermuethen*, it underlines the legal relevance of the denunciatory potential at the local court level.

In the following portion Gregori confirms his participation in acts of bestiality, which he again strives to limit to a certain location, "allzeit zu Purkh mittersiller gericht^s".²¹⁵ Asked why this particular spot was preferred to any other, he cleanses himself with ignorance of a pawn: "Der Jäggl habe sie alzeit dahin gefiehr, warumben wiss er nit."²¹⁶ The boy likewise admits to having crippled stingy peasants, and that one of the victims, a peasant woman, 'died in the end'. The context of the statement does not make it clear whether Gregori stayed on in the vicinity for awhile, to wait up a possible fatal result. What he claims a little further down, referring to a different case, suggests precisely the opposite ("wisse doch nit ob sie khrumpp worden, oder wie es ausgeschlagen").²¹⁷ He nevertheless manages to escape the interrogator's trap that suggests a lethal intention: "Ob er ihrs vermaint das sie sterben soll?²¹⁸ / Hab ihrs nur zum khrumpp worden vermaint unnd nit zum sterben."²¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, mentioning the fact that his vengeful spell coincided with a deadly outcome may indicate presence of certain guilt feelings in the perpetrator of such a magical action. However, we should not rush into stylizing this as a boy warlock's 'personal baggage'. Indeed, one must remain aware that such tokens of psychological uneasiness could hardly have been expressed at all if it had not been for the interrogatory situation, which, of course, could have provoked, or, rather, artificially induced them in the first place. In fact, the court in *Zell* persists in its attempts to wheedle out the motivation behind the defendant's magical feats. After Landtmann's vivid description of a *modus operandi* relative to a (meanwhile admitted) weather magic act, the judges pose a shrewd question: "Was er für eine nuzen darvon gehabt, oder warumb er wettergemacht?"²²⁰, a provocation to which the boy again replies in his self-defensive manner, making Jackl take the

²¹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 382

²¹⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 382

²¹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 383

²¹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 b 376

²¹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 383

²²⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 b 376

blame: “Kheinen der Jäggl hats also haben wollen.”²²¹ The excuse that ethnographers such as Alan Dundes have been known to impute to the ‘German mentality’ – ‘I was only following orders’ – is in this particular case the only imaginable escape route that a helpless individual, caught up in the thorny spiral of a superstitious justice system, can tread.

We now come to a very interesting portion that refers to white magic. It appears that Gregori practiced as a ‚folk healer‘, an occupation not infrequently embraced by travelling beggars. Still, during this hearing the boy’s soothing powers will be irrevocably welded to those of the arch-magus after he ascertains having cured himself twice thanks to *des Jäggl’s salben*.²²² Worse yet, his assistance to a peasant woman in need involves an invocation of the Devil:

Ob er nit auch die mulch verzaubert, wo unnd welcher ohrten?²²³

Auf der Lastatt ob Peisendorff.²²⁴

Auf was weiß ers gezaubert, und wohin er die milich gethonn?²²⁵

ILastatterin hab ein aigne khue, so wenig mülch geben, deshalb hab er zwaymahl in ihrer herberg ein messer in aller teifl namen in die wandt gesteckht, unnd darauf gesprochen, teifl bring durch die messerschaidt milch her, darnach daran gemolchen, seye gleich von underschidlichen khien, die milch vorhandten gewesen, so lastatterin undter ihr mülch gossen und putter gemacht.²²⁶

A superficial reading of Landtmann’s explanation, or lack of understanding for the complex, meandering syntax of the German *Kanzleisprache* could give an impression that it was the knife stuck into the wall that was milked, rather than the cow. Though it is only logical that the latter alternative is what is meant here – despite the symbolical invocation that the milk should start pouring *durch die messerschaidt* – the closeness of the two actions (sticking a dagger into the wall *and* milking the cow) makes them appear interchangeable and ultimately implies their fusion. Now, it is to be expected that most common folk advocates of such supernatural *pars pro toto* thinking knew both the rules to performing this ritual and its practical sense. But we must also assume that a

²²¹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 383

²²² BayHStA HeA 10 b 384

²²³ BayHStA HeA 10 b 376

²²⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 383

²²⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 376

²²⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 383

non-discriminating recipient could easily have adopted such an ‘edifying’ piece of folklore in its *fused* state. Hence, it is not unthinkable that the fantasy of a ‘milked knife’, which we encounter in Elias Finckh’s Aulic Court confession of 30th April 1681²²⁷, is owing to him having misperceived the particularities relating to the knife/milk-superstition. From this perspective, the other boy’s stubborn insistence on the grotesque detail reveals how strongly an individual may be persuaded of something inexistent – tenacity comparable to the one accompanying belief in false memories.

While Landtmann apparently would not hesitate denouncing the peasant woman Catharina ,die Lastatterin‘ (owner of the ill cow), and an anonymous 13-year old beggar girl as witch dance participants, he nonetheless seemed determined not to allow any member of his family get under suspicions of witchcraft:

Ob sein muetter gewust habe, das er ein zauberer: oder villeichten selbsten ein hex seye?²²⁸

Hex seye sie khaine, hab ihr auch niemahl gesagt, das er geschniten oder mit dem Jäggl bekhant.²²⁹

Ob er nit geschwisterth habe?²³⁰

Ain brueder und vier schwester, welche alle ölder alß er, darumb ains läppisch(?).²³¹

Ob er dieselbe nit auch verfiehrt?²³²

Negirts, haben gleich der muetter nichts darvon gewist.²³³

The session ends, whereafter the court has the said Catharina arrested. On 13th July, Gregori is first informed that the woman has deposed a statement of her own, and then asked if he still claims that she is a witch. Faced with consistent questioning, the boy falls prey to utter confusion:

Sagt pald hin pald her und endlich gar es sey nichts wahr, was er gesagt, wisse nichts umb den Jäggl, der gerichtsdienner hab ihn beim einziehen so erschrockt und gedrohet, das ers aus shrockhen bestandten, und ihm selbsten, auch der

²²⁷ BayHStA HeA 11 418

²²⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 b 377

²²⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 384

²³⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 b 377

²³¹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 385

²³² BayHStA HeA 10 b 377

²³³ BayHStA HeA 10 b 385

lastatterin unrecht gethan. Gerichtsdieners widerspricht, gefragt hab er ihn woll, wie er denselben eingezogen, aber nur mit guetten wortten, warauf ers gleich ohne drohen bestandten.²³⁴

Warumb er den gerichtsdieners unrecht thue, seye gewiß der teifl wider bey ihme gewesen, oder villedicht gegenwertig?²³⁵

Er thue ihm nit unrecht, der teifl sey auch nit bei ihme gewesen, weniger gegenwertig.²³⁶

Ob es dann nit wahr, das er von den Jäggl geschniten worden?²³⁷

Sey nit wahr, hab sich selbst angelogen.²³⁸

Ob alles was er bißhero angesagt, auch nit wahr seye?²³⁹

Sey nichts wahr, hab alles nur aus forcht unnd shräcken geredt.²⁴⁰

Similarly to modern interrogation dynamics, Landtmann's desperate cry *wisse nichts umb den Jäggl* might be read as a moment when an exhausted witness retracts the entire statement under stress. The court servant is again featured as playing a rather shady role of actively producing warlock apprentices, even though this may have been for pretty down-to-earth reasons. It appears that at least during the first half of 1678 these reasons could have been a motivation for extra earnings, which is why the overzealous official may have actively created occasions for making arrests.²⁴¹ Incidentally, we are not short of sources indicating sheer police brutality directed against beggar youths: „Am 30. Juni 1677 hatte der Gerichtsdieners von Weißkirchen [an Austrian village] in betrunkenem Zustand einen Bettler namens Simon Pustet zu Boden geschlagen und ihn so lange mit dem entblösten Degen gedroht, bis der Verängstigte gestand, ein Zauberer zu sein.“²⁴² It nevertheless remains puzzling which ‚good words‘ could possibly have buffered the apprehension

²³⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 385

²³⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 378

²³⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 385

²³⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 378

²³⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 b 385

²³⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 b 378

²⁴⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 b 385

²⁴¹ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGSL* (112/113), p. 487

²⁴² H.-J. Wolf : *Hexenwahn*, p. 310

of a beggar youth suspected of sorcery, at the height of the warlock hunt, in 1678. On the other hand, it is not unthinkable that court servants were vulnerable to attacks merely on account of their position within the chain of justice: beggar boys who saw their liberty endangered could easily have counter-accused the official in charge of having resorted to ruse and threats. Nagl indicated that complaints on the activities of court servants had indeed been frequently filed in the *Hofrat*.²⁴³ However, in the example above, the use of the somewhat ‚heavy‘ expression *unrecht thuen* might suggest that the professional dignity of the *gerichtsdienner* was genuinely hurt. Indeed, it seems that at this juncture the situation in the interrogation room gets unusually heated up, as the irony directed against the defendant is allowed to show through. The suggestion that the Devil may have clouded Landtmann’s mind, or may have been doing it at the moment when the dialogue was taking place may well have stemmed from the deeply insulted *gerichtsdienner* himself. Though we can rely only on speculative logic here, it does appear that the court reacts to Gregori’s complaint of having been intimidated into confessing by displaying an attitude of ‚closing ranges‘. Hence, it allows their official’s personal antagonism to be embedded - albeit temporarily - into the interrogation strategy. This development can be accounted for on the graphic level as well. As we can see from the transcript above, in the original document the court servant’s objection that starts with *gerichtsdienner widersprichts...* is placed in the column reserved for Gregori’s complaint, i.e. immediately following it. Other Salzburg protocols make it evident that similar situations with misunderstanding potential invariably necessitate (and obtain) a separate paragraph. But the question with which the interrogating judge aims to clarify the issue (*Warumb er den gerichtsdienner unrecht thue*) clearly shows that there is no misunderstanding at all, only refutation of the defendant’s absurd statement. In other words, there can be no question whose side the court is on. Nevertheless, this moment of an open animosity of the authorities towards the accused is a unique instance within the *Hexenakten* corpus. The rare examples of temporarily watered down formality are, as we have seen, to be encountered at local courts instances.

Rendered confused and insecure, Landtmann attempts to explain that all of his self-incriminating and denunciatory statements have been based on self-deception (*hab sich selbst angelogen*) and intimidation (*aus forcht und shräckhen*), both of which excuses fail to achieve their purpose, merely adding to his discredit. Faced with the prospects of *mehrer betrohung*, Gregori reconfirms the validity of his confession. For the unfortunate boy, the rest of the trial is a downhill slalom towards execution, performed sometime during September 1678, at Zell, the place of his initial arrest.

²⁴³ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGS*L (112/113), p. 496

Cristina Clingerin

The interrogation of Cristina Clingerin, a 15-year-old girl born out of wedlock, started on 8th August 1678. The girl exhibited lucidity upon recapitulating the reasons for her previous hearing at the local court in Gastein: “Weil der gerichtsdienner in der Gastein von ihr wegen des zauberer Jäggl vill wissen wollen.”²⁴⁴ This gives us perhaps not so much insight into the court servant’s behaviour, as much as into the way this young girl positions herself within the situation: under pretext of the hunt for Jackl the Sorcerer she was supposed to give out personal information. She appears to have been particularly careful not to incriminate herself by the answer. One should not hurry with being taken aback by this sharp differentiation, though, since the girl soon declares “das ihr mueter sie im herauß führen angelehrnet, sie soll nichts bestehen”.²⁴⁵ It is, admittedly, impossible to say whether this is not just a manoeuvre aimed at guilt-riddling the parental figure. The scars, in addition, tell (or impose) their own story. One of them is attributed to the initiatory cut performed by the Sorcerer who “hernach etwas weiß unwissent aber was, in das schnidl gethan”.²⁴⁶ The motif of Jackl treating the wound with an unknown substance reminds us of Catharina Pichlerin’s confession, where the gesture is explained as an act of healing. This maybe indicates that, in comparison to the boys, the girls had more affinity for perceiving beggars primarily as herbalists rather than as depositaries of dark powers. There is indeed very little darkness in Cristina’s statements, as though she has not really caught on the demonological luridness that seems to have worked for most of the accused. In her Sabbath account, which carries an almost Jane-Austen-like timber, there are no tacky details, aside from the lightly touched mention of sex with the Devil:

Ainmall am montag sey sie mit dem Jäggl, welcher sie bey der handt geführt, zum hexentanz khommen, alwo der teufl sie griest, und ihne hernach khüssen müssen, volgens brätl und weißbrott gessen, auch siessen wein getrunckhen, hernach tanzt, und ihr tänzer, so herndl gehabt, sie unkheisch braucht, und von ihme khalt empfunden, sonst aber sey ein anderer bueb auch ausserhalb des tanzes und zwar das erstemall bey ihr gelegen.²⁴⁷

We do not know whether Cristina again had her mother to thank to for this piece of chaste romanticism. In any case, the account appears compact, without one single superfluous detail. That

²⁴⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 35

²⁴⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 35

²⁴⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 35

²⁴⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 36

Jackl takes her by the hand, like a medieval knight, determines the etiquette of the little story at the outset. The Devil's welcome greetings have to be responded to with a kiss – there is no licking or wiping of the 'shameful' parts, just an almost comically reduced 'exchange of pleasantries'. The girl does mention the unavoidable cold intercourse with a horny dancer – oddly enough, he is different from the Devil – but this otherwise heavily worn-out aspect seems to be secondary to the love scene with a young man whom she seems to have preferred. From the expression "sonst aber sey ein anderer bueb" it appears that the horny dancer is something of a boy himself, rendered sadly unattractive by his diabolical attributes. The last part of the Sabbath account seems to evoke a dimension other than that of the witch dance itself; the narrator 'leaves' the initial situative frame ("auch ausserhalb des tanzes"), as she emphasizes that her young partner had got to know her prior to the obligatory orgy. Again, it is difficult to evaluate the importance of this retroactive digression, except that it enhances an already inherent idea of a romanticized response to budding sexuality.

The rest of Cristina's confession is more or less conventional. At the very end of the session she denounces her mother for having taken her to the Devil two years ago, an allegation which earns her ten branch strokes. The next day she insists that her mother has taken her to Shockhen, 'where Jackl was' (a slight rearrangement of the previous day's statement), "sodan aber sie mueter wider hinweckh gangen, und sie deponentin hinderlassen".²⁴⁸ Cristina's underlying intention could have been to present herself as having been 'pimped' by her mother. Though Jackl, strictly speaking, is not a sexual customer, the context exudes a kind of indecency at sharp contrast with the girl's perception of purity. However, at this point it is too late to play innocent, so Cristina gets her mother embroiled in the Sabbath story: "mit weiterer erinnerung, das der Jaggl ihr muetter auf dem tanz zwaymall beschlaffen, und sie dahin auch mitgefahren sey."²⁴⁹ While mother's destiny is unknown, Cristina did not escape execution, performed on 3rd September that same year.

Anderl N.

Anderl, yet another accused warlock unable to state his family name, was a 14-year-old beggar seeking alms across Neurmarch and Salzburger Land. Travelling with 'Schinter Jäggl' is given as reason for his previous incarceration in Abbtenu. In the hearing dated 8th August 1678 Anderl depicts himself as an obedient follower:

²⁴⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 37

²⁴⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 37

Vergangenen winter sey es ein iahr gewesen, das er enthalb des rottenmahner tauers zu Oberweiß das erste mall zum Jäggl khommen, und mit ihme in die 20 wochen umbgezogen, unter solcher zeit ihne deponenten mit einer grien salben, welche er anschmieren und umb und umb lauffen müssen, maiß, razen und farkhl machen lehrnen, welche hernach in einer scheiben umbgeloffen.²⁵⁰

The boy appears to have willingly sought Jackl's company, as is evident from the phrase „das erste mall zum Jäggl khommen“. The emphasis on loyalty implied in their common 5-month-journey establishes the tone for all the information he subsequently gives.

The statement contains an interesting variation of using the magic salve, rubbed into the skin and activated by running around. The animals thus created (mice, rats and piglets) run within an oval tray, although „scheibe“ could also signify a window or a mirror. This gives an impression that the defendant imagined the magically produced animals to be of miniature size, which appears to be the quality that distinguishes the little vermin from ‚real‘ animals intended for a bestial intercourse. The process owing to which the animals appear within the aforesaid oval is based on imitation magic: smeared with the green salve, Anderl runs around in circles, thus invoking animals involved in the same activity.

Anderl's description of the flight to the Sabbath is maybe an indicator of a certain hierarchical understanding of Jackl's relationship to his young disciples: „In der wochen sey er in gesellschaft des Jäggl und 2 bueben drey mall als montag, mitwoch und sambstag auf einer gabl, welche Jäggl mit ainer braune salben angeschmirbt, und darzue hui oben auß und nirgentß an gesagt, der Jäggl aber auf einem pockh dahin gefahren“.²⁵¹ It appears that the boys fly riding a pitchfork, whereas the Magician himself avails himself of a more comfortable mean of transportation i.e. a goat. This bears resemblance to statements (such as that given by Christian Rither) which tend to present Jackl as a dominant leader who reserves the best for himself, leaving the second best to the group members.²⁵² Then again, the scenario also allows the defendant to demonstrate the validity of his magical powers. On their way back, however, Anderl and Jackl fly together, but the Magician's attitude toward the disciple seems pretty careless: „als er aber im weckhfahren ainsmalß ein rausch gehabt, hab ihne der Jäggl fallen lassen“.²⁵³ This is indeed a rare example of a failed flight to the Sabbath. The idea of falling off a pitchfork while flying to the Sabbath, though somewhat more elaborately

²⁵⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 1

²⁵¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 2

²⁵² BayHStA HeA 10 a 276

²⁵³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 3

imagined, also occurred to the ‚Witchboy‘ of Bamberg in 1629.²⁵⁴ Perhaps this variation stands for the intensity of the confessor’s narrative - and, hence, confabulatory - investment.

The Devil is rather underrepresented in Anderl’s confession. In fact, the boy seems to distinguish between the Devil and several other devils, judging by the usage of the definite article in the appropriate portion of the Sabbath description: „sodan er den teufl am ganzen leyb, sonderbar aber im hintern und fordern khüssen, auch mit tausent sacra schelten müssen, bey der malzeit, alwo er den teufl, so bey ihme gesessen, vatter gehaissen [...] ain anderer teufl aber hab ihne deponenten im hintern braucht, und khalt empfunden, im abfahren hab ihme der teufl ain gelb, braun und blaues stüppl geben“.²⁵⁵ Even if only in imagination, the diabolical banquet is an occasion for creating social, but also emotional bonds. Anderl does not explain what may have incited him to ‚adopt‘ one of the devils sitting next to him at the feast, but the context of a copious dinner („bey der malzeit“) suggests that the defendant believed such a situation to be emotionally unlocking. Another similar encounter, this time with the Devil, is likewise emotionally charged: „Ob und wie offt der teufl zu ihme in der kheichen khommen? / Alhier niemalß, in der Abbtenu aber ainmahl, alwo er ihme aushelffen wollen, so er aber nit gekhönt, weil geweichte sachen vorhanden gewesen, und weil er constituto zum teufl gesagt, er gehe nit mit ihm, hab er ihne erwürgen wollen.“²⁵⁶ The strangulation with which the Evil One threatens the imprisoned boy indicates that a tight emotional bond has already been established between the two.

An interesting moment in Anderl’s confession pertains to the carnal aspect of his ‚crimes‘. Although an intercourse with a she-devil belongs to the standard part of the Sabbath programme, the boy openly admits not having been able to have his way with her: „sein tenzerin sey ein hisches dirndl gewesen, zu der er sich, nach deme es finster worden gelegt und geschlaffen, dieselbe aber der ursach, weil er nit gekhönt, nit unkheisch brauchen khönnen“.²⁵⁷ When asked if he has committed crimes of bestiality he denies in the same manner: „Mit ainem gaißl hab er dergleichen auch verüben wollen, aber nichts damit ausrichten khönnen.“²⁵⁸ Gender consciousness, as we can see elsewhere, plays a role in some, though not all confessions. It is curious that Anderl should admit to a lack of sexual capability in a context that many other accused warlock boys used as a trampoline for an assertion of their own masculinity. It is, of course, possible that he gave this statement out of

²⁵⁴ H. Sebald : Witch-Children, p. 147

²⁵⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 2

²⁵⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 4

²⁵⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 2

²⁵⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 3

precaution, although it is not clear what exactly would have been achieved by that. Moreover, the nature of this incapability is ambiguous, and could be interpreted either as delayed sexual maturity or as plain impotence. Since both episodes feature Anderl as initially interested in the intercourse, the latter possibility seems more plausible. Finally, if we go still deeper into his confession, examining the statements altogether: his closeness to Jackl, faithfully followed around over the course of five months, him being symbolically adopted by a devil and subsequently sodomized by another one, the jealous Devil threatening to strangle him for his disobedience, and a failed intercourse with a pretty she-devil, the emerging pattern has decidedly homoerotic overtones.

The damage Anderl confesses to having caused to people appears to be founded on a certain kind of ‚beggar identity‘, which the victims must pay for having denigrated:

Vor drey viertl iahr hab er under Rottenman einem paurn, umb willen er ihme nichts geben, und ain znichten dieb, das er nit arbeithen möge, gehaissen, ain schwarzes stüpl under die hausthür gesträth, und alß paur darüber ganngen, hab er gleich nit mehr gehen khönnen, sonder nidergefallen und khrumpp worden, das man ihme aufhöben müssen, welchem allem er deponent, Jäggl und die zwen bueben von weitem zugesechen haben.²⁵⁹

In Neurmarckht bey St Johannis hab er in gesellschaft des Jäggl und 2 bueben mitls anschmierung einer grienleichten salben in die finger und fahrung in die höch der ursachen regen gemacht, weil ihme von einem reichen herren daselbst nichts geben worden, also das ins haus und in marckht khleine bächl gerunnen sein.²⁶⁰

Still, nobody gets killed, and the vengeance that motivates both of the episodes is not strongly pronounced. What makes these accounts interesting is the impulse for Anderl’s actions. In the first case, the stingy peasant calls him a ‚no-good thief who shuns work‘. The situation leaves no space for a counter-argument - which Anderl probably would not have been able to furnish anyway - and a magical retaliation ensues. The second victim, a rich gentleman (i.e. man of higher social rank and in possession of visible wealth) is punished for his lack of generosity by a magically conjured inundation. The latter action is a unique combination of weather magic and vindictive magic; it also seems to be more potent in symbolism. Here, we witness Anderl create rain by flying up into the sky, and this way of construing the punishment lends a taste of divine wrath to his act, construed as means of appeasing the warlock boy’s sense of unjust social distribution of material goods. That the former crime, too, strikes the social (rather than the psychological) chord is evident in the end scene, in which the defendant, Jackl and two other boys are featured gloating from afar: a clique of

²⁵⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 3

²⁶⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 4

individuals forced to fight back whenever their survival attempts get thwarted by the very society that has marginalized them in the first place. After all, one should not forget that Anderl is a 100% beggar; the personal details he has furnished at the outset of the hearing point to no activity other than begging (such as seasonal work and the like): „Von 2 in 3 iahren hero hab er sich in Neurmarch und Salzburger landt am betlen aufgehalten.“²⁶¹

The last crime Anderl confesses to is host desecration, performed in the usual manner, but without him participating in the eucharist: „Jäggl hab ihms wol befolchen, soll hinzue gehen, dieweil er aber nichts gekhönt, hab man ihme selbigen nit geben“.²⁶² This reads more like a ‚justified‘ absence, rather than deliberate disobedience of Jackl’s orders. The host(s) to the stabbing of which he contributes are brought along by other Sabbath participants, so that eucharist avoidance ultimately proves to be no obstacle. All of this would result in an execution, performed 3rd September 1678.

Hans Sudlinger

What is legible of the personal data provided by Hans Sudlinger, a ‚warlock‘ interrogated on 8th August 1678, is the fact that he is 30 years old²⁶³, and born in Steinfeld. The court’s question about Sudlinger’s recent whereabouts implies that the defendant is a beggar - an information additionally confirmed by his answer „Hin und wider“.²⁶⁴ He initially denies an acquaintance with Jackl, simultaneously outing himself as an insider to the Jackl-story: „Khenne ihn nit, sein mueter aber hab er wol verbrennen gesechen.“²⁶⁵ Sudlinger’s answer to the eucharist question is given in a tone that sounds rather reconciliatory:

Drey wochen vor osstern hab er im Stainfeld gebeicht, und einen beichtzetl begert, mit vermelden, er habe khein vonnothen.

Sonst bekhent constituto ultro das ihne ein schwarzer petlman so ihne mitführen wollen, er aber nit mitgangen am khnie geschnitten, auch, das ainmall aine regen worden, sodan er herunder und auf ein haslnuß stauden gefallen sey, und sich verletzt habe.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 1

²⁶² BayHStA HeA 10 c 4

²⁶³ Though Sudlinger’s adult age hardly qualifies him as a ‚boy warlock‘, during the interrogation he will have profiled himself as Jackl’s recruit in every other way.

²⁶⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 6

²⁶⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 6

²⁶⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 6

These information should persuade us that Sudlinger 1) confesses regularly, 2) refuses to be recruited by suspicious characters, furthermore that 3) he suffered being cut on the knee against his will, and that 4) he should be pitied for having fallen down and hurt himself. The four points the defendant hopes will contribute to a bail-out effect are flatly ignored, and the judges, unmoved, continue the hearing. They ask him if he knows a certain Florian²⁶⁷, which makes the defendant give a more substantial statement regarding the cut. The judges' mention of Florian appears to convince Sudlinger that denying is useless:

Khen ihn sovill, das er in der Abbtenu zu ihme, sonst aber sey nit weit von der gemain das erstemall ein schwarzer zrichter miterer mensch zu ihm khommen, und gefragt, wohin er gehen wolle, und ob er nit zauberey zulehnen verlange, deme er mit nain geantworth, derselbe aber gleich ihme deponenten in beysein eines anderen artlichen menschen mit einem messer einen schnitt ans khnie geben, und mit einem zeterle das blut abgewischt, und mit sich genommen, auch darauf verschwunden, vorhero aber starckh gescholten.²⁶⁸

This little story reminds one of modern reports about aliens who befall unsuspecting Earthlings in order to snatch blood specimens from them. Even though the testimony is given under duress, the paranoia-perpetuating social mechanisms are essentially the same. The beggar, who has perfect freedom to paint the story whichever way he wants, construes himself as an unwilling donor of an essential asset - his own blood. It almost seems as though it is only *via* artificially induced reports like these that the bishopric's beggars had the chance to play any role other than the marginal one. Sudlinger is here coveted and stalked by a spooky individual whose nature is expectedly codified by his black colour. The defendant understands black as the colour of the Devil, and uses it quite liberally in his confession: „Der teufl hab ihn auf einem stockhen welchen er mit einer schwarzen salben eingeschrirbt, gegen Lofer geführet.“²⁶⁹ In addition, he names the Devil „schwarze Casper“²⁷⁰, and is in his turn rebaptized into „Schwarzen dörling“ - the defendant instrumentalizes himself the inflated usage he makes of the adjective ‚black‘, as he supposedly answers to the Devil „du teufl bist wol schwärzer alß ich“.²⁷¹

The accused man is confronted with the aforesaid Florian. Oddly enough, he does not disprove the supernaturally tinged testimony of this witness:

²⁶⁷ See the entry on „Florian N.“.

²⁶⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 6-7

²⁶⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 7

²⁷⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 8

²⁷¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 8

Confrontatio mit dem Florian.

Dieser sagt, constituto haisse schinter Hänßl oder Prigmänl, und hab ihne ainmall neben anderen villen, welche er aber nit khent, in lufft am Radstatten thauern am schaurmachen gesechen, welches Hänßl nit widersprechen, wisse iedoch nit, wer ihne damalß in die lufft geführet.²⁷²

With his confession of having floated in the air, Sudlinger delves one step deeper into the realm of the symbolical. Given that he voices no critique against Florian's illogical accusations, it is to be suspected that the two must have been bound by some sort of complicity. Subsequently confronted with the testimony of the two regular denouncers, Veitl and Hämerl, the defendant, however, denies everything: „welches aber constituto auf erschinen genzlich widersprochen, auch das er die zwen bueben nit khenne, noch das er beym Ziglstadl gewesen oder gefahren“.²⁷³ It is only after received branch strokes that he rectifies his story:

Alß er hierauf mit ruethen gehaut worden, hat er bekhent, das er den Jäggl ainmall gesechen, und einen halben tag bey ihme gewesen sey, auch gegen St Wolfgang neben einer teuflin gefahren, regen gemacht, die teuflin auch einmahl unzichtig braucht, auf ihme zugleich ain anderer teufl gelegen, und solches im hintern verübt, deme er constituto hernach auf sein vorders glid ghofiert, sonst aber von beiden khalt empfunden, den teufl auch ainmall mit der hailigen hosti im hintern ausgewischt.²⁷⁴

It is not surprising that an extorted statement like this is hastily cobbled up out of the elements, partially those pertaining to sorcery, partially those that constitute a standard Sabbath-report: weather magic, *Teufelsbuhlschaft*, host desecration. Even so, despite the court's pressure, Sudlinger ‚admits‘ to having spent only half a day with Jackl, undoubtedly hoping to limit the damage he is forced to inflict upon himself. The phrase referring to Sudlinger defecating on the Devil's penis appears to be a compromise based on fusing the requirements of the ‚diabolical intercourse‘ type on the one hand and ‚scatological elements‘ type on the other; likewise, it could be interpreted as an instinctual reaction of a heterosexual man to the notion of being sodomized.

Next hearing, undertaken 5 days later, on 18th August, constrains Sudlinger to thicken the web of lies into which he has entangled himself. His acquaintance with Jackl is now prolonged to four days („Bey vier tag, sey sonst niemand dabey gewesen“²⁷⁵), but otherwise he has troubles filling the

²⁷² BayHStA HeA 10 c 7

²⁷³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 7

²⁷⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 7-8

²⁷⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 9

necessary gaps, like the one about the blood from the initiatory cut: „Wisse es nit wer es aufgefangen, hab das einschreiben nit in acht genommen“²⁷⁶, or the one about the number of visited Sabbaths: „Sey in allem nur ainmahl auf Lofer gefahren“.²⁷⁷ He furthermore asserts having stabbed the host but one single time, having misplaced the magic powder given to him by the Devil, and reduces his weather magic feats to „Mehr nit alß ainmall ein regnl.“²⁷⁸ However, the court’s shrewd question „Ob er nit seinen aigen teufel gehabt? Wie selbiger gehaissen?“, aimed to nail him to his previous confession, shows that it is too late for Sudlinger to water down his statements; he has no other alternatives but to answer „Er hab ihn Schwarz Casper gehaissen“.²⁷⁹ The fact that normally separate questions about the accomplices and the inquiry about any seduced boys are fused together perhaps indicate the court’s insistence on accelerating the interrogation of Sudlinger. His reply „Seine gspän sein Veitl, M Hämerl, khrumpp Turner, Mörtl und andere mehr, so er nit zunennen waiß, übrigens niemand zuegeführt“²⁸⁰ reveal nothing substantial or groundbreaking, since it mentions only the two unavoidable denouncers as well as a couple of dubious beggars who, for all practical purposes, may have been just products of his fantasy.

The judges lose their patience, and the defendant is threatened with torture:

In loco torturae mit betrohung der schörpfe solle sagen

Wan? Und umb was für zeit er mit dem zauberer Jaggl bekhannt worden?

Sey zway iahr, das er mit dem Jaggl, oder wer es gewesen, bekhannt sey,

Wie lang er mit selbigen umbgezogen, sonst aber ain artlicher zoteter(?) betler, der nit gesagt, wer er sey, dabey gewesen.²⁸¹

Sudlinger’s style of furnishing details in dribs and drabs, as well as his urge to immediately neutralize any information the court manages to extract from him are indeed astounding. This man apparently did not surrender to a narrative flux of fantasy, as the case was with so many girl and boy sorcerers. Instead, he gave sparse, contained replies based on lucid calculation of the implicate

²⁷⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 9

²⁷⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 9

²⁷⁸ All examples BayHStA HeA 10 c 9

²⁷⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 9

²⁸⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 11

²⁸¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 11

dangers. As the hearing goes along he is indeed forced to maintain the gradation of his alleged involvement with the Magician, but he does this as reasonably as the circumstances permit, sometimes with a touch of naivete:

Zumahlen er zway iahr lang ein hexenmaister, soll er bekhennen, wie oft er in der wochen auf die tänz gefahren?

In der wochen ainmall, dabey es aber nit gar lustig gewesen.²⁸²

After all of the denouncers have furnished three additional confrontations, in which the defendant is featured as having flown to Gaißberg, Verdersperg and Radstatter tauer, the actual torture ensues:

Hierauf er, iedoch salvo iura confessorum gebunden, und der bainschrauffen angethan worden, alß ihme solche bey ainer viertl stundt angeschrauffen gelassen worden, hat er hernach widerumb frey bekhent, das er bey 40 iahr alt sein mechte, auch am gaiß: und undersperg mit der teuflin ein oder 2mall die unkeischheit getriben, auf ihme auch einer gelegen und 3mall im hintern gebraucht, auch alzeit khalt, wie ein eiß empfunden habe.²⁸³

Sudlinger's confession to having fornicated with the devils of both sexes confirms a statement he has already made. The really new information is the one referring to his age, although it is not clear why the man chose to out himself as being 'close to forty', or else, why he would have lied about his age in the first place. Perhaps he perceived his age as an integral part of his personality, since that single detail may have been what little he had to constitute his identity. Conversely, it may have appeared to him that 'advancing' his own age in this matter would result in the judges being a little more lenient where torture was concerned. Out of the protocols alone we can conclude nothing about Hans Sudlinger's (or, for that matter, any other defendant's) pain threshold, and, by extension, of how much the state of mind would have been altered by torture. At any rate, such questions did not bother the court, who had the scribe accompany the confession extorted from the beggar with „frey bekhent“. Sudlinger was executed on 3rd September 1678.

Anderl Gaßner

Anderl Gaßner, a 9-year-old beggar from Thumberspach, whose alms-seeking was concentrated on the mountain area, had no problems identifying Jackl as the one who has led him astray:

²⁸² BayHStA HeA 10 c 13

²⁸³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 13-14

Khenne ihn wol, weil er in die 8 tag mit ihme gangen, und ob er constituto, nachdeme er zu ihme Jäggl vor ainem halben iahr zu Zell in der langen bruggen khommen, zwar weckhlauffen wollen, hab er ihne doch bey dem rockh widerumb erdappt.²⁸⁴

The tightness of the child-witch/Jackl-interaction is here unequivocally highlighted. Like many other little warlocks, Gaßner, too, construes himself as being of central importance to the Magician. In light of the subsequently given confession, richly adorned with details, the boy's supposed attempt to run away from Jackl does not sound particularly genuine. Indeed, it is a little difficult to imagine that a wandering beggar child could have been effectively prevented from fleeing the company of a grown beggar over a longer period of time, if only because the way of life lead in the open would have offered multiple chances for escape. Insisting on this point may have served, on a practical level, to disperse suspicions of complicity. But, more importantly, it indicated the degree to which the little defendants longed to feel *needed* and sought after. Anderl is asked to give closer details:

Wo sie miteinander hingangen und was sie angefangen?

Der Jäggl hab miten auf der Pruggen unsers herren nahmen, so ein weiß rundes ding gewesen, niedergeworffen, und mit ainem fliedl aufbedeht(?), das bluetig worden, welches er constituto auch in die viermall gethan, sodan Jäggl, teufel, welcher lange khrälln und rossfuß gehabt, dan er deponent in gegenwarth auch eines hintls darauf gesprungen, und gehofiert, zumahlen Jäggl zu ihme gesagt, wan er constituto nit darauf hofierte, er nit in himel khommen thette²⁸⁵

The judges' question is not very specific, which means that the court, apparently not having had previous experience with Gaßner, is open to accepting any account, however outlined. This results in a relatively unimpeded narrative flow. From this we obtain a description of a mistreated oblate, which the boy in his obvious ignorance does not identify as a host. The description is so kinetic that we cannot exclude the possibility of Gaßner having actually witnessed an act of host desecration. At the very least, the account is profoundly imaginative. The Devil, equipped with claws and cloven hooves, likewise takes part in the ritual, to which all the three actors are non-hierarchically subordinated. The boy's mention of a small dog is entirely redundant for the course of the story; however, such detours are typical of children's testimonies. The diminutive 'hintl' might point to the boy's desire to lend liveliness to the scene, or to render it harmless i.e. to counterbalance the

²⁸⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 15

²⁸⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 15

presence of the Devil somewhat. Yet, the most salient element of the account is Jackl's warning that refers to defecating onto the host. Although the context is objectively anti-Christian, the inversion of values is not complete - the inherent threat is that of not going to Heaven, the highest achievement to which a believer can aspire. The impression we get when we take all the other information into account is that the report may have been based on a real event. Unacquainted neither with what the ‚white, oval thing‘ should represent nor with the purpose of the treatment it gets, the boy has to be persuaded to finish off his part of the ritual. The defendant's obvious and naive disconnectedness from the act's esoteric meaning, coupled with the roundabout manner in which he has to be convinced of the next step to do betrays an influence of a manipulative individual most probably older than the boy himself. How so? One of the few world experts on adult development, Robert Kegan, contends that ten-year-olds „dont think abstractly and they aren't literally self-conscious. They have a record of their experience, but they don't reflect on it or derive generalizable themes for it“, this being because „[t]he capacity to see that we have a personal history that inclines or directs us [...] demands the third order of consciousness.“²⁸⁶ Put more simply, a 9/10-year-old child is simply not likely to be capable of assuming a perspective beyond the frame of an already attained degree of mental development. In the rest of the account Anderl swears out the Lord and the Virgin Mary, but neither does this mechanically delivered section make him appear like an insider.

This very differentiated way the ‚evil‘ grownups behave in little Gaßner's report is sometimes so tridimensional that it is hard to consider it as entirely imagined. The context is indeed mythical, but the dialogues may have been real. The following dialogue between the Devil and the boy is a statement of what seems to be an intelligent witness:

Jäggl hab ihne in beysein des teufls mit einem fliedl ob er des linggen augs, der teufl aber, nachdem er ihn vorhero umb seinem nahmen gefragt, er constituo aber einen unrechten nahmen alß Riepll angeben, welches teufl gleich gewust und gesagt, warumb er nit den echten nahmen ansage²⁸⁷

In this account, the Devil is more than just a funny creature - he exhibits some kind of psychic abilities that make him see through the boy's lies. This ‚omniscient‘ faculty carves him as an archetypal father figure. Viewed from a more abstract perspective, the defendant displays lucidity as regards the Other's power. But what sort of underlying message is there for the listener to grasp? Is

²⁸⁶ R. Kegan : In *Over Our Heads*, p. 130

²⁸⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 16

this type of reasoning meant to appease the authorities? The boy knows that the Magician is someone to be handled carefully, an attitude that witnesses of the defendant's already well-developed coping abilities imposed by a beggar way of life. Indeed, this is the only witness who keeps up appearances as regards obedience to Jackl. Asked about the way he treated the holy pillars, he answers: „Wan Jäggl dabey gewesen, hab er darvor schelten, mit stain und menschen khott anwerffen, ainen teufl, hundshaut, ehebrecher und all anders, was ihm eingefallen, unser liebe frau aber ein teuflin haissen müssen, allain aber hab er dergleichen nit gethan.“²⁸⁸ Likewise, he demonstrates caution when confronted to the diabolical gifts: „ain [...] teufl [...] welcher ihme zwar ain gelt geben wollen, solches er aberr nit angenommen, weil es ein verblentes gelt sey.“²⁸⁹ The court, however, would not lend a sympathetic ear to this subtle difference between heretical behaviour imposed from without and a secretly nurtured anti-diabolical stance from within.

Anderl's account of the Sabbath concentrates mostly on the event's carnal aspect:

Jäggl und constituto haben im würtshauß aus dem kheller, welchen Jäggl aufgethan, wein getragen, und in der stuben lustig gewesen, khirschl, khrapfen, fleisch und bratwurst gessen, der teufl sey bey ihme constituto gessen, spilleith haben sie geiger und pfeiffer, so alle teufl waren, gehabt, zu seiner ankthonfft hab er zum teufl gries dich vatter gesagt, und ihne am ganzen leyb, sonderlich im hintern und vorn an der schamb in gegenwarth khlain und grosser menschen mit habenten herndlen am khopf khüssen müssen, sein deponentens tanzerin sey khlain gewesen, mit der er dreymall unzichtig zuegehalten, der drub des Jäggl's brueder aber sey auch damals auf ihme gelegen, im hintern braucht, und khalt empfunden, sonst aber hab ihn constitutum der Jäggl auch ungebührlich a tergo beschlaffen und von ihme warmb empfangen.²⁹⁰

Viewed in general, the whole description appears like a mini X-rated movie. It begins with banal entertainment: a wine cellar is broken into, followed by unrestrained wining and dining, and the atmosphere is accompanied by violins and flutes. The Devil is pictured as sitting next to Anderl, who greets him with „gries dich vatter“, after which the boy starts covering his body with kisses. The way this scene is composed makes it read like a father incest. That (the Devil's) penis is referred to as „schamb“ indicates that this 9-year-old boy has already assimilated the sexually tabooed aspect of the reproductive organs. The act of kissing the Devil's penis (*not* a fellatio, as in many other confessions) is performed in front of the multitude of smaller and bigger imps. The way this part is phrased makes it look like an initiation ceremony forced upon the boy („und ihne am ganzen leyb [...] khüssen *müssen*“). However, a closer look at the inner dynamics of the scene

²⁸⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 16

²⁸⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 16

²⁹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 17

reveals interesting details. Contrary to his role in testimonies of grownup ‚witches‘, the Devil, apparently dominant, is actually not the active part at all. Anderl is really the one who initiates the action, first verbally, then physically. The Devil is an object who (or which) passively undergoes the adoration to which he is exposed, and he maintains his passive stance throughout this account. The role assigned to the Evil One is therefore twofold: he is both a father *and* a passive object of love.

The heterosexual portion of the report features a she-devil partner whose size seems to be tailored to Anderl's own. Although it is true that such a specification does not appear elsewhere, nothing else is said of this particular intercourse, which does not counterbalance the homoerotic overtones prevalent in the report. Finally, the defendant confesses having been subjected to enforced sodomy, on the part of Jackl's brother and Jackl himself. The person referred to as „der drub des Jäggl brueder“ is mentioned neither before, nor afterwards, but the contact is described as cold, a feature normally reserved for the Devil i.e. non-human agents. Jackl's penetration is, expectedly, described as warm.

However, these details alone must not be over-interpreted as they are a part of the topos. If we are to crack this account, we must turn to what little we have that distinguishes it from all accounts in this vein. The most salient distinction is that the foundation of the story rests on *blood* relations. All the participants are connected to each other the way family members are. This is particularly visible in the diabolical baptism scene: „Der teufel hab ihm etwas überm khopf abgeschitt, und zauberer Jäggl gehaissen“²⁹¹ So, the Devil symbolically adopts Anderl, giving him a name of the prodigal son - Zauberer Jackl. After this affiliation²⁹² is established, the Devil functions as a father the intimacy with whom is sought after; „Der drub“, on the other hand, is a brother who intrudes upon the defendant's personal integrity. This character can only be approached via Jackl. We have already seen that Anderl construes the Magician as a shrewd individual who must be obeyed but is not to be trusted. A sudden, unexpected intrusion of his brother - presumably an individual cast in the same mould - makes him suffer violence for which there could have been no preparation. That this cousin of Jackl's is a brother (rather than some other relation) bespeaks that the defendant is sensitized to sibling rivalry - no other explanation fits the previously established ‚familial‘ frame of reference better. At the same time we should bear in mind that none of these characters are real. That means that, for all practical purposes, Jackl and his brother are really two sides of the same entity. Or, to

²⁹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 16

²⁹² Oxford Dictionary of English (p. 27) traces the origins of this word back to medieval Latin *affiliat-*, adopted as a son'. This is the meaning I have in mind when using the term in this particular context.

complete this line of thought: everything described by the boy is a product of his psychological makeup.

Anderl proves to be particularly tenacious when rejecting accusations of bestiality („Habs vom Jäggl nie gesechen, das er dergleichen gethan, weniger das er deponent solches verübt habe“), sorcery („Widerspricht [...] verhexung sowol an Leuthen alß Vich“) and weather magic („Hab niemahlen wetter oder regen gemacht“).²⁹³ He does confess to host desecration, though, but the scene is only rudimentarily rendered: „Zu Prugg hab er aus bevelch des Jäggl's unsern herren dreymall empfangen, und alzeit wider aus dem maul gethan, dem Jäggl zuegetragen, mit messer zerschnitten“²⁹⁴ etc. It seems that - in this and many other reports - Jackl's order is a prerequisite for the eucharist to be received in the first place. This accounts for why many a beggar child's report on receiving the eucharist sounds fairly pale and unconvincing. The most important thing about the host, which these children generally do not perceive as a mystical portal for some Christian miracle, is that it is a plain, palpable object (called ‚Our Lord‘) that Jackl necessitates for a ritual of his own. The last scene that features the Devil reveals another aspect of the Evil One:

Ob und wie offt der teuffl zeit wehrenter verhaftung zu ihme khommen? Was er ihm vorgesagt? Und was sie miteinander volbracht haben?

Zu Täxenpach sey er umb mitternacht ainmall zu ihme in die kheichen khommen, und alß ein heyschreckh umbgesprungen, ihne beym shopf genommen und gezogen, nachdeme er constituto aber gebett, aufgestanden und umbgriffen, hab er nichts erdappen khönnen, auch weiter nichts mehr gemerckht, alhier aber sey er niemals khommen.²⁹⁵

Caution should nonetheless be exercised when identifying this devil to the kissable adoptive father from the Sabbath scene. The depicted entity is rather apersonal, an oppressive, shapeless force that seems to have sprung up from a short, terrifying dream. The agonizing sleeper is violently pulled by the hair, which may be a symbolical manifestation of some intense internal conflict. An epoch-conditioned approach - a prayer - is not the only thing the boy uses to ward the thing off. He gets up and tries to grab it, but - as it happens after one wakes out of a vivid nightmare - there is nothing to get hold off. The creature is said to have ‚hopped about like a grasshopper‘, an insect whose associations with the Devil have been established since St John's Revelation. Besides pointing to

²⁹³ All quotations BayHStA HeA 10 c 17

²⁹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 17

²⁹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 17-18

this meaning, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* incorrectly traces the appellation „Heuschrecke“ back to a Styrian folk belief according to which „Gott durch ihr massenhaftes Erscheinen die bösen Menschen schreckt“²⁹⁶ - the word actually stems from Old High German *hewiskrekko*, *houscrecho* and means literally ‚the one who hops about in the hay‘²⁹⁷ (the meaning ‚to startle‘ being a later derivative from ‚to hop / jump‘).²⁹⁸ This exhibition of folk etymology may have interacted (in either direction) with the beliefs prevalent in the bishopric of Salzburg. To us, it may be of importance inasmuch as the boy probably uses the term because it contains the word ‚shreckh‘, since it resonates with the idea of being startled and, by extension, with the spooky midnight atmosphere that impregnates the story.

Anderl Gassner was executed on 3rd September 1678.

Florian N.

In his answer to the introductory question of the hearing dated 8th August 1678, Florian, the 20-year-old beggar from Carinthia, was not able to state his surname, saying that it had been unknown to him. The only reference to Florian’s origins is his mention of a father who was a fisherman. The defendant carefully declares the reason for his arrest to be: „Weil er in der Abtenau bezichtigt worden, als solle er schaden machen.“²⁹⁹ No mention of Jackl is made - this, as we shall see, is a feature that distinguishes Florian’s confession from everyone else’s:

Ob er nit den zauberer Jäggl khenne? Von was zeit hero? Und wer ihne zu selben geführet habe?

Vor ainem halben iahr auswerths gegen dem früeling hab ihne deponenten einer nahmens Hausl zu einem pockh, so knöpf am khopf gehabt, geführet, welcher ihn gefragt, wo er aus wolle, deme er geantwortt, zu den heusern, der pockh aber, soll mit ihme gehen, und auf ihme sizen, wol ihn zu den heusern führen,

Wohin sie khomm und was sie angefangen?

Morgenß frühe sey er constituto auf einem baumb in einem zwisling im radstatter tauern gesessen, sonst aber hab er ihne mit einer reiter oder sieb, darein er shne gethan, und reitern müssen, schauer machen lehrnen.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.) : *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, Band 3, p. 1824

²⁹⁷ R. Wahrig-Burfeind (Hg.) : *Wahrig. Deutsches Wörterbuch*, p. 712

²⁹⁸ R. Wahrig-Burfeind (Hg.) : *Wahrig. Deutsches Wörterbuch*, p. 1314

²⁹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 29

³⁰⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 29

Hausl, the person designated as the mediator between the defendant and the satanic billy goat is not Hans Sudlinger (see entry on him). Moreover, Florian is not going to be confronted to anyone in particular, but to a list of accomplices, which indicates that the highly imaginative profile of the confession did not deceive the authorities (if that was the underlying idea at all). The goat has horns of a young deer or stag, which may indicate that, to Florian, the dark forces tempting him are imbued with vitality of youth, and therefore promising. The psychological approach of the diabolical beast is mild and not at all demanding, as the case is with many Jackl-accounts which feature him as an experienced sectarian used to routinely gaining over others for his cause. The scenario according to which a friendly domestic animal offers itself as a transport vehicle perhaps betrays Florian's wish for enhanced mobility on his beggar journeys through the area, as stated at the beginning of the interrogatory: „Allenthalben in Cärnten und alhier umbs brott samblen.“³⁰¹ The second answer is a bit confused; it is to be concluded that the goat had left Florian sitting on a forked trunk of a tree before the break of dawn. It is far from impossible that a wandering beggar like Florian should at some point have woken up in such a position; indeed, any dreaming activity going on immediately before awakening could have assumed the symbolic guise of the dreamer flying on a goat above the houses. The goat is supposed to have taught Florian how to manipulate a rudimentary sieve for the purpose of creating stormy weather. Asked about having denied God, the defendant answers in a manner that connects these two loose information: „Hab ihms woll befolchen, auch das er nit mehr betten solle, widerigens er ihne fallen lassen wolle, so er aber verwaigert.“³⁰² Apparently, the emphasis lies on the act of floating in the air.

Like so many other forced confessions of this kind, Florian's diabolical baptism goes on in a lukewarm act that lacks (narrative) enthusiasm:

Der teuffl hab ihn gefragt, wie er haisse, und ob er getaufft sey, deme er geantwortt, er haisse Florian, und sey wol getaufft, der teuffl aber hingegen, das diese tauff nichts nuz sey, sonder ihne anderst tauffen müesse, welches auch geschechen, und hernach ihne Präntl gehaisst, ein anderer einem pockh gleich sey sein stüfgött gewesen, welcher ihm aber ausser eines zwayers, den er der ursachen hernach weckhgeworffen, weil die leuth gesagt, er sey nichts nutz, sonst nichts geschenckht.³⁰³

The young man's indifference to the prospects contained in being recruited by the Evil One are obvious, since he passively undergoes the ritual („welches auch geschechen“), and is soon

³⁰¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 29

³⁰² BayHStA HeA 10 c 29

³⁰³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 29

convinced that the accompanying pecuniary gift is worthless. That the godfather has features of a billy goat indicates that the defendant had no inclination to imagine extra characters. To him, this cliché beast was a Joker for everything (and everyone) concerning sorcery. On the other hand, Florian's Christian identity does not seem to have been particularly pronounced either, as the story juxtaposes both baptisms in a spirit of almost total indifference, with not even an implicit rebellion against the new religious identity imposed by the Devil. The initial part of the beggar boy's Sabbath report goes on in the same dejected vein:

Der Häusl, dan Hanß Sudlinger so einen bruch hat, item die Koberin und Gregorii sein mit ihme auf der gabl in die lufft gefahren, aldort gereitert und risl gemacht, sonst aber fleisch und brot gessen und wasser getruncken, constituto hab seinen teufel Jotpockh Häusl gehaissen, beim tanz haben sie ein gaiger gehabt, er deponent aber hab nit getanzt, dan es ihm nit gelüsted, sonder alzeit gezitert, nachdeme er aber wider auf die erden khommen, sey er haimbgangen.³⁰⁴

It is interesting to observe the logic which incites Florian to combine elements of his story in a particular way. It appears that creating storms is something that can only be done in the air. Hence, according to a scheme established at the beginning of the hearing, a flight on a pitchfork is automatically a pretext for weather magic, which is, again, conditioned by a manipulation of the sieve. The Sabbath feast is not very sumptuous, since the menu consists of meat (presumably a longed-for kind of food), bread and water (most probably the food available in real life). There is but one violinist to assure the musical background, which is more modest in comparison to other Sabbath reports. Instead of rejoicing and dancing, Florian shivers, and for a good reason, too: the Sabbath goes on up in the sky, where the air is freezing. The sacred geography is inverted in a way that assigns the sky to the Devil. Having 'come down to earth' the young man heads straight home. Florian's act of leaving the premises could perhaps be interpreted as fear of death, the disillusioning 'heavenly' prospects of which are almost indistinguishable from the boy's earthly existence.

The questions regarding the eucharist, weather magic, damage done to people and cattle, and bestiality yield nothing but sparse and resigned negative answers, but these innocent statements, as we shall see, would soon have to be revisited. The Devil figure, however, incites Florian to furnish a statement that is both more elaborate and more imaginative:

In der Abbtenu sey der teufel umb 9 uhr in gestalt eines langen manß grau gekhlaiter zu ihme khommen und gesagt, soll mit ihme gehen, widerigens er ihne zerreiben wolle, weilen er aber solches nit thun wollen, hab ihne der teufel off truckht, alhier im thurn sey er auch ainmall wir ein schwarzer vogl einer ambsl gleich zu ihme khommen, und gegen

³⁰⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 30

ihme geschnappet, alß wan er ihn schlickhen wolle, wie ihme dan das feur zum maul heraus gebrunnen, im übrigen aber die unzucht mit ihme niemahlen getriben habe.³⁰⁵

That the Devil tends to wear gray, too, is a common superstition,³⁰⁶ which is nonetheless rare in the Salzburg protocols. The figure described by Florian appears neutral at first sight, but this esthetically understated character really seems to irradiate an aura of what looks like stratal superiority. The man is obviously someone from higher echelons of society, given that he is construed as tall and as clad in a colour not normally worn by beggars. The ultimatum he poses to Florian is likewise that of a self-assured person of authority, and the power he exercises potentially strong. I suspect that this is an anthropomorphic visualization of everything the defendant is *not* - his Other, to speak in Jungian terms. Still, the threat of tearing Florian apart is at odds with the mild way of acting upon it. The coercion techniques the Devil uses to recruit potential warlocks are fairly subtle and seldom amount to real torture. This is, admittedly, in accordance with the theological belief that the Evil One possesses no strength of his own. And yet, the description above is not likely to have been consciously made to fit this particular notion. The feeling of being ‚(op)pressed‘ is the main manifestation of the nightmare. Moreover, the expression ‚hab ihne der teufl *offt* truckht‘ depicts a repeated, routinized activity, rather than a one-time-event (which would have been rendered by adverbs in the sense of ‚several times‘ and the like). The nature of this pressure is not clear: it could be either a symbolic representation of a nightmarish loss of breath, or a euphemism for rape. The latter interpretation could make sense within the context of the defendant’s denial of ever having had an intercourse with the Devil; the speaker’s emphasizing of a negative statement is precisely what makes it suspicious from a psychoanalytical standpoint. The beggars obviously did not have an elaborate vocabulary; this fact - along with the interrogatory-related restraints - makes their statements both blunt and opaque. This makes it all the more difficult to discern just how differentiated the reality behind their formulations might have been. However, even though there is no ‚external key‘ with the help of which we could gauge the precise level of meaning intended by the interrogated speaker at each particular occasion, it does not mean that we should ignore the problem altogether. Certain questions i.e. scenarios on which they were based, often did manage to strike a nerve in the accused’s psyche, making him or her all of a sudden talkative, cooperative, imaginative and vindictive. It seems reasonable to presume that the stronger the fantasy element interwoven into the confession is, the more subjective the defendant’s attitude

³⁰⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 30-31

³⁰⁶ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.) : Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, Band 3, p. 1123

gets; less cliché means more personal colouring. That is why the second brief episode - catalyzed by the first one (the subliminally disturbing appearance of the gray-clad Devil) - is even more symbolically charged: it features a black bird approaching the defendant, with an open beak as if in an attempt to devour him, but it spits fire instead. This proves that, once an imaginative threshold has been crossed, the psychological involvement of the witness in the position of being sucked dry for fantasies could achieve an unusually high level. It is indeed tempting not to interpret the appearance of the black bird as a Freudian metaphor, the bird's menacing, inhospitable beak as a sort of *vagina dentata* invading the immobilized (i.e. incarcerated) young man. Admittedly, such a reductionist approach would not have taken us very far, but the one thing we can be certain of is the intensity of the invoked image, whose iconography makes it salient in comparison to the half-hearted statements usually delivered. The polyvalence of the Devil figure surely lent itself to all sorts of mental-emotional construals, in a process which tended to subvert the available niches.

The judges appear to have been satisfied with finally getting something juicy; for this or some other reason, the hearing ends here. The next day's interrogatory begins with the court's augmented pressure on the accused beggar to start confessing to crimes of host desecration and the like:

Constituto bekhent auf weiter guet iedoch ernstliches zuesprechen, das er unsern herren bey St Gilgen ainmall empfangen, aus dem maul gethan, und dem Häusl zuegetragen, daselbst sie beide mit messer darein gestochen, das bluet daraus gerunnen, weil ihme deponenten aber nit not gewesen, er nit darauf hofiern khönnen, iedoch unsern herren ainen schelben, dieb, und schwarzen gehaissen, und, das er nit mehr werth sey, gesagt.

Auf dem tanz hab er constituto mit der Kholbeverin einer reichen verheurathen und leichtfertigen huer, dan der Runzerin und teufflin getantz, auch mit der ieder aus en zway ersten in verschidenen mahlen die unzucht getriben, mit der teufflin aber, weil er andere mahl nichts schaffen khönnen, nur ainmal solches verübt, und khalt empfunden, auf ihme sey auch damalß ain anderer mit khremppen gelegen, und im hintern braucht, auch khalt gewesen.³⁰⁷

This is a typical process of distorting the initially negative answer to an accusation. From a full denial of ever having had access to the eucharist („Unsern herrn [...] weil er nit zukommen khönnen, nicht empfangen“³⁰⁸), Florian is forced to reconstruct one such ritual nonetheless, although with obvious unease about its predictably bloody outcome. In the same self-defensive spirit the scatological moment is likewise circumvented as elegantly as the circumstances permit. But the defendant's modesty and reticence are obliterated the moment a ‚rich bitch‘ enters the narrative: the entire phrase referring to the Kholbeverin woman namely starts with the adjective ‚reich‘, a characteristic that weighs the heaviest in an array of sins simply by means of being

³⁰⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 31

³⁰⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 30

chronologically prioritized. This is the same kind of ‚flipping‘ that we witness in an otherwise meek confession of Christian Khlain Elmauer, whose verbal cruelty points to how much he revels at inflicting pain out of pure retaliation. Is there a better companion to follow Florian down the path of no return than the (undeservedly) rich woman for whom the defendant feels no empathy? It is perhaps of importance that Kholbeverin is nonetheless the one with whom he claims to have had multiple intercourse, as opposed to the she-devil, with whom the attempt succeeds only once. This repeated debauchery reads like a cross-stratal ‚branding‘ of a normally unavailable sexual partner - a woman with whom maybe even the slightest social interaction would have been next to impossible. In principle, such a scenario is based on the same mechanism as the fantasies of raping Western women, which is nurtured by some patriarchally bred male migrants settled in industrial countries whose cultural dynamics rarely allows them to escape the social margin. But we should be careful with any anachronistic *machismo*-related parallels, since Florian’s masculine modesty may well have been conditioned by the fear of sanction that *Teufelsbuhlschaft* inevitably implied. Again, we cannot confirm that these were his instinctive calculations.

On 13th August the court confronts Florian with a ‚biometric‘ list of accomplices, which makes the young man confirm the truthfulness of all the accusations: „Nachdeme disem sub comminae severa seine angegabne complices und deren description von worth zu worth deutlich vorgelesen worden, hat er alles wahr zu sein, bekhent.“³⁰⁹ This clears the way for further disparities from the defendant’s initial statements. The most important new element in the 19th August hearing is Florian’s confession to having been recruited by Jackl the Magician, a figure he had so thoroughly managed to blend out from his narrative in the beginning. At first he tries - in his naive manner - to limit the imagined interaction with the sorcerer merely to an act of passive observation, but cracks under the weight of pressures and unfavourable testimonies: „Diser bekhent zwar anfenglich das er den zauberer Jaggl nur ainmall in den lüfften gesechen, hernach aber auf weiteres zuesprechen und confrontation mit dem hiesl an tag geben, das er in die 6mall bey dem Jäggl, und zwar auch, alß er geschniten worden, derselbe zugegen gewesen seye.“³¹⁰

From this point, spiraling downwards is just a matter of the time it takes to answer a couple of additional questions. We find out the number of animals sodomized by Florian (10 cows, 1 calf, 3 swines and 6 miraculously spared geese) and learn of the defendant’s patterns of alcohol abuse: „Ob er auf denen tänzen dan nie wein getrunckhen? / Wan er mit dem Jaggl gefahren woll, sonst aber

³⁰⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 32

³¹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 32

nit.³¹¹ The last answer given by Florian is at the same time the apotheosis of the distortion of truth that this young man is forced to shoulder. Although in his own words a stranger to the eucharist - an affirmation one has no reason to doubt more than any other statement he has furnished - , the beggar has to answer the question of how often he stabbed the host. And his answer is „Bey dem tanz allezeit.“³¹²

Florian N. was executed on 3rd September 1678.

Christoph Glenegger

On 9th August 1678, Christoph Glenegger, 11 years old, states having travelled as a beggar in the company of another boy named Riepl. He does not negate an acquaintance with Jackl, with whom he allegedly wandered not longer than three days. Glenegger, too, claims to have been picked up by Jackl without further ado: „Gegen der Lendt bey der langen bruggen sey ihne der Jäggl in der frühe begegnet, und begert, er solle mit ihme gehen, wole ihm was guets geben, darauf sie miteinander in die Unterlendt gangen.“³¹³ Although tailored according to the „initiatory cutting“ cliché, the boy’s story nonetheless contains a number of original elements:

In der uern Lendt sey ainer ganz grien gehlaiter, welches der teufl gewesen, ungefihr zu ihnen khommen, der Jäggl sodan ihm constitutum mit einem fliedl anß him und in rechten fueß zwischen der zechen beckht(?), darauf Jaggl das bluet zwischen der zechen, teufl aber am hirn in ein khriegl aufgefangen, und der beß ihne in ein zetl eingeschriben, welches er volgens in die hoch geblasen, und nichts mehr davon gesechen worden, der Jäggl aber ihme deponenten ein weisses stupp, welches er zugger gehaissen, ins maul und in die zway masen gethan.³¹⁴

This is an example of a not infrequent „double cutting“ variation, which implies the infliction of not one but two wounds, literally from head to toe. The sorcerer performs both incisions, but the blood is then collected by both him and the green-clad Devil. The latter gathers the blood into a *Khriegel*, which suggests that a larger quantity of blood is supposed to have been extracted. This report, however, like so many of its kind, mentions nothing of the pain that would have normally accompanied such a fierce act of branding, which is why it sounds ultimately unreal. The Devil writes Glenegger’s name down on a piece of paper (perhaps in blood), and then blows it up into the

³¹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 32

³¹² BayHStA HeA 10 c 32

³¹³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 46

³¹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 46

air, where it disappears. This is another example of the sky i.e. heights referred to as a diabolical domain. Admittedly, the paper sheet does not end up in the claws of the Evil One, or some sinister register book, but the underlying idea seems to be that it being sucked up by the ether of a higher sphere does not imply waste. Maybe this is the boy's way of symbolically expressing his ignorance as to what such a ritual is supposed to have signified to the adults who insisted on extracting such testimonies. This, on the other hand, would have helped the defendant buffer himself against any unexpected evidence that could have appeared later on; however, we cannot fathom whether this was the orientation of his thoughts. Perhaps the most intriguing detail about this particular statement is the boy's identification of the white powder as sugar. The phrase „ein weisses stupp, welches er zugger gehaissen“ betrays what sounds as genuine ignorance of this spice, the taste of which is not commented upon, even though the boy claims to have received some of it into his mouth. Likewise, the wounds created by the incisions are treated with this „sugar“. In an attempt to reconstruct the meaning behind this illogical affirmation, we might speculate that sugar probably did not figure in Glenegger's diet, but that the defendant must have had some distant knowledge of it (comparable to the ideas Western laypeople tend to have of Oriental aphrodisiacs), which helped him mythologize the spice in the direction warranted by the sorcery context. That way, sugar becomes a substance that is both edible („ins maul“) and healing („und in die zway masen gethan“). However, none of these two qualities appear to have been experienced first hand.

Glenegger's testimony is unique insofar as it contains a brief mention of the boy's mother, which might offer us some insight into the family dynamics of the warlock beggars. This portion is an extension of the particulars referring to the diabolical baptism:

Der teuffl hab ihn am hirn gekhratz, und ain warmbes wasser über den khopf abgeschitt, auch Jäggl Kholerer gehaissen, der Jäggl sey sein stüfgött gewesen, und ihme einen taller geschenckht, welchen er hernach seiner muetter geben, und ihr vorgesagt, es hete ihm solchen taller ein mensch geschenckht, welchen er hernach seiner muetter geben, und ihr vorgesagt, es hete ihm solchen taller ein mensch geschenckht, nachdem er aber denselben bald darauf von der muetter widerumb begert, sey er nit mehr vorhanden gewesen, und als die muetter zu ihme constituto gesagt, du bist gewiß bey dem zauberer Jaggel gewesen, und er solches bestanden, sey die muetter beß gewesen, und ihn darauf abgeschmiert³¹⁵

This little account can be observed from at least two perspectives. One is that of a fantasy fuelled by the idea of what a futile baptismal gift Jackl's disappearing money turned out to make. The spooky coin, given to the mother for safekeeping, quite expectedly evaporates, giving rise to the mother's suspicion as to its real origins. Having extracted the boy's confession as to who the nameless

³¹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 47

benefactor really was, she gives him a good thrashing. Viewed in this way, the entire episode reads like a didactically construed insert from a fairytale which is both mythical and edifying, and perhaps too good to be true. But, not all of the elements in this story are necessarily false. Not only is it not impossible for a beggar son to return with the daily gain he would subsequently surrender to his parents - what we know of Early Modern beggar children indicates that this indeed was common practice. What is more, we have no reason to suspect that the actual persons' behaviour - like that of the defendants' parents - should have been depicted in the statements in a manner markedly different from these people's real life stance, especially since there are no supernatural characteristics to emphasize a taste for distortion. So, the aforementioned twist could have been turned the other way around: after confiscating the *taller*, Christoph's mother could have (ab)used the sorcery stereotype centered around Jackl as a pretext for the alleged disappearance of a haunted coin, in reality safely kept in her possession or possibly wisely spent up. After all, the boy displays certain naivete in not suspecting his mother of fraud. Again, this is very much in line with the consumption mode of Jackl as the „friction scapegoat“ conveniently blamable for many unpleasant surprises of everyday life. Finally, the third possible approach is a combination of the previous two - real inasmuch as it could have been based on an actual conversation, but symbolical in terms of representing transgression: in other words, the phrase „du bist gewiß bey dem zauberer Jäggl gewesen“ signifies, from the point of view of everything that Jackl (micro)culturally stands for, an accusation of theft, or, more general, of surrendering to crime.

Apart from this, the fact that little Glenegger's baptismal name, Jäggl Kholerer, is in fact that of Jackl the Sorcerer indicates, alongside other such examples, indicates that an identification with Jackl as a supernatural role-model was the order of the day, perhaps not unlike superhero figures as deconstructed by Umberto Eco. Referring to the incriminated sorcerer's patronym as one's own maybe tells of the defendant's desire to appear as a credible heir to the miraculous heritage that so obviously disturbed the adults - from the defendant's parents to the authorities that cross-examined him.

The Sabbath account is twice as long as its counterparts in other children's confessions and is therefore worth a closer investigation:

In der Lendt sey er mit dem Jäggl auf ainer ofenschissl, welche Jäggl geschmirbt, auf St Johanß, dahin sie schnell khommen, gefahren, aldort Jäggl die khelerthür eröffnet, schwarzen wein, bier und möth getruncken, brätl, khirschl, fleisch, pfeffer, bratwurst und ein schwarzes broth gessen, salz hab Jäggl hergeben, bey welcher mahlzeit sie von übl anstüfften, das sie nit mehr betten, sonder die creizsäulen beleidigen wollen, geredt, auch ieder das iehnige, was er übls gethan, erzehlt, dem teufl auch als sein deponentens vatter mit hundert tausent sacra ains gebracht, der ihms auch auf

solche weis gesegnet, zu seiner ankhonfft hab er zum teufl gesagt, gries dich Gott, welches er aber nit geliten, das er Gott nennen solle, darauf ihne teufl am ganzen leyb, sonderlich im hintern und vorn an der schamb khüssen, und selbige ins maul nemmen und dutlen müssen, darein er ihme was schändliches, welches er hinabgeschlunden, gelassen, auch volgents ihme den hintern ausgeleckht, bey dem tanz haben sie gaiger, pfeiffer und leyerinnen, so teufl gewesen, gehabt, sein deponentens tenzerin war ein teuflin, mit welcher er hernach zwaymall die unzucht getriben, auf ihme auch ein anderer teufl gelegen, im hintern gebraucht, und von beiden khalt empfunden, bey der abfahrt hab er dem teufl umb essen und trinckhen mit hundert tausent sacra gedanckht, hingegen der teufl ihme auf solche weis gesegnet, und auf die rais ein gelbes stüppl und sälbl geben, erinnert anbey, das als constituto noch 5 iahr alt, und noch im Empach war, er ein 9 jähriges dirndl würcklich in unzucht gebraucht habe.³¹⁶

Judging by the richness of detail, the boy seems to have went to great lengths in weaving the account centered on and around the Sabbath. So much so, that he even dares to retroactively explain episodes from his own past in terms of the newly established sorcery paradigm. Let us not forget that paying attention to details (other than those which consist of a few sharp observations loosely hanging within the confusing tissue of a sorcery-narrative) is not typical of our witch children's confessions. Christoph Glenegger, however, attempts to introduce some logical order into his story. He believes that the Devil should have felt uncomfortable being referred to as ‚god‘. The act of carnal worship of the Devil's body is described in a manner slightly different from the usual formulaic approach: the usage of the verb „dutlen“ is namely an undiguised indicator for a fellatio.

Asked about the use he made of the powders and ointments, Christoph presents himself as a successful magician:

Den huet hab er umb und umb damit geschmirbt, sodan weiß, und razen worden, zu machung färkhl aber hab er ein absonderliche salben gehabt, massen er dan auch färkhl würcklich gemacht, und davon 7 oder 8 einem paurn iedes umb ein pazen verkhaufft, welche ihm aber nit gebliben, derentwegen er sich aldort nit mehr hab sechen lassen derffen.³¹⁷

Although it is not explicitly stated, it appears that the magical action necessitates a hat as a magical receptacle out of which the conjured animals are expected to spring up. The boy clearly distinguishes between unusable vermin and domestic animals, which he values as commodity. However, aware of the fact that such a miraculous gain can be nothing but transitory, he knows he has to permanently shun the customer to whom he has sold an illusion. We are not in the position to discern the part of truth in this short account. What does seem certain, however, is the beggar boy's earthbound awareness of the market laws; in other words, he knows that one cannot get something in exchange for nothing.

³¹⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 48

³¹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 49

The confession of the Glenegger boy also reveals an interesting example of ‚inter-beggar‘ rivalry:

Verschinen winter hab er in der Lendt einen betler, so ein iunger störzer, nachdem sie bey einem paurn [...] angeherbergt, im schlaf mitls anschmierung eines sälbls auf das schinbein der ursachen erkhrumbt, weil er betler zu nachts in essung der suppen so starckh geschlickht, das er constituto nit folgen, und also nit genueg essen mögen.³¹⁸

It seems that the boy felt overrun by another beggar (young, but older than himself) as regards how fast they ate their soup from a common bowl; his vengeful magic demonstration appears to be motivated by a sense of injustice. At any rate, the described situation hints at the possible scope of situations likely to induce revenge fantasies among beggar children.

Glenegger is also one of the warlock boys who declare themselves openly as sodomizers of animals. He flaunts an impressive score of beasts he has supposedly had intercourse with, and with the help of an ointment intended to immobilize them: „welchen er ein sälbl angeschmirbt, das stillstehen müssen“. ³¹⁹ Still, it appears that not all animals would let themselves be instrumentalized in this particular way:

Ein khue und ein sau hab er herunter der Furstau täxenpacher gerichts, so dem paur in der Au daselbst zuehörig gewesen, mitls anschmierung eines salbls, nachdem es apper worden, der ursach erkhrumbt, weil die khue ihme zur unkheischheit nit halten wollen, die sau aber umb sein schnickhen griffen gehabt.³²⁰

Although confessions regarding man-animal sex have over the course of this trial indeed been extracted under milder or stronger pressure, most cannot be said to have been extorted with torture. It is Christoph’s unwarranted ‚replay‘ reference to zoophilia which indicates that the issue might have been more important to him than to most of his peers, especially since the information itself appears to be of secondary importance in comparison to the frustration caused by the stubborn cow’s behaviour.

In spite of the previously delivered, colourful confession relative to the Devil and the Sabbath events, Christoph nonetheless refrains from giving a positive answer regarding the Devil’s visits during his incarceration. The way he formulates his justification suggests that the effect the holy objects are supposed to have is known to him: „Sey nie zu ihme khommen, dan er alzeit geweichte

³¹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 49

³¹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 49

³²⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 50

sachen bey ihm gehabt.“³²¹ But, at this point it is too late to neutralize the statements. Now the only remaining piece of information that the court needs from Christoph Glenegger are the names of the accomplices, whose existence the boy has initially denied, and who he will be forced to tell off during the hearing conducted on 13th August: Christa, operative in Empach, Gries and Täxenpach, and Bastl, who begs mostly in Rauriß.³²²

Christoph Glenegger was executed on 3rd September 1678.

Martin Hibis

Being 26 years old at the time of the 9th August interrogation, Martin Hibis, a beggar operative in at least four locations is, strictly speaking, not a child-witch. His statements will, however, out him both as a follower of Jackl and as a sorcerer, a reputation which at the time of this hearing has already been established. When asked about the previous arrest, Hibis offers an extensive explanation:

Wegen des zauberer Jäggl, weilen derselbe ihme deponenten etwas an die fues, zumahlen er nie strimpf oder shuech trage, sonder maistens paarfues gehe, der ursachen solle angeschmirbt haben, das ihn nit führen solle, sonst aber hab er den Jäggl vor drey iahren im berchtesgadner ländl angetroffen, welcher ihne constitutum mit einem messer schneiden wollen, den er aber mit einem steckhen auf die hand ritterlich geschlagen, das er das messer fallen lassen, und den steckhen hernach an ihme Jaggl gar abgeschlagen, welcher darauf die flucht geben, und seithero ihne nit mehr gesehen habe.³²³

The sparse clothing is an issue that spooks throughout this confession. We have been given to understand that the young man lead an existence deprived of the most fundamental necessities. Hence it sounds logical that warming equipment such as shoes and coats are fantasized about within a magical frame of mind. Again, Jackl figures as a saviour who showers a magical blessing on the young beggar's freezing feet. It is interesting that the sorcerer does not simply conjure up a pair of new shoes, but instead resorts to an ointment supposed to numb the effects of the cold. Perhaps Martin Hibis thought that only a supernatural intervention could alter his miserable state? And yet, the story abruptly assumes a different turn that involves something which resembles a man-to-man combat between Jackl and the boy. Indeed, an expected scenario, according to which a beggar boy

³²¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 51

³²² BayHStA HeA 10 c 51

³²³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 54

willingly subordinates to the dictate of the initiatory cut is in this case turned upside down, as Hibis' statement clearly indicates that the sorcerer has been conquered and consequently forced to flee the premises.

This unusual account, however, strayed significantly from what the conscientious judges deemed acceptable. The phrase „ritterlich geschlagen“, which Martin Hibis used to avert Jackl's violent advances risks causing a role permutation: since the young man, despite being desperately destitute, has shown both moral and physical courage in overpowering the demonic sorcerer, he should be set free. However, from a legal point of view, giving in to such a course of action can easily discredit the entire trial, and this seems to be the last thing that the judges want. This is why the two permanently employed denunciators, Veitl and M Hämerl, are ordered to intervene immediately after the statement that refers to Hibis' knightly behaviour. That the two of them have not been formally introduced into the protocols by an interposed title „Confrontatio mit Veitl und M:Hämerl“ seems to additionally indicate that the court has had to act quickly before the beggar should turn into a Jesus-like figure, and thus inflict serious damage to the prefabricated course of the legal proceedings. Veitl and Hämerl give a succinct but lethal statement with which the 9th August hearing ends: „Veitl und M Hämerl geben vor, Balthasar Göllner hine Praitfues Hausl gesagt, das constituto ihme einen mantl spinnen wollen, und auch berait daran gespunnen habe, und da er förtig worden were, ihne niemand mehr hette bekhommen mögen.“³²⁴

The next interrogatory session, held on 13th August, begins with Hibis attempting to refute the denunciators' vile accusation:

Constituto widerspricht, das er zum Hausl Praitfues gesagt, das wan sein mantl, daran er spinnen thue, fertig werde, er sodan damit in die lüfft fahren und ihne nimand mehr bekhommen möge, weniger auch, das wan man ihne zwickhen und prennen wurde, er ain als andereen weegs nichts bekhennen wollte, iedoch sey nit ohne, das er an einem mantl angefangen zu spinnen, kheiner anderen ursach aber geschechen sey, als das er solchen der khölte halber brauchen wollen, welchen mantl aniezo der Pasul gerichtsdienner am Hällein in handen.³²⁵

In short, Hibis knows that he has to confess to *something*, which is why he does not deny the existence of a coat, a piece of clothing he seems to have genuinely needed.

A confrontation mit a boy referred to as Mathl (this time duly introduced), accompanied by a *territio*, makes Hibis crack and admit to having flown with Jackl on a stick: „bekhent, das er mit dem Jäggl auf einm steckhen vor drey iahr über den hirschpichl gefahren, und Jäggl vorn, er aber

³²⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 54

³²⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 54-55

hinter ihm gesessen sey.“³²⁶ This seems to have made Hibis‘ imagination dam crumble down, since what follows is by far the most extraordinary explanation of the bodily scars in the whole *Hexenakten* corpus:

Soll bekennen, wer ihme an seinem leyb, sonderbar aber die fleckh auf dem ruckhen und hintern backhen gemacht?

Der Jäggl hab ihm vor drey iahren im berchtesgadener ländl ein holz nit allain in den linggen armb negst der hand, sonder auch die fleckh am ruggen und hinder backhen, nachdem er ihne deponent auf die erden gschwint niedergelegt und ausgezogen, mit einem messer ausgeschniten, welche fezen oder fleckh der Jäggl zum reiff machen gebraucht, hernach ihm ein stüppl eingeben, damit er sich vorm teuffl nit fürchte, welcher dan, so jodet wie ein gaißbockh gewesen, und herndl am khopf gehabt, ungefehr darzue khommen³²⁷

With this account Hibis most likely felt obliged to restore the ‚natural‘ balance disturbed by his initial statement of boldly warding off the annoying *Erzmagus*. In this scene, the boy appears subdued by Jackl‘s power and skill, but is otherwise under the sorcerer‘s protection. Who or what really inflicted the stripe-shaped wounds to Martin Hibis must, however, remain a mystery. It seems doubtful that the scars should have come about in the described manner, mostly because the accompanying physical pain has simply been too underplayed to make the story sound genuine. On the other hand, the purpose of this selective flawing is somewhat opaquely defined as ‚reiff machen‘. In modern German, the masculine noun ‚Reif‘ refers to some kind of jewellery, such as a tiara or a ring,³²⁸ which does not necessarily concurs with the verb‘ s Early Modern meaning. Incidentally, at one point during the initiate‘ s pact with the Devil Hibis calls Virgin Mary ‚reiffmacherin‘.³²⁹ There are, in fact, two ‚blasphemy sections‘ in Martin Hibis‘ confession: one in the diabolical baptism, the other in the part devoted to holy pillar desecration. Such a ‚double bind‘ appears somewhat unusual. The witness, however, being 26 years old, probably has a more defined understanding of what constitutes religious transgression, for which reason he seems to give additional weight to blasphemous insults. The second row of these unholy names is particularly picturesque: ‚Unsern herren ain schinter Jaggl, khuekämpl, höllhausl, khrindlweiß, dörnagl und höllhund gehaissen.“³³⁰ That ‚schinter Jaggl‘ is also the name the Devil has attributed to Martin

³²⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 55

³²⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 55-56

³²⁸ R. Wahrig-Burfeind (Hrsg.) : Wahrig. Deutsches Wörterbuch, p. 1215

³²⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 56

³³⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 57

Hibis adds to the ambivalent combination of (conscious) disapproval and (unconscious) fascination for all the matters concerning Jackl's sorcery.

As is usual for this part of the confession, the Sabbath account is elaborately described:

Ob und wie oft und in was gesellschafft er auf die hexentanz gefahren? Wie es dabey hergangen, sol es vom anfang biß zum ende erzehlen?

In der wochen drey mall alß freytag, sambstag und sonntag auf einem stäbl mit dem teufel, der Jäggl aber auf einem gaisbockh, der teufel so ihne deponenten geführt, hab Höllhund gehaissen, und wan er constituto vom tanz ausgebliben, sey er aller würflig worden, und hab ihm alles wehe gethan, sonst aber hab er den teufel so jodet gewesen, zu seiner ankunfft empfangen und gesagt, gries dich Gott, welches er aber nit leiden wollen, sonder hab constituto mit hundert tausent sacra schelten, und ihne dergestalt griessen müssen, deme der teufel auch auf solche weiß danckht, hab vor ihme reverenz gemacht, der teufel auch mit fassung des schopfs sich gegen ihme constituto genaigt, und umb und umb geschaut, darauf ihne teufel am ganzen leyb, sonderbar aber am hintern, und vordern glid khüssen, ins maul nemmen, und was er ihme hinein gelassen, in leyb schlinden, auch volgens im hintern gar leckhen müssen, am sonntag hab er brot und wasser, am kharefreitag und andern fasttügen aber fleisch zuessen, und rothen siessen wein zutrinckhen gehabt, bey welcher malzeit er schelten und erzehlen müssen, was er übel gethan, massen er sich dabey sternvoll gesoffen, und der teufel ein fried dabey gehabt habe, sein tanzerin sey ein teufelin und jodet gewesen, welche er unkheisch gebraucht, damals auch ain anderer teufel auf ihm gelegen, und im hintern die unzucht getriben, von beiden auch khalt empfunden, dergleichen ungebür der Jäggl mit ihme deponenten auch sowol auf dem tanz als sonst im umbgehen verübt habe, zu seiner abfahrt, hab ihm der teufel, nachdeme er zuvor umb essen und drinckhen danckht, ein schwarze salben an die fueß, damit ihm nit führen solle, geschmierbt.³³¹

That one of the devils is named ‚Höllhund‘ might have something to do with ‚Wotan's Heer‘, which Kurt Rau also names as one of the possible distant sources for witch beliefs among children.³³² (We should not forget, though, that ‚Höllhund‘ is actually a re-use of one of the insults which Hibis claims to have uttered in front of the holy pillars). It is interesting that ‚cutting classes‘ i.e. non-attendance of the Sabbath makes the warlock-to-be undergo unpleasant physical symptoms (dizziness and pain). The young man perceives the witch dance as a social obligation that can be neither ignored nor circumvented. At the same time, he is well acquainted with the Sabbath scheme, as can be seen from the upside-down distribution of the diabolical menu, offering nothing but bread and water on Sundays, but sumptuous meals on fast days. The ceremony of the introductory greeting is a little bit more elaborate than usual. The Devil moulds the boy's automatically uttered blessing into swearing, which has to be repeated and properly answered to before they go on to reverence and the body licking. The account ends with Hibis' feet being smeared with black

³³¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 57-58

³³² K. Rau : Augsburgur Kinderhexenprozesse, p. 34

ointment which should prevent freezing - another hint at what seems to have been a pressing issue. Although the Devil, as in many other statements, seems to function as a caring father figure, this, may have nothing to do with the young man's need for parental guidance, as much as with the need to patch up a fundamental gap in the young beggar's daily routine: lack of proper clothing. Still, the dictate of the hearing makes this fact gradually assume the guise of forbidden magic. The self-made coat supposedly woven for purely practical reasons of keeping the defendant warm is thus transformed into a piece of dangerous supernatural tool that brings mischief to innocent folks: „Solle bekhennen, warzue er den gestrickhten mantl brauchen wollen? / Zum fahren und verblenten, welchen er mit salbmen, so er schon gehabt, anschmüern müssen“.³³³

Martin Hibis confirmed his statements *in banco iuris* on 25th August 1678³³⁴, and was executed shortly afterwards, on 3rd September.

Anna (Reinberger) Pötscherin

The differences between child and adult fantasies as postulated by Vygotsky become visible upon comparing the beggar children's confessions with those made by adult defendants. Anna Pötscherin, a woman in her thirties (“ihres vermainens bey 30 iahr alt”³³⁵), was interrogated on 18th August 1678. Anna's occupation is not mentioned. She was clearly not a peddler woman, and the answers she gives suggest that she must have been a housewife. Judging from Anna's own explanation, the reason for her arrest apparently lay in an attempt to poison a well in Straßwalchen: “Weil sie in den brun etwas einem hirttrauch gleich geworffen, und ihr anderst nit gewest, alß müesse sie es hinein werffen.”³³⁶ Here, we get an insight into the irrationality underneath the actions the contemporary society tended to label as ‘witchcraft’. It appears that the woman felt compelled to throw a suspicious herb into the well, thus committing what she knew was a transgressive act that could have been potentially fatal for her. Typically enough, the available information which could help us build up a reasonably acceptable speculation skeleton is fairly sparse. At the time of the hearing, the defendant has already been married for two years. She has got seven stepchildren from her husband's previous marriage(s), but none of her own (“sonst hab sie ain dirndl bey ihrem mann

³³³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 59-60

³³⁴ BayHStA HeA 11 226

³³⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 67

³³⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 67

auch erzeugt, welches schon gestorben³³⁷). The stepchildren are said to have been away on service, except for one who is wandering about with her husband. In other words, child care does not seem to have weighed too heavily on Anna's duties. Whether this shortage of stimuli has made her directionless and ultimately susceptible to magical solutions must remain open. The vividness of her confession, however, indicates that she nurtured grand expectations from the material world, which was nonetheless perceived as particularly hampering and ultimately disappointing:

Wie oft sie in der wochen auf den tanz gefahren? Soll es vom anfang biß zum ende erzehlen?

Die wochen zwaymall als erchtag und sambstag auf einem bockh, wisse aber nit was für ein orth gewesen, sonder sey ihr vorkommen, alß wan ein hochzeit daselbst, und alles lustig were, den teufl, so gar statlich gewesen, hab sie mit grüß und Gotts hundert sacra empfangen, und vor ihm gebuckht, der ihr mit hundert sacra gedanckht, auch ihne im gesicht und im hintern khüssen müssen, hernach bey einem scheiblechten tisch und neben ihr ein teufl sich gesezt, und wie sie gedunckht, haben sie von lauter zuggerwerckh gessen, und rothen wein getrunckhen, auch dem teufl mit bring dies tausent sacra zuegebracht, auf solche weiß er ihrs auch gesegnet, dabey von nichts guetm sonder allem übel geredt worden, tanzt haben sie, aber ohne spilleith, und sey ihr tanzer der teufel gewesen, mit den sie volgents alzeit die unzucht bey ainer halben stundt getriben, und darauf khranckh auch am ganzen leyb erschlagen worden, dabey von ihme teufl khalt, als wie ein eiszapfen empfunden, sonst aber wie sie ausgefahren, dergestalt auch wider haimbkhommen, inmitelß aber etwas in ihrer gestalt bey ihrem mann gelegen sey, welches er nie gemerckht.³³⁸

There is a streak of bitterness about this confession, which reads as a narcotic trip of an individual left with nothing else but evasion into an imaginary world of symbolic wish fulfilment. On the contrary, the majority of the statements taken from the beggar children seem imbued with naivete typical for their tender age. Their manner of going through life without a defined concept, and not having had the chance to experience major disappointments yet, lended these children a playful attitude to handling the Jackl-related stories. Anna's existence, on the other hand, appears to have been pretty insipid, with no family of her own and what seems to have been an unsatisfactory relationship with her husband. The notion that, during her Sabbath journey, an "astral dummy" in Anna's likeness is left behind in the bed, which totally escapes the husband's notice, if understood symbolically, signifies that the spouse interaction probably left a lot to be desired. The idea of the Sabbath resembling a 'joyful wedding' (with sweets and red wine on the menu, and featuring a goodlooking Devil) betrays this woman's longing for sensations. What appears dissonant, however, is the fact that she gets beaten up after a 30-minute intercourse with the Devil. This element is entirely optional; it is clearly not a witches' dance topos. It might indicate either a masochistic

³³⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 67

³³⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 67-68

streak in Anna Pötscherin's psychological make-up, or an effort to stylise herself as the Devil's unwilling victim. Asked about how many times she has had an intercourse with the Devil, the defendant answers: „Weil sie noch ledig gewesen, sey der teuffl in der wochen alzeit drey mall zu ihr khommen, und khalt empfunden.“³³⁹ This woman's diabolical adultery can indeed mean several things: either she wants to profile herself as a desirable female (i.e. coveted by the Devil, as demonstrated by his regular visits), or, on the contrary, as an immaculate wife (having demarcated her carnal activities with the Evil One to a time before her marriage), or both. Either way, the information given here may have functioned as an implicit reprimand directed at her husband.

The range of persons who Anna Pötscherin allegedly took to the witches' dance remain reduced to members of her own family: the 70-year-old mother Gerdl, the brother Jodl and the sister Urschl. An attempt to denounce a Hendorff family consisting of a local sacristan and his four daughters ends in an unexplained revocation. Perhaps Anna wanted to start out a grand-scale denunciation involving as many people as she could remember, but gave up for some reason. Nonetheless, the defendant seems to have nurtured negative feelings towards the community, which becomes clear from the answer she gives to a reformulated question regarding the herb which has ended in the well: „Warumb sie den heitrauch in den brunnen geworffen? / Der teuffl hab solches geholfen, damit der ganze markht vertilgt werde.“³⁴⁰ However, immediately afterwards, she adds: „Sey ein weisser hietrauch, wie ihr der teuffel vorgesagt, gewesen, damit die leuth, so davon trinckhen, sein werden.“³⁴¹ The two explanations remain contradictory, as the first one implies an endemic poisoning with fatal results („vertilgt“ being a pretty charged expression), whereas the second one points to what looks like a secretly created mass addiction to the Devil. These fantasies reveal Anna's fascination by the Devil, and, by extension, her subconscious need to belong to someone or something, an aspect emphasized more often than necessary: „Der teuffl hab befolchen, soll nimmer guet thuen, nit mehr beten, sonder sey vill theurer, das sie müesse sein sein, ... der teuffl auch gesagt, er sey ihr herr“.³⁴²

It is first at the very end of this interrogatory that we can discern elements connecting it to the rest of the trial. It appears that two of Anna's stepchildren are beggars, namely Bastl (11) and Gerdl

³³⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 68

³⁴⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 73

³⁴¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 73

³⁴² BayHStA HeA 10 c 74

(14). Asked about any acquaintance with Jackl the Magician, the defendant answers: „Hab ihn ihr lebtag nie gesechen.“³⁴³ Indeed, the question remains if anyone ever has.

Anna Reinberger (Pötscherin) was executed on 22nd September 1678.

Christoph Strasser

On 19th August 1678, the 10-year-old Christoph Strasser was interrogated. He was a child of a soldier, had no prior convictions, and had spent the preceding three years living at his aunt's place in Salzburg. Asked about what he thought the reason for his arrest was, he said: “Wegen der zauberey, alß wan er etwas khönnen solle”.³⁴⁴

The boy calmly denies ever having seen Jackl, but admits to having been to Zieglstadl: “Sey wol aldort neben dem M Hämerl, Veitl gewesen, dan ihne der Christoph Fraishamb aldahin geführt.”³⁴⁵ The judges confront him to Hiesl Puechner, who corroborates that Fraishamb had taken the two of them to the aforesaid place and to several ‘mischief scenes’ (Sabbath, a wine cellar etc), in the company of Jackl. After Christoph opposes this, he is confronted to Veitl and M Hämerl. But, for some inexplicable reason, the two major denunciators are at a loss, in spite of being duly recognized by the defendant: “Constituto sagt, er kenne den Veitl wol. [...] Deponent gibt vor, das er den M Hämerl auch kenne, welche beide aber Veitl und M Hämerl von ihme constituto, ausser das sie ihn zu Mühl und bey Zieglstadl gesechen, nichts zusagen wissen.”³⁴⁶ Responding to a confrontation in a spirit of conscientious discrimination (rather than that of aggressive accusations) is decidedly nontypical for Veitl and Hämerl, normally eager to drag every accused beggar boy down into the mud. Therefore, the main accusing ‘confronter’ in Christoph's interrogation is Hiesl, who “bestendig vorgibt, das er ihne wol kenne, und nit unrecht thue.”³⁴⁷ Indeed, this much may well have been true, unlike the weather magic and the witch dance.

Ungehindert ihme etliche ruethen strach geben worden, hat er doch nichts bekhent, warauf man ihne geschoren, und besichtiget, und als er gefragt worden, was die 2 masen am ruggen, dan ober dem khnie und auf der schaufl bedeiten, hat er sich mit der unwissenhait entschuldiget.

³⁴³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 76

³⁴⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 79

³⁴⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 79

³⁴⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 79

³⁴⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 79

Nachdeme ihm aber mit strachen abermahlen betrohet worden hat er bekhent, das die traudl in der kheichen ihme gewisen, wie man meisl machen khönne, deren er aber khains gemacht, und als Fraishamb ihne zum Ziglstadl geführt, hab ihne Jaggl gefragt, ob er etwas lernen wolle, dem er mit ja geantwortt, darauf Jaggl ihne am khopf geschniten, das bluet in ein gläsl aufgefangen, und in beysein eines grossen manß wie ein jäger, so der teufel gewesen, in ein außwendig schwarz, inwendig aber rothes buech geschrieben, der Jaggl auch ihme constituto seinen gehabten pieter(?) entzwey gerissen, und gesagt, das beten sey nichts nutz, sonder soll unsern herren stradl haissen.³⁴⁸

It appears that, once he cracked into admitting about the ‘meißl machen’, the boy delivers the whole confession package, involving Jackl, the initiatory cut and the diabolical registry. However, it is important to emphasize that Christoph Strasser does not boast of one single magical feat. The farthest he gets is claiming having *learned* how to create mice, without *actually* creating any (“deren er aber khains gemacht”). Moreover, towards the end of the hearing, he answers the question “Was er vom Jaggl sonsten gelehrt?” with “Nichts, ausser das er von der Traudl [NB the same Traudl who is now in prison with him], wie oben verstanden, maißl machen gelehrt habe.”³⁴⁹ The same is true of the non-magical crimes: that of bestiality, for which he owns up to “Mit einer gais ainmall” and two occasions of host desecration (“zu der mistkhippen [...] getragen [...] und in mist eingraben”).³⁵⁰ But, on the whole, it appears that this 10-year-old boy chose not to jump on the roller-coaster of sorcery-related confabulation. Why? First of all, I disagree with Heinz Nagl’s assumption that Christoph Strasser was a beggar³⁵¹, since there are no clear indications of this. Consequently, not being a beggar child himself, the boy could hardly have maintained an appropriate social network. Unlike most of the accused, he seems to have had a permanent address, living with his mother’s sister Cäterl Burgunderin, and her partner, an anonymous soldier. Having known the three boys involved in the confrontation does not in itself indicate that he was integrated into their group. Perhaps he was simply hanging around, while keeping himself at a (safe) distance. This could explain why Veitl and Hämerl, apart from recognizing him, were unable to say anything specific about him. At any rate, one has to allow the possibility that a certain percentage of children involved must have remained indifferent to the Jackl-hype. After all, the confession extracted from Christoph Strasser consists of unimaginatively combined clichés which do not betray particularly deep personal involvement.

³⁴⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 80

³⁴⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 81

³⁵⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 81

³⁵¹ In his alphabetical catalogue of the accused, H. Nagl listed Christoph Strasser as a beggar; in H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGS* (112/113), p. 536

Some details are nonetheless worth examining. For instance, the Sabbath Devil is referred to as “bißweilen schen, bißweilen schwarz”.³⁵² At first it may seem that such a dichotomy translates as a child’s perception of ‘black’ as a colour conveying non-esthetic symbolism. But, the Devil obviously incorporates both beauty *and* blackness, the qualities perceived to visually alternate in nonspecified timespans, making him appear *entirely* pretty or *entirely* black, and blackness is not necessarily ‘anti-beauty’. Given that the Devil is seldom characterized as “schen”, it would not be far-flung to detect a certain fascination in Christoph Strasser’s words. Furthermore, the boy’s intercourse with the Devil combines elements of fellatio and (as it seems) coprophagy: “hernach ihne am leyb, sonderlich im hintern und am vordern glid, welches dickh gewesen, khüssen, und ins maul nemmen, ihme auch etwas brauns hinein gelassen, und in leyb schlinden müssen”.³⁵³

When describing the Sabbath feast, he places himself next to the diabolical *crème-de-la-crème*: “bey der mahlzeit, dabey Jaggl, hiesl, teufl und teuflin gewesen (+ und bey ihme gesessen)”³⁵⁴ (though the seating arrangement is in a side remark, meaning it had to be reconstructed afterwards). This looks very much like a joyful family meal, perhaps an exhibition of wishful thinking for a boy who had spent years away from his parents. From what he says at the beginning, “der vatter ein soldat zu Werfen sambt der muetter”, one can deduce that parental liaisons were not to be reassumed. In addition, a scene revolving around the diabolical baptism is maybe a giveaway that things have not run smoothly in Christoph’s adoptive family:

Sey wahr, das ihne der teufl anderst getaufft, und Hermanfütin genant, der Jaggl auch sein stüfgött gewesen, der ihme ain halben gulden geschenckht, welchen der teufl ihme wider abgewunnen, und nachdeme er von ihme teufl sein gelt wider haben wollen, hat er ihm mit schlägen getrohet.³⁵⁵

If Christoph construed this scene thus, it may well have been based on a real-life situation. A similar scenario may have taken place at home, with the stepfather (Cäterl’s live-in soldier) depriving the boy of what little he occasionally managed to get hold of. Again, this could be just a variety of the ‘disappearing money’ topos, the purpose of which is hatching up an explanation as to why the defendant is invariably left empty-handed. But, there are reports on baptismal coins being successfully spent up for beer and food, which suggests that every interrogated beggar child followed its own line of imagination.

³⁵² BayHStA HeA 10 c 80

³⁵³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 80-81

³⁵⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 81

³⁵⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 81

Christoph Strasser was executed on 3rd September 1678.

Stephan Vestlberger

Stephan Vestlberger, interrogated on 6th September 1678 was a beggar kid of the purest mould. An orphan (“ein leidiges khindt”) aged between 11 and 12, Stephan states having been here and there, and practiced begging. Nonetheless he has no record of prior incarceration.

Warumb er dermahlen zu verhafft genommen worden.

Weilen ihn die bueben einen zauberjäggl genandt, seye er beß worden, und habe gesagt, wenn er sein stipl noch hette, wollte er ihnen woll das spotten vertreiben.

Ob er dan den zauberer Jäggl kenne, wo er zu selbem khommen, und wie er herseche?

Er deponente kenne den zauberer Jäggl nit, aber seine 3 brieder, Paul, Riepl, und Thammerl woll.³⁵⁶

The Sorcerer Jackl being ‘the talk of the town’, the beliefs and anecdotes related to him naturally took on a life of its own. It is true that multiplying wild assumptions about his activities lent him mythic proportions, but the idea of Jackl, being thus branched out in all directions, was also being worn out towards abstraction. Hence, at some point, to be called „der zauberjäggl“ must have become an effective piece of peer-to-peer mockery. But the judges are not blended with the boy’s account of defending his honour. What matters to them is whether Stephan knows Jackl in person – in their opinion this must be very likely, for how could he otherwise have been offended by the comparison? Of course, the boy denies this, but assures them that his three brothers are acquainted with the Sorcerer. This may not necessarily have been a deliberate lie, since it is reasonable to assume that boys would spread such stories among themselves, in an attempt to fascinate and trump each other.

The hearing takes on a more serious note: a visitation is undertaken, revealing a number of scars, for which the boy concocts the following explanation:

Vestlberger deponiert hiriber, er habe sich am finger geschnitten, und die zechen mit einer hackhen gehaust, den Jäggl kenne er nit, woll aber ein schwarzes weib, welches bey Rosenhaimb in gesellschaft eines schwarzen manß mit herndl aus dem waldt gangen.

³⁵⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 113

Nachdeme Vestlberger 6 ruettenstraich empfangen, bekhennt er, es seye zway iahr, das der zauberer Jäggl zu Prugg zeler gerichtts zu ihm khommen, un ihne in einem waldt gefragt habe, ob er nichts lehrnen mechte, er deponent habe mit nain geantwortet.³⁵⁷

The underlying idea of Stephan's initial statement seems to have been to continue denying an acquaintance with the Sorcerer (which he understood would have brought him misfortune), offering a "black woman / black man" alternative instead. This, coupled with an explanation of the scars having been self-induced, fails to reassure the interrogators. (Maybe the hearing would have taken a different course had he not attempted to offer a surrogate acquaintance). Upon obtaining a response in the form of branch strokes, he cracks quickly, and brings Jackl into the confession. Stephan apparently belongs to a group of defendants to whom one single series of this 'didactic' punishment sufficed to deliver a suitable story. It appears, however, that his initial escape route is not rejected because it is unbelievable, given that the Black Man (and, to a much lesser degree, his female counterpart) already belong to the diabolical menagerie of the beggar children's confessions, but because they have been launched at a wrong moment in the story. After the branch strokes have been administered, Stephan realizes he has to deliver the standard "sorcerer's apprentice" report i.e. the only statement that would be validated by the judges. But even in this situation, he tries to come clean, trying to assure them that he had said 'no'. At any rate, the Devil and his wife, once introduced into the story, do not leave the scene. They are featured in the account of the initiatory cut performed by Jackl:

In wessen beysein das vorige geschechen seye.

Es seyen noch mehr eines gleichen bueben mit bey gewesen, so er aber nit gekhant, ---(?) der deifl mit roßstippen, unnd ain schwarzes weib mit herndl auf dem khopf.

Ob ihn der deifl auch gemerckht, was selbiger gesagt, und ihm deponenten bevolchen habe.

Der deifl habe ihn seinen sohn gehaissen, und er den deifl seinen vatter³⁵⁸

Calling the Devil father – and, consequently, becoming symbolically 'fathered' by him – must, of course, have something to do with the reversed order of the judeo-Christian perception of reality, as construed by demonological treatises, or, more precisely, with the 'upside down' topos typical of

³⁵⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 113

³⁵⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 113

Early Modern witchcraft trials. However, we should ask ourselves how much of this meta-meaning could have seeped through to a single ‘consumer’ of such a notion – in this case Stephan Vestlberger, a 12-year-old beggar accused of sorcery. I suspect that this statement is less based on this boy’s cool calculation to ideologically subvert the well-established Catholic social order, and more on the need to reenact acceptance in a performative act which has been forced upon him from without. After all, the Lord is normally not „mein vatter“, but rather „unser vatter“. Although the attractive possibility of interpreting a relationship thus construed as a compensation for the missing or inappropriate parent-child bonds in the life of the subject in question cannot be substantiated by means of other sources (at least not in a ‚clean‘ manner dear to German historians), it should not be entirely ruled out either. Indeed, what are we to make out of Stephan declaring himself as “leidiges khindt”, and then recounting having been ‘fathered’ by the Devil in a ritual of mutual familiar bonding, a narrative element he could have done without entirely? In fact, the question posed to the boy contains the instruction as to what kind of answer he is expected to come up with: ‘what did [the Devil] say’ (upon marking him)? Now, marking means appropriation, and appropriation means acceptance. Consequently, being accepted into the bosom of a sympathetic individual (in this case the Devil) bespeaks returning to the family, an idea that Stephan returns to in a later statement, when he is interrogated of the circumstances of the witch dance:

Alle wochen 3mahl, maisten thails am erchtag, pfinstag, und sambstag, auf einer gabl, und zu zeiten auf einem schwarzen roßl, so feur ausgsbiben, in gesellschaft seines aigenen deifls, und deiflin. Diese beide haben ihn ihr khindt, und er sie ihren vattern und muetter gehaissen, der Jäggl seye auch mitbey gewesen.³⁵⁹

This fairytale-like account sounds like a modern Christmas fantasy of an orphan allowed to daydream – with minimum adaptation, it could have been a Disney animated cartoon. Of course, one should not overinterpret the meaning of any particular ‘confabulation item’ – the defendant simply holds on to the narrative course established at the beginning. Hence, we cannot be certain to what extent the contents may or may not have had significance for him. Nonetheless, the boy construes this portion as an adventure trip. As is often the case, the Sabbath feast is accompanied by blasphemous table manners: “Sodan haben sie sich an einen disch gesetzt, seye der deifl und deiflin neben ihme gesessen: haben fleisch, brät, äpfel khirsch und siesse bratwurst gegessen, auch bier und wein gedruncken: under dem essen aber gescholten, und grauffet.”³⁶⁰

Stephan does not fail to deliver an answer to the tabooed sexuality:

³⁵⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 115

³⁶⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 115

Ob ihne der Jäggl sodomitice missbraucht, item de bestialitate.

Der zauberer Jäggl habe ihn 8mahl sodomitice missbraucht. Ingleichen habe er diß wegen mit einem bettlbueben active et pasive getriben, item habe er deponent innerhalb eines jahres, quo currente er mit dem z. Jäggl herumgezogen, die bestialitet mit einer sau 8 mahl, und mit einem oxen, khue, khelbl, stiltl, gaiß und bockh zu verschidne mahlen veriebt.³⁶¹

Unfortunately, we do not know if the question posed to the defendant was worded exactly in the aforementioned manner, or, if it was, if there were any additional explanations to clarify expressions such as “sodomitice” and “de bestialitate”. On the other hand, a potential Jackl follower should already know (or have learned) what these particular accusations amount to. The duly given answer seems to be delivered rather mechanically, and, as with many similar confessions, does not appear to betray personal involvement: Stephan confesses to intercourse with seven kinds of domestic animals, whereby their sheer number ought to render credibility to the story.

In general, Vestlberger proved to be a cooperative witness: at the hearing held three days later, he confessed to having seduced about a dozen fellow beggars, aged from 10 to 14.³⁶² He was executed on 22nd September 1678.

Veitl Fasching

Veitl Fasching is interrogated on 9th September 1678. The 16-year-old defendant “[h]abe sich 2 iahr lang bey h guet Franzen V. Lodron aufgehalten, daselbsten esl gehüettet, hernach in der berkhstrassen bey ainem ringlmacher, und letztlich beym creizlmacher zu Loretho gewesen, ausser selbiger zeit seye er dem betlen nachgangen.”³⁶³ Unlike on many other occasions, the judge’s question is not aimed at a specific time span, (‘ain iahr hero’); hence, the answer is supposed to summarize the lot of professional activities up to the moment of arrest. The one shepherd job and the two ‘artisan trainings’, all three of unspecified length, are mentioned first, with the begging part added afterwards. Again, we cannot know whether this was the chronological order originally indicated by Veitl – the scribe may have had his own method of arranging information. The boy does, however, pass off as someone for whom begging was the last, in-between-jobs resort. In addition, he has no record of prior incarceration. What was it, then, that brought him to the bench?

³⁶¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 170

³⁶² BayHStA HeA 10 c 116

³⁶³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 126

Weillen er zum Rägginger in die schuel gangen, haben ihn die bueben alzeit Meißmacher, absonderlich aber der Dionisi aufn Capuciner berg gehaissen, und weillen er, da er noch khlain gewesen, mit der schindter Bäberl herumgangen.³⁶⁴

Fasching is, indeed, one of the rare accused children to have attended school. We have had situations like these elsewhere in the source corpus, but apart from this, the described situation bears resemblance to a case described by Manfred Tschakner: a 7-year-old pupil whose ‘sorcerer/warlock’ tendencies have been decried by the majority of other classmates is forced, under pressure exerted by the *Kammerdiener*, to give up schooling altogether – an interesting example of how precarious the social harmony could have been in a community that had apparently already been flirting with witchcraft accusations.³⁶⁵ Now, the way Veitl presents facts, one would think that a nickname (Meißmacher) pinned to him years ago, perhaps derived from the suspicion that he had rambled about with a certain Schindter Bäberl at his tender age, in itself sufficed to warrant the arrest. Again, we do not know whether the split within the defendant’s self-perception vis-à-vis the legal circumstances he is in is conscious or not, but it is surely salient, since it is obvious that he has been arrested for being a *beggar*, not on account of some rumours spread by his peers. Since Veitl’s statements, in all, suggest lucidity, it is not unlikely that this is the one self-promoting strategy of damage-diminishing, of which a person in his position could avail himself: claiming an undeserved bad reputation to buttress his ignorant innocence. Ignorance, however, is an excuse not welcomed by this court. After Veitl denies knowing Jackl, he undergoes bodily visitation, explaining as best as he can the origin of the various scars. Given that the subsequent confrontation with his supposed accomplice Franzl Wallner does not make him crack, he receives painful branch strokes, which eventually does the trick:

Worauf er nach empfangenen strachen in der guette bekhent, das er den Jäggl über ein jahr khenne, und seye bey ainem pach, alwo er deponent gebadet, zu ihm khommen, und gefragt, wo er mit ihme Jäggl gehen wolle, darauf constitutus mit ja geantworthe, derentwegen er Jäggl ihme gleich gelt geben.³⁶⁶

The account is both interesting and unique, not least because of its pedophile overtones. Of course, the story is most probably a purely fantasized variation on the ‘Jackl-approaches-the-beggar-boy’-

³⁶⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 126

³⁶⁵ M. Tschakner : Hexenverfolgungen in Hohenems, p. 100

³⁶⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 128

theme (we have no evidence to prove the contrary). But even as such, it tells something of Veitl Fasching's – and maybe not only his – state of mind. The defendant describes himself either as taking a bath in a brook, or as having finished bathing. Jackl approaches, and is apparently instantly recognized as the infamous Sorcerer (since there is no reference to him as a 'stranger'). Oddly enough, he does not ask the bathing boy *if* he would accompany him, but *where* he would like the two of them to go. The boy instantly acquiesces and receives some money in return. Everything goes rather effortlessly in this self-serving fantasy. The bathing situation implies nudity, but might also be taken to signify purity. Maybe dropping the information concerning personal hygiene habit was yet another Veitl's attempt of fortifying his self-purification strategy (regardless of the hygiene criteria prevalent in the epoch)? Or else, perhaps he simply obeys what he understands as the laws of confabulation, knowing that what he is coerced to describe never actually happened. An appropriate set of circumstances obviously has to be created, and that is what the defendant does. But, as all the other interrogated children and young people, he does it in a way dictated by his psyche. From the boy's introductory statements it namely appears that he has a predilection for serving various masters, and, consequently, for leading a reasonably structured life. It is out of this particular need that the construal of the 'brook story' arises – not merely because an adult willing to take him along appears on the scene (it is something that all 'Jackl-meets-the-beggar-boy'-stories have in common), but because of the redeeming qualities with which this person (Jackl or not) appears to exert attraction on the socially disoriented i.e. unintegrated adolescent. The state of being 'washed clean' may well be a spiritual preparation for being adopted by a supernatural (and, as the authorities feared, divine, for diabolical) figure, a redeemer to be followed without hesitation. The boy's acquiescence yields a pecuniary reward – a cynical confirmation of an already established orchestration of the authorities' fears, which ultimately yields to a self-fulfilling prophecy. The somewhat casual understanding of physical reality goes on into the depiction of the 'registration' moment: "hab ihn deponenten Jäggl in rechten fuß gegen der Sohlen geschnitten, Jäggl habe das blueth in die handt aufgefangen und ihne darmit auf ein papierl geschriben: seye ein zerlumpter betlman (so der teufel) gegenwertig gewesen".³⁶⁷ In most of the other statements, Jackl uses some kind of a dish to collect the blood dripping from the fresh wound, but here he does it with his bare hand, and, moreover, despite the defendant's schooling experience, there is no reference to a writing tool with which the writing down of his name ought to have been performed. It may be that every aspect involved is simply construed as downright supernatural. More important is the presence of a 'shabby beggar', whose identification with the Devil apparently necessitated an additional

³⁶⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 128

subquestion, given that “so der teufl” appears as a side remark. The somewhat crude expression “zerlumpter betlman” appears to betray Veitl’s disdain towards the low social stratum he occasionally had to slide down into, whenever the circumstances dictated it. Like the Hunter who appears in other reports, the shabby beggar is one of those mute and passive co-presences that spook the diabolical crime scene; here, within the context of a forced initiation, it reflects the existential degradation experienced in real life. Still, in Veitl’s further mentions of the Devil the ‘shabby’ quality of the Dark Lord is not referred to anymore. On the contrary, the Devil (according to the cliché) appears materially potent, inasmuch as he presents his new godson with two kinds of pecuniary gifts: “sein gött sey der teufl gewesen, hab ihm ein roth und weisses gelt geben, das rothe hab er gleich verlohren, das waisse aber seye bey 10 ₰er werth gewesen”.³⁶⁸

The overall impression raised by Fasching’s statements is that he was not going to allow getting carried away in confabulation. Some details are obviously fantasized, but, on the overall, information is withheld (in the form of a negation) wherever possible. An exemplary statement to this effect is the boy’s answer to the question concerning Jackl’s bestiality episodes: “Jäggl habe die khüe in gestalt eines stiers angangen, er deponent aber habe mit vich nichts zuthuen gehabt.”³⁶⁹ Aside from what, at best, could have been a far-fetched (though sadly untraceable) parallel between Jackl the Sorcerer and the Greek god Zeus, this is a unique example of a defendant’s imaginative compromise when relating to what seems to have been an irrelevant issue which, in addition, may have been difficult to imagine otherwise. In fact, after the more or less succinct Sabbath depiction, any subsequent answers furnished by Veitl Fasching remain relatively short, as in: “Was ihm der teufl zur haimbraiß geben. / Hab ihme ein gabl und salben sonsten aber nichts geben.”³⁷⁰ Any unwarranted information are actually answers to unpronounced questions; the boy, understandably, delivers these in an attempt to shorten the trial and fortify his defense: “Habe ihn Jäggl bey denen 2 Weyerer auf der Rietten burg vor vier wochen das leztemahl gesechen, seye dermahlen, alß ein jäger aufgezogen, und 2 grosse bueben bey sich gehabt. Er constitutus wisse aber nit, wie man den Jäggl fangen khönte.”³⁷¹ Unfortunately, displaying ignorance as to the Sorcerer’s whereabouts would not improve Veitl’s situation. Less than a fortnight afterwards, on 22nd September, the defendant was executed.

³⁶⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 128

³⁶⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 129

³⁷⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 129

³⁷¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 130

Geörgl Schmalz

On the same day, the same commission (Maraldt and Hugg) interrogated another arrested beggar, the 15-year-old Geörgl Schmalz, to whom alms seeking throughout ‘Oberlandt’ appears to have been the main occupation. The reason for his arrest was “Weillen er zue dorff im Brixenthall aus dem kkirchenstockh ein gelt gefischt”,³⁷² an understandable crime which seems to confirm the cliché. Towards the end of the hearing, though, the boy adds that his mother (who, unlike his *Holz knecht* father, did not merit to be mentioned in the introductory part) denounced him as a sorcerer to the parish priest of Brixen. Whether the two information are related or not, this seems to have rounded up the reasons for the authorities’ suspicions that Geörgl was a warlock. Stealing church goods would perhaps not have been reason enough for a witchcraft accusation, although Geörgl tends to snatch other things, too. For instance, a piece of a wall is also found upon his person, and his explanation is as follows: “Habe solches selbst von einer ziglmaur herabgeschaben umb willen mit selbigen anzumahlen.”³⁷³

A one-year-long acquaintance with Jackl is admitted without hesitation. However, Geörgl has surprisingly little to say about the Sorcerer’s appearance: “Khenne ihn wohl seith einem iahr, und describirt selben, das er ein gebogne nasen habe.”³⁷⁴ This reduced description confirms again that the aquiline nose was the one feature that stuck to Jackl’s physical profile even if all the others were difficult to retrieve. (The feature may have something to do with Perthl, the Alpine version of Frau Hölle). And, yet, the relevant line (“das er ein gebogne nasen habe”) runs in somewhat different handwriting – more slanted and scribbly than the rest of the protocollized hearing: it may have been added by someone other than the scribe, or by the scribe himself, at a later date. Since this hiatus probably signifies a pause for thinking the matter through, one may assume that ‘reconstructing’ Jackl’s appearance sometimes necessitated a tiny break for combing through the agreed-upon features of this imaginary character.

The answers furnished by Geörgl Schmalz appear to witness of a genuinely simple intellect. This must have been the judges’ view of the matter as well, since their questions are voiced with particular clarity, tending to get more ‘helpful’ (hence more leading!) than usual:

Ob ihne der Jäggl nit gemerckht? Sodan das blueth auf gefangen, und eingeschriben, auch wie das buech ausgesehen?

³⁷² BayHStA HeA 10 c 131

³⁷³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 131

³⁷⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 131

Jäggl habe ihme aus dem hindern in beysein einer blaihen weibspersohn, ein flezl herauß geschnitten und solches darumben behalten, weil ers zubauchen wisse, ihne deponenten in ein buech unwissent wie es ausseche, oder mit weme eingeschriben.³⁷⁵

One could suspect that the judges, somewhat taken by surprise at the answer's inaneness, felt no inclination to ascertain whether the pale woman was the Devil in disguise, as they have done with Veitl Fasching's 'shabby beggar'. Having given such a confused, hilarious statement, the defendant clearly flunked the 'initiatory cut' test. What are we to make of a tiny piece of the boy's behind being bloodlessly cut out by Jackl in the presence of a white-faced girl, and kept by the Sorcerer for further reference? It appears that the boy had only a vague idea of the elements he was supposed to fit together into the account. For some reason, that particular aspect of the Jackl buzz must have missed him. Therefore, he seems to have reasoned like this: 'If any part of my body has to suffer, let it be my behind. And if anybody has to be present while it is done, let it be a pale-looking woman.'³⁷⁶ I don't even know why I have to sacrifice a stripe from my buttocks, but Jackl knows.' This rare variant is not developed further throughout the hearing. When he talks of a peer he has seduced, Geörgl states simply: "Einen 15iährigen bueben [...] habe er dem teufl zuegeführt, welcher ihn geschnitten, und in ein buch eingeschriben."³⁷⁷

Particularities relating to the Sabbath dance are duly delivered, as if the boy has meanwhile freshened up his memory:

Mit wemme er getanzt, und die unzucht getriben?

In 14 tügen seye nur ainmahl ein tanz gehalten worden, da habe er mit einer teufflin getanzt die spilleith haben herndl aufgehabt, folgens habe sich deponent zu seiner tanzerin gelegt, mit selbiger unzucht getriben, von dem teufl aber seye er a posteriori in eodem actu gebraucht worden.

Ingleichen, habe ihn der Jäggl 6 oder 7 mahl sodomitice gebraucht, hingegen er deponent dises mit anderen bueben active, und passive getriben.

Item habe er deponent mit einer gaisß 1 mit einem schäffl 2 oder 3 mahl, mit einer khüen aber, so ihme der teufl gehalten, 4 mahl die bestialitet verübt.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 131

³⁷⁶ Perhaps also a faint echo from the *Legenda aurea* and similar works featuring the Devil as a beautiful young woman. - J. Le Goff : De cultuur van middeleeuws Europa, p. 201

³⁷⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 132

³⁷⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 132

Of all these somewhat exaggerated numbers – which, as we know, mostly signify nothing but arbitrary quantities of imagined, yet inexperienced acts – the information of the witch dance being a fortnightly occasion is surely the most intriguing. The boy either wanted to preserve some narrative dignity (by passing off as ‘knowledgeable’), or he simply chronologically framed the description to one single witch dance, knowing he would have had troubles filling up more than one session with appropriate details. Other than this, the sodomy episodes, though part of the programme, might perhaps look a little more suspicious in light of Geörgl’s previously demonstrated ‘bottom fetish’. Finally, bragging about one’s bestial feats is nothing new either. Technically, the three types of statements are arranged in separate paragraphs, which might reflect short breaks in Geörgl’s narrative flow possibly unimpeded by interpositions on the judges’ part.

In all, the confessed crimes of Geörgl Schmalz amount to various forms of blasphemy, including host desecration, but no weather magic or human victims. His is perhaps the most humane treatment of the ‘martyr pillars’ in this entire mass trial, since, apart from assigning to the Lord and the Virgin some surprisingly innocuous nicknames (“schleckher / schleckherin”), he innocently asserts: “Habe die Creiz: und Martersauln allein mit Schneeballn angeworffen”.³⁷⁹ The execution of Geörgl Schmalz was performed on 22nd September 1678.

Bastl (Sebastian) Mayr

Bastl Mayr, a 12-year-old boy interrogated on 10th September 1678, was more widely known as “Träxler Bastl”. It was the father’s profession that earned the boy this nickname, as he stated himself in the introductory part of the hearing. As usual, the few initial answers already give us a clue to the defendant’s personal circumstances:

Haisse Bastl Mayr, zu Lauffen gebürtig, 12 iahr alt, sein vatter ein träxler daselbst, und hause mit seiner stiefmuetter.

Wo er sich 2 oder 3 iahr hero auf, und wie erhalten?

Habe sich hin und wider auf, und mit bettlen erhalten, weillen ihne sein stiefmuetter zu hause so übel tractirt.

[...]

Warumben er dermahlen eingezogen worden?

³⁷⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 135

Habe ihn der ambtman in der stuben seines vatters hinweckh genommen, wisse aber nit, warumben.³⁸⁰

The impression is that the boy did not leave the household for good; rather, he seems to have been occasionally forced to find alternative nourishment because of the proverbial bad treatment by the stepmother. We cannot know if this was a genuine reason, or simply an excuse; the father was, however, not accused of bad parenting. Curiously enough, Bastl was arrested indoors i.e. in his father's house (or workshop), probably in the parent's absence. This might indicate that, within the frame of this warlock hunt, a beggar's profile, once established as such, could not revert to the socially acceptable pre-begging status. Likewise, it could simply signify an exhibition of ruthlessness on the authorities' part. As we have seen, possible Jackl followers were frequently arrested in the street, sometimes under dubious, legally untenable pretenses. This is the only example of an arrest made in the defendant's house, and without charges being formally announced by the suspect to the court servant in question.

In spite of the habitual denial of an acquaintance with Jackl, Bastl confesses relatively quickly, given the appropriate nudge by the denouncing couple Veitl / M Hämerl:

Ob er den zauberer Jäggl nit khenne? Item den M Hämerl, und Veitl? Wo er zu selbigen khomben? Wie lang es seye?

Umb den zauberer Jäggl wisse er nichts wie auch umb M Hämerl, Veitl aber khenne er woll.

Confrontatio mit Maister Hämerl, und Veitl.

Hierauf er constitutus güettlich ausgesagt, er khenne den zauberer Jäggl ein iahr, seye zu Traunstain zu ihme khommen, und gesagt, er solle mit ihm gehen, wolle ihm gnug zuessen geben.³⁸¹

Curiously, the court melted the two denouncers into the question about the Sorcerer – presumably because of an imminent confrontation with the two. It seems that their appearance itself contributed to converting Bastl, since no confrontation, let alone courtly threatening or torture, has taken place. The boy simply starts out his Jackl account, as if by command. The recruitment incentive 'he would give him enough to eat' is probably derived from the boy's circumstances at home. Food is prioritized motivation elsewhere in the confession, too: "Was ihme der teufl auf die raiß verehrt? / In ein tiechl gebundenes essen, gelt, und salben, auch braun, und schwarzes stippl."³⁸²

³⁸⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 143

³⁸¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 143

³⁸² BayHStA HeA 10 c 145

In general, Bastl's account is rather conventional, except for the answers regarding *Teufelsbuhlschaft* and sodomy:

Habe mit seinem khlainen weibl (so ein teufflin were) gedantz, nachgehends sich zu der selbigen gelegt, und diese unzichtig gebraucht, solches seye auf iedem tanz ainmahl geschechen, der teuffl hingegen habe ihn deponenten alzeit sodomitice gebraucht, von welchem er nit recht khalt, und nit recht warm empfunden.

Wie offft der Jäggl mit ihme sodomium? Item andere bueben getriben?

Jäggl habe ihn alle malzeit 1mahl sonsten aber, da er mit ihme noch herumb vagirt, alzeit 3mahl sodomitice gebraucht, dises habe deponent auch mit dem Jäggl tentirt, aber nichts richten khönnen, von anderen bueben wisse er nichts, die mit ihm dergleichen sollen getriben haben.³⁸³

The ‚neither quite cold nor quite warm‘ attribute with which Bastl describes his erotic encounter with the Devil is in most of the confessions reserved for Jackl, in his capacity of a half-human, half-demonic mediator between this world and the supernatural one. Jackl himself is entirely absent from the first answer, which is probably why the court asks an additional question about sodomitic practices between him and the defendant. However, although the question may have referred only to the witch dance orgy, Bastl refers back to their joint wanderings, during which he claims having been used sexually by the Sorcerer. Here, as in certain other confessions, sodomy seems to be perceived as something of an ‚open option‘: the defendant is welcome to overtake an active role, and any lack of skill is explained away almost apologetically („tentirt, aber nichts richten khönnen“). As always, we have to be very careful in assessing what might have been understood by this. Just because a defendant delivers a desired statement in court does not mean that he possesses any lucidity regarding sexual matters. In fact, Bastl's confession flows almost unimpededly. His answers to all the relevant points (bestiality, weather magic, recruiting new warlocks) are affirmative, except for the Devil's visits *in der kheichen*, which he negates. During the *in banco iuris* session, held on 15th September, the boy reconfirmed all the previous statements, albeit „mit dem vorwandt, der Frenzl Wallner hette ihn darzue angelehrnet“.³⁸⁴ On the 22nd September 1678 Bastl Mayr dies in execution. Shortly after this, he symbolically ‚reappears‘ in the confession of Urban Grienwald, when the court demands Urban to retell the discussions the two boys led while they were inmates of the local Lauffen prison. If Grienwald's claims are genuine, Bastl considered himself innocent, but nonetheless believed that somewhere out there a green-clad man lurked about,

³⁸³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 145

³⁸⁴ BayHStA HeA 11 158

recruiting young followers. To Bastl Mayr Jackl was a reality. Hence, he had no chance of convincing the court of anything else.

Catharina Pichlerin

Although relatively short, the confession made by the 13 or 14-year-old beggar girl Catharina Pichlerin on 26th September 1678 at the local court in Talgäu is an apt demonstration of inventive storytelling. The court's remark of Catharina being „von spurigen wandls, und von deutlicher aussprach“ in itself suggests that they were conscious of the lucid way the girl seems to have handled her statement. She starts out with depicting an expectedly ‚chaotic‘ family situation, which she soon enriches with three peculiar figures:

Wer ihre eltern, vatter und muetter seye?

Ihr vatter seye sonst ein khnapp, und khräxenträger gewesen, ihr muetter aber berails vor ainem iahr in der Gasstein an der herzigen krankheit gestorben.

Alwo sich ihr vatter aniezo aufhalte?

Ja, und dorten, und hette sich gestert spatt/statt(?), da sye von dem gerichtsdienner ergriffen worden, sambt seinen drei bruedern bey den negst gelegenen würthshaus befundten,

Wer dann diese ihres vatters brüder weren, wie sye haissen und von was aussechen?

Wisse weiter nit wers gewesen, als das sye mit ihrem vatter bey ainem jahr umbzogen, haisse der aine Ruep, der ander Wolf, und der dritte Jaggl, weren von mitterer lenge der Ruep ganz grüene, der Wolf mit einem weissen Rockh, und der Jäggl ganz schwarz, iedoch mit ainem gruenen huet beclaidt.³⁸⁵

The three uncles with whom Catharina's father is supposed to have wandered together merit further attention. These men appear in the account approximately at the time of the girl's mother's death, ‚a year ago‘, although the two occurrences may not have been related at all. Apparently, her father and his three co-travelers were in the adjacent *wirthshaus* at the time the girl (and a group of other beggars, as it seems) was arrested. The profiles of the ‚uncles‘ appears to be fairly accurate, under the circumstances. In fact, they are almost too accurate. For once, the characters described do not pass off as (distant) family members. This, admittedly, is not much of an argument, since blood relations of Early Modern wanderers would normally have been subordinated to utilitarian purposes

³⁸⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 157

of sheer survival. They are no uncles as such, but rather ‚father’s three brothers‘. More importantly, the way they are depicted settles them in a realm of fantasy, and this for two reasons. First, the names - one of them is Ruel, the other two are Wolf and Jaggl. Wolf is not a frequent name, rather a surname, and it is directly connected to a ‚chthonic‘ animal. Jaggl (i.e. Jackl), on the other hand, appears with some frequency in this corpus, inasmuch as there is a ‚schinder Jackl‘ who is not to be mixed up with the Sorcerer. But, the fact that Jackl-rumour-mill had already been grinding at the time of this particular interrogatory makes it difficult to believe that Catharina had selected this name at random. Indeed, the real Jackl is the one meant here, ‚promoted‘ to playing a role of her uncle. Furthermore, the colours these men wear bear connotations with nature spirits i.e. concur with descriptions of the shades worn by the story’s usual villains (the Devil, Hunter, Jackl the Sorcerer): Ruel is ‚entirely green‘ (sic!), Wolf wears a white coat, whereas Jäggl is completely black, though furnished with a green hat. There is no further differentiation of the clothing pieces. With a little imagination, one might suspect the cliché of the three Magi underneath.

Habe doch der ghtsdiener von disen niemand gesehen, noch auf ferers, nach ihrer anzaig beschechnes nachsuech betretten khönen, wo sye (wie sye von ihrem vattern vernommen) gleich von Werffen ankommen, und ganz bezech/ bezaht(?) gewesst weren.

Ob sye dann zaubern khönen?

Sye khönen halt fahren, und fahren auf einer ofenschisl, wohin sye wollen, dann der obbenannte Jäggl der beschraite zauberer Jäggl selbst seye.³⁸⁶

Not surprisingly, the men cannot be located anywhere, and out of Catharina’s further explanation one understands why: the gentlemen are sorcerers able to ride an *ofenschissl*. The little girl indicates having flown with them three times: „Sye were nur dreymahl mit ihnen gefahren, alß von der Landt auf Werffen, alda sye bey der Pfarr abgestessten, und beym Würtalorten gessen, und drunkh hetten. Und sonsten von der Gasstein hin und wider.“³⁸⁷ She further indicates that her father had used to smear the ‚vehicles‘ with a salve, „darauf sye gleich darvon gefahren“, but that she has never had or used any such salve herself. Catharina is, therefore, the only female in the sorcerer quintet. This is a relatively rare occurrence, since girl witches of the Salzburg corpus are operative mostly within the frame of the nuclear family. This frame is clearly not prioritized by Catharina:

³⁸⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 157

³⁸⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 157

Vor ainem jahr nach ihrer muetter absterben hatte sye der Jaggl beym Padten der Gasstein an der linggen prusst (wie das annehstiechtige zaichen weißt) aufgeschnidten, und das bluet von ihr zu ihme genommen, darauf mit einer bey sich gehabten salben, davon sye gehailt seye, und mit ihnen fahren khönnen, wisse weiter von kheiner tauff, dann das selbige sye hexstuder gredl genennt hetten, under diß were sye mit ihrem vatter dem Jaggl, und sonderer mehr zu 2mahlen zu tännzen gefahren, und daselbsten hette seye mit ihme gessen und drunckhen.

Diß thetten hier bey abscheuliche ding so sye nit sagen khönne, verüben.

Der Jaggl hette ferter bey ainem pauern in der Gastein so Christian, und dessen weib Elisabeth haisse, nachtszeit ein ganz iunges khindt, so ain maidl gewesst, auf der wiegen entfrembt, und volgents beym Padt aldorten in der heche bey ainem paumb in ainem khesstl, so sye hierzue mit genommen, in ihrem gegensein lebendig in wasser gesotten, und volgents gleich vergraben, und mit stainen verdickht.³⁸⁸

Catharina gives a synthesized version of the initiatory-cut/Sabbath-story, and, as is typical of the hearings at local courts, is not asked any additional questions. In this part of the girl's testimony there is an element not present elsewhere: the idea that the wound perpetrated by the ritual incision into the girl's left breast is attended to by Jackl, in that he smears it up with a salve, thus making it heal. In other words, Catharina's imaginative 'reconstruction' is pretty elaborate, with a tendency of rounding up the story, so as to avoid loose ends. That Jackl handles her with care (the way one would treat a strategic commodity not to be left damaged) perhaps speaks of the little girl's own sense of self-worth, which might even be related to her budding girlhood. Whether we should brand Catharina Pichlerin with a badge of gender awareness or not, the fact is that she is (as expected) the only star of her confession, and, more importantly, the only female protagonist. The only two discernable figures accompanying her to the witch dance are male (her father and Jackl). She claims having eaten, drank, and presumably danced with them. Whether this translates as her desire to take over the role of the deceased mother, one can only speculate. Still, the obvious coquetterie does not seem to betray assumed sexual maturity. The prudishly formulated intermezzo sentence „Diß thetten hier bey abscheuliche ding so sye nit sagen khönne, verüben“, which indicates that *she* is the one hesitating, not the judges, is most probably a reflection of the adolescent girl's vague anticipations of the nature of intimacy - a tabooed issue for Catharina, whose Sabbath report, devoid of any erotic allusions whatsoever, remains the least sexualized account of this kind in the entire corpus! That is, of course, unless we choose to interpret the act of flying with her uncles as a miniature *roman à clef* suggestive of systematized child abuse.

The story of the snatched, boiled and buried baby indicates that Catharina could have heard of the accusations relative to Hiesl the Gypsy, integrating them into her testimony. However, an ingredient which normally accompanies accounts like these - cutting the baby's hand off for the purpose of

³⁸⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 158

making a *main de gloire*³⁸⁹ - is absent here. This makes Jackl appear like a murderer, but not like a sinister alchemist. Perhaps the little girl, upon hearing an appropriate story on some previous occasion, remembered only the part that made sense to her. At any rate, Catharina seems to be a skillfull storyteller, able to maintain the tension of her narrative. However, with her assurances of having witnessed the alleged baby sacrifice („in ihrem gegensein lebendig in wasser gesotten“), she seems to be overdoing it. Hence, the judges, who have been on their guards from the outset, pose an outright question:

Ob sye nit die unwarheit hiermit vorgebe?

Sye wolle solches nit sagen, wan es nit die warheit were, und sye sich hierbey nicht befundten hette, warfür ihr dann herzlichen laidt were, dann es allaing der Jaggl mit sein gross s v lüegen dahin gebracht habe.³⁹⁰

Given that this hearing takes place at a local court, it is not surprising that the interrogators did not apply torture in order to get to the bottom of the statement's falsity. As we know, torture was an instrument applicable solely at the Aulic Court of Salzburg, within the context of the *fragstückh*, when the accused child would deliver answers other than the expected ones. The story of Jackl's baby sacrifice, indeed, comes out of the blue, as a ‚bonus track‘ following the Sabbath description. I suspect that the judges may have been somewhat taken by surprise when this particular motif unexpectedly popped up. And yet, the suspicion with which they treat this information, regardless of how they may have evaluated Catharina's credibility, seem to indicate that the infanticide motif was not, after all, treated on a par with the rest of the witch crimes. Slaughtering and cooking babies i.e. severing their hands for magical, and yet down-to-earth purposes, seems to have been acceptable only within the frame of the process conducted against Hiesl the Gypsy (a Jackl-trial not considered in this book). Those in charge of the trial seem to have come to an unspoken agreement that a baby's hand - a sinister amulet supposedly used by hard-boiled criminals to gain easier entry into people's homes - was basically the robbers' - not the beggars' (not even *the* Arch-beggar's) - domain. Jackl the Sorcerer, after all, is something of a semi-supernatural entity. Furnished with a number of extraordinary capacities, among which counts a mystical access to money, he does not seem to have need for a *main de gloire*, which is rather a prop of real-life murderers. Furthermore,

³⁸⁹ *Main de gloire* or *hand of glory* are Early Modern terms generally used for a hand severed off a corpse of a hanged criminal, and used for magical purposes (M. Curcio : La parapsychologie de A à Z, p. 177). I am using it here for lack of an appropriate term referring to a hand of a baby. The idea that body parts of both the most reprehensible and the most ‚pure‘ individuals can be used for this unholy purpose with equal success only shows how ambivalent the *Unschuld* of children really was in Early Modern folk perception.

³⁹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 158

since no baby corpse has ever appeared as *corpus delicti* over the course of this mass trial, it is not unthinkable that even the authorities only nominally accepted this possibility, and therefore treated it with more discrimination than the standard lot of the warlock crimes.

Not that any of this would have mattered, since, by this moment, Catharina Pichlerin's destiny would have long since been sealed. But, if it by some chance had depended on this particular answer, it would have probably failed to persuade the judges of her innocence. For all the implicit coquetterie she has demonstrated so far, Catharina ultimately determines herself as a child, which, having been caught in a lie, readily, and in a tone of cheap religious sentimentality accuses an inexistent villain for all the (un)pleasantries she has supposedly suffered. She is taken away to prison.

The next hearing takes place some ten days later, on 3rd October, at the Court in Salzburg, and under different circumstances. We can surmise that the sombre atmosphere, the rigidity of the procedure and the stern tone of the interrogation - she is being questioned by none other than Sebastian Zillner himself - may have put the girl under some very unpleasant pressure. She now must carefully expand on the already delivered story:

Ob sie sich noch zu entsinnen wisse, was sie im Talgau der obrigkeit bekant?

Wisse noch alles.

Wer ihr das zaichen an der linckhen Brust gemacht?

Jäggl und teuffl haben sie geschnitten, und hab ihr der Jäggl die hand gebunden, das sie sich nit wöhren können, massen ihr dan auch der vater befolchen, sie soll sich nit wöhren.

Wer sonst dabey gewesen?

Ihr deponentin vatter und dessen brueder Stoffl, dan Woferl und Rieppel, ingleichen ein schedlicher man mit vier rauchen füessen, so der bes feind gewesen.³⁹¹

What passed off as innocent fun at the hearing in Talgäu, assumes the traits of a concerted group coercion highly evocative of an incestuous rape. Having no doubt grasped the importance of what seems to have been an actual scar on her left breast, Catharina duly styles herself as an unwilling recipient of the initiatory incision, which she claims was undertaken by both Jackl and the Devil. The fairytale-like aspect of the wound's healing is wisely left out. While Jackl ties her hands, her

³⁹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 195

father, a passive observant of the scene, admonishes her not to resist the treatment. The brother and two of the three uncles are likewise there, as well as a ‚fearful man with four ugly feet‘ whom the style of her narrative make appear different from the Devil himself. Having previously construed herself as a carefree ‚damsel among chums‘, the little girl takes on the role of an oppressed female with no choice but to be vacuumed into the masculine circle of the Devil and his worshippers.

The monotonous contents of Catharina’s subsequent statements can have two possible justifications. One alternative is that she may have received ‚counsel‘ from other incarcerated beggar children as to what kind of answers to furnish. Mutual imitation either of the cross-age or peer-to-peer type is, after all, a normal occurrence within groups of children, even without the necessity imposed by these extraordinary circumstances. The second alternative is that the scribes may, at some point, have started heavily simplifying the confessions. This may have been achieved by evening out (against a meanwhile firmly established confession mold) any variations which the defendant could have furnished, and/or by omitting details deemed too outlandish or exotic to be included in the statement. The sheer number of the hearings could have yielded methodological adaptations sufficiently slight not to be marked as procedural sloppiness. However, the combination of the two alternatives seems most likely, if only because burdening only one party with responsibility at the expense of the other appears less plausible than assuming a dialectic interplay instead.

At any rate, Catharina Pichlerin’s Salzburg confession is as unimaginative as the Talgäu one was bubbly and fresh. One portion of it is, however, worth comparing to the suitable previous statement - the excerpt referring to the Sabbath orgy:

Ihr tanzer sey der Woferl und Sauspeckh gewesen, mit denen sie nach auslöschung der leichter die unkheischheit getriben, vom Woferl warmb, vom Sauspeckh aber khalt empfangen, der teufl sey der erste, der sie braucht, der Woferl der ander und zwar zwaymall, ihr vatter bey dem tanz auch 2, und ausser dessen sonst 3mall hinten und vorn in treibung der unzucht gewesen³⁹²

Insisting upon the ‚ordinal‘ character of these chain sexual acts is perhaps the only usable giveaway glimmering through the tissue of the cliché. As such, it does not seem to contradict the initial impression, namely that this 13/14-year-old girl was a stranger to carnal pleasures, inasmuch as there is no personal response to the mechanically declaimed ‚illicit‘ acts. Again, one cannot reach far beyond wild guessing, since the fact that this girl had to make an insipid statement against her

³⁹² BayHStA HeA 10 c 196

will leaves space only for thematizing whatever appears, from a huge time distance, to have been inadvertently blurred out. In addition, Catharina's last mention of a sex scene make us none the wiser:

Ob sie nicht gesechen? Was Jaggl mit dem vich gethan?

Habs angangen, ingleichen ihr vatter und die anderen obiger.

Ob nicht auch ihr etwo dergleichen vom vich geschechen?

Der Jaggl hab einen hundert auf sie gehebt, welcher zweymall genogget, aber niemalen recht in leyb khommen.³⁹³

The verb „nageln“ could be understood both in the US English sense „[of a man] performing a sexual act on“ and the Swiss German sense „sich um etwas eifrig bemühen“. Either way, it appears that Catharina perhaps did not have a clue about sexual matters after all, since, according to that, the dog would have ‚penetrated, and yet not penetrated her‘. In light of her eloquence, we have somewhat been made to expect a more accurate expression from this lucid girl „von deutlicher aussprach“. Otherwise, since the Talgäu confession does not contain bestial episodes, whereas these are a part of the *fragstückh* at the Salzburg court, the dog scene may have its origins in the exchange of ideas among the incarcerated children. Having decided to go along with the demands of the interrogatory, however absurd these were, Catharina appears to have coldly delivered all the necessary statements, the contents of which she mostly understood.

What is really intriguing is the nature of the masculine family group she has bragged about from the start. They spook rather unobtrusively throughout both of the hearings, only to get under the spotlight during the closing part of the Salzburg session. But even then they remain elusive:

Wer sie zum zauberer Jäggl geführet?

Ihr vatter, hab gesagt, soll zum zauberer Jäggl gehen.

Undter was vorwandt?

Er werde ihr gelt geben, und also angeordnet.³⁹⁴

³⁹³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 197

³⁹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 197

Ob war, wie sie im Talgau aufgesagt, das ihr vatter und die anderen, wie der gerichtsdienner khommen, sich unsichbar gemacht?

Sey wahr, das sie verschwunden.

Wie ihr vatter ausseche? Was er für khlaider? Wo er sich aufhalte?

Sey ein mann mittlerer lenge, dickh von persohn, roth khurz gstrobletes haar, schwarz, khurzen pardt, weiß im gsicht, in der linggen hand am khlain finger khrumpp, so Jäggl geschnitten, schwarzen rockh, graue hosen, weisse strimpf, bundshuech, und ain grien huet, halt sich in Gastein überall auf, und verkhaufft rothe hilzene schissl, deme Woferl, Riepl und Stoffl auf einer khräxen tragen helffen.

Von wannen ihr vatter, Stoffl, Riepl und Woferl ins Talgau khommen?

Sie sein von Werfen auf Hallein, dan alhero und ins Talgau, fahren alzeit von ainem orth auf das ander auf ainer bachschissl, welche sie mit ihnen tragen, und einmahlen gehen, die khräxen aber vor sich führendt.³⁹⁵

Given the biometric quality of Catharina's description of her father, it is likely that we are dealing with an actual person (whether this person actually is the father remains an arguable point). Generally speaking, this is an amazingly detailed description of a beggar family on the go. Their occupation (travelling salespeople selling small wooden dishes) could probably not offset the authorities' animosity stemming from the nomadic character of the life they led, which probably explained why they made themselves scarce. The mistrust, as it seems, was mutual. All this nudges one to voice a daring conclusion: that, for all practical purposes, some beggars really did manage to make themselves invisible. However, for Catharina Pichlerin it was far too late to perform such a maneuver herself - she was executed on 26th May 1678.

Peterl N.

Peterl N was interrogated on 28th September 1678 by Sebastian Zillner. Gerald Mülleder believes this defendant to have been both mentally deficient and actually recognized as such by the court.³⁹⁶

The boy has a chaotic family background and appears to have been sent away to beg:

Peterl, der zuenahmen ihme unwissent, khan weder creiz machen, noch sonsten betten, waiß sein alter nit, doch dem ansechen nach bey 8 oder 9 iahr alt, sein vatter sey ein schuster gewesen, so schon gestorben, die muetter sey zu

³⁹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 198

³⁹⁶ G. Mülleder : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 348

Wäging davon geloffen. [...] Sein muetter hab ihne weckh geschafft und befolchen, soll auf Traunstain gehen, wie er sich dan aldort, und zu Lauffen auch alhier zu Mühlh aufgehalten.³⁹⁷

Asked about who has taught him to create mice, the boy answers: „Der Jaggl so die khinder hinweckh nimbt“.³⁹⁸ The expression reads like a topos referring to Jackl’s reputation as an abductor of children. Apparently, the boy simply retells what he has heard from the adults. Curiously, the magical feat of “Mäuse machen” is an action performed with a rod, with no ointments involved.

There are some original details in Peterl’s account of the initiatory cut scene. “Jäggl hab ihn ins tüech geschniten. [...] / Ob nicht bluete herauß gangen? / Wol und zwar schwarzes bluete.”³⁹⁹ The Devil (black, with usual features) is described drinking the boy’s blood which has been squeezed into a coal-black dish. The host is desecrated the following way: “auf einen stain legen, mit messer abschaben müssen, davon der stain an einem fleckhl roth und schwarz werden.”⁴⁰⁰ Residues of the grated oblate (in red and black, colours of evil) are a distant echo of the bleeding host topos, which the boy seems to reproduce rather mechanically.

Later during the day Peterl appears to refuse further cooperation. Upon the judges’ insistence, he gives the following explanation:

Und ob er zwar hernach über etliche puncten zu red weiters gestalt worden, hat er doch nichts darauf antworten wollen, sonder die ursach dessen vorgewendt, das allezeit ein schwarzer schinter vor seinen füßen und under dem tisch gewesen, welcher ihme geschafft, er soll nichts bekennen, der selbe khomb auch zu nachts alzeit zu ihme, und rausche im stro, wie er sich dan zu ihme deponenten gelegt, in fuß gebissen, das stro auf ihne geworffen, im buggl und bauch getruckht, davon er etwas khalts empfunden, alß er aber seinen petter gebraucht, sey er wider verschwunden.⁴⁰¹

This is the only occasion in the entire protocol corpus that a nightmare experience is used as an excuse for not delivering a confession. Given the size and the rich description of the account, it must have had some importance for the deponent. Let us remember that withholding an answer is most often explained away by a threat or warning from the (anthropomorphic or zoomorphic) Devil or Jackl himself. In this case the disturbing creature is nameless, which is exactly what makes it uncanny. One should perhaps not go so far as to consider “der schwarze schinter” an Early Modern children scarecrow, but in Peterl’s account it seems to have that function. After all, a

³⁹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 173

³⁹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 173

³⁹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 173

⁴⁰⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 178

⁴⁰¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 177

knacker appears to have been scary enough even to contemporary adults. Placed under the table, beneath the boy's feet, the black creature is said to warn Peterl not to say anything. The reason for obeying it is sinister, since the 'black knacker' haunts him every night, rustling through the bed-straw. Patients suffering from nightmares have been known to report symptoms of oppressive sensations on the back and stomach, and it is not unthinkable that the boy here figuratively accuses his personal nightmare demon of holding him in his embrace. This may or may not have to do something with the actual scars that have to be accounted for:

Wer ihme die masen am khopf, item die am rechten fueß an der mitern zeh, dan an der linckhen hintern backhen, und am bauch linger seits?

Am khopf hab ihms der teufl mit einem zway spannen langen spiessl zu Neukhürchen, am rechten fueß an der mitern zech der Jäggl mit einem messer spiz gemacht, und das bluet ausgetrunckhen, an lingger backhen aber und am bauch habs sein muetter gethan.⁴⁰²

What are we to make of these descriptions? Apparently the only thing we one could rely on are the scars listed by the Court. Of the three figures responsible for scarring the boy, only his mother is an actual person. In addition, Jackl is pictured as drinking blood from out of the defendant's gashed foot; this indicates that vampyric notions are characteristic for Peterl's confession. Moreover, the boy asserts that the excrements he used to throw an evil spell on people have stemmed from the Devil: "Hab wol leuth an fuessen khrumpp gemacht mitls understrähung des teufls khott, welches er hergeben".⁴⁰³ The Devil, therefore, is perceived as withdrawing blood and giving out excrements.

According to this 9-year-old boy, flying along with Jackl was an enterprise which could be interrupted only by a divine intervention. He states: "Sey mit dem Jäggl ainmall auf einen schwarzen faß geflogen, alsdan er Jesus Maria geschrieen, darauf er herunter gefallen, hernach aber der Jäggl ihne ein andermahl wider aufgenommen und geführt."⁴⁰⁴ Ideas like this one betray that children, too, shared the belief in the miraculous effect of summoning help from Christian powers: the boy is *de facto* rescued by the Virgin Mary (both from Jackl and from being smashed to the ground), but the Sorcerer snatches him on another occasion ("ain andermahl"). Invoking the Lord's Mother is apparently futile, since she cannot offer him permanent protection in this respect. (How this may have related to the defendant's own mother is a matter for speculation).

⁴⁰² BayHStA HeA 10 c 177

⁴⁰³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 178

⁴⁰⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 177

The description of hell, to which Jackl's and Peterl's air journey seems to ultimately have led, is a variation of the Sabbath account – the witch dance, according to this boy, can take place only in hell itself:

Sey in die höll gefahren, aldort sie lustig gewesen, auch meisl und färkhl gemacht, ain spillman mit ainer geigen, welcher ain schwarzen khopf, lange negl an henden gehabt, und khain natürlicher mensch, sonder ainer der höll dienet, sey auch vorhanden gewesen, deme er constituto ainen zwayer so Jäggl hergeben, geschenckht.⁴⁰⁵

It is interesting that the boy gives out the 2 *Creutzer*, the amount previously obtained by Jackl, in order to pay the spooky violin player. The violinist has diabolical features (black head, long nails) without actually being the Devil. More precisely, he is referred to as being 'not natural' but *instead* someone 'in the service of hell'.

The Sabbath account has its fair share of intercourse depictions, which are not always ordinary: "seine tanzerin sey die teuflin gewesen, welche er nach ausleschung der liechter genaglet, welches ihme guet gedunckht zusein, von ihr aber khalt empfunden, der teufl und Jäggl haben ihne constitutum auch im hintern braucht, und ein finger langs ding hinein gethan, so ihme wehe gewesen".⁴⁰⁶

Having 'nailed' the she-devil seems to indicate that the boy anticipated the most 'logical' thing to do in a standardized situation, or that he simply reproduced what he had heard from his elders. If the judges' evaluation of Peterl's age is accurate, he could not have been sexually mature at the age of 8/9. Rather, it appears that he had some idea of the prospective joys of intercourse, and that he projected his expectations into the description: "welches ihme guet gedunckht zu sein" most probably indicates that the experience *seems* promising, not that it *was* promising. His contacts with other peers must have augmented the necessity to conform to the older boys' preoccupations with sex. Incidentally, the verb "naglen" ["nageln"] as opposed to the more frequent expression "mit... gelegen" suggests that the action is performed in the spirit of machistic routine, not untypical of the notions which adolescent boys cherish about sexual contact. It is curious that an insinuation to sodomy, which normally follows the boy-warlock / she-devil sexual act does not contaminate its Don Juan aspect retroactively, in terms of a questioned masculinity. Being sodomized by the two dominant male figures is almost always construed as forced upon the defendant, who could not have escaped it even if he'd wanted to. The rule of thumb: the heterosexual intercourse is willingly undertaken, the homosexual one subdued, which leaves (or should leave) no doubt as to the

⁴⁰⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 177-178

⁴⁰⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 178

defendant's preferences. Still, the experience of sodomy is depicted in a way that makes it more credible than the "nageln" of the she-devil: Peterl claims to have been penetrated with a finger-long thing which caused him pain. It is not clear whether this 'thing' is a penis or an object used as a dildo, and the whole account is, of course, the product of the boy's imagination – at least as far as the fantastic frame of the Sabbath is concerned. However, the possibility of child abuse, of which Early Modern sources are otherwise silent, is not to be ruled out entirely.

During the boy's incarceration, the Devil visits him once, with the intention of taking him away, but to no avail:

Der teufel sey animal zu ihm khommen, und gesagt, man werde ihne fürführen, er solle mit ihme gehen, als er aber solches verweigert, hab er ihme mit schlagen getrohet, er aber geantworth, meinethalben magst mich wol schlagen, hernach er ihne im hintern genaglet, und khalt empfunden.⁴⁰⁷

This account does not differ from the same part in the confessions of other Jackl's children: indeed, none of them claimed having expressed a desire to leave the prison along with the Devil. The angered Devil can do nothing but sodomize Peterl in retaliation.

The last questions Peterl has to answer refer to his parents:

Der vatter sey zu Traunstein gestorben, die muetter [...] entloffen und ihne sizen lassen, darauf er ins bruderhaus gangen und aldort gelegen, und volgents zu Traunstein erst zum Jaggl khommen seye. [...] Sein muetter kenne den Jaggl wol.⁴⁰⁸

In an act of futile revenge against an irresponsible mother the child accuses her of being Jackl's witch, possibly unaware of the risks such a statement might entail. However, the Court's response to the boy's confession is surprisingly mild: the execution being ruled out on account of the boy's tender age, he is given out for adoption.

Urban Grienwald

The 28th September protocol of the Salzburg Aulic Court seems to indicate that Urban Grienwald, a young carpenter in his early twenties, was arrested essentially because of his short-term alms-

⁴⁰⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 179

⁴⁰⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 179

seeking activities, which, in all, lasted only 8 days. Nevertheless, the authorities had other reasons for suspicion, given that Urban was a foreigner:

Vor ainem iahr sey er allain aus Osterreich alhero khommen, in mainung dienst zubekommen. [...] Nachdem er alhero khommen, hab er sich bey dem mezger im statthaubtmann hoff in die 8 tag aufgehalten, mit deme er ins Tyrol geraist, und weilen man ihm constituto nit in die statt gelassen, sein sie beide zu Mühl nächtlicher weil über und widerumb herüber gefahren, sonst aber als er aus Neurmarckht das andermall auf Salzburg khomen, sich am Hallain auf der tischler herberg, und alhier zu Maxlan bey einem paurn, dessen nahmen ihme nit bewusst, auch aufgehalten.⁴⁰⁹

Ob er sich nit hernach umb die statt am betl aufgehalten?

In allem 8 tag zu Mühl und im Nunthall.⁴¹⁰

Although Urban apparently had no problem entering the prince-archbishopric's territory, he was refused entry into the city of Salzburg itself. Consequently, he headed for Tyrol, but soon found himself circling around Salzburg again. Properly speaking, Urban's only misdemeanour is begging. However, beggars being an incriminated group, and considering that the young man's Austrian origins make him an outsider anyway, he is ordered to undergo bodily visitation (albeit without being shorn – a bonus earned for lack of actual denunciations for sorcery). The court (presided by Zillner) is, in fact, after something else: any information that Urban had previously exchanged during his incarceration:

Weilen der Träxler Bastl bey ihme in der kheichen zu Lauffen gelegen, alß solle er sagen, ob er nit zu zeiten daselbst was gehört? Oder was sie miteinander geredet? Was der Bastl von dem menschen im grienen rockh gesagt? Wo er seye?

Hab weiter nichts gehört, oder miteinander geredt, ausser das Bästl gesagt, es gescheche ihm unrecht, und das ainer, wie er gehört, in einem grienen rockh vorhanden sein solle, welcher die khinder und bueben verführn, sonst aber sey der Bastl in der kheichen nit angemacht gewesen.⁴¹¹

This inquiry refers to the protocollized hearing of Bastl (Träxler) Mayr. Zillner's question is aimed at wheedling out information about 'the man in the green coat', possibly the otherwise underrepresented Hunter. The ingenuous carpenter retells what little he can: one, Bastl's innocence claims, and two, some talk of a man in a green coat, and who was said to have been seducing

⁴⁰⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 160

⁴¹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 160

⁴¹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 161

children and boys. Reproducing the essence of the rumour-machine relative to Jackl and his recruitment attempts would, in the long run, prove to have been fatal for Urban Grienwald. Next, the inspector sets a trap aimed at discrediting the defendant as a liar. Is it not true that, in front of a certain Prandterin woman, he declared himself a Bavarian? The woman, brought in as a witness, confirms Urban's denial, conceding that she might have misunderstood him. This small confrontation reveals to what impressive lengths Sebastian Zillner would go, once a suspect was in his firm grip. But, even though Urban passes this test, too – so far none of his allegations has proven to be falseful – he will eventually be forced to deliver the whole Jackl-report, in the second half of the session, starting at 2pm:

Weilen sich über vorige besichtigung noch ein maasen am linckhen ohr gleich einem schnitt und fast ein fingerlid lang bezaigt hat, als solle er bekennen, wie ihme solche worden, und durch weme?

Ungehindert ihme zum öffren zuegesprochen worden, die warheit zubekennen, woher solche masen khommen, hat er sich doch alzeit mit der unwissenheit entschuldiget, warauf er gebunden und wolempfindlich gestrichen worden, volgents auch sovil bekent, das ihne ain bueb, welcher ihm constituto einen creizer schuldig gewesen, und er ihme bueben einen gehabten shäken(?) wecknehmen wollen, in das ohr geschnitten, bald darauf aber, das ihm solchen schnit der Jäggl gemacht, vorgeben, welches lester er aber gleich widerumb revocirt hat, mit dem anhang, wan ihme der bueb solchen nit gemacht, wisse er nit, woher er khomme.⁴¹²

The fact that this particular scar has not been initially protocolized appears to be an act of pure perfidy, since this “suddenly spotted” scar legally warrants the application of torture, in the form of hard branch strokes. Regardless of its truthfulness, Urban's first explanation after cracking down seems to indicate that, under the described circumstances, Early Modern Salzburg youths would normally have resorted to a tit-for-tat mode of conflict resolution (and over what appears to be a trifle sum of money). He soon switches on to a Jackl-excuse, but, immediately and somewhat stubbornly, reverts to the previous statement, the only one he declares being able to furnish. Zillner tactically withdraws, if only for a moment: he orders the boy to be untied, but again earnestly threatens him to confess. The defendant then gives up and recounts having been cut on the ear by Jackl, a man in a light yellow coat; an extra question clarifies that the Devil, clad in a green coat, had also been present. Since the green coat, as Urban previously said himself, refers to the seducer of children, this might signify that the defendant had initially relegated the story as superstition or at least as something hard to believe. In this ‘acceptable’ confession, mention of the coats namely

⁴¹² BayHStA HeA 10 c 162

precedes mention of the wearers' identity, although one cannot be sure how coincidental the arrangement of information actually is.

Although essentially (and as usual) a re-ruminated cliché, the Sabbath account in Urban Grienwald's version contains some unique elements. The young man's relationship to the Devil is encoded differently from similar reports made by beggar children. At the very beginning, Urban asserts: „Der teuffl hab ihn empfangen und brueder gehaissen, hingegen er sich von ihme buckht und niderkhniert“.⁴¹³ The notion that the Devil addressed him as ‚brother‘, rather than with a more frequent appellation of ‚father‘, might have a twofold explanation. First, the fact the Devil does not function as God's opposite, anxious to snatch away the Lord's ‚children‘ (i.e. believers) from him seems to indicate that Urban's religiosity is of the ‚loose‘ kind. Second, it is only natural that, in children's confessions, the Devil becomes a substitute for the father, and that such a stance is not normally assumed by a more mature defendant. Furthermore, in his capacity of a supernatural demon, the Devil is perceived as an entity with which an egalitarian relationship is not only theoretically possible, but maybe the only viable alternative. And, because he is a possessor of (un)earthly powers, it is also possible to ingratiate oneself with him by performing a range of knightly gestures of subordination. The defendant's depiction of the diabolical baptism, with its strong presence of ritualized humility, resembles a rite of initiation into a cult group: „Hab sich ausziehen und auf den bauch legen müessen, sodan ain wasser angespritzt, am hirn khrazt, und gesagt, da khraz ich dir die alte tauff hinweckh, darauf Räpplschreiner genant“.⁴¹⁴ It seems strange that a plain carpenter and an occasional beggar had quite coherent ideas of what the act of such an allegiance shift should have implied on the performative level: undressing oneself and assuming a helpless position, so as to simulate total surrender to the powers to which one was to trust one's life. The seriousness of the scene does not allow any of its separate aspects, such as nudity, to degenerate into the vulgar or the grotesque, although unstructured confabulating would probably not have been allowed free rein anyway. Urban's answer to the question why he had denied everything so strongly, „Hab gedacht, er wolle schweigen“, suggests that the real story of his life would have come out more extraordinary than the diabolical telenovela in which he was forced to play a tragic role. Urban Grienwald was executed on 20th October 1678.

⁴¹³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 164

⁴¹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 164

Maria Willbergerin and daughter Maria Silvesterin

It is the denouncing activity of Veitl and Hämerl that seems to have involved the 33-year-old Maria Willbergerin in this mass witch trial. At the beginning of the Salzburg hearing, held on 3rd October 1678, she stated her personal situation thus:

Sey in das sibente iahr verheurath und hab ein khind und ein schwester Rosindl, so einen soldaten nahmens Hans Strobl die traudl sey ein cramerin zu burckhausen, dan Gerdl, von deren sie aber nit weiß, wo sie sich aufhalte, ihr mann sey ein soldat underm khurfürsten, dermahlen zu Aicha drey stund von Fridberg in quartier.

In was gesellschaftt sie vor ainem iahr gewesen?

Alzeit bey ihrem mann.

Ob sie nicht bueben khenne, deren ainer M Hämerl, und der ander Veitl haisse?

Khenne kainen under beiden.⁴¹⁵

In the ensuing confrontation, Veitl disclaims recognition of Maria Willbergerin. Hämerl, however, starts recounting all the more vehemently the locations at which the defendant is supposed to have appeared. Since on this particular occasion the two denunciators do not function as a team, Hämerl's statement is worth looking into:

Der erste khenne sie nit, M Hämerl aber wol, weil sie nit allain mitgefahen, sonder auch zu Strass und Mühl, alwo der zauberer Jaggl zugegen gewesen, sich befunden, welches erstere des fahrens halber sie widersprochen, wegen Strass und Mühl aber wahr zu sein, auch das der Willibald der leyerer gerdl ihr bueb, so ihr deponentin khindt getragen, dabey gewesen, bekhant.

Und weilen auch M Hämerl vorgeben, das sie constituta zu Straß gegen Reisendorff mit dem zauberer Jäggl hinter das haus gangen, als ist sie weiter gefragt worden.⁴¹⁶

Here we have a unique opportunity to observe the dynamics of Hämerl's accusations. As we can see, the defendant instantly renounces having participated in group wanderings with the Sorcerer. But, unfortunately for her, she does admit to having been "zu Strass und Mühl". The context remains unclear, though. Is it a social gathering (maybe at a *Herberg*?), or a beggars' march, during which Willibald, an acquaintance, held her daughter in his arms? The protocol remains silent as to

⁴¹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 204

⁴¹⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 204

this woman's main occupation. In his list, Heinz Nagl marked her as a "Bettler?"⁴¹⁷, but she may have been just a housewife. In all, it appears that Maria would not have led an easy life, both as a mother and a soldier's wife whose husband was permanently away on duty. That her nuptial life was not without its tensions either is revealed during the body visitation, when she accounts for the origin of the scars: "am ruggen der man ghaut und gestochen, bey dem haimblichen orth von ayß, an der khnie(?), habs ihr man gethan".⁴¹⁸ More important than the ultimately impenetrable matter of Maria's occupation is the manner in which Hämerl 'upgrades' his statement, after the woman has confessed to a portion of his assertions. The entire denunciation block carries an undertone of slandering Maria for adultery. If Veitl and Hämerl had been present in the room from the start of the hearing – which is not unlikely, given that the confrontation takes place shortly after the beginning – Hämerl could have shaped his statement in a way that would effectively endanger what in the beginning looks like Maria's impeccable loyalty to her husband. The two boys seem to have been in a position to voice their accusations whichever way they pleased. The scene which Hämerl evokes (Maria going behind the house with Jackl) makes the interrogated woman appear in a highly immoral light. However, regardless of any possible gender-type interpretations of this confrontation, Hämerl's accusation becomes a turning point of the interrogation, since it enables the court to pursue the matter further. This may indeed be an obvious demonstration of what a decisive, nefarious influence these two boys had on the course of the trial. But it would perhaps be wrong to ascribe them any real 'power', since the power as such belongs primarily to the Salzburg court, able not only to skilfully marshal their denunciatory potential, but to make them appear legally responsible for the continuation of an interrogatory: "Und weilen auch M Hämerl vorgeben, das sie constituta [&c.], als ist sie weiter gefragt worden." After all, this hearing, too, is conducted by Sebastian Zillner himself.

After the body visitation, which reads like an Early Modern geography of life coups, and a range of hard branch strokes, Maria still refuses to confess to anything. The court summons her little daughter, "Maria Silvesterin oder Wilbergerin, dem ansechen nach 7 oder 8 iahr alt."⁴¹⁹ Although she partially misunderstands the questions, the little girl seems very willing to cooperate. The judge asks her whether Jackl the Sorcerer has ever visited her in Straß, but little Maria denies this. A leading question follows:

⁴¹⁷ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil 1“, in *MGSL* (112/113), p. 538

⁴¹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 205

⁴¹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 205

Wer sie also angelehret? Ob nicht die muetter?

Wol, die muetter hab zu ihr gesagt, sie soll bey leyb nichts bekhennen, man thete sie sonst alle beide umbringen, sonst hab der zauberer Jäggl zu Straß zu ihr gesagt, ob sie nichts lehren woll, deme sie mit nain geantwort.⁴²⁰

The ambiguity of the question „Wer sie also angelehret?“ is salient. There are at least two possible translations. The first, “Who, then, has taught you magic?” and the second, “Who, then, has trained you how to respond (i.e. what not to say)?”. It appears that the court poses the question with the *former* meaning in mind. The court automatically assumes that little Maria is a witch. If it was not Jackl who has introduced her to sorcery, who then? Maybe her mother? But the answer the child furnishes (commencing with an affirmative “Wol,...”) seems clearly to point to the *latter* meaning, not least because her mother actually could have warned her against confesing to anything, or otherwise they would both be dead. In fact, it seems rather probable that Maria Sr. sould have uttered such a warning, considering that this is the first information the little girl blurts out. In addition, she contradicts herself in the second part of her answer, from which it is clear that Jackl has visited her at Straß, has offered his services as a teacher of magic, which she allegedly refused. This sequence of naïve, contradicting negations likewise speaks in favour of the idea that the little girl may have been coached by her mother prior the hearing. However, in all the confusion, she may have lost the thread of it, retaining only a vague idea that she was supposed to answer ‘no’ to any questions about Jackl. Once caught up in the interrogation web, she casts the nebulous caveat away, and answers quite freely:

Was das schnitl an der rechten fuß bedeite?

Der Jaggl hab sie aldort geschniten.

Ob nit der Jäggl ihrer mueter auch dergleichen gemacht?

Habs gleichfalß zu Straß hinterm haus geschnitten.⁴²¹

The way both of the accusations (albeit from two utterly unreliable witnesses) concur is outright sinister. The dreary grind that appears to have physically scarred Maria Willbergerin will, under these circumstances, take its second toll. The daughter’s fantasy, ignited by the community’s

⁴²⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 205

⁴²¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 205

rumour-machine, flows unimpededly: the Black Man, a trip to the witch dance, filing the child into the Diabolical registry. In addition, Maria gets to repeat her story ‘into her mothers face’.

Two days later, on 5th October, the interrogation of Maria Willbergerin continues. After her repeated denial, she is brought to the torture room, but since her attitude is described as “Ad hoc negat”, Sebastian Zillner orders which measures are to be undertaken:

Über diß man ihr die suppen geben und am leyb mit weichbrun gewaschen, und weilen auch vorkommen, das sie deponentin einen bruch zuhaben, vorgegeben, ihr tochter auch am haimblichen orth nit mehr zecht(?) sein solle, als sein beide durch die (+ geschworne) hebam besichtigt worden, alwo ersagter hebam aussag nach die mueter mit kheinem bruch behafft, das dirndl aber wol nit mehr gerecht seye, über welches das dirndl (+ in gegenwarth ihrer muetter) auf anfragen, woher es khomme, vorgeben das der Willibald und ein ander schwarzer mit langen khrälln an händen (# warmit er sie an der brust gekhrazt, und sie darauf zu ihme gesagt, ö, du grober narr!), untruher(?) an ihrem leyb dergestalt getruckht, das ihr wehe gethan, dabey auch ihr mueter gewesen, und solches gesechen, welches alles aber die mueter hernach widersprochen.

Warauf sie gebunden und an die leiter mit betrohung des brennens gestant worden, nach etlich gethanen anzügen aber bekhent, das sie mit dem Jäggl gangen, und in die rechte seiten geschniten, der teufl auch ihr techterl beschlaffen habe.⁴²²

We are not in the position to judge the midwife’s evaluation as to Maria’s hernia. The act of insisting upon this symptom may have been just the accused woman’s spontaneous defense strategy, with which she hoped to thwart the court’s intention to have her tortured. In fact, it appears that this complaint made matters worse. Having had both the mother *and* the daughter examined, the court appears to have perceived them as a kind of a “double body”, possibly led (at least in part) by the hereditary implications of witchcraft, but also by their very ‘real’ involvement in sorcery, as explained by the daughter. The court, however, is on the lookout for two *different* symptoms, and, since little Maria’s simplistic statements made at the first hearing contain *no* sexual details whatsoever, it is through the act of being gynaecologically examined that the daughter’s own imagination ignites her into delivering an account of having been raped.

The mysterious Willibald, who Maria felt obliged to include into her explanation, when wrestling against Hämerl’s vehement verbal attacks, appears now, in the daughter’s interpretation, as having sexually mistreated the child. The mythical overlay of the depicted scene necessitates closer attention. First of all, it seems that Willibald is not human – rather, the little girl categorizes him as *yet another* ‘black man with claws’: “der Willibald und ein ander schwarzer mit langen khrälln”. Now, everywhere else in the confessions of the witch-children, protagonists are usually

⁴²² BayHStA HeA 10 c 206-207

distinguished quite well from among each other, and this goes for supernatural creatures such as the Devil and his mythical derivatives as well. Maria Jr has already unequivocally availed herself of the Black Man figure, who she mentioned twice during the first hearing, and, though she tends to contradict herself, she does seem to keep her ‘role players’ apart. Therefore, I do not think that she claims having been raped (or molested otherwise) by an ordinary man and a black, demonic creature – which, incidentally, has *not* been qualified as the Devil! – but by two clawed black men, one of whom is named Willibald. This would have been the same man who had held the little Maria in his arms back at Straß. Him being introduced into the story in the first place might be interpreted as Maria’s attempt to assure Hämerl (and, of course, the court) that the man she had been seen with at Straß was not Jackl the Sorcerer, but “Willibald der Leyerer”. Whatever their relationship might have been like, picturing him as somebody who carried her daughter in his arms would have made their interaction morally innocuous, the child functioning as some kind of a purifying tampon zone. This part of the child’s statement is conspicuous in technical terms as well – The side remark “# warmit er sie an der brust gekhrazt, und sie darauf zu ihme gesagt, ö du grober narr!” is added by a different handwriting: hasty, scribbly and not as slanted as the scribe’s usual style. The added adjective “(+ geschworne)”, which refers to the midwife, is also scribbled in this other handwriting. It may have been added either by someone other than the scribe, or at a later date, or both. On the other hand, the scribe’s own side remark, “+ in gegenwarth ihrer muetter”, does not differ from the main body of the protocol.

Children’s testimonies suggesting sexual abuse are doubtlessly the most difficult to evaluate, and the implied risk of indicting innocent people is very high. Psychiatrists conscientiously caution that „les enfants victimes d’abus accusent souvent, en plus de leurs abuseurs ou à leur place, des personnes autres, de leur voisinage ou d’ailleurs. À partir d’une réalité traumatique vécue, ils inventent des scènes sexuelles souvent extravagantes, imaginent des réseaux, des complots, des puissances occultes.”⁴²³ This is something we have to bear in mind when dealing with little Maria’s statements. So what are we to make of them? There are at least four alternative interpretations, each of which would have justified the statement of Maria Jr. *One*: the mother and Willibald could have had an intimate relationship, and little Maria would have been describing a scene of the two of them mating; the intercourse may have been merely fantasized, though. *Two*: the child really was molested by Willibald der Leyerer, and her account would thus have been truthful. *Three*: from their encounter, and/or interaction, the child could have developed animosity against Willibald, the rape accusation having retaliatory character. *Four*: regardless of whether there was any particular

⁴²³ É. Roudinesco : La part obscure de nous-mêmes, p. 209

connection between the mother and Willibald, the man could have been something of a surrogate father to little Maria. After all, the mother had mentioned her husband having been away most of the time. Even after a brief interaction, the child could have bonded with Willibald. The first two alternatives are fairly clear: there was a sexual act involved, either witnessed or experienced by the little defendant. (The midwife's testimony of the little girl's 'tainted' virginity would be the strongest argument to the latter). In the child's psyche, the man is 'satanized' for being a sexual threat, a dynamics redolent of the plot in Alfred Hitchcock's motion picture *Marnie* (1964). The third possibility is also understandable if we assume that Maria must have had some actual motif to denounce Willibald as the utmost villain. However, the fourth alternative is not to be written off either, despite its exasperating logic (or lack of it). Throughout the history of witchcraft trials, children have been known to denounce unsuspecting parents and caretakers. How does one explain a child's tendency to accuse a close person who normally appears to be a loving caretaker, of witchcraft or sorcery – or sexual abuse? A case with similar dynamics appears in Lyndal Roper's research of the mini mass hysteria concerning Augsburg child-witches. At some point of the proceedings, the incarcerated group of some twenty children (aged from six to sixteen) appear to have concurred in accusing a certain needlewoman of having seduced them to witchcraft. According to Roper, the accused woman "certainly fitted the part: she was an older woman who was not the children's mother but who fulfilled the maternal role, who knew the children and played a part in their imaginative worlds."⁴²⁴ Whether Willibald performed the same function to little Maria cannot be ascertained; at any rate, it is the little girl's open antagonism against her mother that overshadows the role of this male character. The one thing we can probably be sure of is that, in light of all the mentioned alternatives, as well as caveats derived from them, the statement of this 7/8-year-old child would in and of itself not weigh much in a modern courtroom. The little girl, after all, complains that somebody scratched her on the chest and pressed themselves against her body – for all we know, this could have been merely a description of a nightmare.

Still, what are we to make of the only implicitly 'palpable' proof which seems to buttress the guilt of both Marias: the midwife's expert opinion? According to her, the mother is not struck by hernia, "das dirndl aber wol nit mehr gerecht". Nevertheless, this supposedly impartial evaluation contains a remarkably suspicious (maybe even a tell-tale) word: "wol". The use of this adjective automatically waters down the edge of the assertion, in that it indicates more a fair probability than a near-100% certainty. On the other hand, the midwife seems to have used no such expression when ruling out hernia in Maria Sr. What if the reverse was true: that the mother had hernia and that the

⁴²⁴ L. Roper : *Witch Craze*, p. 215

child was sexually untouched? To put it bluntly: what if the midwife had been a scam hired to voice a ‘suitable’ diagnosis? The furnisher of the two scribbly side remarks did feel it necessary to add that the summoned woman was a “sworn” member of her profession. In addition, elsewhere in the corpus we have seen that court servants could be pretty shady characters, too. Would all midwives, then, have exerted only and exclusively irreproachable behaviour? It is not unthinkable that Sebastian Zillner knew that instrumentalizing any health problem a defendant could have complained of was the fastest way of making him or her crack under torture. We cannot say whether it was because of this that Maria Willbergerin decided to confess after being heaved up into the air several times. Maybe she simply had a low pain threshold. At some point, the torture must have become unbearable, given that the woman confessed to all three crimes at once: that she had been with Jackl, that he had inflicted her a cut, and that the Devil had had his way with her daughter. (The agonies of pain had strangely dissipated every trace of Willibald, though). When asked to explain why she has been denying it for so long, and to answer who has taught her what to say, she resignedly states: “Der teufl.”⁴²⁵

Now that the court has made Maria succumb to procedural pressures, some other irregularities need to be clarified in line with the newly established guilt frame. Shortly before Maria is taken into the torture chamber, she has to explain why her agnus dei necklace had gotten loose:

Wie ihr das breve am hals aufgelest worden?

Habs selbst aufgelest, weillen ihr selbiges zu föst am hals gewesen.⁴²⁶

The answer could not have been more straightforward – the necklace having been tied too tightly against the neck, the incarcerated woman must have loosened it up to some extent (or removed it completely), in order to breathe freely. However, after confessing to the sorcery crimes, Maria is forced to revisit even this triviality, so as to reshape the answer along witchcraft-related lines:

Wer ihr bevolchen, das sie das breve ledig gemacht?

Aus bevelch des teufels hab sie solches auflesen, und vom hals thuen müssen.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 207

⁴²⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 206

⁴²⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 207

Here, Maria appears to express a belief that the act of reading out the contents of the *brevierl* amulet would strip the trinket of its sacred mystery, thus neutralizing its healing character. She may have been voicing a widespread assumption. From the moment of ‘cracking down’, as we have seen, most of the accused Jackl’s followers tread a symbolic path of collective (i.e. demonological *and* popular) notions, occasionally shaped by individualized variations, Maria, too, delivers a relatively monotonous account. Not many of its aspects offer anything in the way of interpretation. For example, she claims that the Devil and Jackl have drunk up the blood which has flown from the ‘initiatory’ wound: “Der teufl, welcher neben dem Jäggl das bluett getrunckhen”.⁴²⁸ Furnishing Jackl and the Devil with what a modern observer would classify as vampiric traits may have been Maria’s metaphor for her life being sucked out of her by the two sinister figures. In general, however, the vampire figure of the late 17th century beliefs, operational only in its ‘larva’ state of *Nachzehrter* (addressed for the first time in Philip Rohr’s work *Dissertatio historico-philosophica de masticatione mortuorum* from 1679)⁴²⁹, had yet to be permanently associated to forceful extraction of blood over the course of the 18th century. Since the ‘Sorcerer-Jackl’-trial precedes by at least half a century the great theologian European vampire-related debates, this particular gesture stands isolated in the pool of variations, bearing no consequences to the dominant witchcraft/sorcery paradigm. Still, the expected overlapping of the complexes ‘witch’ and ‘vampire’ possibly speaks in favour of Brian P. Levack’s mild criticism of Gábor Klaniczay’s hypothesis⁴³⁰ that the latter beliefs are cultural succedents to the former.⁴³¹

Within this picture of drinking blood more crucial is perhaps the ‘drinking’ element itself. During the hearing Maria’s penchant for alcohol comes to the fore. This characteristic of hers even receives ritualistic recognition in the act of diabolical baptism: “Hab ihr ein wasser in einer schissl übers gesicht abgossen, und weil sie gern trinckh, Pierarsch gehaissen”.⁴³² In effect, Maria’s diabolical name is more of a pejorative nickname likely to have been earned in real life. In addition, she further thematizes her ‘drunken’ states, in an attempt to use them to her own advantage. Asked to explain which way she had been seduced, she answers: “Sie sey selbst zum Jäggl gangen, welcher

⁴²⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 207

⁴²⁹ M. Introvigne : „La naissance du vampire dans l’Europe du 18e siècle“, in L. Silhol (ed.) : Vampire. Portrait d’une ombre, p. 20

⁴³⁰ G. Klaniczay : „Historische Hintergründe: Der Aufstieg der Vampire im Habsburgerreich des 18. Jahrhunderts“, in J. Bertschik / C. A. Tuczay (Hg.) : Poetische Wiedergänger, pp. 83-111

⁴³¹ B. P. Levack : „The Decline and End of Witchcraft Prosecutions“, in M. Gijswijt-Hofstra *et al.* : Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, pp. 71-72

⁴³² BayHStA HeA 10 c 209

ihr ein tranckh eines prantweins gleich zutrinckhen geben, davon sie bleblet/blablet(?) worden.“⁴³³ Maria’s response to Jackl is devoid of magnetism present in the confessions of his younger followers; hence, this woman construes the interaction between the Sorcerer and herself as based on some kind of hypnotic effect induced by drink. But, alcoholic dizziness is meant to shoulder even more serious *faux pas* of Maria’s past. The defendant’s narration suggests that her attitude to the course of events, helpless as it seems to be, fits the previously outlined addiction frame:

Ob sie dem teufel oder Jäggl nicht andere leuth zuegeführt? Ob nicht ihr khind selbst?

Hab ihms wol versprochen müessen, aber weder ihr khinder noch andere zuegeführt noch geschenckt, sonder der Jäggl hab ihrs ihr khind aus der hand gerissen und geschniten, und wisse ihr man nichts davon, das das khind geschniten, oder sie deponentin ein hex seye.⁴³⁴

Wie ihrem iungen khind geschechen? So bey ihr am böth erstickt?

Selbiges khind, welches sie im ledigen standt erzeugt, hab sie nachts unter dem armb gehabt, und weil sie rauschig gewesen, müesse es erstickt worden sein, zumahlen selbiges in der frühe todter gewesen und diß sey vor 2 iahr zu Regenspurg am bayrhoff geschechen.⁴³⁵

The court seems meticulous in its persistence to dig up a two-year-old case of baby death by misadventure, with the aim of exploiting it for the current trial. The next question “Ob es nicht mit fleiß und aus wessen gehaiß geschechen?“ makes this intention crystal clear. In all, Maria Wilbergerin has, not least by means of her daughter’s testimony, determined herself as a bad, Devil-worshipping mother, unwilling or unable to resist the evil temptations of the Archmagus. At the *In banco iuris* session held on 10th October, she confirmed her confession, and was executed ten days later. The little Maria was returned to her father.

Christoph Forsthueber

The case of Christoph Forsthueber, interrogated on 3rd and 11th October 1678, is both interesting and puzzling, not least because of the outcome of this relatively short hearing. This 20-year-old boy from Huetenstainer Gericht, with no living parents, states that he has lived at home, doing occasional work: “Wo er sich von einem iahr hero überall aufgehalten? / Zu haus, aldort er

⁴³³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 209-210

⁴³⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 209

⁴³⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 210

khlecket.”⁴³⁶ The defendant is, therefore, not a beggar, or at least does not declare himself to be one. However, his praying abilities leave something to be desired, and the judges hold on to that:

Ob er beten khönne?

Habs khönt, aber wider vergessen. [...]

Wie lang es sey, das er das beten vergessen habe?

Mecht ein halb iahr sein? [...]

Ob er wolle beten lehrnen und in die khürchen gehen?

Wolle sechen, das er beten lehrne, und auch in die khürchen gehen.⁴³⁷

Falling out of the ritualistic frame (in terms of not being able to say a prayer) would normally have been used towards making a case against an alleged warlock supposed to be a follower of Jackl. Christoph, however, denies he has ever met the Sorcerer, and the judges seem to accept his banal explanation as to the nature of his bodily scars without further ado. There is no obvious reason for this, if it were not for the curious corporeal ‘anomaly’, which merits a separate question:

Warumb er im hintern leyb so weit offen seye?

Sey dergestalt alzeit gewesen.⁴³⁸

This can mean nothing else than that the judges had the defendant undergo some kind of anal inspection. At the very least, this means that, upon performing the usual bodily visitation when searching out scars, the judges could not escape noticing that the young man’s anus had been unusually dilated. If that is the way this portion ought to be interpreted, it is a case without precedent in the entire source corpus. Oddly enough, with all the insistence on diabolical sodomy and sexual submission of the boy warlocks to Jackl, it is strange that the one single proof reasonably evocative of anal intercourse could have been left unintegrated into a possible charge of witchcraft, inasmuch as the expression ‚weit offen‘ is normally used to refer to hymen inspection

⁴³⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 192

⁴³⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 192

⁴³⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 192

performed by a sworn midwife. The impression I have is that the judges must have concluded that the boy's anal dilatation signalled an illness (or more likely, a hereditary infirmity) of some kind, to which Christoph's answer, after all, unequivocally refers. Hence their decision to let him go:

Dieweilen weiter nichts aus ihme zubringen gewesen, sonsten auch sovil erscheinen, das er in dieser khunst unerfahren, als ist ihme ain shilling von etlich und 30 strachen mit dem bedeiten und anbetrohung geben worden, das wan er furß khonfftig nit mehr beten oder in die khürchen gehen, dem pflegsverwalter und vicario daselbst zu St Gilgen auch mer also spötlich zureden und anthworten, man ihme sodan widerumb alhero bringen lassen, und andere gestalt, alß aniezo beschechen, gegen ihme verfahren werde.⁴³⁹

„Das er in dieser khunst unerfahren“ is one of the very few statements suggesting the nature of the judges' 'evaluation grid'. It is interesting that, after their expert opinion has irrevocably elongated towards 'not guilty', even the boy's mocking attitude towards the priest of St Gilgen (the only mention of this offence) does not in itself constitute a witchcraft-related crime. The Court decides to release Forsthueber, albeit with a *caveat*: should he persist with his inappropriate behaviour, he would be rearrested and tried anew.

Georg Witzig

The hearing of Georg Witzig is dated 11th October 1678. Georg Witzig, with a nickname of Khrapfennudl, is a 9-year-old boy from Mühlh, born of a *reiter* and a *strickherin*, out of wedlock. Asked about his whereabouts in the past, he answers: “Sey 14 tag bey einem seiltanzer gewesen.”⁴⁴⁰ Georg's statement of having spent a fortnight with a tightrope-walker is an indicator to possible interactions among members of early modern marginal groups – in his threefold classification of dishonest professions of the Early Modern era, R. van Dülmen places beggars and all sorts of street performers into the third group, that of *fahrendes Volk*.⁴⁴¹ Georg is not questioned any further about this; his next substantial answer offers a succinct, but interesting account on the social interaction with his peers. What follows essentially reads as confabulation:

Ob er nit den Fränzl Wallner sonst Schernfanger genant, khenne? Was mit ihme gethan?

⁴³⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 192 and 194

⁴⁴⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 258

⁴⁴¹ R. van Dülmen : „Der infame Mensch. Unehrlliche Arbeit und soziale Ausgrenzung in der Frühen Neuzeit“, pp. 106-140, in R. van Dülmen (Ed.) : Arbeit, Frömmigkeit und Eigensinn, p. 111

Khenne ihn wol, dan er ihme constituto das erstmall bey dem sternwürth ein bier zalt das andermal sey er mit ihme auf Mürabell gangen, aldort er Fränzl mit bueben als Anderl, Thomerl und Pletschedl gespilt, er constituto aber sey davon gangen, und das dritemall bey St Sebastian, alwo ihm Fränzl befolchen, soll den leithen in die säckh greiffen, welches er aber nit gethan, sonder davon gangen.⁴⁴²

Here we learn not only that Salzburg boy beggars drank beer, but also that treating each other to beer served, like in our times, as interaction promoter. The other boy is the 13-year-old Fränzl Wallner, arrested in Salzburg in early 1678.⁴⁴³ Sometime after the beer treat, Fränzl invites Georg to play with three of his chums at Mürabell, but Georg leaves the premises for some reason. The third time, at St Sebastian, Fränzl orders Georg to engage himself in pick-pocketing, which he refuses to do and leaves the spot. This is an interesting example of peer pressure on the one hand, and response to it on the other. Although he accepts the beer treat, he does not let himself be bought, and refuses everything that ensues: to play with boys he deems suspicious, and to commit a morally reprehensible deed. The scenario described above could just as easily have been a depiction of modern circumstances. This section may well be the most trustworthy part of Georg's confession.

Nachdem ihme mit ruethen strachen getrohet worden, hat er bekhent, das vor drithalben iahr zu Mürabell ainer zu ihm khommen, und ihne zu dem friber brindl vor das virgili thor geführet, aldort zu ihm gesagt, wol ihm ain bier zahlen und was lehren.⁴⁴⁴

The person in question is, of course, Jackl. But, this part of the account should be viewed against the background of the previous episode. Here, too, we have the introductory beer treat, which, however, makes less sense in the context of the stranger's underlying intention: initiatory cutting the boy's toe (in the presence of the Devil). Considering that Georg reports Jackl to have "leichtes haar und khrumppe nasen", one is inclined to suspect that we are once again in the sphere of readily deliverable clichés. The cutting is said to have happened "in beysein der obigen bueben", although it is not clear who those boys might be; there are simply no other names available than the ones referring to Fränzl Wollner and his gang. The lot that Georg has decidedly declared to have distanced himself from suddenly becomes the audience of the diabolical initiation. This seems to confirm his depreciative opinion on them.

The rest of the confession is perfectly within the frame of the ordinary, and the magic Georg is supposed to have performed is also fairly modest:

⁴⁴² BayHStA HeA 10 c 258

⁴⁴³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 118

⁴⁴⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 258

Vor ainem halben viertl iahr hab er zu Sizenhamb mit einem schwarzen stüpl, so der teufl hergeben, drey paurnknecht und drey paurndirn, weil sie ihm nichts geben, dergestalt verhext, das die 3 ersten, wie ihm der teufl gesagt, er aber selbst nit gesechen, khranckh, die drey menschen aber khrumpp worden sein.⁴⁴⁵

The reason he states („weil sie ihm nichts geben“) does not necessarily derive from vindictive sentiments, but may in itself be just a repetition of what seems to make most sense in such an account. The superficial description of the magical action („dergestalt verhext, das...“) seems to betray ignorance of the matter, inasmuch as its validity has to be confirmed by the Devil. Weather magic exercises, on the other hand, appear to have been more exciting to Georg – maybe because any subsequent storm that actually happened in reality could persuade the little magician of his supernatural power. Again, the outcome is reported by the Devil:

Vor ainem viertl iahr hab er zu Perckhamb mit ainem schwarzen stüpl, welches er in die hech geworffen, dabey gscholten, und gesagt, gib dem teufl meinen herren und Gott den sorgen, das ein wetter wende, ain wetter gemacht, das tonnert, und, wie ihm der teufl gesagt, zway roß zu Lifering erschlagen habe.⁴⁴⁶

The end of the hearing is something of a curiosity. The two major denunciators, Veitl and Hämerl, having informed the court that Georg rescinded his confession in front of them, the judges demand the defendant to explain himself:

Weilen durch M Hämerl und Veitl vorkommen, das der constituto Wizing gegen ihnen beiden alles widerumb revociert, ist er hierüber zu red gestelt, von ihme aber die ursach dessen geben worden, das sie nit wissen sollen, das er dergleichen auch ainer seye, sonder, was er heut ausgesagt, alles der wahrheit gemeß sey.⁴⁴⁷

What was the reason for Georg withholding the confession from Veitl and Hämerl? Perhaps it was simply his integrity. It is most likely that Georg could have felt nothing but contempt for the two ‘traitors’ acting as the right hand of the court. Declaring himself in front of the authorities was, under the circumstances, inevitable. It seems that this boy did not want to accord the same pleasure to punks undeserving of his company. Being a warlock was one thing, being like the two of them was something else – at least as this 9-year-old boy understood it. He was nonetheless executed on 20th October 1678.

⁴⁴⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 261

⁴⁴⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 261-262

⁴⁴⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 262

Christian N.

The confession of Christian N., interrogated on 12th October 1678, is cryptic, in terms of being both confuse and incomplete. This hearing does *not* refer to either of the cases catalogued in Norbert Schindler's nomenclature as „N., Christian“ under numbers 58 (108)⁴⁴⁸ and 145 (109)⁴⁴⁹, respectively. Only the first page of the protocol is preserved, with some of the expressions being practically illegible. The text in its integral version is therefore given below:

Hat anfangs weder betten noch das creizmachen khönnen und sich für 14iährig angeben, aniezo aber sagt er seye 3 oder 4 iahr alt. Beym schnit, so gleich in einer halben stundt widerumben zuegehribet, und seiner einschreibung, der teufl ihme einen creuzer geben, und der Jackl ihme gehaissen, fleißig zu betten.

Zweymal sacril. f. comunicirt, dem zauberer Jäckhl die heyl. hosti geben darein gestochen, das bluet hoch aufgespritzt.

Auf den hexentanzten, warzue er mit dem teufl und Jackhl gefahren, sie einen pfeiffer und geiger gehabt.

Alle tag seye er aus gassl gangen, 2 oder 3 mahl aus sein ... gestiegen, so oder nit guet, sonder nur khalt gewesen.

Der zauberer Jackhl ihm und andere bueben auf die khuen hinaufgehebt, und khurdl nacher hassen, die geissen ihme stillegehalten.

Der fragen ob er teufl ihne öfters in der kheichen bey nacht sodomitice gebraucht und khalt eingelassen.

Die Khalber er mit dem Jager und bakhl gefahren, wein ... nöth und ... getrunckhen, auch mit menschen getanz⁴⁵⁰

Judging by the information that Christian N furnished the court with, he was either deranged, mentally challenged, or simply a great simulator. It is impossible to guess which of the alternatives apply in this particular case. The condensed form of the hearing protocol itself could indicate that an ordinary hearing of this individual was not possible for some reason. Apparently, the court was determined not to let any of the suspects go, however unfit for an interrogation they may have appeared to be. It is unclear why the protocol is sparse. The apparently irretrievable end of the document would have rounded up our knowledge in this respect.

We cannot be sure of the boy's age because of the way he himself rectifies the data. In Heinz Nagl's case study this defendant is catalogued as a 14-year-old⁴⁵¹, which implies that Nagl understood the portion „aniezo aber sagt er seye 3 oder 4 iahr alt“ as the boy's ironical joke. There was no third party present to consult on the matter of age establishing, as the case was with

⁴⁴⁸ N. Schindler : „Die Entstehung der Unbarmherzigkeit. Zur Kultur und Lebensweise der Salzburger Bettler am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts“, pp. 61-130, in *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* (1988), p. 110

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 125

⁴⁵⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 271

⁴⁵¹ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGS* (112/113), p. 532

Cristindl Khärfueß, the little girl who amused herself by saying she was 90. The great disparity between the two different ages indicated by Christian tends to colour both with a shadow of a doubt. Fourteen does sound more likely than ‚3 or 4‘, but is not necessarily true either.

The phrase that further discredits the boy’s confession is the part where he states „der Jäckhl ihme gehaissen, fleißig zu betten“. Nowhere else in the protocols is Jackl described as somebody who incites people to pray; thus, any underlying meaning of this remains opaque. That the boy could not recite a prayer or cross himself at the beginning of the interrogatory adds to the confusion. Maybe this was nothing but Christian’s clumsy attempt to counterbalance his ignorance of the Roman Catholic rites. Furthermore, even if we should venture to read the key verb as „betlen“ instead, the situation does not improve much, since begging would most likely have belonged to the defendant’s daily activities anyway. One thing that seems certain, though, is that this part of the story refers to what happened after the initiatory cut.

The part referring to host desecration reads „dem zauberer Jäckhl die heyl. hosti geben darein gestochen“. It appears that Jackl is the one to have stabbed the host after the defendant gave it to him. There is no description of the Sabbath, just the defendant’s confirmation of having been there. The sentence containing the phrase „nit guet sonder nur khalt gewesen“ might be a description of an intercourse with the Devil, given that *guet* : *khalt* (rather than „warmb : khalt“) occasionally serves as a binary pair of adjectives used to designate the Devil’s penis. The information is too scant for speculating on whether this signifies that Christian derived pleasure from a tabooed type of intercourse. The group bestiality scene again features Jackl as aiding the defendant and the other boys to sodomize domestic animals. In sum, nothing substantial is to be concluded from this mixture of Jackl-stereotypes, and the confession of Christian N. must be dismissed as a set of statements not based on fantasies of sorcery as much as on the boy’s attempt to deliver anything that nominally had to do with the Magician. Though Gerald Mülleder is bent on classifying the boy as ‚obviously mentally deficient‘, the Court saw no obstacle to the execution of Christian N. on 22nd December 1678.

Christian Khlain Elmauer

Not all of the alleged followers were beggars - some were considered marginal on other grounds, like Christian Khlain Elmauer, a lame (*khrumpp*) 25-year-old son of a woodcutter in Khlein Arl. From Christian’s introductory statements we learn that the handicap he was branded with (paralysis of the left hand) brought him no 100% exoneration from work:

Wie er sich ernährt, und wie er an der linggen hand khrump worden?

Sein vatter hab ihme zuessen geben, dabey er auch zuetragen müessen, und sey in muetterleyb khrumpp worden.

Was er dan zuetragen?

Sey mit einem arler bueben nahmens Blasi umb obst ausgangen.⁴⁵²

That this young man immediately afterwards - apparently without being compelled - confesses to having been cut by Jackl perhaps shows that the result of the labour division imposed by his father did not make him feel genuinely useful. We do not know which duties were allotted to his two brothers and three sisters, briefly mentioned at the beginning of the hearing. As we can see, Christian's contribution to the family's economy consisted of fruit-picking, an activity neither creative nor lucrative. The manner in which he describes the situation indicates that he probably felt as the alms-receiver of the family, since it was the father who had 'given him to eat'. Since he states having been born with the handicap, at the moment of the hearing he could look back on a quarter of a century of being an economic burden on his family. We do not know if fruit-picking was all the work he had ever been asked to perform. In addition, no information is provided as to how serious the handicap was. At any rate, it seems to have had its share of consequences on the psychological profile of Christian Elmauer. The crucial sentence declaring the nature of his physical condition is construed in a way that juxtaposes the roles of both of the parents - the figures he apparently could never successfully dissociate from: „Sein vatter hab ihme zuessen geben [...] und sey in muetterleyb khrumpp worden.“ Thus, the father is mentioned first, in his capacity of a demanding life-sustainer, and subsequently the mother, as a non-demanding life-giver. This is the only time that the mother is referred to. Judging by the court's question „Ob sein vatter oder geschwisterth wissenschafft haben, das er zaubern khönne?“⁴⁵³, she is probably deceased. Nonetheless, in spite of the brevity of the phrase, the mother functions as a conduit for some sort of guilt. Indeed, the defendant could have formulated his bodily state otherwise, e.g. by stating somethin along the lines of „I have always been like this“, and thus defining the lameness as an integral part of himself. The opposite seems to be the case, though: Christian namely understands his handicap as an anomaly accidentally ‚earned‘ in the womb, a symptom he could just as easily have been born without, had the circumstances been

⁴⁵² BayHStA HeA 10 c 274

⁴⁵³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 277

different. The ‚norm‘ he compulsively compares himself to is that of a healthy individual he could never become, because, being possibly constantly confronted to his supposed incapability of earning a living (especially considering that the father is an artisan), he appears to be a projection canvas for the family shadow. Marginalized within the microcosmos of his own family, Christian Elmauer seems to have been in desperate need of a magical redeemer: someone who would make him feel useful, but above all *needed*, and recruit him accordingly. The Jackl figure lended itself to this purpose. Christian also states that the initiatory cut has taken place two years prior to the hearing, probably in his eagerness to underline that this parallel ‚career‘ of his has got continuity. Considering Christian’s age, it is understandable that his report is essentially modest in terms of confabulation. Except for their role in furnishing him with a group structure he could belong to, the supernatural protagonists themselves appear to have been of little importance to him, which is why their differentiation is only rudimentary: „Ein jäger in einem grienen khleid, so der teufl gewesen [...] / Woher er gewust, das es der teufl sey? / Weil er ihme solches selbst gesagt.“⁴⁵⁴ Curiously enough, Christian’s pledge of allegiance to the Devil is unique in that the nature of the magical actions he has signed up to perform is stated with precision: „Sey wahr, das er alles mit aufhebung der zway schwör finger verläugnen, und dabey angeloben müssen, das er wolle wetter und meisl machen.“⁴⁵⁵ The defendant obviously wanted to utilize all the details of the Jackl legend he could come up with, maybe even as a mnemonic precaution. The secondary effect of this sort of delimitation, regardless of whether it was intended or not, implied an automatic exclusion of any other crimes that Christian Elmauer, as a follower of Jackl, could have been charged with. Summoning stormy clouds and conjuring mice sounded innocuous enough. But this defendant is not as harmless as that. When asked the routine question about any physical harm he may have inflicted to people or cattle, the answer he gives is (at least compared to the impression he initially creates) surprisingly brutal:

Ob er nit leuth und vich erkrumbt? Mit weme? Und wo?

Zway oder drey persohnen, als ain petlman in der Arl, welcher ihne umbbringen wollen mitls anschmirung ainer grienen salben, welche der teufl hergeben, hab er erkhrumbt, den zu Radtstatt ebenfalß einen petlman welcher ihne in der nürischen weiß schneiden wollen, und endtlichen ainen bueben zu ersagten Radtstatt nahmens Paul, umb willen er ihme was stellen wollen, auf obige weiß khrumpp gemacht, vich aber wedersprechendt.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 274

⁴⁵⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 274

⁴⁵⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 276

This looks like a perfect example for an alterity perception of a *marginal-to-marginal* type. The crucial word that sets him off on a roller coaster of verbal vengeance is the word „erkhrumbt“, since it directly reflects his own unintegrated ‚wound‘. That explains why beggars become his target. Even if the depicted situations are themselves far from impossible, the context sounds unreal. Violent beggars were, of course, not uncommon, but such murderous aggression is more likely to have been a result of one particular beggar’s pathology, rather than a feature invariably shared by all beggars in general. The second case is even more serious: Christian accuses a beggar for attempting to hurt him with a sharp object. However, he also adds that this was intended „in der nährischen weiß“, which means that the attack was probably simulated out of fun, or was not genuine for any other reason. It is interesting that Paul, the third victim in the row, is the only person to have a name - apparently designating beggars as such sufficed in Christian’s eyes. The transgression performed by Paul is somewhat cryptic, depending on the meaning of the word „stellen“. If the word means what it says („stellen“), it indicates, for instance, that the boy posed Christian a trap which made him stumble and fall - an example of children cruelty. However, if the word is a mispronunciation of „stehlen“, it signifies that Christian may have been very possessive of the few things that he owned. Hence, should anybody have tried to steal them, the act would unmistakably have touched the wasp’s nest of Christian’s own inferiority that his personal victimhood was based on. The fact that individuals who feel oppressed tend to redirect the violence to those inferior in strength and/or status is known to psychologists: „Das erleichternde Gefühl, jemand anderen verletzen zu können gaukelt uns vor, wir hätten die Macht wiedererlangt und seien nicht völlig ausgeliefert, da wir ja nach unten treten und einen anderen zum Opfer machen können.“⁴⁵⁷ Cattle, on the other hand, is no decisive factor in Christian’s universe, and is therefore exempt from any magical victimization on his part.

However, Christian as a weather magician is quite his usual, endearingly harmless self: „ainen regen gemacht, dabey gesprochen, solle in teufls nahmen regnen, darauf es geregnet, donnert, und risl geworffen, aber khainen sonder schaden gethan.“⁴⁵⁸ His helplessness is further enhanced by the statement he gives in relation to the Devil’s visits: „In der Arl ainmal, und wie er hieher khommen, auch ainmal, hab gesagt, soll mit ihme gehen, er aber nit gekhönt, ihme auch befolchen, soll nichts bestehen, sonsten von zauberersachen geredt, ainer den anderen im hintern gebraucht, und was

⁴⁵⁷ L. Greene : Abwehr und Abgrenzung, p. 249

⁴⁵⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 276

ihme der teuffl hinein gelassen, khalt gewesen sey.“⁴⁵⁹ Christian Elmauer’s Devil is stripped of most of his powers; the defendant does not construe him as a rescuer, but rather takes the responsibility for not being able to follow him. The conversation between the Devil and the defendant is devoted to ‚sorcerer stuff‘. This imprecise, half-hearted wording shows that the statement is simply meant to satisfy the requirements of the cliché. But it is also maybe the best indicator that, to the common folk of Salzburg archbishopric, sorcery was being more talked of than practiced. Or, more precise: talking of sorcery equalled practicing it. Which is exactly what this mass trial brought about. Elmauer was executed in November 1679.

The Debellackh family

Thanks to the confession of Elisabetha Wellackhin, the eldest child of the Slovenian family Debellackh, all of its members get arrested on suspicion of being Jackl’s acolytes. Elisabetha is the first one to be interrogated, but the hearing of her parents, according to the protocol, takes place almost simultaneously (26th October 1678 7 AM and 9AM, respectively).

From the information furnished by the *pater familias*, Andree Debellackh, we learn that this beggar family is originally from Carniola (Kranj in modern Slovenia), and that his wife and himself do not speak German, for which reason the court assigns them an interpreter:

Vor allem ist zu wissen, das weilen dieser Debellackhi und sein weib der deitschen sprach nit, sonder allain der windischen khindig, als ist Sebastian Assegg furger und gastgeb alhier für ainen dolmetscher gebraucht, [...] Er haisse Andre Debellackhi bey 33 iahr, in Crain gebürtig, sein weib nenne sich Ursula Khobianckhin, hab vier khinder List 12, Urschl 10, Simandl 6, und Geogl im driten iahr alt.⁴⁶⁰

When Andre denies ever to have heard of Jackl before, the court confronts him with the fact that Lisl (Elisabetha) has already confessed to bearing knowledge of her father’s incisions:

Weil sein tochter die Lisl schon berait bekhent, das er geschniten worden, als solle er die warheit bekhennen, vom weme er gezeichnet worden? Und wohin?

Sein tochter die Lisl mög es wol gesagt haben, sey aber nit wahr, zumahlen er zu Werfen schon besichtiget worden, aber ainiges zaichen an ihme nit gefunden haben.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 277

⁴⁶⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 320

⁴⁶¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 320

It is possible that, at the beginning of the interrogation, a big part of Andre Debellackh's composure stemmed from the fortunate outcome of the body visitation he had undergone at the court in Werfen. Ignoring this piece of information, the judges have Andre shaved and start a visitation of their own: „Hierauf er geschoren und besichtigt, auch in die 40 zaichen bey ihme gefunden worden.“⁴⁶²

After a break that implies a change of court assessors, and having redened the acquaintance with Jackl, Andre is confronted with his daughter, who confirms her accusations in German, and repeats them in Slovenian:

Ob zwar diese ihre gethane aussagen de novo widerumb bestettiget, solche auch also wahr zusein, ihme constituto als vattern von puncten zu puncten in windischer sprach under das gesicht gesagt, hat er doch solches alles widersprochen, vorgebende, man soll ihme nur den khopf nemmen, er wisse nichts. [...]

Weilen sein tochter ihme under das gesicht saget, das er den zauberer Jäggl wol khenne, als solle er nunmehr die warheit bekhennen.

Khenne den Jaggl nit, und khönne seiner tochter das maul nit spören.⁴⁶³

One could imagine how perplexed this man must have been upon being accused, by his own daughter, of a collusion with an inexistent person. The situation might possibly be compared to a modern-day immigrant ignorant of the host country's language being charged of a criminal action by his own semi-integrated child. The act of insisting on her father's guilt seems like a sheer display of power on the part of this 12-year-old girl, who probably enjoyed being able to throw a repetition of her story into his face in their mother tongue as well, possibly retaliating for some tense family dynamics from the past. The defendant, stubbornly declining what he knows is untrue, rhetorically pawns his own head in the name of truth: „man soll ihme nur den khopf nemmen, er wisse nichts“ (the court, as we shall see, will understand this self-defeating ultimatum of Andre's quite literally). We do not know whether the situation would have allowed any private, if brief across-the-room communication between the father and the daughter: an exchange of short phrases that might

⁴⁶² BayHStA HeA 10 c 320

⁴⁶³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 321

have escaped the court's attention, as in A. C. Doyle's short story *The Greek Interpreter*.⁴⁶⁴ At any rate, when asked to assume an attitude to Lisl's firmly repeated accusations, Andre Debellackh again denies it all, adding, with what reads like resignation, that he 'cannot shut her mouth'.

Elisabetha Welackhin, 11 years old ("die muetter gibt's für 12 iahr an"), delivers a story of Jackl approaching them at a *würtshaus* and inviting them to Altenmarckht:

Negst verschinen fasching sey der Jaggl ausserhalb freisach in ainem würtshaus zu ihnen khomen (+ ein khräxen, wie ein welcher crammer gehabt), und gesagt, sie sollen auf Altenmarckht (bey Radstatt) gehen, aldort er zu ihnen khommen, und etwas zahlen wolle, welches auch geschechen, und sie deponentin in der nacht aus khnöckhl rechter hand, den vatter ain wenig am buggl, und die muetter auf die rechte axl, die andere drey khinder aber nit geschniten worden, dern Jaggl auch das bluet in ein gschirl wie ein bixl aufgefangen, und der zugegen geweste jäger, so sheich und grien gekhlaiter war, nachdem er sie alle umb den namen gefragt, in ein auswendig schwarz, inwendig aber rothes buech geschriben, sie deponentin Urschl, den vatter Hänsel und die muetter Gerdl gehaissen, dem vatter auch drey groschen mit deme geben, das er teufel und Jaggl zu Salzburg schon widerumb zu ihm khommen wollen, und aldort stupp geben, das sie etwas lehrnen können, dabey ihnen auch befolchen, sollen nit mehr beten oder das creiz machen, mit unsern herren nit mehr umbgehen, sonder sollen ihne teufel lieb haben, die muetter auch ihren psalter hinweckh thuen, und damit unser liebe frau nit mehr ehren, welches sie auch zuthuen, und das sie wollen des teufls sein, versprochen, der Jäggl hernach sie auf Radstatt hinein geführt, und in beysein eines anderen menschen, nahmens Mariedl, so Jaggl bey sich gehabt und auch geschniten, khraut und khnödl und beer zalt, volgens der Jaggl das mensch bey der hand genommen und zur thür hinaus geführt.⁴⁶⁵

According to modern standards, Lisl would have counted as an adolescent. Her own emotional investment into the story could partially be explained with age-related rebellion that implies taking up a whole new set of values (Devil instead of God etc). In the second half of her statement the attention she devotes to Jackl and his girlfriend seem to express an interest in relationships and possibly physical intimacy. Lisl is probably too young to be interested in Jackl herself, but he does seem to exert a certain fascination on her, since he is construed as a 'man of possessions': he is able to pay for the food, he marks those who belong to him, and the girl he is with is unequivocally treated as a girlfriend. The father, on the other hand, is the one who receives "drey groschen" from the Hunter. Receiving money from representatives of the diabolical world is, admittedly, an aspect of the topos, but we do not know for sure whether this did or did not augment Andre Debellackh's inferiority in his daughter's eyes, or whether the entire story originated for retaliation reasons. After

⁴⁶⁴ A. C. Doyle : The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes. In this short story, first published in 1894, Holmes' client is commissioned by a group of shady characters to pose as an interpreter for their Greek, non-English speaking captive. Recognizing the illegality of the situation, he manages to discretely attach short personal questions to the ones they require him to direct to the prisoner, whose answers shed some light on the mysterious circumstances. During the interview, the criminals fail to register the parallel conversation going on between the interpreter and the Greek speaker.

⁴⁶⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 336-337

all, Jackl is a provider both of delicious food (“khraut und khnödl und beer”) and of tasty wine, which he makes accessible by blowing into the keyhole of the wine cellar: „alwo Jaggl in das schlissloch geblasen, welches gleich aufgangen“.⁴⁶⁶

But there are, apparently, two Lisls here. The one is a young girl, the other still a little girl in need of attention. Her account does not refer to the whole family at all – this may have been conditioned by the interrogator’s question “Ob nit der zauberer Jaggl bey ihr und ihren eltern gewesen?” (although other witnesses, when answering, have been known to extend the scope of persons involved, regardless of the way the question was framed) – but rather to the father, the mother and herself. The younger sister and two brothers are only implicitly mentioned (“die andere drey khinder aber nit geschniten worden”), and in a way that does not make it clear whether they were present or not. Indeed, it is at least rather curious that Lisl has the three of them rebaptized by the Hunter into names with the same consonance: Urschl-Hänsel-Gerdl. We are not in the sphere of nickname hybrids inspired by the animal kingdom, such as Fuchsschwanz and the like. Instead, there is an ordinary sequence of short Christian names, suggesting perhaps that the girl perceived the diabolical baptism as an act of being promoted into the sedentary mainstream. There is no reason to suspect Elisabetha Wellackhin, a bilingual child of Slovenian beggars, not to have been aware of the differences between her family and native residents of their host territory, the archbishopric of Salzburg. Her attempt to polish her parent’s and her own ‘image’ by choosing cute, innocuous Alpine-sounding names, perhaps betrays her wish to blend in with the local population. Another question that poses itself is why she chose the name of Urschl – that of her younger sister? Admittedly, the name may have been just randomly chosen. However, in light of the younger sister’s confession, given a week later, Lisl’s apparently innocent ‘identity theft’ appears to witness to a certain kind of sibling rivalry. In this account, Lisl is the only child, treated on a par with her parents, and the name assigned to her is the one belonging to a sister which may have been perceived to be getting more attention.

Lisl’s answer to the question related to the Eucharist reveals how limited the Debellackhs’ participation in church matters was: “Zu Golling hab sie in der gefenckhnuß beicht und Unseren herren empfangen, sonst aber nie, der vatter und die muetter haben solches nit verrichten khönnen, weilen sie niemandt verstanden.”⁴⁶⁷ Apparently there were no provisions for people who could not understand the language of the congregation.

⁴⁶⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 339

⁴⁶⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 337

Lisl's description of the Sabbath slightly differs from the convention, and thereby offers interesting insights:

Zu ihrer anknonfft hab ihr deponentin der teufl befolchen, sie solle tanzen, welchen sie hernach am ganzen leyb, sonderlich im vordern glid, den sie ins maul nemmen, und das sauere, so er ihr hinein gelassen, schlinden, dan auch im hintern khüssen und leckhen, den pffifferling aber sie ausgespieben, volgents mit ainem fezen und unsern herren ihne teufl, wie auch den Jaggl, seinen bueben, ihren vattern im hintern, die mueter aber und sie deponentin selbst im hintern und vordern auswischen müessen, [...] sie deponentin hab mit des Jäggl's bueb und ainem teufl, der vatter mit der mueter, Mariedl und ainer teuflin, die mueter aber auch mit einem teufl tanzt, mit welchen des Jaggl's bueb und teufl sie constituta hernach die unzucht getriben, vom bueben warmb vom teufel aber khalt empfunden, und habe der teufl solches mit ihr ein halbe stund, welches ihr wehe gethan, getriben, der bueb aber nit solang, auch dabey khein schmerzen gehabt, auf ihme bueben sey damals auch der teufl gelegen, und im hintern braucht, dergleichen auch vom vatter mit einer teuflin, und auf ihme auch ein teufl, von der muetter aber mit einem anderen teufl verüebt worden, welches sie deponentin gesechen⁴⁶⁸

The introductory kissing and licking of the Devil's body is accompanied by an act of fellatio performed by the initiate. Whereas the majority of the accounts describe Devil's sperm simply as *unflath*, Lisl instead specifies that its taste was ‚acid‘. This in itself is not enough of an argument to affirm that the little girl may have been talking of something actually experienced, but her persistence in having been sexually active with the brothers does add a certain weight to the credibility of the fellatio scene. Assuming that Lisl was in this case reminiscing rather than confabulating, it is not impossible to assume that the swallowed sperm can have been acid, the quality which, in itself, can be traced back to the quality of the food the male partner has ingested.⁴⁶⁹ On the other hand, we should not read too much into Lisl's usage of the adjective ‚sauer‘, which could have been used simply to designate the opposite of, or anything other than, ‚süß‘.

The part which describes Lisl's swallowing and spitting out of the Devil's excrement witnesses to the little girl's imaginative faculties. In the context of the statement above, the term *pfifferling* (meaning ‚chanterelle‘) does not seem to indicate a mushroom, but faeces. In this respect, it may have been some baby talk euphemism referring to animal, rather than human excrement (most of the descriptions that deal with desecration make use of the word ‚khot‘ i.e. ‚menschenkhot‘ when referring to the latter). This might indicate that, despite the Devil's anthropoid appearance, his ‚goat‘ emanation was permanently present in the mind of the children, dictating the way his actions

⁴⁶⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 338-339

⁴⁶⁹ See table 8.3 *Factors Affecting Taste of Ejaculate* in R. Crooks & K. Baur : *Our Sexuality*, p. 226

were perceived i.e. construed. The ‚pflifferling‘ in question seems rather like a piece of goat or sheep excrement, the marble shape of which made Lisl imagine (for lack of an appropriate experience) that, if taken into the mouth, the thing could have been spat out easily. Curiously, the Devil takes no notice of it, and no further action in this sense is forced upon her, as with Sabbath initiates who refuse to swallow his *unflath*. What follows next is rather an act of collective wiping of the bodily orifices, the scene having taken a ‚cleaning‘ (one might even say ‚cleansing‘) direction. The act is differentiated along gender lines: it is Lisl herself who does the wiping of the Devil’s, Jackl’s, his boys‘ and her father’s behinds. Lisl’s mother and Lisl herself do it on their own. That this happens ‚im hintern und vordern‘ perhaps betrays the belief that the filth inherent in the female sexual organs was symbolically identical to that of the defecation orifice. The host would thus have been all the more humiliated. As with other host desecration scenarios, the host pierced with needles shots only blood into the air, any traces of excrement with which it is supposed to have been impregnated having miraculously disappeared.

The orgy that ensues after the dance features Lisl copulating with both one of Jackl’s boys and the Devil. Mating with the Devil lasts half an hour, and, as usual, proves to be painful, ‚der bueb aber nit solang, auch dabey khein schmerzen gehabt‘. Since these accounts usually feature sex with a human being, which serves only to reinforce the unnatural effects of copulating with the Evil One, we should not read too much into this particular description. On the other hand, there is something of a continuity in Lisl’s construal of the degradation of male participants, whose passivity is emphasized: Jackl’s boy has harmless, short sex with her, but is in his turn sodomized by the Devil, the father enjoys a she-devil’s charms, but suffers similar treatment as well. This section ending with the (normally superfluous) words ‚welches sie deponentin gesechen‘ confirms Lisl’s curiosity in carnal matters. It is not clear whether the phrase refers to the whole orgy scene, or just the mother’s intercourse ‚mit ainem anderen teuffl‘.

The confession of the younger sister, Ursula, brings sharp edges into the story. A bracketed remark specifies that, according to her mother, the girl was eight years old. Ursula herself could not or would not state her age at the beginning of the interrogation. Since there is no reason why her own age should not have been known to her (at least approximately), this may read as a general expression of wariness in an individual distrustful of the authorities, especially when inquiring: ‚wisse nit wie alt, noch wo vatter, muetter und Lisl seye‘.⁴⁷⁰ The second statement indicates that she may have been held in the dark about the lot of the rest of the family i.e. that the judges had extra reasons to sequester her. Upon her confirming she had been at the *wirtshaus* in Freisach, and

⁴⁷⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 342

denying ever to have heard of Jackl before, she is subjected to a body visitation for the purpose of checking her virginity status. As in the case of the 5-year-old Cristindl Khärfuessin, this is done first informally, „durch des amtmanns schwägerin“⁴⁷¹, and then by a sworn midwife, Regina Weingartnerin, who states „das sie auf vorgangene besichtigung dises dirndls nit mehr rain oder für ain jungfrau befunden“.⁴⁷² The ‚truth‘ is now supposed to emerge, and the judges start out again, questioning her age:

Wie alt sie aigentlich seye?

Zechen iahr.

Weil sie auf besichtigung für khain jungfrau befunden worden, als solle sie sagen, wer ihr solche genommen?

Der vatter sey ihr auf dem bauch gelegen⁴⁷³

Due to the lack of substantial evidence, the age question shall remain unsolved. The persistence of the judges to determine this one basic fact must have been justified, however. Perhaps Ursula looked too old for the age indicated by her mother, who may have done this in order to protect the daughter in terms of devaluating the impact of any confessions she would subsequently make. The next answer gives proper background to Ursula’s astounding statement of having been sexually abused by her father:

Nachdeme sie aber mit 3 oder 4 ruetenstraich leidenlich angesechen worden, hat sie gegen dem Daniel dolmetscher in crainischen sprach bekhent, das nit ihr vatter sonder ain ander iunger kherl ohne bart in einem dirchenen khleid und wie ein teuflischer mensch, auch wie sie von ihrer muetter gehört, der Jaggl solle gewesen sein, zu Mautendorff im wirtshaus die jungfrauschafft genommen.⁴⁷⁴

Not nearly as cooperative as her sister, Ursula had to suffer a couple of branch blows before opening up. It seems that the truth could have crossed Ursula’s lips only in her native tongue. What she confessed to was perhaps too embarrassing to say directly, or the pain-induced stress might have caused a temporary blackout, which, in its turn, made her switch to Slovenian automatically.

⁴⁷¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 342

⁴⁷² BayHStA HeA 10 c 342

⁴⁷³ BayHStA HeA 10c 342

⁴⁷⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 342

However, the easiness with which the girl accused her father of incest, in an attempt to divert attention from the ‚culprit‘ actually responsible for her defloration sheds new light on the spirit in which such confessions were made. We can judge the image of Andre Debellackh in his daughters‘ eyes to have been rather poor. One cannot say whether this had anything to do with the family‘ s precarious situation, in which both of the parents failed to offer an adequate role-model for coping with everyday challenges (especially since they knew no German and Andre was blind), or the interaction between Andre and the girls really did leave something to be desired. The fact is that neither of the two girls refrained from denouncing him. Aged eight or ten, Ursula was old enough to know that a father-daughter incest was a taboo the discovery of which would shock the adults, and she played that particular card without hesitation. What she had not counted on was the cool disbelief of the judges. Pressed on by the branch blows to say the truth, Ursula cracks, delivering a banal story of a virginity lost to a young, no-name crook at the *Wirtshaus* in Mautendorff. But, since it has been made clear to her that untimely defloration is a sin, somebody has got to take the blame, and that somebody is Jackl the magician. The young perpetrator is therefore construed as a person of diabolical appearance, and Ursula adds that it may possibly have been the archbishopric‘ s enemy no. 1: „wie sie von ihrer muetter gehört, der Jaggl solle gewesen sein“. This is an interesting example of how a simple intercourse gets blown out of proportion in the context of a witch hunt interrogatory. She reports that Jackl - apparently immediately after having had his way with her - in a sort of post-coital missionary zeal distributes initiatory cuts to the whole family, with standard registration into a (this time white) book. To make him appear as non-Christian as possible, Ursula adds „und hab dieser kherl, welcher den rosenkhrantz nit leiden noch das beten hören, sonder gleich zur thür hinaus geloffen, auch alle leuth in der nacht schneiden wollen.“⁴⁷⁵ The last statement is supposed to diminish Ursula‘ s own responsibility for what happened, for similar fate was to have been reserved for all good Christians that Jackl would hunt down that night. Ursula‘ s mention of a rosary (supposedly frowned at by Jackl) witnesses of a pronounced religious streak she seems to have inherited i.e. absorbed from her father. She is the only one among the accused beggar children to situate the Devil in the context of the ‚cross pillars‘ , and she does it in the same, religious, vein as she specifies that „der teufl aber, welcher die creizsaun geforchten, sey in die näche nicht hinzue khommen.“⁴⁷⁶ But this retroactive self-image rehabilitation of Ursula‘ s is spiced with faith only so as to heave suspicion over to the other family members - her parents, but especially the father. Her answer to the question regarding host desecration tendentiously profiles the father as a confident

⁴⁷⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 344

⁴⁷⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 345

insider: „Wie ihr der vatter gesagt, hab Jaggl der mueter ain heilige hosti gebracht, in welche sie alle mit einem messer gestochen und zu stickhl zerschniten“.⁴⁷⁷ Ursula herself is but an innocent pawn forced to follow the magician’s directions. A variation of the host treatment in this little girl’s version implies that the host, after having been mistreated and sullied, is thrown away into the toilet: „hernach mit fuessen getreten, darauf gebislet und gehofiert, volgents in haimblich gemach geworffen“.⁴⁷⁸

Ursula’s Sabbath report contains, like Lisl’s, details of oral sex and scatological themes. She grapples with the cliché in her own way, but without Lisl’s elegant logic:

Wan sie dahin khommen, hab sie dan teufl am rockh, in henden, im hintern, und vorn an seinem glid, welches er ihr auch ins maul geben, und was er hinein gelassen, khalt gewesen sey, davon sie ein ganze wochen nichts essen khönnen, und aller khrözige, khüssen, auch im hintern leckhen, davon ihr das wang gros aufgeschwollen, und sehr gestunckhen⁴⁷⁹

Unsurprisingly, the symptoms of the ordeal proposed by Ursula have very little to do with both of the mentioned activities. Licking the Devil’s behind makes her cheek swell, whereas the cold unspecified substance from his *membrum virile* is imagined to inflame the throat on the inside and hamper food ingestion, as well as provoke an itch. What Ursula in fact describes are symptoms of some mild ailments she is likely to have experienced in her short life. This is, indeed, a nice example of the way children’s fantasies correlate with reality. We can also ask ourselves what real-life event may have inspired the statement she gives regarding the guests of the Sabbath: „bey dem tanz haben sich etliche mascara, so im gesicht schwarz, darunter auch etliche herren, welche sich in frauen khlaider angelegt, befunden“.⁴⁸⁰ The description is highly reminiscent of a carnival travesty, and the closest geographical point which could possibly have featured such a scene would have been late 17th-century Venice. We have already mentioned that the Debellackh family was originally from Carniola, which lies northeast of Trieste in Italy i.e. only two gulfes away from Venice. Another possibility is that, during their wanderings across the area, the Debellackhs might have witnessed a public performance of an *ensemble* of travelling comedians. Any such scene would have been perceived - by a child less than eight years old - as something quite extraordinary on the one hand, and something fairly difficult to classify on the other. Given that the hearings

⁴⁷⁷ BayHStA HeA 10c 345

⁴⁷⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 345

⁴⁷⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 345

⁴⁸⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 345

functioned also as imaginary competitions (with admittedly rigid rules), placing such a mental picture into the context of a witch dance would have been the most logical thing a child could do. When commenting on the account given by the 8-year-old Karen Iffuersdatter during a North Norwegian witch trial in 1663, Liv H. Willumsen underlines that the little girl „might have been describing what she had seen through a window when wealthy people were having a party“.⁴⁸¹ What is more, even after having considered the caveat according to which the scribes would have ‚watered down‘ the original statement, Ursula seems to formulate the description in a rather clear-cut way, that makes one think some contents that have already been stored are being duly reproduced with an accuracy of a detached, but keen observer. Finally, it does not surprise that the queer figures of this briefly described scene do not interact with Ursula at the Sabbath. They belong to another world, and though the little girl’s imagination includes them in the narrative, they remain static and essentially non-integrated.

Asked about having delved in weather magic, all that Ursula can deliver is a fascinated report of Jackl who demonstrates his powers in front of her brothers and sisters. The scene is said to have taken place in Carinthia and Carniola, which perhaps witnesses of the bond that the girl felt for her native soil:

Der Jäggl hab in beysein ihrer, und der eltern sambt denen geschwisterthen in Cärnten und Khrän zway wetter gemacht, welche alles erschlagen, darzue er ain khugl gebraucht, und wan er selbige auf den boden geworffen, seye das feuer davon gangen, und das wetter entstanden.⁴⁸²

Jackl’s performance of creating weather with a fire thrown down to the ground differs from the ‚powder and salves‘ scenario; it appears to be closer to conceptions of coping with the forces of nature typical for Slavic folklore.

In the end, none of the Debellackh children were executed, apparently because of their tender age. Instead of that, they were given for adoption (*Auferziehung*). Andree, the father, was exiled. The only family member sentenced to death was Andree’s wife Ursula. However, since Ursula’s interrogatory features no essential aspects relative to the daughters’ statements, it has not been considered here. She was executed on 29th November 1678.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ L. H. Willumsen : Seventeenth-Century Witchcraft Trials in Scotland and Northern Norway, p. 216

⁴⁸² BayHStA HeA 10 c 346

⁴⁸³ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGS*L (112/113), p. 525

Khärfues' story, being packed with details, is particularly interesting. He was one of the four children in a family of beggars, born of Philipp Khärfues and Sara Händlin. Although he was stated not to have been aware of his age, the information given by his mother offer us 4th, 5th or 6th December 1670 as his possible birthday, his eighth birthday having been due six weeks after the hearing. In his own words, he was a full-time beggar with no artisan skills: "mit betlen sich ernährendt, khönne sost khain handwerch".⁴⁸⁴ The hearing undertaken on 21st October 1678 was a consequence of an earlier interrogatory held at the *ambthaus* in Golling, "Weil er sich zu Golling im ambthaus öffters geriembt, er khönne razen, maisl, und färkhl machen".⁴⁸⁵ One of the two magic powders necessary for this operation was the green one; Fränzl felt it necessary to add that it was the one belonging to his mother.

Fränzl's perception of the magic is fairly simple – he confirms having dug a hole in the ground, out of which ran mice, piglets and little deers, "welches von ihme nur ainmall geschechen. Sonst aber sey sein deponentens muetter die andere wochen hernach auch zum Jäggl khommen".⁴⁸⁶ Indeed, he seems to have been anxious of involving his mother in the case: he tried to include her into all scenes, whenever possible, always carefully emphasizing that the father had nothing to do with it. For instance, the mother is supposed to have been present during one of Jackl's metamorphoses into various animals: „Sey wahr, das er sich zu einen storkh, schäb und andern machen khönne, wie er sich dan im Goserwald unweit der Abbtenua aber zu einer khue gemacht habe, dabey auch sein deponentens mueter, der vatter aber nit gewesen“.⁴⁸⁷

Fränzl's abuse of the holy pillars is extremely mild, compared with what was established as standard in mistreating the images of Jesus and Mary (throwing animal and human excrements at them and treating them a colourful range of particularly nasty names): „Die martersäuln hab er zu Ischl und Gosarn ieden orths ainmall die feigen zaigen, mit stain und erden khott anwerffen, unsern herren ainen schelben, dieb und hundstaschen, unser liebe frau aber ain huer und zanckh haissen müessen, khön auch nit widersprechen, das er zu Golling dem cruzifix die feigen gewisen habe.“⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 280

⁴⁸⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 280

⁴⁸⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 281

⁴⁸⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 281

⁴⁸⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 282

Then again, it could be that the „feigen zeigen“ truly was the worst insult this little boy could think of.

He obviously had his own understanding of things they interrogated him about. The sense of “viech erkhrümmung” obviously escaped him. When asked whether Jackl had thrown mortifying spells on cattle, Fränzl expressly denies it. But then he adds that Jackl actually did throw a spell on a pig, and that they both had ridden on it (which seems to be the highlight of the description):

Hab ihme Jaggl niemahlen geholffen, sonst auch ain oder anders selbst dergleichen nit verüebt, der Jaggl aber [...] hab in der Abbtenu auf der gassen ein schwein erkhrumbt, darauf Jäggl gesessen und ihne constitutum mitgenommen, und gegen dem tag gefahren [...] und nachdeme ein schwein von dem hintern haus heraus gangen, hab Jäggl ein pulver darauf gesträth, auf welche sie beide gesessen, und auf Hallein zu einem paurn [...] gefahren [...] der Jaggl aber neben einen anderen bueben, nahmens Hänsl auf der sau verbliebt, weiter gefahren sey.⁴⁸⁹

To this child, Jackl is a source of fabulous excitement. The two of them riding on a pig makes one think of Astrid Lindgren’s classic *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa*, in which a boy explores Sweden while flying on a goose. The fantasy of being ‘driven’ around by an admirable youth, older than himself, is perceived as a precious but short-term kind of honour, since, at the end of the account, another boy takes up his passenger seat on the enchanted pig. As for Hänsl, the other beggar boy, “ihne Hänsl hab der Jaggl in der Abbtenu am betlen aufgefangen”.⁴⁹⁰

Fränzl has no shortage of ideas regarding Jackl’s magic. In his accounts the magician unlocks the door of a wine cellar with powder, makes brooms fly, and exerts power over household articles according to the *pars pro toto*-principle:

mit fernerer erinnerung, das wan Jäggl von dem besen nur ein zwickh oder reistll nemmet, der besen ihme nachvolgen, ingleichen wan er von einem sib ein haar aisziechet, selbiges im ganzen haus durch hexerey umb und umb auch hin und wider fahren endlich ihme nachfolgen thuet.⁴⁹¹

This rich confession contains an example of Jackl’s sheer malice – an exercise of unwarranted vengeful magic used against a generous peasant:

Constituto bekhent ferners, das fert im sommer, ehe die khirschen zeitig worden, der Jaggl einen paurn zu Jahrdorf [...] so ein iunger mann, schwarzes haar, ohne bart, ein altes weib, und siben khinder hat, und ihme constituto brot und khrapfen offt geben [...],

⁴⁸⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 283-284

⁴⁹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 284

⁴⁹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 289

dergestalt khrumpp gemacht [...] hete der Jaggl aus lauter muetwillen, ein weisses stupp auf den weeg [...] nidergestrath [...] nachdeme er darüber gangen gleich an einem fueß khrumpp worden, und auf ein khnie fallen müssen.⁴⁹²

Even though a lot of Jackl's attributes may be the little confessors' own projections, the characteristics which come to the fore in some situations clearly refer either to him, or the dominant gang member whom he represents. Fränzl also depicts him as a man who reacts with impatience and brutality: „und wäre er constituto gern vom Jaggl gangen, weil er ihne wegen seines langsamen gangs geschlagen“.⁴⁹³

The court exerts the usual pressure with the help of its two 'official' denunciators, Veitl und Maister Hämerl, who accuse Fränzl's mother Sara Händlin of host desecration (and the entire family of witch dance participation) during her confrontation with her son. In the next day's confession Fränzl retells a scene of stealing a goblet from a local church, the participants being Jackl, Fränzl's mother and Fränzl himself. Here, too, the father is absent from the story, “der vatter aber sey ain dessen am hallein in einem haus unweit des Thanners”.⁴⁹⁴ Jackl exchanges the goblet for wine, which he drinks together with Sara Händlin.

Curiously enough, two details in the boy's confession make the ecclesiastical order appear in a rather unfavourable light. He describes how Jackl got besprinkled with holy water by a priest in Ischl, and that he, Fränzl, went to a witch dance accompanied by a priest. Asked whether his parents were there as well, he answers, quite expectedly: “Der vatter nit, die mueter aber woll.”⁴⁹⁵ The account of the witch dance also contains a description of host desecration which his mother performs with a needle, whereas Jackl and himself do it with knives – a conveniently construed gender distribution of weapons. For all his willingness to discredit his mother, he declines pronouncing his accusations in front of her, “der ursachen [...], weil sie ihne ausgerinte”.⁴⁹⁶

The official, non-crossed-out version of the diabolical intercourse:

⁴⁹² BayHStA HeA 10 c 289

⁴⁹³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 281

⁴⁹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 286

⁴⁹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 287

⁴⁹⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 290

Die unzucht damit [*NB with the female devil*] getrieben dazumahlen auf ihme auch der teufl gelegen, im hintern (#fast ein halbe stundt lang gebraucht, welches ihme sehr wehe gethan, und solches ----en tag lang empfunden, hete auch der teufl, ohngeackht er och und wehe geschrien, nit aufgehörth), von beiden habe er khalt empfunden⁴⁹⁷

The foreplay to the intercourse usually consists of a fellatio, rarely accompanied by the grotesque task of eating the Devil's feces. This particularity is also included:

Am ganzen leyb, sonderlich im hintern, und im vordern glid ([...] so khalt gewesen, und ihme die haut geschauert), welches er ins maul nemmen, und was er ihme hinein gelassen, schlinden müessen, gekhüst, im hintern geleckht (# und koth ins maul bekommen, so gar vast gestunckhen, und mit einem hadern, auch unseren herren <das ist die heylige hosti> welche Jaggl hergeben, ausgewischt⁴⁹⁸

The boy also confesses to having had intercourse with his sister:

Sey wahr, das er, neben dem Gotthardt und dem teufl ihr auf dem bauch gelegen, und sein vorders glid derselben in den leyb gethan, und das gesaichet hinein gelassen, welches die andern zwen als teufl und Gotthard, wie er gesechen, auch verüebt haben, und dises sey miten im sommer, ehe das er einkommen, geschechen⁴⁹⁹

Given that at the time when this incestuous scene was supposed to have taken place Fränzl was 7 ½ years old, it is not very likely that the event involved him penetrating the sister and ejaculating into her. On the other hand, his brother Gotthard, who at the time of the arrest was 13 years old, would have been 12 at the time of the incident. If an incestuous intercourse between the sister and the brother had really happened, it is more probable that it involved Gotthard rather than Fränzl, who, out of sibling rivalry, could have reshaped the story, so as to shine in all his sexually mature 'manliness', a stage in which he had been preceded by his brother. It is impossible to ascertain whether he did this to retroactively shape up the image of himself screaming "och und wehe" during the diabolical intercourse, or for some other reason. At any rate, both scenes featuring Fränzl (as a passive victim and as an active perpetrator) are in a way complementary.

Fränzl Khärfues was considered too young to be executed. He was given out for adoption instead.

⁴⁹⁷ BayHStAHeA 10 c 288

⁴⁹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 287

⁴⁹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 290-291

The Khärfueeses: Cristindl Khärfues (sister of Fränzl)

Surely the most unusual confession given by a member of the Khärfueß family is the deposition of Sara's and Philipp's only daughter, Cristindl, who secures attention by the very first statement, that relating to her age:

Haisse Cristindl Khärfuessin, und gibt anfenglich vor, das sie zechen iahr, gleich darauf aber, das sie auf ostern 90 iahr alt werde, der eltern vorgeben nach werdt sie khünfftig carfreytag 6 iahr alt.⁵⁰⁰

Appearing to be older than one is seems to have been of some importance to this 5-year-old girl. The judges may have been somewhat sympathetic to this bout of childishness, given that they duly protocollized the entire process of establishing her age, rather than just stating the essential point. In Cristindl's version of the story, the Hunter has no characteristics other than being ugly and long-haired („dabey auch ain scheicher jäger mit lang habenten haar gewesen“⁵⁰¹). Long hair is not a feature frequently ascribed to supernatural (i.e. witch) beings; Jackl is, in fact, the only one usually described with long hair. Hence, one might assume that Cristindl either accidentally mixes up the elements from Jackl-stories picked up from her family members, or simply dislikes long-haired men for whatever reason. In her statement she makes herself look helplessly overpowered by her parents and Jackl in their attempts of prodding her to bad behaviour, such as host desecration:

Der Jäggl und ihr mueter haben wol die heilige hosti gehabt, in welche sie zwar anfangs nit gern aus der muetter, vatter und Jaggl's bevelch ober mit messer steckhen müessen, das bluetig worden, hernach alle in ein schaff, vorhero aber auf unsern h, und zwar sie deponentin aus der mueter gehaiß fünffmal gehofiert, und ainmal, wie Jaggl befolchen, und sie darzue getriben, gebislet, das aigen khott gethan, und unsern herren darein graben⁵⁰²

The scatological character of this account may, indeed, be traced back to the anal phase of a child's psychosexual development. However, since the little girl seems to derive no particular pleasure from defecation, which is here construed as a rather cumbersome duty, the described scene is more likely to have something to do with toilet training. The idea that everyone present (the Khärfueß family and Jackl) defecates into a washtub might indicate that the proper kind of handling her physiological needs has been mastered by Cristindl sometime before (perhaps not too long ago,

⁵⁰⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 349

⁵⁰¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 349

⁵⁰² BayHStA HeA 10 c 349

given the emphasis it gets). This approach, admittedly, contains the danger of overinterpreting the unavoidable topos of defecating onto the host, of which Cristindl's statement may have been just another variation that needs no further looking into. Both scenes being included, it seems that the 'barrel act' has got priority over the 'host act' - even though the latter chronologically precedes it, the 'barrel act' is mentioned first: „hernach alle in ein schaff, vorhero aber auf unsern h“. The mother allegedly forces Cristindl to defecate five times in a row, whereas Jackl „befolchen, und sie darzue getriben“ both to urinate and defecate. In the child's fantasy, authority figures incite her to alleviate herself unrestrainedly, instead of sanctioning it, which seems like an inversion of a real life scene.

When questioned whether she has attended the Sabbath dance with her parents, Cristindl encompasses the whole family into her statement:

Sie deponentin, der vatter, mueter, Fränzl und Gotthardt sein auf einem bockh gesessen und gefahren, suppen, fleisch, khnödl, khrapfen und bratwurst gessen, wein, bier, und möth getrnckhen, dabey auch drey spilleith als geiger gewesen, und sie deponentin hernach mit dem Gotthard, fränzl ihren gebuedern, und einem anderen scheichen mann getantz, volgents sich alle zu ihr gelegt, und die unzucht getriben, welches ihr wehe gethan gehabt, und warmb empfunden.⁵⁰³

There is no way of getting to the bottom of this incestuous scene solely through the witness's description, and the judges know this. An examination of the little girl's vaginal orifice is undertaken instantly by a couple of female officials; on the next day, a sworn midwife makes her deposition on the same matter:

Als sie hierauf von des amtmans weibspersohnen am haimblichen orth besichtigt, und selbiges von ihnen all zu weit schon befunden worden, hat man für guet angesehen, das sie auch durch die geschworene hebam besichtigt worden. [...] Regina Weingartnerin geschworne hebam bringt vor der hochfürstl. commission vor, das sie diese am haimblichen orth besichtigt, aber nit mehr rain oder für ain jungfrau befunden habe, zumallen solches vill weiter als die Ursula Debellaackhin offen sey, welches sie auch auf leyblichen ayd bezeugen khönne.⁵⁰⁴

The midwife confirms the grotesque preliminary evaluation made by the women at the court, that of Cristindl being 'found to be too wide', in that she declares the little girl not to be 'pure' anymore. Needless to say, this traditional way of ascertaining virginity is entirely unscientific. It is a gynaecological fact that hymen, the membrane which partially closes the opening of the vagina, can in some cases be positioned in a way which creates the illusion that an intercourse has already taken

⁵⁰³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 349

⁵⁰⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 349-350

place. According to a recent medical study, „many findings previously thought to be indicative of sexual abuse are now recognized to be normal variants or nonspecific abnormalities.“⁵⁰⁵ In fact, it is Cristindl’s fairly relaxed attitude about having been sexually abused that makes the story not particularly credible, at least against the background of the pathetic screams her brother allegedly uttered while being raped by the devil. Indeed, Cristindl’s only distinct emotion relative to the intercourse scene is that „ihr wehe gethan gehabt, und warmb empfunden“, a description neither emotionally engaged nor elaborate enough for presuming a case of child abuse. It seems justified to ask oneself whether the 5-year-old girl actually understood the meaning of the expression „unzucht getriben“, especially given that her actual words were customarily transformed into legal jargon. In the end: „Als dieser delinquentin hierauf ihre gestrige depositiones deutlich abgelesen worden, hat sie nit allain solche durchgehends bestättiget, sonder auch dabey die erinnerung gethan, das der sheiche mann der erste gewesen, welcher auf ihr gelegen sey.“⁵⁰⁶ The defloration is, therefore, neither of her two brothers’ doing. Instead, it is ascribed to an unidentified Sabbath participant. Fränzl’s statement relative to the incest with his sister bears the same date as Cristindl’s deposition. This indicates not only that the court instantly reacted to this information by an extensive additional hearing of her brother, but, more importantly, that the incest scenario - placed in a surreal context of the Sabbath - originated from the little girl herself. In Fränzl’s confession, on the other hand, the Sabbath is not explicitly mentioned, and the boy dates the incident to sometime during the previous summer. Curiously enough, the word ‚teufl‘ appears nowhere in Cristindl’s account. The „scheicher Mann“ could, of course, stand for the Devil, who he only vaguely resembles. Fränzl, however, clearly names the Devil as the third male party involved in the intercourse, and that seems to have sealed the matter in the eyes of the court.

Like Fränzl, Cristindl had her life spared and ended up in an adoptive family. It is assumed that this was also the case with their brother, the baby Matthias.

The Khärfueses: Sara Händlin (mother of Fränzl)

Fränzl Khärfueß’s 44-year-old mother Sara Händlin tries to neutralize the effects of her son’s confession by enhancing the innocuous character of the entire family: “sie beide ehrleith ernöhren

⁵⁰⁵ N. D. Kellogg, M. D. / J. L. Lukefahr, M. D. (eds.) : The Medical Evaluation of Child and Adolescent Sexual Abuse, p. 57, URL <http://69.89.31.170/~missout9/safecaremo/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/medical-evaluations-of-sexual-abuse-manual.pdf> [accessed 9th December 2010]

⁵⁰⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 350

sich mit den khindern am betlen, und gehe sie aniezo mit schwangeren leyb".⁵⁰⁷ A *besichtigung* which immediately follows fails to confirm Sara's pregnancy, however. The hearing reveals that Sara delved in healing magic. Of the two powders to have been found upon her person, the green one was used to make noodles, the grey one "aber einem pfefferstupp gleich hab ihr vor zway iahr die teufferyla oben bey St Georgen, als ihr mann khranckh gewesen, geben".⁵⁰⁸ The fact of her healing magic activities is now established, throwing an ominous shadow over all of her previous actions, which includes an interestingly construed suicide attempt during her Golling incarceration:

Warumb sie sic him ambthaus zu Golling zwaymahl erhenckhen woollen, soll es ohne sheikh eröffnen?

Weil man sie also abgehendert, dahero ursach gehabt, ungestiemb zu sein, das sie sich zwaymal erhenckhen wollen, davon aber ihr mann sie erreth, der teuffl hab angeschundten, und zu ihr gesagt, sie soll sich erwürgen, wie er sie dan auch selbst würgen wollen, warauf sie das füruech aufgelest, und mit dem bäntrl auch der ursach henckhen wollen, weilen ihre gefaters leith am Hallein Khramer Michl vorgesagt, man werde sie auf Salzburg führen, und aldort das üben/klen(??) nemmen.⁵⁰⁹

She appears to have been starved by the Golling authorities for being disobedient (her other excesses consisted of spitting out the food brought by the *gerichtsdienlerin*⁵¹⁰). But the suicide attempt is not solely due to the effects of the starvation. She ultimately confesses she was taught by 'insiders' to dread her transfer to Salzburg, where beggars could expect the worst. Suicide being a theological sin, the wisest way to justify it is to weave the Devil into the whole story, and in a manner that leaves no alternative, since failing to strangle herself would have implied her being strangled by the Devil anyway.

The situation worsens, as the judges face her with a threat she uttered while in Golling prison:

Warum sie öfftters gesagt, das wan sie aldort zu Golling nit bald ausgelassen werde, sie das khleine khind umbbringen wolle?

Sey zwar wol wahr, das sie gesagt, wolle ihre khinder ins schaff steckhen, sey aber ihr ernst nit gewesen.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 294

⁵⁰⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 295

⁵⁰⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 295

⁵¹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 295-296

⁵¹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 295

The child in question would have been Mathiasl, a baby at the Golling phase, and less than 2 years old at the time of this hearing. Sara Händlin apparently had no real intention to dispose of her baby by putting it in a washtub; her hope of softening the judges on account of her motherhood (and the threats derived therefrom) seem to have been doomed to failure at both court locations. Given that infanticide in the 17th century becomes a sexual offence as well⁵¹², Sara might have suffered the pressure of this additional aspect, solely by virtue of being a beggar woman, and hence of loose morality.

Under pressure of a confrontation with Veitl and Hämerl, she confesses to have been accosted by Jackl while the family was in the Au, sometime before previous Christmas; once persuaded, they all ride on a black goat to a wine cellar “bey dem Hofer wüth”.⁵¹³ Naturally, the Devil is also present in the Au – the Sabbath scene obviously taking place in the wine cellar – and he desires to take possession of them all:

Der teufel [...] zu ihr gesagt, gries dich, du mueßt mit mir fahren, und begert, sie soll ihm ihr khind den Fränzl geben, welches sie auch gethan, und als er darauf die zway khaine, dan sie und ihren mann auch begert, haben sie ihme solches zuegesagt.⁵¹⁴

Again, the Devil is perceived as someone who *wants* them as a family. This must have been a major reason why an affiliation with the Devil could, in a mature beggar’s frame of mind, have been perceived as attractive, even if only for the purpose of the investigation. Sara’s confession is not rich with fantasies – it is made from a poor middle-aged woman’s point of view. Even her new witch-name is simply “bese zanckh”.⁵¹⁵ Her lack of ability to confabulate is even more pronounced in her list of magical actions, which either prove ineffective (“regen gemacht, in mainung, das schaden thuen sole, welches aber nichts gefruchtet”), or their effects, whichever they may be, remain unknown to her (“dem vich undergestrath, aber nichts gehört, das etwas schaden geleiten”).⁵¹⁶ Although she admits to having created one storm, the score is rather meagre. The woman perhaps wanted to give as neutral a confession as possible. The answer to the question regarding invisibility/transformation is likewise within the sphere of the innocuous: “Jaggl mach sich zum storkh, bockh, baumb, stain und banckh, welches sie auch khönnen, und flechte ainen

⁵¹² I. Lövkrona : Annika Larsdotter barnamörderska, pp. 13-14

⁵¹³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 296

⁵¹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 296

⁵¹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 297

⁵¹⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 298-299

strohalben und ein bretl darauf gelegt, welches erscheinet, als wan es ein banckh wär, der sodan darauf sizet, niderfallen mueß“. ⁵¹⁷

Contrary to these somewhat naive reports, the details of her desecration of the holy images, however, reveal a charged attitude to the Lord, and especially to the Virgin Mary:

...und auch sonsten, wo sie nur aine martersaul gesechen, mit erden und ihrem khott angeworffen, unsern herren auch ain hunds, zanckh, diebs gfräß, raben, und schelbmen gefräß, schelbmenkhott und diebsgestenckh, unser liebe frau aber ain wetterschlächtige zanckh gehaissen, und sey aber unser liebe frau so verbitert und von herzen zornig gewesen, wan sie selbige also geunehrt, das sie vermaint, wans möglich, das sie es hete, selbige zerreißen mechte. ⁵¹⁸

Sara's perception of the holy image betrays her age's and her own proportions of sanctity: the picture of the Virgin on a *martersäule* is construed as a screen out of which the Sacred is supposed to emanate, but it essentially remains passive, unable to burst through to the (non)believer and punish her blasphemy. The Virgin, who, curiously, receives but one single swearword, is deeply enraged, and 'would have torn her to pieces had it been possible'. From a theological standpoint, this act is equal to host desecration, the aspects of which have been discussed elsewhere. As for its individual dimension, Sara Händlin might indeed have nurtured a particular respect for the Virgin, which in this confession comes to the fore. However, the embittered and enraged woman that the Holy Virgin of this account is supposed to be is, in fact, the accused witch herself, her spiteful character having been established during both of the hearings.

Throughout the interrogation Sara's credibility as a witness shrinks considerably. Besides the paradoxically formulated statements – the Devil offering her his help in resisting confession and enticing her to suicide – the story of the host theft in Au lacks appropriate backup: “Weilen eingezogner erfahrung nach man nichts wissen wolle, das ein pecher sambt 6 heiligen hostien verlohren worden”⁵¹⁹, and the one storm she is supposed to have caused is unaccountable for. The judges interrogate her on her children's possible absences from home. It turns out that the oldest son, Gotthard, had left home three or four years ago (at the age of 9 or 10). As for Fränzl, “sey er das erstemall, als sie ihne umb broth geschickht, zwen tag, das andermall aber im sommer, ain halb iahr ausgnossen”.⁵²⁰ Fränzl's begging expeditions, therefore, probably began at the age of 7.

⁵¹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 299

⁵¹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 299

⁵¹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 304

⁵²⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 304

The last set of questions that Sara Händlin answers pertain to her pregnancy, the existence of which has been denied by two midwives, a mother and a daughter. But the suspicious judges want to hear Sara's own version concerning this dubious matter:

Was sie ihrer empfinde? Obs schwanger oder nit?

Sey wol schwanger gewesen, wie sie aingeführt worden, allain sey dieser tagen ein schwarz schändliches ding einer faust groß von ihr khommen, welchen sie zerriben, und in das S.V. unflatschaft geworffen.

Ob sie schmerzen gehabt?

Hab weiter khain schmerzen gehabt.

Ob sie sich nit etwo mit fleiß schwanger gestelt? Warumben? Aus wessen gehaiss? Ob nicht des teufls.

Bekhent, das sie sich der ursachen für schwanger angeben, da es doch nit gewesen, weilen sie vermainet, sie wolle desto leichter ledig und loß werden⁵²¹

Perhaps the grotesque story of the misformed foetus thrown into the dirt might have satisfied the judges' curiosity had the circumstances been different. Being an inconsistent liar, Sara Händlin was not fortunate in the attempts to profile herself as a victim, and her flirts with infanticide and suicide were miscalculated. She was executed on 12th January 1679.

The Khärfueses: Philipp Khärfues (father of Fränzl)

The testimony of Fränzl's 60-year-old father Philipp Khärfueß throws an additional light on early modern parent-child relationships. The old man's feelings for his sons do not seem to run deep. That the oldest son, Gotthard, is said to be "9 oder 10 iahr alt, wisse aber nit wo er sich dermahlen aufhalte"⁵²² witnesses to the fact that, having left the family, a beggar child tends to be considered as 'good riddance', his age frozen forever to the age he had at the time of leaving home. (Gotthard is really 13). When asked about Fränzl's age, though, he gives an accurate answer. But there is more to the interaction with his sons. Asked about the number of boys he has taken to Jackl, he unexpectedly draws the youngest child, Mathiasl, into the story:

Ob er nit dem teufl versprechen müessen, ihme auch andere zuzuführen? Wievil er deme würcklich zuegeführt?

⁵²¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 305

⁵²² BayHStA HeA 10 c 306

Hab ihms wol versprochen, aber khainen zuegeführt, derentwegen ihne der teufel mit einem zenn gebriget, ausser das er constituto ihme teufel den Mathiasl sein khind, weil er ihme khein ruhe gelassen, geschenckht.⁵²³

The baby Mathiasl is considered a nuisance by his father, possibly because of the large age discrepancy which would have put the elderly parent's coping capabilities to a severe test. It appears that both parents share an idea that the youngest child is, in a way, expendable. After all, having been falsely accused of witchcraft by one of their own children, it does not surprise that both Sara and Philipp nurtured a sort of an infanticide fantasy. Philipp was executed sometime before his wife, on 29th November 1678.

Blasi N.

In very few cases the judges seem to have been at a loss as to how a confession was to be evaluated - so much so, that their confusion resulted in an acquittal of the defendant. One such hearing was undertaken on 4th November 1678. The witness was a certain Blasi, a young vagabond with no surname or fixed abode. Only the details pertaining to his origins, his parents, brothers and sisters appear to be stated with accuracy. Everything else about him (as far as that interrogation was concerned) remains blurry:

Haisse Blasi, wisse sonst khain anderen namen, 14 oder 15 iahr alt, zu Mäzing in der enzerkhürchner pfarr gen Schäring gehorig, geborn, der vatter habe hiesl am schuester guett, die muetter aber Mariedl, welche beide schon gestorben, gehaissen, hab noch sechs geschwisterth im leben, als Thoma bey 20 iahr ein preu, wisse nit wo er sey, dan Jodl so beym vöttern zu Reit in der enzerkhürchner pfarr, item Marina, welche mit dem Caspar paur in voriger pfarr verheurath, zugleich die Jutl so zu Rüb bey einem mezer dient, desgleichen die Mariedl aldort bey einem paur in diensten, die Sopherl aber verheurath am Mäzing, alwo vatter und mueter gehaust.⁵²⁴

In general, the accused beggar children unable to give their family names were the ones to have left home a considerable lapse of time prior to being interrogated. Any family ties would normally have been severed, with the surnames sunken to oblivion. Some of the children were ignorant of their roots to begin with. Now, Blasi placed an impressive horizontal dimension of his genealogical tree at the judges' disposal - but, oddly enough, could not state his own surname. If he truly did suffer from some kind of mental-emotional disorder, such an anomaly would be accountable for. Indeed, Blasi's report, mechanically thorough as it is, is reminiscent of bouts of talkativeness typical of

⁵²³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 310

⁵²⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 353

some sorts of autism, or any other disorder which makes the patient remember certain things with amazing accuracy, but thwarts the ability to assimilate essential data (such as those in relation to his own personality). For what it's worth, the account ends in a cyclic manner, as it began, mentioning Blasi's father and mother. In a way, it follows a logic of its own.

That being said - and acknowledging that speculations like these cannot lead us very far - another question imposes itself: could Blasi have had a rational reason to withhold his family name?

Wo er sich etlich iahr hero überall aufgehalten? Und in was gesellschaft?

Anderhalb iahr hab er sich beym lippen paurn zu Mäzing aufgehalten, iezeigen sommer aber sey er allain in die 10 oder 19 wochen im garten hin und wider umbgangen.

Wie lang er sich schon alhier und wo befunden?

In die 4 tag, und sey die erste 3 tag bey den paurn, heunt nach aber in dem khleinen hiesl, alwo ihrer drey gehangen, gelegen und geschlafen.

Wie und warumb er hinein gangen?

Hab die khöthen abgethan, und gleich hinein gangen, ursach das khein wind zu ihme khommen khönnen.⁵²⁵

The crucial phrase in the aforementioned statements seems to be „im garten hin und wider umbgangen“. Begging as such is not mentioned at all, although it is most probably to be inferred from the context. A picture of Blasi which emerges here is that of a disoriented, most likely jobless wanderer whose accommodation is irregular since it depends on him waking his prospective benefactors' sympathy. The last question refers to Blasi's unauthorized entry to a small house. The house, referred to as „alwo ihrer drey gehangen“ is reputedly ‚impure‘, and for a morbid reason, too. Apparently the house was located very near a scaffold featuring three freshly hanged convicts.⁵²⁶ Blasi's answer to the accusation of trespassing, is, however, touchingly naive, almost to the point of excusing the act: he removed the safety chains and broke into the house in order to escape the cold wind (the event having taken place in early November). There is an 11-day-pause between this and the next hearing, during which the newly summoned witness offers his version of the story:

⁵²⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 353

⁵²⁶ G. Müllerder : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 343

Nach abgelegt leyblichen ayd sagt hans hamberger abdeckher alhier aus, das der Blasi frühe umb 7 uhr zu ihme in die stuben khommen und zu wärmen gebetten, nachdeme er ihne gefragt, wo er über nacht gelegen, hab er ihme geantwortt, er sey im negsten hiesl alwo drey hangen, gelegen, und hab ihne nicht geforchten, welches er hernach dem M Simon zuwissen gemacht.⁵²⁷

Once again, we have an interesting example of marginal-to-marginal interaction, this time between a beggar boy and an *abdeckher*. Even though it is perhaps no coincidence that he is the one to have given refuge to the boy, there is no mention of Blasi's previous (futile) attempts to gain access elsewhere. The *abdeckher* claims to have received Blasi into his home on an early morning, after the boy had spent a night in the house which he was the only one not to consider spooky. But what presented an even greater mystery to the court was the question how Blasi actually got into the building in the first place. Intrigued and far from satisfied by his succinct explanation „Hab die khötten abgethan“, the judges interrogate further, but to no avail: „Hierauf Blasii, nachdem er gefragt worden, wie er in das hiesl khommen, nichts anders zur antwortt geben, als seye er gleich mit Gottes hilff, wisse nit wie, hinein gangen.“⁵²⁸

The answer that Blasi gives to the question concerning Jackl seems to have discredited him not only as a possible suspect, but as a witness, too. Asked what Jackl's hair looked like - an oddly formulated question in its own turn (the interrogator must have had good reasons for it) - Blasi answers: „Ein schwarzes, und stehe der Jaggl den gerichtsdienner mainent, neben ihme?“⁵²⁹ The defendant's identification of the court servant with the archbishopric's No. 1 enemy, as well as his allegation „das der ambtman mit ihme ins hiesl gangen“⁵³⁰ was not what the judges expected to hear. Their inevitable conclusion being „das mehrers im simplicitet und verwüerrung des khopfs, zumahlen seinem vorgeben nach er mit dem fallenden siechtumb behafft sein solle, erschienen.“, the case reached its formal ending with the following verdict: „Dieser ist nach beschechener relativa auf die landgräniz ausgeführt worden.“⁵³¹

Interestingly enough, it is Blasi himself who provides the court with the information of his own epilepsy. At that point in the interrogation, any external confirmation seems redundant, and the judges do not feel inclined to inquire any further into this self-made diagnose. Nonetheless, „simplicitet“, „verwüerrung des khopfs“ and „fallendes siechtumb“ are interchangeable *only*

⁵²⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 353-354

⁵²⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 354

⁵²⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 354

⁵³⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 354

⁵³¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 354

inasmuch as they represent mental states other than those of what one has traditionally considered a psychologically ‚normal‘ individual. Blasi indeed does appear both simple and confused throughout the hearing, and this extra piece of information - him being supposedly prone to epilepsy attacks - helps him toward being catalogued as an individual with no rational footing in life, therefore inapt for being consulted any further in the serious business of catching Jackl the Magician and his gang of little warlocks. Hence, he is promptly exiled over the border.

The reasons that the court had for releasing Blasi seem to have been manifold. Firstly, the defendant gave an impression of being either mentally retarded or slightly, and harmlessly, deranged. Secondly, there was the court official’s confirmation of Blasi’s epilepsy. And lastly, with his impressively accurate account about his family members and their whereabouts, the boy must have struck the judges as someone easily traceable in the community, and, consequently, someone perfectly networked into it. The bizarre circumstances of his one-night-residence at an abandoned spookhouse profiled him as an individual who, unlike the survival-hungry beggars prone to stealing, searched his own undoing with his erratic wanderings which, all things considered, were far from street-smart.

Were the judges right about dismissing Blasi N., or was his behaviour at the hearings just a marvellously executed smokescreen? As one of the very few survivors of the multi-year mass hunt for Jackl and his followers, this 14/15-year-old vagabond incarnates a disciple who the authorities deemed least likely of being implemented into a major villain’s plans of spoiling the mores of the community. This ineptitude, simulated or not, was what ultimately saved his life.

Maidl N.

Like the Ruepp brothers some time afterwards, Maidl, the girl interrogated on 7th November 1678, was not able to state her last name as well as her age. Mülleder underlined that she was registered as ‚looking 15‘.⁵³² The confession she gave was, as we shall see, in many respects that of a child, rather than that of an adolescent. In substance, Maidl’s answers were not dissimilar to those of her peers, such as Elisabetha Wellackhin. What seems to be reasonably certain is that she was an orphan abandoned to poverty relatively early in life:

Haisse Maidl, wisse ihren schreib, oder zuenahmen, noch das alter nit, sey under dem radstatter taurn geboren, ihre eltern sein arme hausleith gewesen, welche schon verstorben.

⁵³² G. Mülleder : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 345

Wo sie sich ein zeit hero aufgehalten? Und wie die nahrung gehabt?

Zu Altenmarckht 8 tag, zu Zell im Pintzgau 2 oder 3 tag, in der Alben leichtenberger gerichts 8 tag mit abspeilen, negst Cammer 10 tag in der arbeit mit khue hieten, und volgens in der Rauriß, alwo sie aufkhlaubt worden, aufgehalten.⁵³³

This girl obviously wandered alone, not within a group of beggars. The time span over which she accounts for her movements approximately amounts to a month, a choice which in itself is not justified or additionally explained. There may be three possible reasons for this. Firstly, that is how she understood the meaning of the phrase „ein zeit hero“ (as an arbitrary cut-out of the subjective past). Secondly, her parents could have deceased immediately prior to that period, which would have automatically initiated the girl's solo wandering across the village landscape of the area. Thirdly, this is perhaps simply as far as she could remember past events with any accuracy, considering that she travelled on her own. In addition, identifying her mother and father as „arme hausleith [...] schon verstorben“ does not exclude the possibility that Maidl may have been deliberately driven to begging by her parents, who could have passed away while she was already on the go. After all, everything that she has to say about them is that they were poor, her succinct statement betraying no particular emotional bond. The fact that Maidl cannot state either her age or her surname speaks in favour of an early abandonment of (and by) the nuclear family. The family does not appear to have been substituted by an ‚upbringing‘ structure (such as a family of wandering beggars) that would have compensated the little girl's uprooting in terms of maintaining the continuity of the identity-ensuring data, such as age and surname. The absence of a particular nickname - other than the appellation Schinterkroth she allegedly receives at the diabolical baptism - which would normally have come about through interaction with other beggars, also speaks of Maidl's isolation from the social context of begging. Whichever way she coped, she coped alone. Maidl's description of her encounter with the Magician invokes the Catholic clichés of a diabolical villain. In her story, Jackl is a ‚bad‘ boy:

Wer ihr etwo im hin und her gehen begegnet?

Ein beser bueb in einem schwarzen rockh, der sie alleweil geschlagen.

Was er ihr sonst gethan?

Habs under sich am glid an der grossen zechen mit einer nadl gestochen, daraus ein tropfen bluet gangen.

⁵³³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 357

Wer das bluet aufgefangen, in was?

Der bueb in ein eßlöfl.

Wer dabey gewesen?

Zwen schwarze männer mit scheichen horn, welche ihnen in die hech gestanden, und habenten langen negln an henden und fuessen. [...]

Wer dan der iehnige, der sie geschniten, und der, welcher zugegen gewest?

Der bueb, so sie geschniten, hab ein rotliches haar und auf die lingge seiten ain khrumppe nasen gehabt, welcher der zauberer Jaggl, die zwen aber mit herndl teufl gewesen.⁵³⁴

It is possible that the phrase referring to the ‚bad boy in a black coat, who used to beat her all the time‘ speaks of a real life situation, which was to be expected under the circumstances. However, by the time the girl has sunken deeper into describing the diabolical initiation, she seems to have ceased operating with facts and to have tuned in to delivering common preconceptions about Jackl. Moreover, the ‚halved‘ physical description of the perpetrator subsequently identified as Jackl creates the impression that there are *two* different male persons involved in the event. Indeed, why would she mention the black coat first, and leave describing more personal features (red hair, crooked nose) for five questions later? The interrogator’s request for her to differentiate between the boy who performed the cut and the boy who was present indicates that, probably due to Maidl’s confusing way of (re)telling the story, this particular point was *de facto* an issue of diminished clarity. Finally, the court’s question is formulated as „who is who“, and therefore not expressly orientated towards obtaining an additional description.

Maidl’s contribution to the disrespect of the eucharist contains two confessions in one:

Wie oft sie unsern herren empfangen?

Gar oft, denselben wider aus dem maul gethan, und anfangs ausgesagt, das sie selbigen auf einen tisch, alwo ain farkh abgestochen worden, gelegt und dardurch bluetig worden, hernach aber bekhent, das sie unsern herren mit einer nadl gestochen, das bluetig worden, die feigen zeigt, die jungen gegen ihme ausgeschlagen, mit füssen getreten + darauf gehofiert, den guli gestochen, zauberer Jaggl und teufl gehaissen.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 357

⁵³⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 358

She claims to have received the host „gar offt“, but if this is true, then it must have happened during the life she used to lead before she became a travelling beggar. The first version of the host-story contains mention of a table, thereby referring to an interior of a house, rather than that of a church. It is imaginable that Maidl may have brought the oblate home to play with it, the episode serving as a basis for her initial host desecration account. From this perspective, the report sounds surprisingly genuine: the child brings the host home, puts it on the table on which rests a freshly slaughtered pig. Consequently, the oblate gets soaked up by pig blood, and this is where the story ends. What conclusions can we draw from this? The point with the little girl’s story is: 1) to confirm that the host has bled, and 2) to give an explanation for its bleeding. But, Maidl is apparently prodded to alter her statement. In the new version, the Lord’s bleeding is effected by the needle stabs performed by Maidl. She flips him off and abuses him in the foreseeable manner. Flipping off (*Feigen zeigen*), an expression we can also encounter in the 8-year-old Fränzl Khärfueß’ confession, is mocking gesture that seems to be more typical of a child than an adolescent or a young adult, at least as our corpus material is concerned. Besides this, the manner in which Maidl construes the Devil’s didactically phrased order „soll nit mehr beten sonder schelten“⁵³⁶ implies that she perceives praying and swearing as opposites. The combination of these two details seems to indicate that she may have been younger than 15, the age catalogued by the authorities and accepted by the previous scholarship.⁵³⁷ The word „Guli“, although not entirely transparent, is probably related to „Gülle“, which is the Upper German expression for „Jauche“, both of which stand for „stable dung with no hay in it“. „Guli“, then, is indeed an accurate description of the state the host is in at that moment in the story, which means that the little girl apparently had a coherent mental picture of the account she wanted to deliver. Let us remember that the majority of host desecration stories furnished by sorcerers in this trial is nothing more than a pop-up cliché lacking common sense. Whether this accuracy rests on the little girl’s scatological fixations is difficult to ascertain. At the end of the mistreatment, the host is de facto covered with urine and excrements, and it is this repellent admixture that Maidl stabs anew. In fact, „Guli“ appears before the explanation itself, as an answer to the question about the martyr pillars: „Hab zu unsrem herren gesagt, herr spoth in deinem herzen grund, und den guli gestochen“.⁵³⁸ It appears that, at this point, Maidl already had a concrete notion of the scenario she was supposed to communicate to the judges. What sounds like a

⁵³⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 357

⁵³⁷ G. Mülleler : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 201

⁵³⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 358

real life event concerning the oblate soaked in pig blood is interposed between the more conventional description, possibly because Maidl could not immediately concoct an account that would contain all the necessary ingredients i.e. blood *and* excrements. Admittedly, the phrase with which the second version of Maidl's host desecration report is introduced („hernach aber bekhent, das...“) does not seem to imply the use of any persuasive techniques (even the mildest legal devices, such as threats, would have been included in the protocol). Nonetheless, the whole phrase, which reads „anfangs *ausgesagt*, [...] hernach aber *bekhent*“ reveals that the account initially given is held to be invalid, and that only the following report, tailored after the well-known mould, is to be considered as genuine ‚confession‘. In short, the court was determined to ignore a perfectly rational explanation, and pressured the defendants into delivering an irrational one.

Maidl's statement concerning the Sabbath contains no significant variations. One portion, though, claims our utmost attention: „Jaggl und teufel sein ihre tanzer gewesen, welche sich zu ihr gelegt, die unzucht getriben und ain kindl machen wollen“.⁵³⁹ At first sight, it reads like a tautology. Now, it is an established fact that the economy of an Early Modern trial did not favour recording superfluous data; there was no reason to waste either the court's ink or the court's time, especially given the variety of fixed legal expressions intended to give uniformity to the colourful language of the defendants (but frequently failing to achieve the desired level of neutrality). One of these expressions is, undoubtedly, „unzucht treiben“. But, the phrase „ain kindl machen wollen“ has an almost identical meaning. ‚Making a baby‘ is namely the way a little child superficially informed of the ways of procreation would have described an intercourse. The phrase, being deprived of Christian undertones, is also the one common Early Modern folk would use to refer to sex euphemistically. Conversely, „unzucht treiben“ is a legal expression, which is precisely where the problem lies: it is a sugarcoated translation of the colloquial, thus possibly unacceptable wording of the individual defendant. It seems highly unlikely that a little girl would have resorted to such a conventional, lifeless way of putting it at all. The problem is additionally highlighted by the accompanying phrase „ain kindl machen wollen“, the wording of which seems all the more natural in the context. In short, these are the reasons to assume that these are all *Maidl's* words, which managed to pass the filter through which they landed in the protocol.

The next question is, then, whether the second phrase is just a variety of the first, or rather its extension? In this light, the sex implied in both of them has different connotations: that of an intercourse in the first, that of procreation in the second. This could explain the awkwardness of what at first sight looks like chance ambiguity. In an atavistic annunciation of the femininity her

⁵³⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 359

future maturing would bring, Maidl clarifies to the court that the Sabbath evening was used, among other things, for her begetting an offspring by Jackl or the Devil. Again, her playful way of describing their journey to the wine cellars is more suggestive of ‚cuddly‘ innocence typical for a pre-puberty girl still fixated to the father figure, than for a grown female experienced in carnal matters: „Dem Jaggl sey sie auf der schoß, der Jaggl aber auf dem teufl gesessen“.⁵⁴⁰ Though there is, admittedly, a world of nuances between these two extremes, the former seems to concur with the overall impression. However, the detail in itself was not salient enough to attract the judges‘ attention. Hence, it did not suffice for the court to burden its prefabricated interrogation programme with additional questions.

Oddly enough, some of the elements in Maidl’s story, when observed separately, appear to be particularly ‚charged‘, but their effect is diluted by what seems to be a relaxed attitude on the part of the little girl: „Der teufl hab ihr ain bluet ans hirn gestrichen und Schinterkhrot gehaissen, Jaggl sey ihr stieffgott gewesen und ain groschen geben, welches sie im würtshaus wechseln lassen, und verzöhrt.“⁵⁴¹ That the Devil baptizes her with blood rather than with cold water or urine seems just like an accidental choice of motif, a detail spontaneously selected out of the pool of the few available variations. For some reason, the sorcery report in Maidl’s interpretation assumes features that make it appear satanic in the 20th century sense of the word (Jackl’s red hair, bloody baptism, conceiving a baby with the Devil). On a more practical level, the manner in which she handles the money received from Jackl shows its disappearing qualities have long since established themselves as a topos by the time of this confession. By carefully exchanging the suspicious money, and paying for her food with the real money received in return, Maidl-the-beggar-survivor thus displays an extraordinary street-smart quality.

Maidl’s further crimes are, as usual, magical powder excesses and weather magic. She does confess to having killed people and cattle, but, in general, remains personally uninvolved into the story: „Der Jaggl hab ihr ein schwarzes pulfer geben, welches sie [...] den leithen understrähen müssen, und getöttet. Bey dem heiligen bluet und in der Rauriß hab sie auch dem vich undergesträth, das todt worden, welches sie gesehen.“⁵⁴² The question referring to the weather magic again brings her skills to the fore: „Hinter dem rauriser tauern hab sie mit schwebl und pöch ein feur under die dörner aufgemacht, darauf es tonnert, risl geworffen und ain regen worden, welches das getraid

⁵⁴⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 359

⁵⁴¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 359

⁵⁴² BayHStA HeA 10 c 359

erschlagen, und das wasser angeloffen.“⁵⁴³ Indeed, unlike many *zauberbuben* who thrilled in describing their own supernatural powers, this girl did not ride the wave of magical fantasy, apparently inclined to rational explanations whenever possible. At any rate, the idea that a thorn-lit sulphur fire can create stormy weather (as opposed to magic balls and incantations) is unique to this defendant. Incidentally, folk beliefs concerning sulphur (and its connections to the Devil) are characteristic for Tyrol und Bohemia,⁵⁴⁴ areas geographically close to the prince-archbishopric of Salzburg.

It is towards the end of the hearing that Maidl returns to what seems to have been a ‚wounded point‘ of her life story:

Wer sie verführet?

Ein grosser betlbueb nahmens Mathias in einem grossen rockh und schwarzen pfaiden.⁵⁴⁵

This is the person with whom Maidl has fused the Jackl figure in her account of the initiatory cut. This piece of information, however, does not fit particularly well into the logic of the story. The question is about who introduced the defendant into sorcery, not who performed the cut. (The latter inquiry is elsewhere in the protocols covered by the question „Wer ihn/sie geschniten?“). Indeed, within the context of all the answers Maidl has already furnished the question is rather superfluous, but it simply forms a part of the *fragstückh* composed in advance. Therefore, the little girl's answers the best way she can, referring the interrogator back to the beggar boy mentioned at the beginning of the hearing. Now that he has a name - Mathias - we can be sure that this individual is not to be confused with Jackl. Moreover, it appears that Mathias, unlike Jackl, is a real person - an unfriendly, violent beggar boy she had encountered during her lonesome journey and whose company she could not shake off. Mathias is, therefore, the central personality of Maidl's beggar existence. If anyone can be said to have ‚seduced‘ her into anything, it must have been him.

This is where the ambivalence of the word „verführen“ comes into play. The seduction implied in the court's question is the one with sorcery undertones: they want to know who initiated Maidl into following the path of the Devil. However, the spirit in which she formulated her answer may just as well refer to the verb's other meaning i.e. the one suggesting sexual seduction. Not only do both of

⁵⁴³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 360

⁵⁴⁴ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.) : Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, Band 7, pp. 1457-1458

⁵⁴⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 360

the meanings (‘lead astray’ and ‘entice to intercourse’) converge for reasons that are essentially religious, but an Early Modern adult is generally aware of the connection. The *Zedler* lexicon begins the actual explanation of the lemma with the words „In der Heiligen Schrift wird das Verführen sonderlich den Propheten zugeschrieben, welche die Menschen von Gott verleiten“, and goes on specifying that „Dieses Verführen wird auch dem Teufel zugeschrieben, welcher der allgemeine Verführer der ganzen Welt genennet wird, der mit seinem Betrug und Lügen die Menschen in der Welt verführet, und vom rechten Wege auf Irrwege der falschen Lehre und des bösen Lebens ableitet“.⁵⁴⁶ The question is whether a little girl who has received little or no religious education would have been receptive to the theologically moralizing dimension of a question which, in her understanding, aimed primarily toward finding out more about Mathias’ sexual advances.

But if literal seduction is what is really meant here, why is it not verbalized more specifically? Maidl’s very last answer may give a clue to that. (It is preceded by the court’s listing of the five scars found on her body, all of which she ascribes to the doings of Jackl and the Devil). Asked „Warumb sie so oft gemerckht worden?“, she answers „Gleich gern, und haben sie darüber alzeit eingeschriben.“⁵⁴⁷ She does not give an outright answer as to why she should have been marked so often, but implicitly, she seems to define the reality behind the word „gemerckht“ as a joyful repetitive activity. It is to be suspected that at this point the little girl mentally still lingers on at the ‘seduction’ question. What she really states is that she has been marked many times, and that on each occasion she has been registered into the Devil’s book. In my opinion, this really refers to the happy moments she experienced during her wanderings. Exactly what these joyful moments that tended to repeat themselves consisted of we are not likely to ever know. However, within the context, they could be interpreted as moments of sexual intimacy or simply of bodily closeness with Mathias, experienced on occasions when he actually did treat her gently. Or, if the ‘evil boy in a black coat’ and the ‘big beggar boy [...] in a big coat’ are not the same person after all, any moments of pleasure refer to the time spent with Mathias, whom the simplistic ‘single-characteristic’ encoding⁵⁴⁸ typical of the witch-children’s confessions distinguishes by his *stature* rather than by his ‘evil’ nature. And, given that pursuing joy is a sin according to the Roman Catholic view - she need not have been a regular churchgoer to have adopted such a view -, Maidl

⁵⁴⁶ J. H. Zedler (ed.) : Großes vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste. Sieben und vierzigster Band, Ver-Vers, p. 613

⁵⁴⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 360

⁵⁴⁸ Adjective + noun = complete personality profile

knows she has to be duly ‚registered‘ into the Devil’s book each time after having indulged herself in this way. As far as the defendant’s attitude is concerned, all this is done in a perfectly innocent manner, but the authorities’ literal evaluation of it results in disastrous consequences.

Maidl N. was executed on 29th November 1678.

Augustin Grueber

Interrogated on 16th November 1678, a 13-year-old beggar named Augustin Grueber delivered a detailed confession of his warlock activities, for which he had been tried at the local court in Mittersill. His version of the initiatory cut distinguishes itself from stereotyped confessions in that it is furnished by a minute description of the two boys supposed to have undergone the same treatment with him:

Jaggl hab ihne mit einem weiß schallenden messer in den linggen daumb geschnitten, dabey auch zwen bueben nahmens Hiesl und Georgl (+welche zu Neukhürchen sein), so gleichfalß auch, und zwar der Hiesl in die rechte hand beym khnöpfl, der Georgl aber in rechten fueß an der grossen zechen geschniten, von dem auch zugegen gewesten mann mit lang habenten negln an henden und füssen, so der teufl war, das bluet von ihnen dreyen in ein gläsl aufgefangen, sodan in ein auswendig schwarz, inwendig aber weiß und rothes buech eingeschrieben, er deponent hab vor dem teufl wol zittert, ihme aber befolchen, soll ihm nit fürchten (+geschehe ihme nichts), sonst aber sey der Hiesl ein resleter bueb, bey 14 iahr alt, hab ein schwarz khurzes haar, schwarz loderns rökchl, graue hosen, im rechten wang ein maasen, sein mueter sey ain cramerin ober der khürchen bey der prunstuben lingger hand am wang, der Georgl aber ein halbe meil ober Neukhürchen zu wald, ain blaicher bueb bey 18 oder 19ig iahr alt, weisses haar über die ohren, langes gesicht, grau lodern rockh, schwarz lainene hosen, und schwarz gestrickhte strimpf, seine eltern sein aldort hausleith.⁵⁴⁹

The personal details referring to Augustin’s co-initiates, Hiesl and Georgl, are delivered with an almost biometric precision, at least for Early Modern standards. What reasons Augustin had to draw precisely these two into his story is not very clear. Judging by the indication of their parents’ professions (*cramerin*, *hausleith*), the boys are not wandering beggars, but belong to the sedentary population. The defendant’s underlying antagonism is either situated along social fissures (locals vs. vagabonds) or is of a personal nature. Augustin’s declaration of having been „ledig erzeugt“ might be viewed against the background of the information he supplies about Hiesl’s and Georg’s parents. If envy, possibly based on the combination of the two factors mentioned, is what really motivates Augustin, the statement he gives betrays his wish of dragging two boys from somewhat respectable families down the drain with him.

⁵⁴⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 366-367

Jackl's role remains marginal in Augustin's account, reduced to performing the initiatory cutting in front of the present male figure, „so der teufl war“. The paraphernalia of this Devil, stripped of its usual prerogatives, is confined to long nails⁵⁵⁰ on his hands and feet - hence no horns are mentioned, or even black skin. Augustin emphasizes having trembled with fear in front of this Devil, whose likeness has in fact very little in common with the demonological cliché. There is something about the minimalistic way Augustin construes the Devil that makes the evoked dread believable. This is achieved by the absence of predictable elements commonly attributable to the diabolical, the kinetic poetry of the figure's movements - his long-nailed claws holding a glass into which he catches the blood of the three boys - and, lastly, his authoritative command (directed at the initiate) not to fear him. However, it is not the aesthetic horror that freezes the superstitious defendant, but the fear of being *hurt* by this menacingly equipped apparition. The Devil's additional remark „geschehe ihme nichts“ - furnished as an answer to a subquestion - apparently reassures Augustin, for he goes on with the ritual, as we infer from his subsequent statements. This confirms what we witness elsewhere in the protocols: that the performative act of appeasing the initiate actually functions as an integral part of the ritual.

We may even go as far as hypothesizing that the more prefabricated the protagonist figures pertaining to the witchcraft / sorcery context are, the lesser the emotional investment by the children concerned. In other words, whenever the Devil is given no particular attention in a child's confession, the details referring to him are delivered in a lukewarm, unmoved manner in which one handles stereotypes. According to W. Lippmann, the building of stereotypes translates as an unconsciously performed cognitive strategy of selective perception and reduction of complexity,⁵⁵¹ in our case, the „perception“ does not refer to the Devil as an abstract entity accessible only to theologians, but rather at the visual construal of this figure out of the elements the culture has rendered available - or, more precisely, the elements that actually *were* available to the group in question. Under the circumstances, the Salzburg beggar children were indeed unwilling consumers of this standardly shaped Devil stereotype, but they used it in the way dictated by their respective psychological make-ups.

⁵⁵⁰ Like English *nail*, the German masculine noun *Nagel* has two meanings (metal spike i.e. part of a finger/toe). Both of these seem to correlate within the account, given that they are featured on the hands and feet of both God (by virtue of the crucifixion) and the Devil (by virtue of his claws). Though cross nails are definitely a part of Jesus' wider semantic field, and though the folk Devil is often imagined as a beast, it appears that in this particular case the one homonym meaning 'triggers' the other. In this respect, neurolinguistic studies of concept retrieval have a task of examining the neural pathways responsible for the processes of lexical association and discrimination.

⁵⁵¹ A. Nünning (Hrsg.) : Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie, p. 679

Having thus been gained over to the Devil's cause, the boy swears allegiance, which, conveniently for him, contains a couple of welcome incentives:

Sey wahr, das er alles verläugnen, und hingegen sich dem teufel mit leyb und seel ergeben, zu dem ende auch die finger von rechter hand aufheben und auf sein ayd schwören müssen, dabey ihme befolchen, soll nit mehr betten, noch sich zwagen oder waschen, sonder sacrament schelten und fluechen, welches er auch gethan, und derentwegen ihme constituto ainen thaller zum zechen und trinckhen geben, welchen er auch bey dem würrh zu Mittersill vertronckhen.⁵⁵²

The Devil's further orders are not limited to verbal degradation of the Sacrament, but encompass a ban on Augustin's maintenance of personal hygiene. This may have been the boy's attempt to explain away his shabby physical appearance (notably by using the synonym pair *zwagen/waschen*), or even to invert it into a virtue that helped him serve a higher (or lower) cause. Augustin receives one *thaller* as recompense, from the intended use of which („zum zechen und trinckhen“) one can deduce that the boy might have been an established alcohol consumer. The diabolical baptism is similarly rewarded: „der Jäggl [...] ihme einen schenen fünffzechner geben, den er vertronckhen.“⁵⁵³ The portion „welchen er auch bey dem würrh zu Mittersill vetrunkhen“ may well refer to an experienced situation, considering the overall emphasis he gives to the joy of drinking. His addiction is most poignantly expressed in the statement relating to the Sabbath: „Der teufel hab ihne empfangen und gefragt, ob er trinckhen will, deme er ia wein geantwortt“.⁵⁵⁴

The details that Augustin furnishes in the matter of host desecration reveal that his understanding of the host-come-alive issue is partially literal:

Unsern herren hab er zu Metersill zwayemall, zu Hollerspach 3, und zu Prambberg auch 3mall empfangen, alzeit aus dem maul widerumb gethan, zum Jäggl und teuffel tragen, mit stain und brigl geschlagen, mit messer gestochen, das bluet in die hech gespritzt, und ganz wie ein mensch worden, darauf gehofiert, mit fuessen getreten, ain schelben, dieb und teuffel gehaissen, mit sacra, gescholten, sodan mit stain und menschenhott eingraben.⁵⁵⁵

It seems that Augustin's imagination in this respect - and only where this initial hearing is concerned - was limited to having the host assume an anthropomorphic *form* („ganz wie ein mensch worden“), but not actually turning into a human being (divine or not), since the oblate seems to

⁵⁵² BayHStA HeA 10 c 367

⁵⁵³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 369

⁵⁵⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 368

⁵⁵⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 367

remain what it essentially is. Perhaps the peripheral importance that the image of Christ had in this particular defendant's mind was what failed to give him reasons to live himself into the role of a desecrator. The act of mistreating the host is construed as obeying a command taken from two hierarchically superior beings („zum Jaggl und teufl tragen“). This being nothing else than a monotonous retelling of standard ingredients, it does not wake the impression of ever having been performed in reality. The court, however, will force him to revisit this fairly harmless account, and ‚enrich‘ it accordingly.

When it comes to examples of witch magic performed by Augustin himself, the frame of the ordinary is again transcended:

Ob er nicht leith und vich verzaubert? Wo? Und mit weme?

Leith negat, zway khue aber hab er zu wildalben khizpichler herrschafft mitls understrähung eines rothen stüppls, welches Jaggl hergeben, wan das vich gelegen und noch warmb gewesen, todt gemacht, und sey khein andere ursach gewesen, als das er das stupp nur versuecht habe.⁵⁵⁶

Though it may seem that Augustin speaks of poisoning some cows that are either dormant or only lying down, the phrase „und noch warmb gewesen“ seems to indicate that the animals would have been rendered immobile first (as may have been the case in some bestial episodes), by means of the red powder, and that they perished afterwards, when the poison kicked in. It is not clear what his initial intentions might have been. The salient feature of this short account is the fact that Augustin carefully distances himself from the apparently both unexpected and undesired effects of this magical experiment, and in a way that almost reads like remorse. The action - which may or may not have been exercised in reality - appears to have squared with his own convictions of good and bad. It is on these convictions that such initiatives seem to have been based, as one can see from his weather magic account:

Mitten im ---osching(?) sommer hab er auf den Achenthall mit einer dergleichen wurzl, wie ihm vorgezaigt worden, risl gemacht, das traid erschlagen, darzue er dem teufl zum helffen und wettermachen geruffen, und selbige wurzl in die heche geworffen, die ursach dessen sey, weil man ihme am Jochberg nichts geben, sonder nur ausgerint haben, und bese leith seint.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 369

⁵⁵⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 369

The people of Jochberg could indeed have proven to be unkind and spiteful, which in its turn might have triggered vengeful fantasies in Augustin. However, speaking in procedural terms, it seems that it is the herb that the judges produce as circumstantial evidence that unequivocally points the answer to this leading question in the intended direction. The herb (or its root) would undoubtedly already have been visibly spread out in front of the defendant before the question was even formulated. Hence there was no alternative but to fill the gaps by saying which way the herb was manipulated for the purpose of destroying the weather (throwing it up towards the sky was the ,agreed‘ way to do it). What might have been perfectly justified anger that came out of the unfortunate encounters the beggar children had with a part of the local population was manipulated during the interrogation process into a confession of wishful thinking, the materialization of which had a legally binding, and ultimately fatal, effect.

When he decided to involve the two boys in the Jackl-plot, Augustin Grueber was perhaps prodded by motives that have already been discussed. But what reads as his eagerness to deliver a detailed account of the activities undertaken by the three of them was also a two-edged sword, as it ignited the judges‘ curiosity to find out more. The statement relative to the occurrences at the Sabbath contained too many controversial details that would soon weigh heavily upon him. The host, which meanwhile must have been dug out of its temporary place of burial, is sullied by the three of them accompanied by a girl subsequently identified as Derindl:

mit hutten und unserm herren, welchen er under den zechen, shuech und im hintern dahin gebracht, auswischen müssen, die zwen bueben, das mensch und sich selbst auch damit gesäubert, [...] under wehrendem essen und trinckhen haben sie von unserem herren geredt, das er nur ain schelben, dieb, auch sonst nichts nuz, der teuffl Gott, hingegen er der teuffl sey, sein tanzerin, dabey Jaggl mit ainer gescheckheten geigen aufgemacht, sey die Derindl und die teufflin gewesen, zu welchen beiden er sich nach ausleschung der leichter gelegt, und die unzucht getriben, von der Darindl warmb, von der teufflin aber khalt empfunden, auf ihme sey auch der teuffl gelegen, und im hintern braucht, welches ihm wol gethan, und gleichfalß khalt gewesen⁵⁵⁸

This Sabbath report is different from most confessions of its kind in that it describes precisely the kind of scenario that the authorities feared the most: that groups of young people - mustered for this special purpose - were being actively recruited by Jackl and successfully won over to the Devil’s lair. The accounts of beggar boys and girls appearing as single initiates in the Sabbath story was certainly bad enough; cases of entire families turning into followers of Jackl was even more inconvenient, as it involved extra suspects spanning over at least two generations. This is because a

⁵⁵⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 368

bigger number of participants implied more virus carriers bringing about higher risk. But, all such cases were believed to be conquerable by sequestration of the relevant individuals and their eventual execution. With this, the society in its essence would have been kept intact. Augustin indeed appears to have struck a chord in the absolutists' frame of mind when he demonstrated that the Sabbath was above all an outlet for unrestrained debauchery of the archbishopric's youth, both of high *and* low extraction. Therefore, what makes this statement somewhat revolutionary is, firstly, the composition of its initiates: they are all new to the context (except perhaps for Derindl, but she is new to the story anyway), and, secondly, the spirit of rebellious collusion that makes the whole thing look like a Californian party from the 1960's. Young *peers* expected to become faithful subjects give in to excessive eating, drinking, utter disrespect of everything sacred, and, of course, ,illicit' sex which does not evoke a shred of guilt (the highlight being the defendant's declaration that the intercourse with the Devil was entirely to his liking). All of this taken together could only mean that the society whose most vital elements were thus infected was indeed rotten to the core, and hence maybe irrevocably lost to subversive forces, the harbingers of social disintegration. Whatever religiously motivated reasons (such as rooting out Protestant heresy etc) may have initialized the Zauberer-Jackl trials, the ensuing mass hunt superseded it, and took on a life of its own. The fact that the authorities themselves (via S. Zillner) godfathered the crystallization of the Sabbath legend according to a recipe defined in the course of the interrogations does not mean that their apprehension was any lesser - they would not have been aware of the paradox - , nor does it diminish the overall effect of Augustin's statement, which I believe may be compared with the proverbial one drop too many. However, it is important to point out that in this case, the ,hiatus' is most likely to have come about upon the judges' rereading the protocols after the hearing, when the big picture prospects of the boy's description would have dawned at them in all its clarity. The tone of the interrogation held approximately four weeks later is much more severe, Augustin's assertions much wilder, and his situation entirely hopeless.

The two statements Augustin Grueber gives at the beginning of the second hearing, held on 13th December, reveal his partiality in relation to his three Sabbath companions. It appears he wanted to exclude Derindl from the story at the expense of enhancing the role played by the two boys:

Erleiert, das die zwen bueben, als Hiesl und Georgl, welche er angeben, sich hin und wider am petlen aufhalten. Revocirt abermahlen, das er die Derindl unkheisch braucht, ingleichen das sie mit ihme auf die hexentanz gefahren, auch das er sie mit der heiligen hosti ausgewischt habe.

Als ihm aber hierauf zuegesprochen worden, hat er widerumb bekhent, das alle drey puncten wahr, die ursach aber seines widerrufens sey, weil der teufel ihme solches befolchen nit zugestehen, das die Derindl ein hex sey, er auch werde durch solches läugnen desto ehrvnder davon khommen.⁵⁵⁹

Judging by the way the two pieces of information have been presented, the act of denouncing Hiesl and Georgl as occasional beggars is supposed to direct the court's attention to them, and consequently smooth the path for the judges' acceptance of Derindl's innocence. This proves to be a miscalculation, and Augustin has to justify himself as having acted upon the Devil's instructions. This manoeuvre of Augustin's, however, may well have nothing to do with an affection felt for his girl companion. Indeed it seems that, in between two hearings, the defendant concluded that introducing the Derindl character into the Sabbath report was potentially dangerous for him. Why? Quite simply - because she was a witch. This is explicitly stated in the explanation he furnishes to this effect: that the Devil had told him not to give away the fact „das die Derindl ein hex sey“. It shows that, thanks to his own preconceived notions about witchcraft i.e. about individuals most likely to play the role of witches, Augustin feared that a connection made between him and a presumed witch would have jeopardized the positive outcome of his trial more than anything else. Finally, he may have hoped that outing Derindl would contribute to the betterment of his situation. The propounded direction of Augustin's reasoning may seem illogical. But, let us remember that he is a 14-year-old beggar, directionless, prone to drinking, and with no overview of the situation he is in. Furthermore, Augustin's fall under the trial's procedural spell - which implies grappling with circumstances entirely foreign to him - seems to blunt his deductive possibilities rather than sharpen them. For a not very bright individual already entangled in a web of half-truths, lies and fantastic notions heavy with religious meaning, guessing what would be the wisest thing to say in this hostile, opaque context becomes next to impossible. The court is not interested in the truth - that much is clear to Augustin Grueber. He obviously has to give them what he believes they want to hear. And if he concocts the right story, however unfavourably he may appear in it, he might get closer to being released. Therefore he offers the judges, of his own accord, a twist on the host desecration tale:

Gibt auch weiter an tag, das unser lieber herr im stechen groß wie ein mensch worden sey, und sovill ihme constitutum gedunckht, er die füeß gerieret, sonst aber die hend zusammen und über sich gehalten auch die augen zuegethan, sie

⁵⁵⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 371-372

volgents die hend ihme voneinaner gethan, und nit allain durch dieselbe sonder auch durch die füß negl geschlagen, und an ein saul oder baumb geheft und gebriglet.⁵⁶⁰

This extraordinary account is a perfect example of the host-come-alive myth in the making. It shows what happens when religious metaphors are imposed upon unimaginative individuals lacking the capability to recognize and integrate paradoxes of the faith. The only way that a young uneducated layperson like Augustin can construe such a scenario is to give it literal meaning. Therefore he states that ‚during the stabbing, Our Lord became as big/tall as a man/human being‘ and seemed to have moved his feet. Now, it is possible that a notion of the resurrection of Christ out of the host was, at a certain level, permeated (if not conditioned) by the beliefs pertaining to baby Jesus. When she talks of the medieval process of the sensitizing of Christians to the eucharistic symbolism of ‚the child in the host‘, Miri Rubin emphasizes that ‚[s]o used did the eye become, so trained was the mind, to think of the transubstantiated host as the real Christ, and in one of his suffering personas, as a sacrificed child, that horrific tales of a bleeding child Christ in the host were tolerated within the culture, and could circulate in *exempla*.‘⁵⁶¹ But how much of this lofty symbolism would have seeped through to a wandering Salzburg beggar who was in his teens? It seems more probable that his ideas of a renascent Christ primarily derived from an act of physical birth (a connection between killing and birthing in the bleeding host context having already been recognized by advocates of *gender theory*⁵⁶²). The phrase ‚sovill ihme constitutum gedunckht, er die füeß gerieret“ reads like a reaction of a man leaning over a newborn. To someone estranged to the mysteries of new life both by his gender and his inexperienced age, such an image must have something of a puzzling effect. So much for the astonishment relative to the ‚birth‘ moment. Meanwhile, the host has turned into a life-sized man who begins to move. His movements, on the other hand, become those of the suffering Christ, or the *Schmerzensmann* who, according to Augustin, ‚die hend zusammen und über sich gehalten auch die augen zuegethan“. If any single sacred posture of the Western culture spells redemption, this is the one. Here, however, it not only fails to connect one to the divine, but makes the saviour undergo a new crucifixion, followed by a burst of sadistic violence. But Christ is not destroyed while assuming the sacred posture. The crucifixion is performed first after the sacred posture has been undone - the Lord’s hands are first unclasped, and then, along with the feet, run through with nails. This seems like a crucial moment

⁵⁶⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 372

⁵⁶¹ M. Rubin : *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, p. 137

⁵⁶² C. Walker Bynum : *Wonderful Blood*, p. 180

in the story, because it determines the defendant's relationship to the divine. The Lord must first be stripped of the sanctity contained in the posture, and only afterwards can he be molested without ethical consequences for the desecrator(s). In other words, making the God ungodly before profaning him is, in its own way, an act of faith. The body subsequently hanged on a pillar or a tree, for the purpose of being „gehefft und gebriglet“, is in fact not a God anymore, but rather a carcass with no identity or moral power.

The judges, however, had no antennae with which to grasp what may actually have been deeply religious undertones of Augustin Grueber's second account of the desecrated host. In the protocol referring to the next day's session of *In banco iuris* there figures one short phrase: „Hat alles confirmirt.“⁵⁶³ Nonetheless, something that looks like divine intervention stands in the way of an imminent execution planned for 22nd December:

Als diser zur execution geführt werden wollen, gegen dem amtmann aber gleich vorhero alles widerumb revocirt, hat man ihne auf beschachnes intiriren zu red gestelt, welcher aber dises darauf vorgebracht, das vergangene nacht etwas weiß zu ihme khommen und gesagt, er soll seine sind recht beichten, sonst werde er in die höll khommen, daher er sowol wider ihne selbst als auch die angebne zwen bueben Georgl und Heisl unrecht ausgesagt, und kenne den Jaggl gar nit, das er aber alles der ordnung nach erzelt, sey die ursach, weil er solches von anderen paursleithen, welche er nit zunennen weiß, gehört habe, das bey den hexentänzen also hergehe, über diß er an ein absonderliche kheichen zuführen bevelcht, und also die execution für dismall mit ihme eingestelt worden ist.⁵⁶⁴

Indeed, no other confession in the whole corpus of sources is accompanied by a comparable ‚leap of faith‘ - if that is what it was. We do not know how to evaluate this story of the angelic appearance - is it an outright bluff or an inspired hallucination? Though at first hand it may be interpreted as just another desperate, straw-clutching step, there is no obvious reason to shut out the alternative of a genuine repentance on the part of the defendant - repentance that would have assumed an appropriate cultural-religious shape. This would not have been an isolated example, since Bengt Ankarloo's study of the 17th century Swedish witch hunts suggests that a group of Gävle child-witches who had already been condemned to death claimed having seen angels (i.e. white doves which symbolized angels) upon confessing to witchcraft, as opposed to those ‚in denial‘, who were supposed to have seen black ravens.⁵⁶⁵ Similar ‚epiphanies‘ were not uncommon in the 16th and the 17th centuries in both Catholic and Protestant Europe, where even theologians genuinely believed

⁵⁶³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 370

⁵⁶⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 372

⁵⁶⁵ B. Ankarloo : *Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige*, p. 318

in the possibility of *Engelserscheinungen*. Still, such reports could occasionally turn out to have been merely didactic scams, as in the Kirchhain spook trial of 1681-83, during which the father of the children who had witnessed the appearance of white-clad angels admitted that it had in fact been his sister-in-law in disguise.⁵⁶⁶ Has the present episode resulted out of a similar maneuver, a prank played on Augustin Grueber by an idle and malicious court servant? On the other hand, it is likely that the young prisoner did not need such a stimulus at all. The white apparition warns him to confess to his sins or else count on going to hell. The sin, as it were, refers to the false charges „wider ihne selbst als auch die angebene zwen bueben“. The accusations he has made against Hiesl and Geogl must weigh heavily upon his chest. With this statement he withdraws from his confession the remaining two of his three Sabbath companions. But, implicitly and in a spirit surprisingly untypical for an early modern Christian, Augustin also expresses his regrets of having been untrue to himself. Though his hierarchically subordinate and socially marginal position would most probably have left him no leeway anyway, it seems that somewhere deep inside, the loss of his own integrity is the one thing he cannot forgive himself.

At any rate, the tiny niche temporarily opened by the angel story offered Augustin the last chance to raise a voice of reason. The gossip machinery responsible for the circulation of stories about Jackl the Magician is given in a nutshell. From this we learn that what the court accepted as first-hand knowledge of the events at the witch dances was in fact nothing but common good, as accurate as urban legends of the modern era.

This will be the last credible thing the defendant shall utter before the trial ends. Augustin Grueber's next statement is an example of a previously voiced opinion transformed according to the dictates of the situation:

Auf weiteres zuredstellen gibt constituto an tag, das ihme herr P. lector cappuziner bevolchen, solle anzaigen, das er sich unschuldig angeben, welches aber nit wahr sey, dan er seinem beichtvater virschalten habe, das er ein zauberer sey, als ihme darauf seine gethane und berait vorhin bekhante unthatten von puncten zu puncten abermal deitlich vorgelesen worden, hat er dieselbe alle confirmirt, benebens sovill angezaigt, das der teufl und nit etwas weisses sowol vor als nach der beicht und communion zu ihme khommen, und bevolchen, soll unrecht beichten, und, das er den Jäggl kenne, oder ein hexenmaister sey, sowol dem beichtvatter als denen herren läugnen, also ihme dardurch ein freid gemacht, das er darauf mit dem M Hämerl umbgerolt, in dieser dreymaliger erscheinung aber hab ihn der teufl nie gebraucht, unsern herren hab er zwar wol gekhüßt, sey ihn aber hart genug ankhommen, die gaistliche haben das khüssen befolchen, der teufl aber verboten, und sey solches khüssen der ursach geschechen, das die leith mainen sollen, es gescheche aus eyfer, verharre aber auf deme, das alles wahr sey, was er bekhent, und wölle gern sterben.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶ H.-J. Wolf : Hexenwahn, pp. 429-430

⁵⁶⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 373

The boy's morals had by this moment already been irreparably broken. Augustin refuses the sympathetic piece of advice from the Cappuciner monk (officially summoned as a 'soul guardian'), as it opposes the statement he had given his confessor, of being a sorcerer himself. Of course, the repetitive character of the accused one's confession being reread to him at the moments of his temporary denial of additional 'crimes' might themselves have influenced the defendant in question. The rereading of the statement to Augustin may therefore have contributed to tearing his integrity to shreds. In a newly established spirit of dejection Augustin dismounts the religiously inspired story of an angel's appearance, exchanging it for a diabolical visitation. It is perhaps important that the boy entirely abandons the story of the white apparition, rather than adapting it along the lines that would have made the angel appear as the Devil in disguise. Maybe this, too, speaks in favour of the genuineness of Augustin's faith, rudimentary but pure in its naïveté. In this ungracefully hackneyed surrogate story the Devil is supposed to have appeared both before and after the confession and the communion, a symptomatic example of a diabolical *enjambement* of the two Christian rituals. This final phase of questioning makes Augustin's act of kissing the likeness of the Lord (it is not clear whether he refers to a crucifix or a host) an act of blasphemy, and thus produces the result the court seems to have pursued all along: turning the defendant into a paragon of anti-Christian hypocrisy. A hint to an intercourse he supposedly had with Hämerl, for the purpose of pleasing the Devil, can either be ascribed to his desperation or implies Augustin's intention not to leave one of the two heavily compromised denouncers unscathed. The last words "wölle gern sterben" indicate that the boy is aware of having nothing more to lose.

The very last piece of evidence pertaining to the Grueber case is dated 3rd January 1679. In it, Augustin witnesses to having been regularly visited by the Devil during his subsequent incarceration. He has Aperl, the person who brings him food, send for the *ambtmann*, perhaps in hope that the official might appear while the Devil is still standing by the window: "Gedachte Aperl sagt wahr zusein, das Stindl von ihr begert, sie soll den ambtmann khommen lassen, der teufl sey zwaymall beym fenster gewesen und ihm getrohet".⁵⁶⁸ If taken literally, this description most probably indicates a sort of mental aberration to which the boy succumbed after the trial. It may well be that this 14-year-old boy ceased being himself even before the execution, performed on 22nd December 1678.

⁵⁶⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 374

Catharina Leidenhammerin (Derindl)

The 16th November interrogatory of Catharina Leidenhammerin is inextricably connected to Augustin Grueber's confession; for this reason it is considered here even though the imaginary contents derived therefrom are not, strictly speaking, to be classified under "child fantasies". In Grueber's statements, this 25-year-old girl is referred to as "Derindl". The start of her hearing gives an impression that, at a certain point, it all could have ended in a way most favourable for her. After all, the reason for her being summoned is nothing but a blurry denunciation, which Grueber apparently withdraws on the spot. But instead of insisting on that one point, Catharina delivers a nebulous story of her own:

Was sie aldort ausgesagt, sey der warheit nit gemäß, zumahlen sie der Stindl also angeben.

Als Stindl hierüber zur red gestelt worden, hat er sein gethane deposition der Derindl halber revocirt, und das er ihr unrecht gethan habe.

Hingegen constituta auf weiteres zuesprechen sovill bekhent, das ein reitender herr zu ihr auf der hohenfilzen khommen, begerent, sie solle mit ihm gehen, welcher sie hernach in der linggen hand an den baln gezeichnet.⁵⁶⁹

Apparently, the idea of gaining a place under the judges' spotlight was too irresistible for the accused beggars to persist in the truthfulness of their initial statements, however uneventful or unattractive they may have been. In addition, Catharina may have had particular issues with making herself appear desirable, under any pretext whatsoever. The scene in which a horse-riding gentleman takes her by the hand does make her suspect of witchcraft, but at the price of appearing, if only for a brief moment, alluring and wanted, not least in front of Augustin himself, the nature of whose relationship with Catharina a.k.a. Derindl is unknown to us. If their interaction had any depth to it, a 10-year-gap between them may also be interpreted accordingly.

Quite expectedly, the judges readily jump at the cue. They have the girl undergo shaving and visitation, during which she is found to be "am haimblichen orth geschwollen".⁵⁷⁰ However, it is rather unclear to me what criteria were normally used for gaining this sort of juridical insight. From which degree onwards was an accused witch's vagina supposed to be regarded as swollen? Other than in cases of establishing one's virginity, this was no matter for consulting a midwife, at least according to our Salzburg sources. That means that the evaluation of this fact was left entirely to male officials, i.e. the ones who performed the shavings. Yet neither their knowledge of the female

⁵⁶⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 376

⁵⁷⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 376

anatomy nor their experience with the opposite sex need have been vast or comprehensive. After all, perception of what constitutes a perfectly sculpted body part is also a cultural construct conditioned by a number of factors. From the girl's plain reply to the accusation: "die geschwulst am haimblichen orth sey alzeit gewesen"⁵⁷¹ we get only the information that the growth has always been there – indeed, it may have been anything from a mole to a subcutaneous pocket of fat tissue.

Catharina, persisting in her account of having her hand marked by the mysterious rider, gets into trouble with explaining the loosening of the 'Holy letter' necklace:

an der hand hab sie der reitende herr gezeichnet, und hernach umb ihren nahmen gefragt, unwissent aber, was er mit dem bluet gethan [...]

Warumb sie den khnopf am breve aufgelest?

Hab nur daran geschaut.

Als sie hierauf mit ruethen gestrichen worden, hat sie bekhannt, das ihr der iehnige, so sie an der hand geschnitten, vergangene nacht das breve aufgelest, wisse aber nit, wie er hinein zu ihr khommen, sonder hab sie gefragt, was sie da thue, deme sie geantwortt, schlaffen, darauf er sich zu ihr gelegt, und die unzucht getriben, auch nit recht warmb und nit recht khalt gewesen.⁵⁷²

The logic of the witch trial has an act of expected curiosity – the fact that Catharina has loosened the necklace to have a look at the pendant – mutate into an account as believable as a plot in a soft pornographic movie. The man allegedly responsible for branding her inexplicably enters the dungeon, and after a short, banal conversation, a lukewarm intercourse ensues. Interestingly enough, neither the court's question nor the subsequently administered branch strikes themselves indicate that Catharina's answer should contain any sexual components (unless those implicit in their inquiry about the swollen vagina). Again, it is the defendant herself who feels compelled to romanticize the details relative to her confession. She might have various reasons for mitigating the effects of a thus construed intimacy moment. First, her ignorance paves the way to innocence: she has no idea how the man might have gained access to the dungeon. She feels helpless and surprised both in relation to him and in relation to the authorities who have brought her there. That the stranger wonders what she is doing in such a place may again be a partially disguised reference to her undeserved captivity. Admittedly, one must not lose out of sight that this is an 'unpolished' statement made under duress. If there is an agenda to it, it can only have been engendered by the

⁵⁷¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 378

⁵⁷² BayHStA HeA 10 c 378

girl's overall psychological state. Indeed, though somewhat aware of the religiously transgressive aspects indicated by the alleged lover's penis temperature, the girl does not seem to have thought it through, perhaps judging it best not to commit herself in either direction, 'khalt' or 'warmb'. The described scene is Catharina's most personalized statement, and the one that has the least to do with confession stereotypes. The rest of her story has her demoted to an executive obliged to agree to the Devil's blackmail: "wan du willst mein sein, must du mir alle tag ein khind zubringen".⁵⁷³

Catharina's Sabbath report follows a predictable scheme. There is one element in it which indicates that here the defendant delivers a story learnt by heart: "und wan sie nach miternacht vom tanz hinweckh, haben sie mit dem fahren bisweilen ein wenig muessen stillhalten, unwissent aber warumb."⁵⁷⁴ The part she missed most probably refers to the chime of the church bells, believed to have the power of disabling the witch flight for as long as it can be heard. Since all the other elements mentioned conform to the cliché, it makes sense to assume that Catharina could not remember this one thing from Sabbath stories that were otherwise in circulation, excusing herself with ignorance rather than to risk concocting an explanation of her own.

The Devil in Catharina's account is an authoritarian brute who threatens to punish disobedience with physical violence:

Ob sie nit dem teufel versprochen müesen, ihme auch andere zuzuführen? Wievil sie deme würcklich zuegeführt?

Habs wol versprochen, aber niemand zuegeführt (+ in bedenckhung sie bald hiavor kranckh worden), dabey der teufl ihr getrohet, wan sie ihme kheins werde zubringen, er sie zu laub und staub verführen wolle.⁵⁷⁵

Using illness as an excuse not to serve the Devil represents an interesting detour from the stereotype. There are at least two sides to the 'falling ill' moment: on the hand, the defendant is technically disabled to do his bidding; on the other hand, the idea that the Dark Lord, unwilling to take a 'no' for an answer, threatens to destroy her makes her appear particularly fragile in the eyes of the interrogators, as a helpless victim torn between two evils. That the Devil's threat has obviously not been acted upon makes this particular excuse rather thin, at least in terms of modern logic. But Catharina's construal of the Devil could offer us some insight into her psyche, in light of an otherwise rare reference to a nightmare:

⁵⁷³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 378

⁵⁷⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 379

⁵⁷⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 380

Wie oft der teuffl zu ihr alhier und zu Mittersill in die kheichen khommen? Was er gesagt und gethan?

Zu Mittersill hab sie ainmall gedunckht, es lege etwas schwörs auf ihr, und also nit schreyen khönnen, welches aber bald wider verschwunden, alhier aber sey er vergangene nacht bey ihr gewesen und gefragt, was sie thue, hernach braucht.⁵⁷⁶

It would be interesting to know whether explaining away an oppressive dream by an act of diabolical forces was an Early Modern rule of thumb or whether the context of the hearing made the girl use this piece of information accordingly. There is indeed nothing unusual about nightmares of the aforementioned type; it appears that the girl simply uses a temporarily difficult psychological state – as opposed to the physical symptoms of the illness she has previously brandished – to appear as someone exploited by the Devil, rather than someone colluding with him. Other than that, in the scene that immediately follows, there is again an emphasis on the Devil inquiring about her wellbeing, asking her what her business is.

The Devil, as depicted by Darindl, is decidedly human-like, and lacks the numinous, scary dimension frequently featured in children's confessions:

Als sie geschnitten worden, hab der teuffl sie umb ihren nahmen gefragt, deme sie geantwortt Darindl, darauf er ein schwarz biechl, unwissent woher, vermaine doch aus dem sackh gezogen, und sich veträth, das sie nit sechen khönnen, was er damit gethan, und ob er sie nie geschrieben oder nit.

In der kheichen alhier hab ihr der teuffl befolchen, solle das agnus dei vom hals thuen, was das betlwerch nuz sey, welches sie auch darauf hinweckh gethan, und sich zu ihr gelegt.⁵⁷⁷

In no other confession does the Devil appear as secretive as here. His attempt to hide the book away from Darindl's eyes is an act of a necromancer desperate to maintain the halo of mystery that surrounds his lofty activities. Perhaps this description refers to a real-life scene...

Jackl, on the other hand, is almost absent from Darindl's account, apart from the obligatory confession to being acquainted with him (“Sey an einem Montage two 8 tag vor heurige jacobi mit ihme bekhant worden.”).⁵⁷⁸ On her own initiative, however, she mentions him only in passing, and in an undefined context that makes Jackl appear vaguely superior to her: “Erleitert, das die ursach ihres vorigen läugnens sey, weil ihr der Jaggl solches befolchen.”⁵⁷⁹ Moreover, Darindl seems to have melted Jackl into the Devil figure, which can be detected at the beginning of her Sabbath

⁵⁷⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 380

⁵⁷⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 380-381

⁵⁷⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 380

⁵⁷⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 380

description, “Den teufel hab sie Jaggl gehaissen”.⁵⁸⁰ This might further indicate that the defendant had not been acquainted with stories of Jackl the Magician, or that, even if she had known them, they furnished her no material for confabulation. The predominant theme in her confession is namely that of being approached, possibly taken away by a fascinating male person. It appears that such a great honour could be bestowed only to the Devil (“the Man himself”), not to some intermediary of secondary importance. All in all, Catharina Leidenhammerin does not seem to have left an impression of a particularly credible witch. Her confession appears to be mainly centered on her being pestered by the Devil, who she depicts partly as a nit-picking father figure, partly as a seductive, but elusive lover. That the witch idea did not catch on her, can be inferred from her anemic confessions related to the crimes imputable to witches: without any imagination (or motivation to confabulate), she affirms having „in die kheller gefahren, darin bier getrunckhen, aber weiter nichts gethan.“⁵⁸¹ Likewise, the magic powders she is supposed to have received (again from the Evil One, and not from Jackl) seem to have been wasted on her: „Der beß hab ihr wol ain stupp geben, welches sie den leithen in die windl, wan sie geschniten werden, strähen solle, davon sie zaubern khönnen, selbiges stupp aber hab sie im teichl versträth, und also nit gebraucht.“⁵⁸² Incidentally, the sources do not give us a clue as to why this girl in particular was not tortured into producing the appropriate statements, but instead allowed to remain largely indifferent both to witchcraft accusations and to Jackl. This apparent lenience of the court was not, however, conducive to sparing Darindl the execution hatchet, which fell on 22nd Dcember 1678.

Georg Grueber

Georg Grueber, the 17-year-old beggar from Rauriß, had been interrogated in Großarl prior to his hearing in Salzburg on 24th November 1678. He seems to have belonged to that group of boys to whom a connection with Jackl signified a self-confirming device. His is the type of confession that incited certain historians of the 1930’s to read *Männerbund*-symbolism into the description of the initiatory cut. Indeed, Georg’s version of it is rendered with Spartan succinctness: „Hab ihne mit einem messer in beysein eines jägers, welches der teufel gewesen, in die lingge axl geschnitten.“⁵⁸³ Wherever a shoulder cut appears in the boys’ accounts, it functions as a tattoo that indicates

⁵⁸⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 379

⁵⁸¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 379-380

⁵⁸² BayHStA HeA 10 c 380

⁵⁸³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 383

belongship. Other types of cuts, such as that under the toe, usually do not go along with this sort of identification. Georg's story is rendered in a manner that makes him look satisfied with how he tackles the tasks imposed by Jackl and the Devil:

Der teuffl und Jaggl haben ihme befolchen, soll sie nit anschauen, sonder verreden, welches er auch gethan, dabey angespiben, mit stain, holz, erden, roß und seinem khott angeworffen ain zauberer, hundstaschen, pernheiter, besti, lözen vogl, sey nichts werth sonder ain schelben und dieb, unser liebe frau aber sey nur znicht, mög einem nit helffen, ain huer, hex, zauberin, besti und hundstaschen gehaissen.⁵⁸⁴

The notion that Jesus and the Virgin Mary are not worth looking at soon becomes a more defined meaning. The most personal section of this short report refers to the Lord's mother, who „mög einem nit helffen“. Despite the fact that swearings like these are delivered as a component of the topos, the way they are voiced nonetheless allow one to detect something of a personal attitude to the object being verbally degraded. The mother reproached for not helping him may be either the individual, i.e. Georg's own mother, or universal mother, i.e. the Virgin Mary (although the Early Modern Age's religiosity makes both figures appear fused). Perhaps differentiating between the two levels is not ultimately necessary, since they both seem to operate as a response to an emotional authority (parent / God). From the host desecration scene we shall see just how vehement that response is:

Beicht hab er niemals, unsren herren aber in der Rauriß 2, Lendt 2, Bischofshoven 1, Werfen 3, Hallein 3. Khuchl 1 und zu Golling 2 mal empfangen, alzeit aus dem maul in die hand gethan, und unter die zehen geschoben, dem Jäggl und besen feind auch des Jäggl's mensch nahmens Bärbl einer mezger tochter von St Johanß zuegetragen, mit einem messer, das bluet daraus gerunnen, gestopft, auch immerdar gresser, einer spannen lang, wie ein crucifix worden, welche die hend zusammen gegen ihnen aufgehebt (+ und sie starckh angeschaut), selbiges auf den poden geworffen, mit füssen getreten, mit finger lang eisenen negl die fueß aufeinander, dan durch die hendt, seiten, und beiden axlen (+ in dessen selbiger hendt und fueß noch gerühret) angenaglet und durchschlagen, hernach mit ainer peitschen allenthalben gegaislet, gebriglet, darauf gehofiert, ainen zauberer, hexenmaister, pernheiter, falschen mauskhopf und besti gehaissen, darauf er gestorben, und khlain wie ein halb pazen worden, welches sie hernach auf vorige weiß zu unterschiedlichen mahlen alles auf ein neues mit der heiligen hosti widerumb begangen, und sich auch wie verstanden, dergestalt erzaigt, biß sie solche endlichen in das wasser geworffen, auf dergleichen weiß er constituto mit al 14 empfangenen heiligen hostien umb gangen, und also übel tractiert.⁵⁸⁵

The description above is indeed unprecedented in its almost pornographic violence, and the overall atmosphere evoked in the scene is vividly blasphemous. This is evident already in the curtly

⁵⁸⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 383

⁵⁸⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 385

formulated introductory phrase: “Beicht hab er niemals”. There are three participants besides Georg: the Devil, Jackl, and Jackl’s girlfriend (who is not just some anonymous female this time, but is duly identified as Bärbl, daughter of a specific village butcher). Their function being that of a passive audience in charge of acknowledging and approving of the act (“dem Jäggl und besen feind auch des Jäggl mensch [...] zuegetragen”), the focus of action lies with the beggar boy himself. He claims that, upon receiving the host on not less than thirteen occasions, he would always invariably take it out of his mouth and shove it under his toes. As opposed to the standard phrase ‘unseren herren ausspiben’, this somewhat elaborate description indicates that Georg either had given the matter some thought or was inspired on the spot to describe the act so as to convey the spirit of conscious disrespect.

However, Georg’s act of crucifying the human-like figure to which the host has turned is what gives this account its three-dimensional quality. The stabbed host, having started to bleed, is growing larger and larger over a span of time. Though one can but speculate in trying to guess the perception frame of an Early Modern subject involved in such an act, it appears that from the beginning of the account up to and including the moment of stabbing, the host has got the form and appearance of an oblate; once it starts to miraculously enlarge itself, however, it is imagined to have already assumed an anthropomorphic shape at some previous point, with the bleeding moment possibly constituting the implicit demarcation line. Indeed, none of the defendants relating the host desecration reports in the Salzburg *Hexenakten* corpus dwells on the moment of physical transformation of the oblate cookie into a man. I suspect there are two reasons for this. First, the confusing theological notion that the oblate *is* Christ himself most probably led uninitiated layfolk to presume that the Lord was somehow simultaneously present in both of those shapes, and that transubstantiation meant the Lord assumed one of his two potential strands of existence. Second, it is perhaps precisely because of this dogmatic axiom that the Church did not encourage people to reflect too much upon the matter, the fleshy nature of which made Christ’s unearthly purity difficult to preserve. After all, given that the process of anthropomorphization is introduced by knife stabs that cause bleeding, and in the context of Christ’s resurrection out of the oval Eucharistic cookie, it is obviously reminiscent of birth, a taboo issue for men, who – in my source corpus at least – compose the majority of host desecrators. In Georg’s account the human form assumed by the Lord is additionally encoded by the phrase “wie ein crucifix worden”. Literally speaking, it bespeaks a transformation of the host into a crucifix, but implicitly, according to the synecdoche principle, into the crucified Saviour. In other words, the creature sprung up from the host is preordained to suffer.

An examination of the parts of speech used to refer to the Lord displays an inconsistent usage which makes the Lord assume all grammatical genders: “ein crucifix, *welche* die hend [...] aufgehebt”; “*selbiges* auf den poden geworffen”, “darauf *er* gestorben”. Though almost all of these pronouns can be traced back to the appropriate nouns (‘selbiges’ refers to ‘das crucifix’, ‘er’ auf ‘unser herr’, whereas ‘welche’ remains ambiguous), this nonetheless denotes a certain amount of confusion caused by the syncretic inclusiveness of the Eucharistic act. Maybe the female personal pronoun *welche*, for which no counterpart noun is detectable in the account functions as the third gender, an ‘Es’ meant to bespeak mistrustful distance on the part of the speaker. Had a neutrum form been used, it would have referred to ‘das crucifix’ – but within the logic of the text, it seems vital to emphasize that it is not the cross itself that raises its hands, but rather the creature hanging *on* the cross, and this creature is feminine. Now, the only feminine noun that implicitly dominates the discourse is, of course, ‘die [heilige] hostie’.⁵⁸⁶ That means that the resurrection of Christ has, in fact, failed; the *langage* of the description reveals that it is not Christ himself who hangs on the Crucifix, but merely a mysteriously anthropomorphized oblate cookie raising its hands in defense and sending out a stern look directed at the diabolical congregation. To put it bluntly, this is a cryptic way of saying “I do not believe in transubstantiation”.

Georg throws the crucifix with the creature – or an undifferentiated crucifix-Christ duality – onto the ground and stamps it with his feet (which is perhaps an extreme version of shoving the host under his toes). Then he takes out iron nails and runs them through the creature’s feet, hands, hips (or thighs) and shoulders, while the molested man (whose gender is evidenced in ‘selbiger’) still moving his extremities about. The Lord is thus so thoroughly nailed to the cross that the nails run through to the backside of the wood (“angenaglet und durchschlagen”). The creature is then horsewhipped, defecated upon and exposed to a brief array of insults, respectively. This results in death, which brings about another shift of the creature’s gender, since Georg makes it clear that the one who has died is a *he*.

It is of course impossible to even remotely reconstruct what exactly might have godfathered a construal of such a sadistic outburst as the one presented by this 17-year-old boy. Considering that theological subtleties were essentially foreign to beggars, most of which possessed only rudimentary knowledge in matters of the faith, it is not likely that the fury contained in this report had much to do with Jesus *per se*. Confessing to the crime of host desecration was merely one of the accusations routinely pursued by the court. Georg Grueber’s heavily charged statement,

⁵⁸⁶ The word ‘Hostie’ is, admittedly, absent from the court’s question, which starts with „Wie oft er beicht und Unsren herren empfangen...“, but it is otherwise used on a par with ‘unser Herr’ to signify the Eucharistic oblate; incidentally, ‘die heilige Hostie’ appears in the second half of Georg Grueber’s description.

however, seems to indicate that those individuals in need of an excuse for expressing their rage wholeheartedly embraced the niche allotted to them by the court as an opportunity for tension release. Not only that verbal violence contained in this report cannot be disproved, it also denotes that *real* violence lies underneath. That the existence of an Early Modern Salzburg beggar was essentially an insecure life path, full of humiliations and hostility, as can be inferred from Gerhard Ammerer's study *Heimat Straße*, surely contributed to hoarding up a heavy load of resentment in those individuals convinced that they deserved more. Contrary to e.g. Catharina Leidenhammerin, Georg seems to have been among those beggar youths who had seriously caught up on the idea of belonging to an iconoclast clique lead by Jackl the Magician. His release of anger against the Lord reads, above all, as a cry of powerlessness.

Upon closer observation, it appears that the detonator of Georg's aggression is the stern look the Lord throws at the blaspheming group. This gesture is a rigid reaction of a demanding authority figure who dares to crave submission in spite of the situation being entirely against him; a vengeful fantasy necessitates that the character defined as a villain display such behaviour in order to account for the comeuppance he consequently gets. The dynamics is reminiscent of the atmosphere in Sade's *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, at the end of which the overbearing Mme de Mistival, in spite of eliciting a reminder of her own untouchability ends up being gruesomely degraded.⁵⁸⁷ There are at least three action layers here. For once, the Lord is simply beaten up. The defendant could have and undoubtedly did experience such a situation from both ends. In terms of venting the accumulated anger for violence suffered in childhood years, the U. S. psychiatrist Arthur Janov offered a thought-provoking ‚class distinction‘ drawn from his practice of primal therapy. He observed that the treatment fared better with patients from workers' families. While the patients from petty bourgeois family settings need to pound pillows during primal therapy sessions in order to access a deeply buried, intricately encoded rage, those who were not „too involved with analyzing Father [...] just need to scream at him for all the senseless beatings they received.“⁵⁸⁸ Then, the Lord is crucified, in a manner highly reminiscent of rape: the nails said to be finger-long break both through the body and the wood. The remark “in dessen selbiger handt und fueß noch gerühret” betrays maybe not so much a sadistic streak as a joy in blocking the other's movements, which is maybe why its effects are not imagined to be fatal. (Whether this could be read as a German cultural response to an atavistic echo of swaddling is a point that must remain moot for the

⁵⁸⁷ Sade : *La Philosophie dans le boudoir*, p. 205

⁵⁸⁸ A. Janov : *The Primal Scream*, p. 241

time being).⁵⁸⁹ Finally, the treatment the Saviour gets after the crucifixion is a gratuitous degradation of his physical and psychological integrity, an episode that would have been perfectly superfluous to a genuine believer. Why is it that only after this systematic humiliation that the Lord is allowed to die? Perhaps the violent treatment that Georg has him undergo represents a beggar's life in a nutshell. Having declared the Lord dead, the boy adds that God - or is it the Host again? - subsequently diminished in size („khlein wie ein halb pazen worden“). In other words, it is only *after* the mistreatment that the host is imagined to reassume its standard, pre-enlargement size. This might signify that the defendant has woven his story in accordance with some kind of ethical framework, the rules of which required that the duelling between God and himself, however unfavourable for the former, should take place as a real-life event involving two grownup individuals, rather than be construed as Georg fighting a tiny, biscuit-sized Jesus. Then again, in none of the reports of the young warlocks is the respective defendant's imagination stretched that far - even though the existence of the ‚confabulation item‘ relative to the „khleine Mändl“ offered possibilities that could have been used more creatively. The purpose of the crime, after all, is to defeat Jesus - or rather, that which he represents - in what is perceived as his majestic emanation. Once the rampage is over, the mistreated subject returns to being an object, and of feminine gender, too: „biß sie solche endlichen in das wasser geworffen“; this time it is clear that the thing referred to is the host, perhaps intended to rot as soon as possible. Symbolically, however, the act of throwing the host into water signifies surrendering an apparently emotionally charged experience to oblivion, inasmuch as one would thus preclude another resurrection (implied by a new burial). This way of definitive disposal of the host is not unique to Georg only. After a similarly construed host desecration, Jacob Schekhenreiter also declares having thrown the Lord away, but this time „in ein scheiche grueben“.⁵⁹⁰

Any conflict with authority, a concept understood both in its most abstract sense (the Lord's divine power) and the most concrete sense (all forms of worldly authority) is, from the perspective of modern psychology, rooted in the personality's tension-laden relationship with the parental figures. Unfortunately, the protocols do not furnish substantial information necessary even for a rudimentary reconstruction of the defendant's family situation. Georg's only reference to his parents is the statement with which he situates himself in terms of his origins: „in der Rauriß gebürtig, sein vatter sey aldort ainer geiger, cramer und hausman, welcher neben der mueter noch in leben.“⁵⁹¹ The

⁵⁸⁹ A. Dundes : Life Is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder, pp. 100-102

⁵⁹⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 438

⁵⁹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 383

impression one gets from the rather heterogenous range of professional activities that Georg ascribes to his father is that Grueber Senior must have had certain eclecticism. The fact that Georg's father exercises two professions apart from running the household stands in sharp contrast with the life path walked by his son. Judging from Georg's statement about his parents, presented as a theoretically verifiable point as they are both said to be alive at the moment of his confession, the boy appears to be the only member of the family involved in begging. Whether Georg's alm-seeking orientation was his personal decision that implied him consciously giving up a nutritionally austere domestic life (the formulation „sey hin und wider dem brot nachgangen“ accentuates want of food), or a force of circumstance imposed from without, one cannot ascertain. His father's two jobs might indicate a pecuniary duress which Georg may have wanted to distance himself from by trying to survive on his own. In Georg's Sabbath description a range of dishes is crowned by a fat rooster („bey der mahlzeit er suppen, fleisch, pfeffer, brät, und copruner gessen“⁵⁹²), which seems to suggest that food indeed may have been an issue in the Grueber household, inasmuch as Georg emphasizes that *he* is the one to have eaten of it.

Grueber's story of the diabolical baptism contains all the required elements:

Der teufel hab ihme ain khaltes wasser über den khopf abgossen, mit vermelden, die alte tauf sey nichts, sonder nur ein narrenwerckh, die neue aber die rechte, und hab ihne Schiltl gehaissen, der Jaggl sey sein stüffgott gewesen, und bey ainem gulden in münz geschenckht, welches gelt, als er es ausgeben woollen, zu stain worden.⁵⁹³

As usual, the baptism scene does not differ substantially from its Christian model (water, new name, money). The Devil's remark about the unworthiness of the previous baptism and the act of reassuring the initiate that the diabolical ritual is to be held as valid instead signifies that the beliefs of the boy warlocks were in fact genuinely Christian: in Georg's mind, the Devil knows that his surrogate ritual is not up to its model, and therefore has to furnish the initiate with a 'legal explanation' as to the symbolical worth of what has been undergone. This, too, seems to have been the result of interrogatory dynamics – even without being prodded by a specifically formulated question, the accused children generally felt obliged to state more precisely on what grounds they were supposed to have been baptized anew. In spite of having delivered an adequate answer, it appears that, having included in his explanation the word *narrenwerckh*, Georg inadvertently demonstrated that, deep within, he considered the entire matter as lacking in seriousness. It is perhaps important that the money received as baptismal gift turns to stone precisely at the moment

⁵⁹² BayHStA HeA 10 c 386

⁵⁹³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 386

that Georg tries to pay something with it; this means that the effects of the chimera last until it collides with the real world.

Two conclusions can be extracted from the way Georg depicts demonstrations of his own magical abilities. First, from his power to conjure mice, we see that he understood magical actions as having both a beginning and an end (in theory, if not in practice): “Hab ein schwarzes und vom Jaggl gegebenes pulfer auf den boden gesträth und gesagt, in teufls nahmen sollen solang meisl herkhommen und da verbleiben, biß der iehnige, der es machen khan, widerumb weckh treibet, darauf meisl vorhanden gewesen.”⁵⁹⁴ In similar statements made by most other *zauberbuben*, an end of the magical action is never formulated. Second, Georg’s weather magic is introduced by yellow ointments provided by Jackl, but the Devil is the one capable to catalyze the process: “Vor der negst gewesten giß[er] hab er zu Täxenpach aus bevelch des Jäggl mit einer gelben salben, welche er auf einer waasen geschmirbt, dabey dem teufel zum helffen gerueffen, und gesagt, es soll so lang und vill regnen, biß der iehnige abstelt, der es gemacht hat, ergezaubert“.⁵⁹⁵ In both of these examples, the defendant retains an exclusive power to unravel the magic he has thus created. This quality of being ‘sorcery-conscious’ is perhaps the strongest element in Georg Grueber’s construal of himself as a follower of Jackl.

However, neither Jackl nor the Devil constitute any fuel for Georg’s sexual fantasies. Although he states having copulated with both of them during Sabbath (“under wehrendem actu auch der teufel auf ihme gelegen [...] dergleichen er deponent selbst mit dem Jaggl auch verübt”), his mechanical descriptions do not cross the stereotypical frame. Asked if he had previously been secretly visited by the Devil, Georg answers affirmatively, but the Devil in question is a female: “alhier aber in menschen gestalt als ein weib durch das fenster zweymall zu ihme khommen, und befolchen, soll nit beten, noch etwas bestehen, er werde schon haimb khommen, welche er hernach tämpert und khalt empfunden.”⁵⁹⁶ The colloquially sounding word *tämpern* might indicate that Georg was not sexually inexperienced. At any rate, the woman is construed as helpful and sexually available. This scene is similar to the appropriate part of Catharina Leidenhammerin’s report. Indeed, the notion of being secretly haunted by an individual of the opposite sex (even if it is the Devil) functions as means of boosting the incarcerated individual’s ego by satisfying his/her longing to be desired. The Devil’s visit pulls them back from the margin towards the center (of social happening?). This statement also contains a cryptic reference to Georg’s place of residence (“er werde schon haimb

⁵⁹⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 388

⁵⁹⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 387

⁵⁹⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 c 388

khommen”). We do not know where this ‘home’ was supposed to have been, but even if Georg’s place of residence – unmentioned in the protocols – should have changed frequently, he apparently had an idea that he belonged somewhere. In light of his answer to the question whether his parents had known of his warlock faculties, “Khönnen nichts dergleichen”⁵⁹⁷ we may deduce that the family home probably was not in this equation. Georg Grueber was executed on 22nd December 1678.

Ruepp and Leonard Ernst

One curiosity related to the Ernst brothers, Ruepp and Leonard, is that the court could not ascertain how old either of them were. When on 19th December 1678 Ruepp Ernst is asked „wie alt sein brueder sey?“, instead of stating his age at least approximately, he answers in a half-cryptic, half-street-smart way: „sein brueder aber sey umb das iunger, was er constituto elter sey.“⁵⁹⁸ In general, however, Ruepp’s testimony lends an impression of stemming from a younger teenager. The initiation is depicted as taking place in a spirit of fraternal complicity:

Erleitert anbey, das ihme deponenten sein brueder Leindl am Zederberg gesagt, der Jäggl hete das bluet von ihme constituto in ein becher aufgefangen, und vor negst verschinen heiligen pfingsten in beysein des besen, welcher ihme deponenten solches auch selbst entdeckht, und das er zugegen sey, dan seines brueders und des Jaggls Scheckhenreiters in ein buech eingeschriben. [...] hab ihm solches sein brueder und der teufl selbst gesagt, das er ihme eingeschriben.⁵⁹⁹

Apparently, Ruepp had no problem believing the Jackl-story his younger brother confided to him. He saw no problem in pointing out that the report of the diabolical initiation could be corroborated by the Devil himself. The majority of the warlock boys seem to have regarded the Evil One as someone of their own flock. To Ruepp, he is no theological spook, but rather a cool, somewhat older mate who initially inspires fear that soon turns to awe: „Wahr, er constituto hab den teufl anfangs wol geforchten, der teufl hab ihm aber gesagt, er darf ihme nit förchten, dan er ihme nichts thue.“⁶⁰⁰ At first, it may be curious that this kind of soothing reassurance coming from the Evil One could have been considered effective at all. One must keep in mind, though, that, to the beggars, the only real danger inherent in social interactions was the risk of physical violence; should this risk

⁵⁹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 388

⁵⁹⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 c 430

⁵⁹⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 430

⁶⁰⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 430

have been successfully eliminated, there was no reason not to accept somebody, even if his beastly physique would have made him an undesirable companion in all the upper layers of society. This must have been even more true for beggar children and adolescents, whose naivete would normally have made them less judgmental than grownups in creating contacts with exciting, if dangerous-looking individuals.

The host desecration account is the most vivid portion of Ruepp Ernst's confession:

Bekhent, das er unsern herren zu St Michael, dan enthalb des Khätsbergs unwissent bey St Peter oder zu St Georgen item an der Ensbruggen, zu Mauterndorff, im Wenig und zu Wagrein empfangen, alzeit widerumb aus dem maul und in sackh, buesen und erbleng geschoben, dem Jäggl, besen, seinem brueder und Scheckhenreiter zuegetragen, alle mit messer, iedoch er deponent nur ein wenig, das roth worden, darein gestochen, darauf unser herr etwas gresseres worden, und zu ihme constituto gesagt, ich will dich nit mehr, weil du mir so schmärer thuest, deme er geantworth, habs thuen müssen, hernach mit füssen getreten, überghofiirt, ain teufl, hundsnasen, narren, khrot, läschen und juckher gehaissen, und in freithoff eingraben, aber drey tag hernach selbigen wider ausgraben, in ein hader gethan, in seinen noch anhabenten linggen shuech gelegt, und auf die hexentänz mit sich gefihret haben.⁶⁰¹

This account, too, makes it clear that Ruepp is the recessive, and Leonhard the dominant sibling. Ruepp's lack of initiative is neatly profiled in this scene: compared to those of the four other participants (the Magician, the Devil and two hard-boiled beggar boys), Ruepp's role is hierarchically the lowest. The manner in which he justifies himself in front of the resurrected Lord for the violence inflicted - by saying „habs thuen müssen“ - lends itself to a twofold interpretation. For once, the attitude appearing on the surface redirects the responsibility for the action along the lines of „I am only following orders“. But whose orders are we talking about? Quite predictably, the logic of the account ascribes them to the Devil, but this figure itself is no explanation. As always, the Devil is a projection canvas symbolizing the defendant's psychological urges placed in an anti-religious context. Once we strip the report of its theological attributes, the horizon clarifies itself. As we said before, it is reasonable to assume that any scene depicted in the protocols must be rooted in real-life situations, but also in real-life social relations. Now, by construing his story in a certain way, Ruepp has actually inadvertently revealed to us that his position in the peer group is essentially marginal, or at least not as central as he would want it to be. Hence, this might indicate that what motivates him to deliver his confession is an urge to compete with his brother, who somehow appears to be leading a far more exciting life. His version of the host desecration is construed as a peer group initiation which, e.g. like the French *bizutage*, requires a demonstration of compulsive

⁶⁰¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 430-431

violence. Although the admittance conditions of the ritual do not require the defendant to suffer violence himself, but rather inflict violence upon a sacred symbol, Ruepp's reluctance and lukewarm, evasive handling („alle mit messer, iedoch er deponent nur ein wenig [...] darein gestochen“) show that he does not feel comfortable in the role, and that the act of host desecration does not have any cathartic effects on him (as the case seems to have been with Georg Grueber).

„Our Lord“, whom knife-stabs reddened with blood, grows „a little bigger“. This should be the point at which the host has already become anthropomorphized. The Lord speaks directly to Ruepp, informing him in a rather dry, matter-of-fact manner that he discontinues his divine affection for the defendant, on account of being thus mistreated by him. Indeed, God neither craves mercy, nor sends out bitter gazes - he simply treats the knife-stabs as a breach of (religious) commitment. This could mean that Ruepp comes from a world in which putting a foot wrong results in cold, irrevocable rejection. In Ruepp's economy of affection there is no chance for haggling or setting things straight, in other words: no forgiveness. This is where the defendant gets his satisfaction from, in his capacity of a host desecrator. His reply is equally emotionless; he shows no mercy because none has been warranted to begin with. The sequence that follows is built with the usual components (stamping, defecation, verbal insults), whereafter the boy buries the Lord, at which time he presumably has the form of a host again. Other than the moment during which the Lord speaks, there are no references to gauge any possible shape-shiftings of the host. Perhaps this proves that Ruepp largely ignored the idea of transubstantiation in the first place. In no other host desecration account does the Lord come across as two-dimensional as here. To Ruepp Ernst, God indeed was nothing but an oblate cookie.

The host is not thrown away to a murky place, but buried in a churchyard. There is no reference to anyone else being present when Ruepp comes to dig out the Lord's body three days afterwards. This lapse of time indicates that the boy was to some extent acquainted with resurrection symbolism, to which he apparently unconsciously adhered. It is somewhat clear to him that the Lord should rise again after three days, and that the sadistic treatment orchestrated by the Devil's disciples cannot kill him. In this light it is no wonder that the act of digging out the Lord and wrapping him up in a piece of cloth again has a strong birth connotation.

Yet another display of Ruepp's belief that burying correlates with creation of life is the account of summing up the animals he creates with the aid of Jackl's black powder:

Der Jäggl hab ihm ain schwarz stupp geben, selbiges in tausent teufls nahmen aingraben, alsdan, meisl, khefer, wurmb, khazen, hund, wisl und khlaime mändl worden, welche leztere tanzt, ain das ander umb und umb getriben und die unzucht verüebt.⁶⁰²

Apparently, it takes an action of depositing something into the earth to create living creatures. The result of Ruepp's magic is an impressive range of mostly vermin animals, whereas the 'little men' are the last item mentioned. Beliefs like these seem to betray the child warlock's tabooed view on the procreative aspect of sexuality. The symbolism of the magic action is indeed highly redolent of insemination, and subsequent parturition, with the entire process being thinly disguised with iconography of the improper: Jackl (a sexually mature male) provides black powder (sperm) which is to be injected into earth (vagina) in the name of the thousand devils (orgasm/lust/erotic discourse), which makes a range of 'bad' animals appear (being born is a sin in itself in Roman Catholicism), its final products being 'little men' (babies/children/adolescents) engaged in a frantic group orgy (young warlocks' i.e. the defendant's awakening sexuality). Incidentally, all the beasts are just a pretext for squeezing the 'little men' into the story, since they are the only ones commented upon.

It seems that this sort of naive fantasy could stem from a child precociously disturbed by learning the secret behind procreation. Whether we should automatically impute the same amount of naivete to Ruepp himself is an arguable point, rendered even more difficult by his unfathomable age. Albeit he does convey it in the interrogation process, we cannot know to what extent he considered it genuine. The next statement referring to the Devil's secret visits „und wan der teufl in weibsgestalt khommen, hab er dieselbe vorn, in mansgestalt aber der teufl ihne constitutum im hintern braucht“⁶⁰³ reveals nothing substantial in this respect, apart from a traditional portion of biological determinism according to which the question of who plays the active partner in the sexual act is a matter conditioned by gender. Neither do the bestiality episodes that Ruepp refers to appear to be based on real experiences:

Ob er nit gesehen, was Jäggl mit dem vich gethan?

Jäggl hats angangen.

Ob er nit auch dergleichen und mit was für vich verübt?

⁶⁰² BayHStA HeA 10 c 432

⁶⁰³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 432

Habs mit 3 schwein und ieder 3 mall, welche er hergelegt, Jäggl und sein brueder ihme geholffen, dan mit 3 gaiß ieden 3, ain hund 3, und mit 3 khazen auch ieden mall gethan.⁶⁰⁴

The formulaic repetition of the number 3 throws a veil of suspicion over the whole statement. It is indeed not surprising that even this action cannot be carried out without the assistance of both Jackl and Ruepp's brother. In other words, we are still in the sphere of peer - and, we might add: fraternal - competition. The Magician Jackl and Leonhard Ernst are considered as experts keen on helping the new warlock recruit get settled in his role as an animal molester. The same applies to weather magic, except that this time Jacob Scheckhenreiter is also involved:

Wievil er wetter gemacht, wo? Und mit weme?

Sey wol dabey gewesen, das Jäggl mitls anschmirung einer salben an das herz schauer wetter gemacht, darzue aber nit geholffen, sonst hab er deponent vor pfingstag enthalb des Khätsbergs mit dem Jäggl, seinem brueder und Scheckhenreiter auf obige anschmirung der salben 3 mall, als schauer, schne und regen wetter gemacht, und darzue gesprochen, gehe hin in tausent teufls nahmen, das alles erschlage, so auch geschechen.⁶⁰⁵

Oddly enough, the confession given by Leonhard Ernst, though of similar length, is notoriously formulaic. The worshipped sibling did not invest himself into the statement he was ordered to deliver, and had nothing to add to his story *in banco iuris* either. Both brothers were executed on 12th January 1679.

Stephan Eder

The somewhat looser interrogation concept of the prince-archbishopric's local courts seems to have allowed more variation in the answers of the defendants. This applies to the hearing undertaken on 13th January 1679 at the *pfliegericht* of Mittersill, too. The 14-year-old defendant's name was Stephan Eder, born to Andre and Margaretha, a couple of "arme hausleith". Besides this protocol, another document can help us lighten up the circumstances under which Stephan Eder was arrested: the letter of the judge Georg Hästlingerath to the Salzburg authorities, dated 14th January 1679. Its intent being to summarize the case to be handed over to the Aulic Court, the letter also reconstructs the conversation (which is actually a mini interrogation on the spot) between the boy and the court servant, who consequently performs the arrest:

⁶⁰⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 432

⁶⁰⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 c 432-433

Vergangenem pfinztag den 12 diß hat der hiesige gerichtsdienerknecht einen petlbueben Stephan Eder genandt angestanden und befragt, ob er nit den zauberer Jäggl khennen thue, welcher ihme hierauf mit stolzen worthen zur antwortt geben, was es dan wäre, wan er gar mit ermeltem Jäggl bekhant, was man ihme darunter thuen wollte? Warüber er selbige für verdecktig ansehend, handvest gemacht, und in gefenckliche arrest gebracht⁶⁰⁶

Let us examine any inherent bias first. The court servant underlines that the boy voiced his reply in a more or less defiant tone (“mit stolzen worthen”), and, to make matters worse, dared to pose a counterquestion instead. However, this thin explanation could just as easily have been the court servant’s excuse for making the arrest. In many other cases, the beggar children greatly simplified the official’s task, in that they answered his question affirmatively. With Stephan Eder, the reason had to be somewhat artificially created. This is the one circumstance that would ‘detonate’ the flow of Jackl-episodes, and, as we have seen elsewhere, it seems to have helped upgrading (or instituting in the first place) the defendant’s belief in his own subversive powers, thus creating a social problem out of nowhere. The letter in fact displays some reservation as to the boy’s guilt, but ends up incriminating him implicitly: “dahero nun von für hochwürdl. und gnädige verordnung erwarthe, wie und was gestalten sich gegen disen zauberer pueben weiterers zuverhalten”.⁶⁰⁷

Stephan admitted that begging had been his main occupation, but also that he had recently tended to cows for a Pfaffenhofen peasant in Bavaria. We do not know if this is true; we cannot exclude that older or more ‘experienced’ defendants assumed that such information would not have provoked backup investigations (which sometimes took place within local court jurisdictions⁶⁰⁸). At any rate, it is within this ‘cowboy’ context that the Jackl story is embedded. It appears that, at this point, Stephan had already internalized his role of a *zauberer pueb*:

Ob er nit den zauberer Jäggl khenne, wasgestalten er mit ihme bekhant worden? Wie lang es hin?

Thue ihne woll erkennen, und habe selbige an ainem freitag 14 tag nach pffingsten gleich vor abgannng der sohne, wie er die küe von der waid haimb treiben wolle, khennen lernen, dazumahlen were ihme auf einem weißen roß reithend begegnet, welcher ihne Stephl angeröth, wo er mit denen khüen hinwölle, deme er hierüber haimbzue geantworthet, Jäggl aber begerte, er solle warthen, und die handt herraichen, wollte ihme was lehren, alß nun Stephl die rechte handt hergöben, und gemelt, was er ihme dan lehren will, habe Jäggl ain taschenmösserl heraußgezogen auf den ungenannt(?) finger beim miteren glid ain windl geschniden, das pluet in ein plöch(?), oder zu –ns(?) glaimb(?)

⁶⁰⁶ BayHStA HeA 11 250

⁶⁰⁷ BayHStA HeA 11 250

⁶⁰⁸ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGSL* (112/113), p. 430

zuegehendes pixl aufgefangen, und in das windl ain gelbes pilferl gesträt, den schaden alsobalden gehailt, und verboten, hiervon den leithen nichts zusagen, sondern wan er befragt worden zumelden, er habe ihme diseß mäßl selbsten gemacht, der Jäggl hätte sich sodan weiters vernemmen lassen, er helffe darmit villen leithen, und ihme Stephl darauf ein prot zekossten göben, denselben sohn gehaisen, und gesagt, er habe hinführan seinen nammen Jäggl, solle darvon stillschweigen nit pethen, und weder auf gott noch unnser liebe frauen khain acht göben, über dises seye der Jäggl widerumb von ihme gerithen.⁶⁰⁹

Many different attributes ascribable to Jackl come to the fore in this picturesque account. The dominant streak is, however, his saviour profile, complemented both by his healing qualities and his own insistence of ‘helping a lot of people’. Jackl’s symbolic acts (feeding the boy with bread and declaring him his son) could be read as a Jesus parable – not on account of some religious streak in the young narrator, but because of the mytho-magical qualities of the performative gesture *per se*. The quasimedieval entrance (and exit) of a “knight on a white horse” manifests not only visually, but likewise in gestures, albeit of a different type. Jackl does not dismount his horse – while still in the saddle, he tends his hand to the boy, only to brandish a pocket knife and cut into his finger. The whole account is construed like a fairytale: a stranger approaches the would-be-hero protagonist, asking him where he is heading. In accordance with fairytale rules, which impose that the furnished answer be simplistic, and inviting creative intrusion, the stranger expectedly offers a more exciting direction.

However, one thing has not escaped the court’s attention: the fact that, according to Stephan’s account, Jackl had never actually introduced himself. Hence their question “Woher er dan waiß das es der zauberer Jäggl gewesen”.⁶¹⁰ The boy’s answer nonetheless coheres with the previously established fairytale model. Stephan’s semi-logical declaration is synthetized thus: “Constitutus habe ihne hernach gefragt, wer er den seye, darauf er vermelt, er were der zauberer Jäggl sein vatter der schwarze gebe ihme alles ain.”⁶¹¹ This explanation belongs to the pool of fantasies which derive the Sorcerer’s powers directly from the Devil, but one must not forget that in many confessions, Jackl as a magical potentate reigns supreme. The sheer amount of details incorporated into the description betrays an obvious fascination. Connecting the dots among the figures involved appears to reveal a hierarchy of identification between the Devil, Jackl and Stephan. Jackl claims to owe everything he has to his father, the ‘Black One’. By the act of ritualistically fathering Stephan (with accompanying promises), he repeats the pattern, and that in a way that would make Stephan eligible

⁶⁰⁹ BayHStA HeA 11 251-252

⁶¹⁰ BayHStA HeA 11 252

⁶¹¹ BayHStA HeA 11 252

to recruit other boys himself. The model is simple and elastic, but extremely effective, in that its structure facilitates the court's charges.

The defendant, however, did not incorporate Jackl into the two accounts pertaining to the witch dance (although the initiatory cut is recognized to have been a prerequisite in this respect). This would be a pointed insistence on by the Aulic Court. By extension, this would suggest that the appearance of Jackl did not make sense in a superstitious setting inherently foreign to the young individual being questioned. Jackl already has a firm position within Stephan's heroic self-serving fantasy. On the other hand, the Sabbath, in the boy's perception, seems to have been the sphere of only moderately attractive nature's impulses, weakly connected to the demonic sphere:

Ob er nit auf die hexendänz und wirths kheller gefirth worden, wie offt?

Zweymall, ersten mal seye nach dem er vom Jaggl bemörckht worden, ain unbekhanter mit ainem grienen gwandt, under dem gsicht schwarz und nit allendinges einem rechten menschen gleich nächtlicher weil in seines paurns hof, und zu ihme Stepfl khommen, durch welcher er nacher Pfaffenhofen zum wüth in kheller (warin ain unbekhanter mannß, und weibsbildt gewesen) gefirth wordten, alda heten sie pier und prandtwein gesöcht, der wüth were woll endzwischen in kheller khommen, hete sie aber nit wahrgenommen, weilien sie unsichtbar gewest: und auf ain panckh heukher bliben. Das annder mahl hete ihne der mit dem grienen clayd, welcher er vor den besen feindt gehalten widerumb abgeholt, und in vorgemelten kheller gefirth warin sie wie zuvor pier und prandtwein gedrunken, auch darzue getanzt, es heten sich darin noch 2 mans und 3 weibspersohnen, so alle peyerische claidung angetragen, befunden, nach vollendung dessen hete ihne der bese feindt haimbraith lassen⁶¹²

One could, theoretically, suppose that the scarcity of imaginary models at the beggar children's disposal did not allow much variation. Vygotsky's work on eidetic images could prove supportive in this respect.⁶¹³ Still, the rigid setting of an Early Modern witch trial is not to be equated to modern psychological research experiments – both the aim and the conditions are at sharp contrast. And in this particular witch trial, the court aimed for the truth, even though the result was an almost exact opposite of truth. The court's expectations that the warlock suspects should variate as much as possible could only have been tacitly implied, never spoken out. Although the techniques of incitement to confabulation are in themselves crude, they, too, have a subtext. In addition, most defendants were not ready to elaborate on all of the proposed sub-themes (initiatory cut, Sabbath, weather magic etc); instead, they tended to dwell on those imaginary complexes which, poetically speaking, 'spoke' to them. Stephan obviously did not invest himself as ardently in the witch-dance/

⁶¹² BayHStA HeA 11 253

⁶¹³ The reader is kindly referred to the „Fantasy“ section of this work, in which Lev Vygotsky's contribution is discussed.

wine-cellar story. He simply fused all the elements into descriptions of incognito visits to the cellar, where inebriation could be safely indulged in under the cloak of invisibility. The not-quite-human man in green (suspected to be the Devil) duly picks him up from home and sends him away when the party is over. Although the stranger's demonic appearance is depicted with plasticity (probably as a measure of self-defence), it is not in accordance with this green goblin's gallant services, and the obvious spirit of complicity exuding from their cellar adventures. In terms of fantasies, Stephan further delivers nothing of grand importance. His confession to the theft of a cow bell does not interest the court of Mittersill in the least. About a month afterwards, Stephan Eder would be facing the judges in Salzburg.

The hearing of 11th February 1679 starts out in sombre tones. What began perhaps just as a defiant prank played at an irritating court servant has meanwhile gotten out of hand. As in the case of e.g. Catharina Pichlerin, the young defendant, once at the Aulic Court, starts exerting more judicial awareness, and attempts to rectify things retroactively, by declaring innocence:

Alß ihme hierauf die zu Mittersill gestelte fragstückh nochmahlen vorgehalten worden, hat er zwar vorgeben, das er sich der daselbst gethanen aussagen noch wol zu erinnern wisse, iedoch weil ihne der gerichtsschreiber aldort so streng gehalten, und umb die mehristen sachen, ob er nit diß oder eines gethan, selbst gefragt, darauf er aus forcht ia gesagt, und also sich unschuldig angeben habe.⁶¹⁴

This is quite an interesting piece of information. It seems to indicate that the scribe at the local court of Mittersill tended to interpose the flow of the hearing with (sternly formulated) questions of his own. In itself, this is not unthinkable: charismatic individuals tend to stand out in any power structure, often overstepping the hierarchical mark. On the other hand, it is possible that, for instance, only one such interruption actually happened, and that Stephan subsequently blew it out of proportion so as to stylize himself as an innocent, fearful lamb. It is likewise possible that the boy 'reworked' the unpleasant atmosphere of the Grand Aulic Court, projectively ascribing it to the influence of the previous hearing. In any case, this attitude would have functioned as a desperation-based safety net: 'If you treat me unkindly, I'll confess out of fear'.

The judges, of course, ignore both the boy's plea of innocence along with any subliminal suggestions, and order a body visitation. During the ensuing hearing portion the boy admits to the cut, but denies acquaintance with Jackl, again underlining the falsity of his Mittersill statement. This very understandable reaction is, as we know, a one-way road:

⁶¹⁴ BayHStA HeA 11 287

Als ihme hierauf 6 oder 7 ruethenstraich geben worden, hat er bekhent, das er den Jaggl wol khenne, hab ein schelche nasen, grien huet, darunter ein schwarzes khappl, und sey zu ihme auf einem grau schimel reitender khommen, auch ein brott geben, welches er gessen, hernach mit ainem khrumppen messer in beysein des teufels, der ain grien rockh angehabt, schwarz khöp darunter zwey horn einem bockh gleich und gaisßfueß, in die rechte hand an den ungenannten finger geschnitten, das bluet daraus gerunnen, umb seinen nahmen gefragt, und in ein inwendig weiß, außwendig aber grienes buech geschriben.⁶¹⁵

One should, however, not expect that differences between the statements given at two different court levels – or, indeed, lack of any differences – should prove automatically quantifiable for purposes of an analysis of any ‘fantastic’ contents inherent in them. Though the two groups of interrogations are undeniably connected, the Salzburg sessions obviously deriving from those held at the local courts, in practice, they represent two distinctly separate contexts. It is no wonder that the confabulated texts and contexts should vary, since many of the defendants felt summoned to upgrade an already existing story in order to ‘deliver’ something new. Apart from this, the social interaction among incarcerated Jackl followers must have contributed to a kind of standardization of the most important information clusters. Nevertheless, such a standardization process would certainly not have subdued all the numerous variations i.e. those facets which did not prove to be easily classifiable or exploitable.

This digression might help us understand why Stephan Eder’s recounting of the ‘initiator cut’ is essentially barren, at least in terms of being deprived of a didactically folkloristic frame which we believe to have been present in the boy’s Mittersill confession. There is an additional fusion of the available confabulation elements: the Sorcerer – this time on a gray horse – is esthetically displeasing (and hence more threatening), whereas the Devil, in his green-black outfit, horned and with goose feet, has ceased to exhibit the neutrality he seems to have had while he functioned as an unidentifiable offspring of the local lore. Still, the question to what extent these variations can be ascribable to the defendant’s own conscious or unconscious choices must remain open. Sometimes the wording of a particular statement is suspiciously similar to numerous other protocols. By asking if the defendant’s actual words would have made a difference at all, one might risk being accused of trying to wake von Ranke’s spirit. The question is rather: why do some aspects of the sorcery complex within this mass trial invite numerous variations, while certain others do not? For example, the issue of blasphematory treatment of the holy images is almost always uneventful. Though some, or maybe even most of the actors involved may have found amusement in throwing refuse at the holy pillars (at least in their thoughts), this particular manner of disobedience seems to have

⁶¹⁵ BayHStA HeA 11 287-288

contributed fairly little to the attractivity of Jackl the Sorcerer. Stephan Eder's treatment of the holy pillars is therefore fairly disengaged: "Der teufl hab befolchen, soll sie nit anschauen, den huet nit abziechen sonder anschielchen welches er auch gethan."⁶¹⁶ But, even this display of what prophetically anticipates a kind of a *fin-de-siècle* disdain does not seem disparate from the context of the boy's adolescent enthusiasm for a redeeming hero, whose name he, after all, claims to have adopted in the not quite painless act of diabolical baptism: "Der teufl hab ihne inß gesicht mit ainem wasser gesprizt, welches ihn gebrent, und gesagt, die erste tauf sey nichts guet, und Jäggl gehaissen".⁶¹⁷ The answer seems to have had a satisfactory effect, as the session ends here.

The next hearing takes place on 18th February. After admitting that he has never had communion, and receiving branch strokes for this demonstration of honesty, Stephan Eder delivers such an interesting witch dance account that it deserves to be fully reproduced here:

In der wochen zweymall alß freitag und sambstag auf ainem schwarzen roß welches der teufl gewesen, mit dem teufl und zu zeiten mit dem Jaggl über berg und thal gefahren, und dahin sie khommen, ain wüth, so schwarz im gsicht gewesen, herndl am khopf, gaißfueß und ein griens khleid angehabt, vorhanden war, welcher ihne constitutum gefragt, was er thue, ob er das iehnige, was er ihme anbefolchen, verrichte, der teufl hab ihme deponenten die hand geben (+und gesagt, freist dich, er hingegen franckh dich geantwortet), welche er nit allain, sonder auch im hintern backhen und sein vorders glid, so der teufl ihme in das rechte ohr gesteckht, auch ins maul, ungehindert er die zen etwas zusammen gehalten, etwas sieß gelassen und geschlunden, unsern herren hab der Jäggl auch dahin gebracht, in dem er constituto neben dem Jäggl und anderen mit messer darein gestochen, das bluete daraus gerunnen, und gesagt, gehe hin du schelben und dabey ein hundßtaschen gehaissen, mit stain darauf geworffen, mit fuessen getretten, angespiben, darauf gebislet, gehofiert, und in ein finstres loch geworffen, bey der malzeit sey ein manßpersohn, so der teufl gewesen, dan Jaggl, er constituto und des teufls dirn gesessen, alda sie suppen, fleisch und einen runden khopf einem menschen gleich sechend, gessen, daran ihme deponenten graust, und wein getrunken, von allerhand znichten händl alß wettermachen, menschen bschlaffen, und was sie sonst anhaben oder erdenkhen khönnen, geredt, leyerer und sakhpfeiffer sein spilleith gewesen, die Gerdl sey sein tanzerin gewesen, welche ihm, als er sie unkheisch brauchen wollen, der ursachen hinunter geschlagen, weil er ihr zu khlain gewesen, inmassen dan der teufl und Jagl auch damalß auf ihme gelegen und getruckht, auch im hintern braucht, welches alles khalt gewesen, dergleichen er deponent auch mit dem Jaggl reciproc thuen müssen, der Jaggl aber hab ihne constitutum nit empfunden, weil er khlain ware, falß aber er deponent ain gresseres mannliches glid bekhommen sollte, er sodan heurathen, und ain khind machen wolle, im abfahren haben sie leithen gehörten, damit sie besucher abfahren, und hab ihm der teufel weiteres nichts geben, als das er für ihne die malzeit gezahlt.⁶¹⁸

One must not forget that Stephan had had a whole week for thinking this through and possibly to tailor his story by modelling it according to similar reports of his inmates. In addition, it does not

⁶¹⁶ BayHStA HeA 11 288

⁶¹⁷ BayHStA HeA 11 288

⁶¹⁸ BayHStA HeA 11 288-290

wonder that the boy's narrative flow itself becomes visibly compulsive. The circumstances (arrest, imprisonment, interrogation, mild torture) may have forced him to prioritize words, not merely as his only weapon, but as his only existence conduit: what he is saying is a matter of life and death. Maybe the length of Stephan's Sabbath report was itself a manoeuvre, the aim of which was to prolong his life and postpone the inevitable.

Even so, not everything in this story can be explained away with the help of the foregoing caveat. Are its sexually burdened contents the result of sheer imagination, of peer-to-peer confidence, or are they derived from some other type of interaction?

Stephan's account features three different Devil figures. First, there is the Black Steed which serves as a transport vehicle to the witch dance; second, there is the sinister black-faced, horned, goose-footed host in a green outfit; finally, there is the „Manßpersohn“ at the Sabbath feast, intentionally or accidentally not identified to either of the previous figures. Apparently the boy did not perceive multiplying the ‚hypostases‘ of the Dark Lord as particularly contradictory: the Devil in the shape of a black steed is pictured as being ridden by the anthropomorphic Devil („auf einem schwarzen roß welches der teufl gewesen mit dem teufl [...] gefahren“). Everything extraordinary indeed carries a diabolical badge, but the distribution of the ‚shock‘ potential derived therefrom is somewhat different from what we have seen elsewhere. On the one hand, the Devil is surprisingly unsure of his persuasive powers. He feels compelled to bond with the would-be-initiate prior to the ritual, asking him to confirm his obedience in advance („welcher ihne constitutum gefragt, was er thue, ob er das iehnige, was er ihme anbefolchen, verrichte“). The boy's reply is positive, as the Devil's act of stretching out his hand in greeting implies. This particular aspect makes the Devil's supremacy appear milder than usual. Perhaps that is because the real horror, according to Stephan Eder, lurks in less obvious places. Regardless of the predominance of what might be interpreted as the boy's adolescent sexual self-questioning, the utterly disturbing peak of the whole account is surely the skull on the Sabbath menu, inasmuch as the defendant does not omit to comment the effect it has had on him („einen runden khopf einem menschen khopf gleich sehend, gessen, daran ihme deponenten graust“). Motifs suggestive of cannibalism do not seem to have been functional within the prefabricated frame, which is probably the reason why they are extremely rare in the trial corpus. This one mention could, theoretically speaking, have been inspired by the Early Modern custom of using martyrs' skulls as drinking bowls, as suggested in a 1910 study by Marie Andree-Eysn.⁶¹⁹ The same study emphasizes the cultural relevance of skulls for the geographical area of

⁶¹⁹ M. Andree-Eysn : Volkskundliches aus dem bayrisch-österreichischen Alpengebiet, p. 147

„southern German lands“ (Austria, Bavaria, Tyrol etc).⁶²⁰ Still, I cannot even hypothetically retrace the trajectory along which such beliefs could have reached the ears of a Salzburg beggar boy. What we can be sure of, however, is that the probably accidental nature of this particular detail does not diminish the cultural value of the defendant's display of fear and disgust over the transgression of perhaps the most deep-rooted taboos of all. The boy's uncertainty as to whether the origin of the head is human or not may have been conditioned by a self-defense reflex - under the circumstances obviously unfavourable for the defendant, the court might have pressured him into identifying the decapitated man. Still, since this detail appears to have been consciously thrown into the story, it functions rather as a foil background against which the contours of Stephan's indignation should be clearly visible. (The boy avoids commenting whether he in particular has tasted of this eerie course). Knowing that he had to deliver an account full of darkest transgressions, Stephan, like all the others, followed suit. But this did not prevent him from enriching the story with scenes terrifying not only from the dogmatic, but also from the personal standpoint.

Judging from this report alone, sex is something of an issue to Stephan Eder. The obligatory part of the programme - the scene of copulating with the Devil - seems to have ignited the boy's imaginative powers. The Devil is pictured penetrating Stephan's right ear, subsequently forcing itself into the defendant's mouth which offers insufficient resistance („auch ins Maul, ungehindert er die Zehen etwas zusammen gehalten, etwas sieß gelassen und geschlungen“). Although one could imagine that many an American intellectual would readily jump on to the bandwagon of pedophilia-inspired explanations⁶²¹, the accuracy of the account is ultimately impossible to gauge. The only certainty is that the Devil's ejaculate is referred to as „something sweet“ rather than as „unflath“. However, if we contextualize this with the predominating intimacy theme, we can achieve a more differentiated picture. The scene of Stephan's unsuccessful courting of Gerdl points to the defendant's „Achilles“ heel: demonstrating an irritated refusal, the girl knocks him down, mocking the miniature size of his penis; Stephan's masculinity is thus humiliated both on a corporeal and a verbal level. In a spirit of resignation, the boy assumes his subordinate position in the male-male orgy - only to recognize that he is sexually insufficient even in that situation: „der Jaggl aber hab ihne constitutum nit empfunden, weil er klein ware“. Maybe the image of penetration into the right ear symbolizes an otherwise clearly emphasized sexual inferiority, itself rooted in the biological

⁶²⁰ M. Andree-Eysn, op. cit., pp. 147-152

⁶²¹ The obvious obsession of U.S. culture with pedophilia (evident not only in e.g. deMause's writings but in the taste of the local mass audience for child-abuse scandals) has perhaps something to do with the mentality of a „young“ nation which, guilty over the fact that its independence had to be earned through rebellion against the „old“ motherland, constantly fears retribution from an evil parent. American fears of pedophilia may indeed be nothing but symbolical (and profoundly Christian) restagings of this guilt complex.

state of things, but, just as possibly, in immaturity and/or inexperience. The kinky sexual contact (penis/ear) supersedes the standard ritualistic, and, consequently, outworn subordination of the boy initiate; here, the defendant exploits the diabolical scenario to punish himself: not being fit to accomplish penetration into the adequate orifice, he has to suffer a penetrative assault into one of his own ‚illogical‘ orifices i.e. his right ear.

One thing seems sure, though: penis size was an Early Modern issue, too. Admittedly, the danger of reading postmodern gender-based frustrations into a premodern context, being inherent to the process of interpretation itself, can therefore never be entirely excluded. And yet, in this case this danger is at least partially neutralized by the fairly unequivocal voice of the source itself. Whether this is indeed Stephan’s personal conclusion as to his masculine potency, or simply a cynical intercepted deduction of a bored scribe, a piece of worldly ‚wisdom‘ eloquently closes up the embarrassing exposure of a faulty Early Modern male: „falß aber er deponent ain gresseres mannliches glid bekommen sollte, er sodan heurathen, und ain khind machen wolle“.

Stephan Eder was executed on 3rd March 1679.

Augustin Eder

Held at the Grand Aulic Court on the 18th February 1679, the hearing of the 21-year-old Augustin Eder from the Peisendorff community belonging to Mittersill, though extremely short, contains some quite original variations on the themes concerning the Sabbath. The boy’s only previous arrest dates back to Mittersill, the reason being “Weilen sie ihne gezigen, er khenne den zauberer Jäggl.”⁶²² The question that immediately follows – “Wohin der Jäggl ihne geschniten?”⁶²³ (referring both to the geographical area where the incision took place, and to the incised region of the body) – implies that Eder’s alleged connection with Jackl has already been clarified, any additional denials having been made superfluous. The scene of the initiatory cut, which the defendant places in Bavaria, offers nothing out of the ordinary, with the exception of not differentiating which task is performed by Jackl and which by the Devil (“welche beide alß Jäggl und teufl zusammen geholffen”).⁶²⁴ As we have seen, this portion usually betrays some, even if rudimentary, sense of hierarchy, which makes one of the rite operators (Jackl, the Devil, the Hunter) appear as an ‘alpha

⁶²² BayHStA HeA 11 298

⁶²³ BayHStA HeA 11 298

⁶²⁴ BayHStA HeA 11 298

villain'. In this case, it is from the Devil's words of encouragement *er sols nur thuen, es sey guet*⁶²⁵ that we learn who has the saying. The Devil would soon be additionally profiled as an unyielding commander:

Wie oft er auf die hexentanz gefahren? Mit und auf weme? Wie es dabey hergangen?

Seye siben wochen mit dem Jäggl auf ainem weissen schimel, welches der teufl, der Jaggl aber fuchsknecht gewesen, dan auf ainer gabl und ofenkhruckhen (+ welche er mit einem öl geschmirbt), auf Geberhausen und andernorths hin umbgefahren, alwo er den teufl im ganzen leyb, sonderlich im hintern und vorn an seinem glid, mit welchem er ihme deponenten ins maul gebislet, selbiges aber wider heraus gespiben, der teufl ihme aber getrohet und gesagt, solle ihm mehr khommen, welches er hernach in leyb geschlunden, khüssen müssen, suppen, fleisch, bratwürst und khrapfen haben sie gessen, bier und wein getrunckhen, neben seiner sey der teufl, Jäggl und ain reiter huer namens Eva gesessen, dabey sie, was sie anhöben wollen, von huren, wettermachen und leiterkhrumppen geredt und siben sacrament gescholten, der teufl hab ihms bracht und gesagt, gilt rindl(?), hingegen er geantwortet, geseign gott teufl, unsern herren auch ainen narren, hundstaschen, schelben und dieb, unser liebe frau ain hexin und narrin gehaisen, die heiligen aber sein nichts nutz, und sey herunten woll bösser als im himel, zu spilleith haben geiger und pfeiffer, welche teufl waren, gehabt, sein tanzerin sey die reiterhuer und die teuflin gewesen, welche er beide (+ als die erste vorn, und die andere hinten) unkheisch braucht, und von der Eva warmb, von der teuflin aber khalt empfunden, auf ihme sey auch ain scheiche närrin und der Jäggl gelegen, und hinten die unzucht getriben, so gleichfalß khalt gewesen, in der abfahrt hab der teufel zu ihme gesagt, er soll widerumb khommen, sonst er ihne holen wolle.⁶²⁶

Typically enough, the folk Devil can also appear in the shape of a white horse.⁶²⁷ If picturing Jackl as a 'fox knight' means anything at all, it could be a distant echo of the Reinhard Fuchs legend. In a famous study Piero Camporesi claims that the emblematic and eternal struggle against hunger fought by the shrewd protagonist of the related *Romanzo della volpe* (i.e. *Ysengrimus*) would have been embraced by medieval vagabonds as a model for the desirable trait of astuteness.⁶²⁸ In addition, the fox is featured as a helpful animal in Bavarian and Tyrolean folklore.⁶²⁹

We have seen that swallowing the Devil's urine/ejaculate is a must ("habs schlinden muessen"). Augustin obviously upgraded this notion in terms of his own defeated act of rebellion. Spitting the Devil's bodily fluid out earns him a threatening reprimand that the next upcoming load must be properly ingurgitated ("und gesagt, solle ihme mehr khommen"). The plight of having to kiss the Devil's penis is an obligatory tribute to the sexual degradation a male defendant has to endure.

⁶²⁵ BayHStA HeA 11 298

⁶²⁶ BayHStA HeA 11 298-299

⁶²⁷ H. Bächtold/Stäubli (Hg.) : Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aerglaubens, Band 6, p. 1636

⁶²⁸ P. Camporesi : Il libro dei vagabondi, p. 24

⁶²⁹ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.) : Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, Band 3, p. 179

Further down Eder appears to distinguish between ‘natural’ and ‘unnatural’ intercourse, as he points out that the *reiterhuer* was taken missionary style, whereas the she-Devil was mounted. Quite expectedly, the latter contact produces a cold impression – a feature which Eder tends to attribute to unattractive or repulsive sexual partners (“ain scheiche närrin und der Jäggl).

Curiously, the defendant’s Sabbath account takes place in hell. This aspect, implicit in the sequence *und sey herunten woll bösser als im himel*, suggests that Augustin automatically assumed that hell, as the Devil’s natural habitat, would have been the most logical place for the *hexentänz*, which many other accused beggars nonetheless chose to locate within their own mobility radius. However, the end of the account underlines how forced the Devil’s hospitality really is (“er soll widerumb khommen, sonst er ihne holen wolle”). Apart from the swear words intended for blasphemy (*höllhund* etc), mentions of hell are indeed rare in the examined portion of the *Hexenakten* corpus, which implies that it did not predominate in the beggar children’s *Weltanschauung*.

Augustin Eder was executed on 3rd March 1679.

Andre Taucher

The case of Andre Taucher, another survivor of the ‚Zauberer-Jackl‘-trials, appears to have been less ambiguous. Unlike Elias Finckh, the almost 17 years old Taucher boy declared himself a beggar, at the beginning of the hearing undertaken on 26th April 1681. A confusing background i.e. a broken-up family situation may have had its share in Andre’s choice of earning a living: „sein vatter so ein schmid gewesen und vor 7 iahren gestorben, habe Veith, die mueter aber, welche aniezo mit ainem kraxenträger verehelicht, und zu Schwarzach in Goldegger gericht wohnt, Magdalena gehaissen, er constituto sey dem petlen nachgangen.“⁶³⁰ This probably indicates that the young man’s beggar career lasted for 7 years, as his mother’s remarriage into a neighbourly community appears to have resulted in her 10-year-old son being left to his own devices. Indeed, Andre’s meeting with Jackl and the subsequent diabolical baptism are not devoid of a certain family reenactment perspective:

Habs mit ainer feder aufgefangen, ihne sodan umb seinen nahmen gefragt, den er ihme gesagt, so dan in ain briefl geschriben, in das weitl(?) hab er ihme ein stückh gethan, und gesagt, er soll sein khind sein, welches er ihm mit ja versprochen, dabey sey ein schwarz leyblichs mensch in einer grienen schauben, welche er nit gekhant, und ein groß

⁶³⁰ BayHStA HeA 11 437

fristeß hietl gewesen, und nachdeme er deponent in ainem haus umb ain almuesen khommen, sey Jäggl von ihme gangen, und hab ihn nit mehr gesechen.⁶³¹

Since Jackl here essentially plays a parental role, it should not surprise us that he is imagined to have left without an explanation. However, he does this only after having extracted Andre's promise to 'be his child' - one of the most touching declarations in the entire corpus. The presence of an unknown woman does not actively contribute to the episode; it may be simply a variation on other similar stories, the scenario of which requires passive observers of the act of being registered into Jackl's *briefl*. Although the woman is „leyblich“, she is also „schwarz“, an indicator either of her hair colour or of her diabolical nature. That Andre's interaction with the Sorcerer is a little more intimate than habitually described is demonstrated by Jackl's demand for secrecy: „Jäggl hab ihm befolchen, solle zaubern lehrnen, wan er widerumb zu ihme khomme, dabey auch verbotten, solle nit sagen, das er bey ihme gewesen sey, auch nit betten, noch etwas gwaichts anhangen.“⁶³² The defendant seems to have perceived this vow of silence as an additional part of the ritual. In fact, it may be something of a symbolic excuse for Jackl's ultimately insubstantial presence, for, asked „Wie lang er mit dem Jäggl gangen? Und ob er nit auch mit ihme geriten oder gefahren?“, the boy answers „Sey nit gar mit dem Jäggl ain viertl stundt gangen, geriten oder gefahren niemalen.“⁶³³ To Andre, the Jackl figure is apparently no excuse for him not to stage-manage himself as a hero of adventures that elsewhere tend to read like an Early Modern version of *Second Life* - his interaction with the Sorcerer is meager, and the one magical object he receives as a token of his apprenticeship is some brown powder for weather-making, which allegedly remains unused. The judges then try to extract more from what little has been established, inquiring about Jackl's female companion who observed the registering, but receive nothing but a snapshot of a coitus: „Sovill er gesechen, hab er sie auf dem feld hergenommen.“⁶³⁴ The interrogatory so far not having yielded satisfactory results, the judges order the defendant to be tied down onto a *stuel*:

Alß man ihne auf den stuel gebunden, hat er bekhent, das er das mensch auch brauchen muessen, zumal ihne Jäggl auf das mensch geruckht, und er Jäggl sich sodan auch auf ihn deponenten gelegt und auf und nider truckht.

⁶³¹ BayHStA HeA 11 437-438

⁶³² BayHStA HeA 11 438

⁶³³ BayHStA HeA 11 438

⁶³⁴ BayHStA HeA 11 438

Nachdem ihme bey 10 oder 12 ruethenstraich geben worden, hat er bekhent, das Jäggl ihm befolchen, soll beichten, und sich spriessen lassen, sodan unsern herren widerumb aus dem maul thuen, welches er auch ainmall gethan, und dem Jäggl geben, welchen er mit einem messer zerschniten und gestochen, das er roth worden.

Ob er nit auch dergleichen thuen müssen?

Ja, das bluet, so ihme der priester geben, hab er auch wider außspiben müssen.

Alß er vom stuel aufgelassen worden, hat er bekphant, das er unsern herren zu Golling zweymall aus dem maul gethan, und diß sey ain wochen nach ostern geschechen.⁶³⁵

The description of the sex-sandwich differs little from similar reports made by visibly younger defendants, which naturally arouses suspicions as to the origins of such a euphemisation. Given that in this context the expression ‚auf und nider truckht‘ is used with some frequency, we should ask ourselves whether it might not have been the scribe’s own way of reformulating a piece of indecent action? Should we, for the sake of the argument, hypothetically assume that the description is as close as possible to the defendant’s very words, it still remains open how a late adolescent’s unenlightenment in sexual matters could have been expressed in what essentially sounds like child vocabulary. What is more, Andre has already made it clear that Jackl and his woman had had sex in the field. From all of the above it ensues that Andre probably had an idea of what it is like to ‚use a woman‘, an action which does not leave him at a loss for words. Conversely, it is the act of sodomitic subordination that makes him sound unsure. The Taucher boy obviously decides to implement Jackl’s sodomitic tendencies this early in the story, so as to get himself out of a tight spot: once tied up to the bank, he has to admit having had intercourse with the aforesaid female, but he knows it must have happened unwillingly. Therefore, the precondition for the act is Andre being mounted by Jackl, all of which resembles a threesome in which both the woman and the adolescent boy are conducted by a dominant grownup man - an interesting example of Early Modern gender hierarchy.

However, this carnal episode is not nearly enough; the scarcity of the confession earns Andre a dozen branch strokes before he is any wiser. Hence, he resorts to the ‚thwarted communion‘ scenario, exploiting the host desecration cliché of the reddened oblate. There is really nothing extraordinary about this story, except for the internalisation of the transubstantiation symbolics: the communion wine *de facto* turns to blood, just as the oblate is referred to as ‚Our Lord‘, a rare demonstration of ritualistic consistency. Only after hearing this do the judges release him from the

⁶³⁵ BayHStA HeA 11 438

bank, and it is probably only out of relief that Andre delivers an additional account in the same fashion.

Typically for interrogation dynamics, the next statement is a revision of everything confessed so far; as such, it conforms to a number of demonological prescriptions:

Solle die warheit bekhennen, wie oft er, und zwar das erstemall bey dem Jäggl gewesen?

Ehe er constituto nacher Golling khommen, sey er auch in der Abbtenu bey dem Jäggl gewesen, aldort er ihne neben dem khnie geschniten, er Jäggl das bluet in ein hish schissl aufgefangen, umb seinen nahmen gefragt, sodan in ein inwendig weiß, auswendig aber etwas wenig schwarzes briefl geschriben, und hab müssen sein khind sein, das mensch und der hund sein auch zugegen gewesen, hernach sey ainer im gesicht schwarz und in einem schwarzen khlaider, so ein schöner juckher gewesen, zu ihnen khommen, gegen deme der Jäggl, und hingegen auch der juckher gegen dem Jäggl neben beiderseits abziehung der hiett reverenz gemacht, und er constituto gesehen, das der juckher zwey hernl auf dem khopf, dan schwarze hendt, lange khrälh und fueß dezen gehabt habe, und zu ihme Jäggl gesagt, hast schon mehr ain bueben, schau das dergleichen mehrer bekhombst, die sein mir am liebsten, sonst will er ihne zerreißen, und habe seines gedunckhens ihne deponenten auch der juckher in das lingge wang gegen dem ohr, weil es ihne gebrent gehabt, geschniten, und mit dem bluet in ein schenes buech, alß wanß mit gold übersudlet gewesen were, geschriben, dem Jäggl hab er auch ein biechl geben, und befolchen, soll die bueben darein schreiben, dan das briefl schon voll gewesen sey, der juckher hab ihme deponenten ain khreizer geschenckht, das er solle sein sein, welches er ihme auch mit ja versprochen, und leyb und seel übergeben, welcher ihme darauf befolchen, solle nit frintl(?) betten oder Gott nennen, sonst nämbe ihn unser herr zu sich, solle dafür schelten mit dem teifl und tausent sacra.⁶³⁶

The wealth of details turn Andre Taucher's report into a mini-fairytale, considerably more differentiated than the initial account. For once, this time the symbolical adoption by Jackl is stated as compulsory, in that the defendant is forced to acknowledge the status of an apprentice-stepson: „und hab *müssen* sein khind sein“. Incidentally, this aspect pales in comparison to what is about to follow. The Devil, who in this account steals Jackl's show, is imagined in the shape of a spooky nobleman. This may indeed have something to do with the appropriate topos, but it is also possible that the *juckher* figure functions as a narrative gap-filler, since it allows the defendant to elaborate both on the nobleman's clothes and the etiquette of exchanged greetings - let us not forget that confessions of insufficient length were regarded with suspicion. Moreover, it is the obviously diabolical traits of the black-faced gentleman that finally manage to render credibility to Andre's report. Without the humanoid-terratological qualities corporeally incarnated by the Dark Lord, the Jackl-story is basically insipid, and the sorcery accusations lack their ideological (rather than religious) fuel. In this account, the Devil is the one who really pulls the strings. He comments on

⁶³⁶ BayHStA HeA 11 439

Andre's presence with a mixture of approval, admonishing command and outright threat, with which Jackl is officially demoted to a rank of a mere executioner. The latter aspect is additionally emphasized by the fact that the Devil performs an initiatory cut of his own on Andre's left cheek. In all, we cannot say how conscious Andre's attempt to construe himself as a desirable piece of prey actually was; nonetheless, even though created under duress, it is still his own fantasy, in which he plays a hero against his better judgment. In other words, whatever the beggar boy has to offer, the Devil wants it, and more of it: „schau das dergleichen mehrer bekhombst, die sein mir am liebsten“. Whether this is the voice of a child longing for emotional guidance from an almighty parent, or a socially disadvantaged individual whom the mainstream God has forsaken, the *circulus vitiosus* of satanized marginals rolls on as if by magic. The power in the number of strayed youths thus recruited remains only vaguely suggested, by means of an over-filled registry book which the Devil is imagined handing over to Jackl. Between the lines (or rather breathe-in pauses between sentences), this detail might be a sugarcoated metaphor for what the court was ready to perceive as a demographic bomb consisting of rebellious adolescent have-nots. On a more mundane level, it perhaps merely indicates that Absolutist bureaucratic manners are the one thing that the worldly authorities have in common with the infernal ones i.e. that the defendant is aware that whatever is happening to him is larger than himself. The social dimension is reflected with particular clarity in the double reference to symbols of material wealth: on the one hand, the diabolical register appears as if „mit gold übersudlet“, on the other, the poor initiate receives but a single *khreizer* for having to undergo the whole horror-show. Is this a self-defensive, fatalistic metaphor for an ultimate unattainability of fortune for those who happen to be socially disfavoured? If it is, the secondary gain, deduced from Freud's famous analogy between gold and excrements, is staying pure i.e. ‚non-filthened‘ by the compromising qualities of the noble metal, thanks to which the diabolical registry appears in a new, morally reprehensible light. Oddly enough, nothing less than absolute loyalty („leyb und seel“) is in demand here, and yet it is rewarded by a simple coin: another ‚proof‘ of how cheap beggars really are. Stretching this argument a little further also makes them expendable - the dots which the authorities have long since connected. It is interesting that Andre, though he is with one foot immersed into his enchanting diabolical fantasy, stands with the other one firmly entrenched in his Catholic faith (anticipated already by the previously told host desecration story). Firstly, he is doubly ‚spoken for‘, in that he gives himself to Jackl as a son, while the Devil gets his body and soul: both acts are rather clear examples of a Christian type of surrender to the Lord. Secondly, the only measure capable of scaring him away from abjuring his new allegiance is namely death - but this sanction is again formulated as a consequence of God's righteous wrath,

in spite of the obvious paradox contained in the Devil's warning „sonst nãmbe ihn unser herr zu sich“. It is likewise possible that Andre believes the ‚soft-boiled‘ phase immediately following the initiation to be a liminal state during which he is at the mercy of both of the conflicting forces - Satan *and* God.

Owing to its structure, Andre Taucher's confession is a suitable example of how the narrative niche aimed at relating confabulatory particulars catalyzes a flow of fantasy items (figures, situations, interrelations etc) the origins of which (personal beliefs, parental attitudes, peer group constructs?) are fairly difficult to guess. What matters is the way these imaginative concepts function within the dynamics of the confession, which is only co-steered, but never entirely dominated by the interrogator. In the following statements, the defendant goes on pinning himself down to personalized variations of the warlock theme:

Wie oft er unsern herren in der Abtenau empfangen, und was damit gethan?

Ainmahl ohne beicht, und mit einem spissl widerumb aus dem maul gethan, in die hand genommen, und vor der khürchthür niedergelegt, sodan der Jäggl und der juckher hierzue gangen, denselben aufgehebt, und in ain bixl gethan, hinter der khürchen gangen, und alle drey darein geschnitten und mit einem hilzenen harten spissl darein gestochen, das hischbraun(?) heraus gangen, er sodan unsern herren einen betl, teifl, dreckh, hundts, rabenfleisch und diebsaß haissen müssen, und s v dreckh, welchen ain betler gemacht, geworffen habe.⁶³⁷

Returning the Lord to the Church i.e. laying the unswallowed host onto the threshold of His house is maybe the first token of rejecting faith, the faith that may be crumbling as the defendant speaks - perhaps because the very possibility of elaborating discourses along anti-Catholic lines automatically raises iconoclastic thoughts. But the rules according to which Jackl and the diabolical nobleman are to play bad guys in the boy's adventure do not allow that this matter be terminated through an act of graceful distancing from the former allegiance. Since each of the two is an agreed-upon locus of nastiness, Andre is expected to recount everything about their misdeeds; furthermore, this enables the defendant himself to come clean as regards the religious infractions involved: the villains would not let him part peacefully from the oblate. Still, it would be exaggerated to generalize such an insight by claiming that every similar account is nothing but an inwardly welcomed occasion for a retroactive crypto-rebellion in the narrative form. The least one can conclude is that Andre Taucher's devotion to the Lord runs a little deeper than that of many other boy warlocks, even though it is not free of projections („er sodan unsern herren einen betl [...]

⁶³⁷ BayHStA HeA 11 439-440

haissen müssen“). In general, some *zauberbuben* indeed seem to have cared more for what they perceived as God, some less, and some not at all. After all, not God, but Jackl the Sorcerer, is the intended focus of their confessions.

After a couple of uneventful information related to the group's pitchfork journeys, Andre offers the court an interesting variation of the bestiality episode, and an intriguing statement evoking male-to-male intimacy:

Ob sie nie vich angetroffen, und was damit gethan?

Jäggl sey enters wasser von Khuchl hierauf in ainem dorff zu einem paurn in den stall gangen, und das vich überall griffen, weiter aber nit gesechen, was Jäggl sonst damit gethan, ihne constitutum hab Jäggl auch auf ein khue gehebt umb zusechen, ob sie ihne trage.

Wie oft und von weme er in der kheichen zu Golling und alhier besuecht worden?

Zu Golling hab er zweymallen in der kheichen etwas gehört, und alhie auch so oft des nachts, vermaine, es sey der Jaggl gewesen, und hab gesagt, er sole sechen, das er auskhomme, woll ihm schon aushelffen, hab ihm auch befolchen, soll das geheng hinweckh thuen vom halß, es sey nichts werth, welches er bey ainer viertlstundt abgethan, unter dessen sie miteinander gebloedert, und ihne gefragt, ob er nit bey ihme mechte ligen, dem er geantwortt, er wisse es nit, hab sich sodan zu ihme gelegt, khizlet, khußt und umbgewelzt.⁶³⁸

The two short accounts are perhaps best jointly analyzed. Apparently Jackl does not display zoophilic tendencies, and is pictured entering the stable to cuddle what heads of cattle he finds therein. Perhaps certain single beggar men really did have a habit of doing something like this, if only to be able to briefly connect with the more obvious aspects of a peasant life. Or maybe Andre shows no affinity for the idea of Jackl mating with animals because it collides with demonstrative tenderness the two of them share in the subsequent scene, the description of which is quite out of the ordinary. If we leave the majority of outright confabulations aside (,the Devil visited me in prison'), this is not the only time a defendant is asked to comb through his memory in search of any strange nocturnal events experienced during incarceration in the local dungeon. The few hallucinatory accounts we have encountered suggest that the defendants were allowed, indeed encouraged, to relate to the court any confusing and disturbing nightmares they may have had, but only if these were narratively traceable to the main culprits: Jackl and/or the Devil. Considering that Andre's account, too, starts with „vermaine, es sey...“, we seem to be dealing with an initially amorphous sensation to which the interrogation lends a juridically acceptable shape. We cannot be

⁶³⁸ BayHStA HeA 11 440-441

sure whether Jackl's visit to Andre's dungeon is a plain dream, an exhibition of perfectly justifiable wishful thinking, or the one derived from the other. Jackl, who has already determined himself as a polyvalent figure in Andre's mental universe, functions here mainly as an apostate saviour-lover, the twist on the „apprentice in distress“-tale being that the Sorcerer solely offers assistance to an escape the prisoner should undertake himself. Although it remains ambiguous which of the two removes the Agnus Dei from the defendant's neck, it is important that the act of canonically forbidden intimacy can ensue only after the divine ‚purity shield‘ (similarly to a medieval chastity belt) has been done away with. In Freudian language, the Id can run wild only after a temporary removal of the Superego in the form of a holy necklace. In addition, the taking off of this sacred jewellery basically functions as an overture to undressing, which ultimately makes it equal religious nudity. As regards the way a defendant reacts to an obviously erotically connotated question, Andre Taucher's „geantwort, er wisse es nit“ coincides with a very similar answer that Elias Finckh claims having given to the seductive violinist at the witch dance (though the scribe's laconic paraphrase might have evened out any subtle differences in the way the two answers were expressed!). Given that both were being interrogated at approximately the same time (Finckh's 9th April statement preceding Taucher's by 17 days), it is not excluded that they somehow could have influenced each others stories. However, once we are done with diagnosing the topos, what we are left with is a pretty lively description of Jackl's and Andre's horizontal fondling, i.e. ‚tickling, kissing, and rolling-over‘. In order to understand this, we have to go back to those points of Andre's confession which hint to sex. First such mention involves Jackl copulating with his female companion, which he is said to have „hergenommen“. Then we hear of an imposed threesome that Jackl conducts by mounting the mating couple and pressing himself against the boy („auf und nider truckht“). Neither of the two hints to copulation are suggestive of pleasure. With the prison intimacy scene, the reverse seems to be true: there is pleasure, albeit with no obvious copulation. The only criterion of differentiation appears to be the defendant's apparent ‚adjectival‘ investment into this particular scene, the one aspect that makes it sound genuine i.e. based on an actual experience. But what kind of experience can it have been? Does this essentially innocent description bear resemblance to homoerotically tinged experiences that adolescent boys tend to have while navigating through their bisexual phase? Or does it simply evoke an anonymous episode of prepubescent, essentially pre-sexual, joyful and unrestrained bodily interaction between chums fond of each other? It would be somewhat irresponsible to assume that social and existential marginalization would have been able to neutralize the effects of the beggar boys' bio-psychological development. I do not claim that this development is directly readable from the protocols as such (or, for that matter, from any other type

of ego-documents), but this merely makes the psychological aspect elusive to the historian - it does not make it inexistent. In fact, the question is to which extent the supposedly ‚loose‘ life of beggars can be said to have yielded niches within which expressiveness in emotional communication surpassed the narrow liberties habitual to the non-nomadic majority? Consequently, it is possible that the liberties of beggar children and youths were even bigger than those of their grownup counterparts - if indeed variations are to be sought at a group / stratum rather than individual level. We still know too little about the habits of these groups to pronounce monochromatic judgments. Whichever way we direct our speculations on the nature of Andre's statements, it is important to note that they have not served their purpose. Three days later, Andre decides to deliver a confession that is vividly more stereotypical (and which includes an unavoidable bestiality episode). Does this mean the boy must have realized that, at some point, he would be forced to cough up the expected story? Considering that he ultimately managed to avoid capital punishment, we may suspect that the decision to change the confession was not only conscious, but perhaps even calculated. To make matters more opaque, *Lizentiat* Johan Franz conducts the new hearing, dated 29th April, in a somewhat peculiar manner. The appropriate protocol is namely not a combination of *Interrogatoria* and *Responsoria*, but rather a one single piece of retelling. Indeed, the introduction during which the defendant is said to have confirmed his previous statement lengthens, by plan or by accident, into a new account from which any court questions are omitted. The story repeats, this time enriched with an element previously left unmentioned - the diabolical baptism:

Am Carfreitag hab er sich neben andern in der Abbtenu zwischen 9 und 10 Uhr sprissen lassen, auf unsern herren hab er auch gespiben, mit fuessen darauf getreten, und mit menschen khott geworffen, der juckher hab ihme benebens befolchen, er sol sich nit fürmen(?) lassen, wie er ihme dan auch ain breu über den khopf abgossen, und Jäggl gesagt, er sey nit recht taufft worden, sey nichts werth die alte tauff, und wie juckher vermeldt, sey der Jäggl sein gött, massen sie ihne Schneider gehaissen, und der sathan ain khreizer geschenckt, was aber sonst dabey geredt worden, khönne er nit mehr wissen, dan er gar vergessen sey, wie er dan, weil er in diensten gewesen, und umb etwas geschickht worden, gleich alles vergessen habe. Als ihme das nunmehr zerbrechne pixl, warinen er das vom Jäggl empfangene braune stüpl gehabt, vorgezaigt worden, hat er selbiges gleich erkhandt, das das rechte seye.⁶³⁹

Thanks to the condensed form of this hearing any techniques responsible for goading Andre into ‚rectifying‘ his statement are not evident from the document itself. It is not unthinkable that the judge gave him some kind of a semi-formal hint; it is likewise possible that the boy did not need much to start producing a new confession, and that that this was the reason why Lt. Franz refrained

⁶³⁹ BayHStA HeA 11 441

from following the usual procedure. But what did Andre base this additional information upon? The material for the enhancement must have been obtained during the two whole days that separated the hearings. We have already seen that Andre's accounts are stamped with originality which the court felt obliged to counteract by mild torture and purposeful (i.e. leading) questions. In other words, when not properly steered, Andre tends to give legally unusable answers. What, then, could have influenced him into enriching his report with all the standard details relative to the ritual of diabolical baptism, including the obligatory clause of how worthless *die alte tauff* really is? Should we assume that other imprisoned beggar 'warlocks' exchanged their versions with Andre, it seems likely that this made him adjust his story according to what was generally known about Jackl's feats. The corollary of this hybridization is the presence of *three* villains instead of two, for besides Jackl and the *juckher*, the account features Satan himself, who overtakes from the latter the task of presenting the initiate with a baptismal *khreizer*. It is, of course, understandable that under the stressful circumstances the young defendants could not (and maybe would not) bother about whether their various statements logically cohered. Nonetheless, the presence of the black gentleman alongside Satan appears to prove that, to the beggar children of Salzburg, the religious construct of Satan was more of an abstract entity than a genuine bogeyman. The horned, clawed black man was *the* Devil, and it was only under this guise that Satan could live up to the criterion.

In order to prevent any further questions concerning the ritual, Andre uses a smokescreen that makes practically no sense. He claims that after him receiving the coin there is some more talk among the leaders of the ceremony. However, at the given moment he happens to be *in somebody's service* and consequently has to leave because he is sent on an errand, which interruption makes him forget everything other than what he has already related to the court. This is by far the greatest and most puzzling inconsistency in the hearing of Andre Taucher. At the first session he declares alms seeking to be his major occupation. In spite of this, it is not impossible that he did perform services for someone, at least on occasion, and yet none are actually mentioned. This seems to be of importance because most of the interrogated children - apparently reacting to the social stigma which the trial situation would render painfully salient - normally felt anxious to profile themselves as workers by vocation and beggars by *force majeure*. Hence, errands, even of the most trifling kind, are named first, with the unpleasant truth basically left for the end. Andre, in his own words, is just a beggar and nothing else - until an excuse of fetching something for a master forces him to leave the diabolical assembly. Were we to persist in locating a logical bond within the context of the statement itself, we might hypothesize that the service is performed for one of the figures presiding the ritual, but this assumption seems rather strained. At any rate, it is the supposed irruption of the

mundane into this lofty atmosphere that makes Andre fall into oblivion, a circumstance doubly underlined within the account: „dan er gar vergessen sey, [...] alles vergessen habe“. The clumsy maneuver is therefore an understandable attempt of self-defense, a countermeasure that falls way behind the court’s Joker card of producing a cracked box that has allegedly contained Jackl’s brown powder. We have already witnessed the procedural habit of facing the defendants with *corpora delicti* relevant to sorcery accusations, as in the case of a magical herb presented to Augustin Grueber during the hearing held on 16th November 1678. Let us recall that Augustin formulates his confession concerning weather magic after having been presented a plant root *similar* to the one he has supposedly used („mit einer dergleichen wurzl, wie ihm vorgezaigt worden, risl gemacht“⁶⁴⁰). The question is: where do these objects come from? What is the origin of the *nunmehr zerbrechne pixl* brandished against Andre Taucher? Two explanations seem plausible. 1) The broken box, being one of the beggar boy’s few belongings, is naturally confiscated at the moment of the arrest, and consequently assumed to have played a role in the sorcery crimes. The guilt-riddling dynamics of the trial transforms it into a legitimate legal instrument. 2) Since boxes were convenient safekeeping containers for people on the (perpetual) move, it is only logical that many beggars should have had at least one in their possession - a hypothesis that can neither be confirmed nor refuted. This particular object, however, may have nothing whatsoever to do with Andre Taucher, who would have had little courage to contradict the judge by denying that he has ever possessed any such box at all. In fact, the modifier „nunmehr zerbrechne“ might suggest that the court has faced the defendant with a box whose broken state makes it ultimately unrecognizable even if the boy actually has possessed anything similar. Hence, the confused defendant, unfit for intellectual fencing, has no alternative but to confirm the identity of the object. It is in the half-hearted spirit of forced collaboration with the dominant interlocutor that Andre continues his updated confession:

Constituto bekhent ferers, das Jäggl im obgenanten stall ein khue gebraucht, welches er auch ainmall thuen müssen, darzue ihne der Jäggl hinauf gehebt, sonst aber mit kheinem anderen vich nit.

Dan hab Jäggl alhier in der kheichen zu ihme deponenten gesagt, er wolle ihm aushelffen, zu dem ende das thürl, wardurch man ihnen(?) das essen reicht, eröffnet, heraus griffen, und die närb(?) abgethan, welches ambtmann confirmirt, das er es offner gefunden, deponent aber habe zu ihme Jäggl gesagt, er begere nit heraus, dan man ihne gleich wider fangen thete, es were dan solch, man liesse ihn gleich also selbst hinaus, und weil Jäggl bey ihme in der kheichen gewesen, hab er ihme constituto die hendl vonainander gestreckht, ins maul gespiben, und ruckhwerts an ihme gemacht, aber nichts empfunden, das er ihme in leyb khommen were, hernach durch die mauer wider hinweckh.⁶⁴¹

⁶⁴⁰ BayHStA HeA 10 c 369

⁶⁴¹ BayHStA HeA 11 442

Unless we opt for a hypothesis that a foreign party actually did gain entry into the prison building, consequently manipulating the trapdoor of the prison cell, it is to be assumed that it could have been opened solely by one of the guards i.e. insider officials, or maybe even vandalized by Andre Taucher himself, caught in a violent spasm of frustration. The fact that Jackl takes the blame for the ‚open trapdoor‘ (a circumstance confirmed by one of the insider employees), coupled with the Sorcerer’s disappearance *durch die mauer*, might indicate the probability of the latter alternative. However, the trapdoor issue seems to be related to something much more important: Andre’s lucid reflexions of the consequences that a successful escape would trigger. This personal insight, embedded into a dialogue between Jackl and the boy, functions as a subliminal message directed at Andre’s accusers, and is a symbolic way of pleading rightfully deserved innocence.

The depiction of Jackl’s attempt to sexually degrade Andre, viewed from the perspective of the forced ‚improvement‘ of the confession, is, the way I see it, basically the defendant’s compensation for the innocuous fondling contained in his previous statement. A selective system, fostered by the dialectic character of a witch trial, is at work here: the contents of a confession are being altered as often as necessary until they are made to fit a set of preconceived notions - a reconfirmation of the golden rule. Comparing both versions of Andre’s sexual(ized) contact with the Sorcerer, we must ask ourselves what purpose is Jackl as a *rapist* intended to serve? In the previous account, despite Andre’s indecisive resistance, the intimacy between the two is more or less *consensual*, in the improved version it is *borne*. Admittedly, it remains difficult to discern which of the two aspects the court perceived as more disturbing: the carnal intimacy, or the ideological bond derivable from it. Either way, because of its subversive potential, the complicity inherent to the unity of bodies and/or souls could not be allowed to linger as a valid alternative. Therefore, an interrogation would be pursued until the defendant was made to distance himself from any pleasure involved. That is why a declaration of having been sexually harassed in the dungeon (by the Devil and/or Jackl) is an unavoidable element of every confession. From this perspective, Jackl’s gesture of spitting in Andre’s mouth is an apt metaphor for the untruthful statement the imprisoned boy has no choice but to sully himself with. The imagery evocative of rape adequately reflects a violation of justice.

Unfortunately, the *Hexenakten* do not contain the folio SLA.HP.1681/1 327/8, which documents that Andre Taucher was pardoned on account of his repentance, and, consequently, entered ‚ebschl. Dienste‘ (the information stems from Nagl’s study).⁶⁴² Nevertheless, though this might indicate that the court had, in this particular case, actually been capable of evaluating a defendant’s

⁶⁴² H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690, Teil I“, in *MGS*L (112/113), p. 539

guilt (or lack of it), the decision ultimately appears arbitrary. Or, more precise: it is to be suspected that the verdict was influenced by aspects not legible from the sources at hand. Indeed, as an external examiner of the protocols relative to Andre Taucher - and viewed against the background of all the other trial records, most of which allow us to infer innocence no less convincing than Andre's - one forcefully remains puzzled as to the nature of this outcome.

Elias Finckh

In light of the exceptionally high number of people executed for sorcery within the ‚Zauberer-Jackl‘-trial, the hearings of those who have been able to escape this misfortune merit specific attention. Such is the case of the 12-year-old Elias Finckh, a beggar from Niderlandt. Having been judged too inane for the sorcery charges, he was ultimately condemned to compulsory work, on the 30th April 1681. The sentence, preceded by a deposition apparently identical to the one he had made on 9th April, was, in addition to the two inspecting judges, presided (and possibly formulated) by Sebastian Zillner himself: „Dieser delinquent nahmens Finckh ist zu dem Mertiltragen angestellt worden.“⁶⁴³ Assigning a beggar to a task of transporting mortar meant (re)including him into the working community; compared to the alternatives of execution and exile, this measure is probably a sign of utmost leniency, from the authorities' point of view. But how did Elias Finckh contribute to escaping the axe, and were there other circumstances besides the statement itself?

The preliminary information furnished by Elias would normally have marked him out rather unfavourably, for the boy also states having been born out of wedlock: „sein mueter werde die Glechen Maidl genant, der vatter sey ein Hamerschmidt zu Murau Mathiaß mit nahmen, so verheurath, und er constituto unehelich und in sein vatters wehrenter verheurathung erworben worden seye.“⁶⁴⁴ As always, it is impossible to know whether this information was extracted, given willingly, or anything in between. However, since many other defendants were apparently allowed to pass off without further elaboration on the remark „unehelich geboren“, it seems somewhat likely that the boy has brought it up of his own accord after all. It appears that the ghost of bastardy, which spooks above the defendant's origins, not unlike the scarlet letter on Hester Prynne's robe,⁶⁴⁵ was an indelible aspect of those origins, its social unacceptability notwithstanding. Elias simply delivers ‚everything that there is‘ to say about his parents in general; the fact that he reproduces

⁶⁴³ BayHStA HeA 11 423

⁶⁴⁴ BayHStA HeA 11 416

⁶⁴⁵ This is a reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, originally published in 1850.

discrimination in his narrative does not imply that he is being discriminatory himself. It is the virtually inescapable public shame of an ‚open secret‘ surrounding the circumstances of his birth that conditions his social identity just as much as the name of his mother or the profession of his father does. However, this ‚identity‘ would have been shaped primarily by the defendant’s mother Magdalena Hueberin, a beggar woman with whom Elias used to go alms-seeking. Out of this purely nominal presence of the father one might dare intuiting some short-term erotic encounter between the parents, which a supposed duplicity of Mathias Finckh rendered volatile. It seems that, at least to some representatives of the lowest social layer, family origins were of utmost importance, regardless of the amount of disgrace implied. In some cases at least, what was appreciated may have been origins as such, but what mostly fuelled the motivation seems to have been a vain hope of utilizing the scarce genealogy information for the purpose of reinstating oneself as mainstream (however rudimentary that urge might actually have been). Indeed, Elias Finckh is not that much of a bastard after all: he has got a family name, and, as we shall see later on, a mother to defend him.

The boy’s encounter with the Sorcerer is described rather succinctly: „Khenne den zauberer Jäggl bey zwey iahren hero, und sey am Hallein ausser der pruggen zu ihme deponenten khommen, und selbst gesagt, das er der zauberer Jaggl seye, trag ein schwarzen rockh und liechte khnöpf darauf.“⁶⁴⁶ Although Jackl’s sober outfit is different from the dandy look featured in many other statements, it is in perfect accordance with the straightforward, no-nonsense approach of the Sorcerer. There are no attempts of persuasion, and the recruitment unfolds pretty effortlessly:

Sey volgents mit ihme in die statt hinein zu einem wüthshaus gangen, sodan umb seinen namen gefragt, dan er geantwortet, er haisse Elias Finckh, hernach in den rechten zaigfinger mit einem messer geschniten, das blueth daraus gangen, welches er in ein hipsch eisenes pixl aufgefangen und ihne in ein brait aussenher schwarz, inwendig aber geschribnes buech eingeschriben, auch darauf ainen fünffzechner geschenckht.

Was hernach weiterß geschechen? Und was er thuen müssen?

Hab weiter nichts thuen derffen, sey auch nichts geschechen. [...] Der Jäggl hab bey dem wiesgarben ein buch geschriben, ihme constituto auch versprochen, wolle ihn lesen und schreiben lehrnen, sonst hab er von ihme nichts erlehnet.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁶ BayHStA HeA 11 416

⁶⁴⁷ BayHStA HeA 11 416

It is interesting that the introduction between the two is not simultaneous. Jackl appears, presents himself, takes the boy along into a *wirthshaus*, and then asks about his name, only to perform an initiatory cut in response.

The subtle difference between the answer “was er thuen müssen” and Elias’ reply “Hab [...] nichts thuen derffen”, if it is not just a negligible variation, may be an additional emphasis of the defendant’s passive role vis-à-vis Jackl. Here we see that the state of being recruited by the Sorcerer could manifest itself simply in static containment from any sort of personal initiative, just as much as in readiness to perform a range of subordinative actions. In fact, if we disregard the initiatory cut altogether, Jackl’s role essentially reduces to that of a teacher i.e. the depository of the magical powers of reading and writing – an aspect emphasized by his sober outfit with no outlandish *accoutrements*. The scarcity of the source does not allow us to go as far as interpreting this as the boy’s wish to excel at those two disciplines, but it appears that, to Elias, they had priority over the thunder-and-lightning dimension of sorcery normally preferred by other self-declared followers of Jackl. Each additional sub-question (i.e. slight variations of ‘What has he taught you?’) yields only sparsely enhanced answers:

Was er ihne gelehret?

Lesen, schreiben und schiessen.

Was noch mehrers?

Zaubern, alß meißl und fäckhl machen, alß er hierauf gefragt worden, wie er ain und anders gemacht, hat er solches widerumb revocirt.

Warauf er an die banckh gebunten und ihme etliche ruetenstraich gegeben worden, über welches er die warheit zusagen, erbetten, und bekhent, das er vom Jäggl meisl und fäckhl gelehrt.⁶⁴⁸

‘Reading, writing, and shooting’ – the furnished answer is as contextually incorrect as can be. Compared to what is usually mentioned here (weather magic, invisibility etc), the aforementioned tasks are so sublime that Jackl, who is at risk of becoming a wise, benevolent figure, can almost be said to bear similarity to Chiron, the teacher of Hercules. Since the defendant seems to have been insistent on this point from the start, the judges choose not to contradict it *per se*, but rather wheedle out the list of sorcery skills from Jackl’s little apprentice. This is where the second confabulation

⁶⁴⁸ BayHStA HeA 11 417

wave sets in, if only reluctantly and obviously without an adequate cover story. This irregularity will be rectified by the branch strokes.

Elias' account of the initiatory cut seems to obtain an extra dimension which comes to the fore during the body visitation, as the boy explains the origin of each individual scar:

Am khopf, wüsse er nichts davon zusagen, müsse nur im haarscheren geschniten worden sein.

Die an der nasen sey ihm unbewußt.

An der linggen axl hab er sich selber khrält.

Am vordern finger rechter hand hab ihn der schinter Jäggl geschniten.

Lingger hand am vordern zaigfinger hab er alle drey selbst mit dem ---(?) messer geschniten.

Am mitern finger lingger hand hab er sich von selbst aufkhrält.

Un am linggen khnie mit seinen henden auch aufkhrält.⁶⁴⁹

Referring to the three scars on his left forefinger, the defendant claims having inflicted them himself, albeit we do not know whether this was intentional. The one scar on the right forefinger allegedly stems from the cut performed by Jackl. But, almost all the other scars are self-inflicted as well, apparently caused by the boy's repetitive acts of scratching himself sore. Naming Jackl as responsible for one of the marks on the body must, therefore, be evaluated against the background of what reads like a personal habit. Admittedly, any repetitive scratching would have been understandable, given the poor hygienic circumstances of the wandering beggars. Knife wounds, even when self-inflicted, could have been purely accidental. Indeed, within the context of the beggar children's 'wound chronology', determining Jackl as one of the causes appears to make sense, provided that one refrains from regarding him as an actual person. Jackl the Sorcerer is an arch-beggar, the social peak one strives towards, and, as such, he functions not unlike a Joker in a deck of playing cards. Perhaps what the 'Jackl-did-it'-statements really mean should be translated as 'Life has made me so'. Nevertheless, it would not have been a conscious construct.

Finally, it is symptomatic that the process of cataloguing the scars reveals even those of which the boy has previously been unaware ("Die an der nasen sey ihm unbewußt"), which might betray unfamiliarity with mirrors. Though the use of mirrors, according to Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, started spreading on all social classes of France from mid-17th century onwards⁶⁵⁰, contemporary Salzburg beggars apparently had no access to these objects. It is not unthinkable that some individuals belonging to the lowest stratum of contemporary Salzburg could have been familiar with mirrors,

⁶⁴⁹ BayHStA HeA 11 417

⁶⁵⁰ S. Melchior-Bonnet : The Mirror: A History, p. 29

but whether these would have made a difference before the custom's mass usage brought about a shift in self-perception, remains an arguable point.

Elias Finckh's exposé on the procedures of creating mice and piglets is by far the most elaborate in the corpus:

Die meisl hab er dergestalt bekhommen, in deme er ein tragente mauß aufgeschnitten, das die junge heraus gefallen, die fäkhel aber hab er eine sau in die 6mall angangen in mainung, dardurch fäkhel zumachen, welches der Jaggl auch 8mall gethan, und diß sey zu khuchel bey dem Podlt(?) geschechen, welches zuthuen ihme der Jäggl befolchen, haben auch ain feldenmauß genommen und ayter aufgefangen, sodan ihr haimbliches glidit und testiculos damit geschmirbt, damit sie die sau bösser im hintern brauchen und ehrunder fäkhel machen khönnen.⁶⁵¹

Perhaps the most surprising thing about this mishmash of cruelty against animals and (imaginary?) zoophilia is the total absence of sorcery. There are no magical powders or salves, just an unappetizing scenario that, in theory, could have taken place (the grotesque climax being the moment in which pus extracted from a field mouse is used as a lubricant to sodomize a pig). We are facing yet another novelty of the Finckh boy's confession: within this context, the verb *machen* has a biological, not a magical connotation, and the story is construed accordingly. In fact, later on we shall see that this 12-year-old defendant uses the term 'khinder machen' in the same way. But, as far as this particular account is concerned, nothing is really 'made' by Elias. On one occasion, he cuts open a pregnant she-mouse so that foetuses fall onto the ground (a metaphor for, maybe even a distant echo of the crimes for which Zigeuner Hiesl was tried three years earlier, in 1678), on another one he penetrates a pig in the hope of 'making' piglets, of which there are none. Jackl's presence in the story is fairly discrete: apart from surpassing the defendant in the number of bestial acts, he is imagined as 'ordering' the boy to perform the acts in question. In addition, it appears that the bestial episode is not a single isolated attempt; rather, the search for lubricant betrays the intent "damit die sau bösser im hintern brauchen [...] khönnen". Considering how compact and, ultimately, logical this short report is, one could suspect it to have been based on real actions. Whether this is a compromise between reality and confabulation or just a pressured demonstration of pure fantasy is of secondary importance: all the halftruths and conjectures of which this nebulous trial consists have hardened into a structure the solidity of which has rendered it unquestionable.

The next two replies are somewhat puzzling in their lack of common sense:

Was er sonst gelehrt oder gethan?

⁶⁵¹ BayHStA HeA 11 417

Ein messer hab er in die banckh gesteckht, und dasselbe gemolchen das ain grienes prot herausgeloffen.

Zu was ende solches geschechen?

Gleich gern.⁶⁵²

What could the boy have had in mind when he mentioned green bread produced from milking a knife, an act accompanied by an illogical commentary? For once, he may have, at least for a moment, nurtured hope that obvious lies would get the judges to have him untied and, eventually released. He also may have wanted to test the limits of what was acceptable. After all, the ‘milked knife’ is a sequel to the sado-bestial episode that is not particularly believable in its own turn. We cannot exclude the possibility that he suffered from a mental disorder which would have made him temporarily lapse into total absurdity, e.g. from schizop(h)rasia, the condition characterized by ‘word salad’ symptoms.⁶⁵³ However, given the overall lucidity of the account, my guess is that he simply groped his way about in an utterly difficult situation. Maybe he instantaneously realized that he was treading a slippery path. At any rate, there are no side-remarks concerning the fuzzy answers provided by Elias. And, since the subsequent answers (referring to the boy’s communion habits) are again clearly formulated, there was no reason to alter the course of the hearing, which does not mean the interrogating judge was not put on his guard. Indeed, on this occasion, he seems to have slightly accustomed his technique (mistaking what looked like lack of common sense for mere ignorance), in that he avoided naming the host and described it instead. This subtle manoeuvre proved superfluous, since the circumlocutory question “Was er mit dem iehnigen gethan, welches ihm die capuziner ins maul geben?” was knowledgeably and serenely answered with „Unsern herren hab er solang in dem maul behalten, biß er zergangen gewesen, alsdan ihne hierunter geschlunden habe.“⁶⁵⁴ The defendant obviously knew that the ‘something’ was ‘Our Lord’, and that He was not to be taken out of one’s mouth – for which reason he succinctly negated ever having transgressed the Communion rule in this manner.

Elias proves cooperative when asked to list all of Jackl’s orders, which essentially amount to blasphematory treatment of the holy pillars (the boy obviously preferred one single theme at a time). However, his reluctance to include elements of witchcraft mythology into his accounts is by

⁶⁵² BayHStA HeA 11 418

⁶⁵³ T. Kammerer : „Shizofazija“, in A. Porot (ed.) : Enciklopedija psihijatrije, pp. 595-596

⁶⁵⁴ BayHStA HeA 11 418

now a constant, and so is the judge's decision not to provide him with clues. Hence the question "Ob er nie bey einem tanz gewesen?"⁶⁵⁵, to which he gives an affirmative answer, adding only that it took place at an inn. This 'dance' to which Jackl is said to have taken him is a rather common, decidedly non-diabolical feast that bears only superficial similarities to the Sabbath:

Drey spilleith in grien hueten haben aufgemacht, er constituto hab mit der wüthsdien getantz, dabey auch schene leith in schwarzen huetl und darunter khäpl, dan braune röckh antragent, gewesen, nach dem tanz haben sie sich alle zum tisch gesezt, suppen, khraut, fleisch, brätl und pfeffer gessen, dabey lebzelteres brott gehabt, hernach sie schlaffen gangen, und hab sich ein spillman zu ihme constituto gelegt.

Was sie miteinander gethan und angefangen?

Nichts, ausser das ihne der spillman gefragt, ob er gern tanze, deme er nur ja geantwortt.⁶⁵⁶

The expression 'beautiful people' may convey pretty much the meaning it has today – a group of prestigious individuals belonging to the upper stratum of society. And, like today, it is their garments that make them 'beautiful'. This does not seem to mean those other participants, the commoners, are ugly – we have seen that esthetically displeasing individuals always get a distinguishing sticker 'sheich'. Rather, it means that the 'chosen ones' have something extra that makes them stand out. Perhaps this particular quality was what made them 'magical', or at least extraordinary, in the defendant's eyes. As with Finckh's previous statements, there is nothing supernatural whatsoever about this apparently high-profile feast; Jackl himself is virtually absent. The description itself is very moderate. Also the euphemistic expression 'then they went to sleep' waters down the sexual undertones habitual to the majority of Sabbath accounts. And yet, this prudishness is perhaps itself a mask intended to discourage further deepening of the theme. The only mini-episode worth thinking over would be Elias' interaction with the violinist – a fragment which, with a little imagination, could be interpreted as a vaguely anticipated homoerotic courtship. Placed into a context of some modern gay venue, the violinist's seemingly innocent question posed to the boy would need no pruning to fit the *Zeitgeist*. On the other hand, this short exhibition of etiquette, devoid of elements like rape or 'tongue worship' of a stinky horned anti-God, seems to have sprung up from experiences that have very little in common with the routinized vulgarities of a beggar's mundane existence. Again, we cannot go beyond mere conjectures. A violinist (perhaps *the* violinist) is only briefly referred to during the next session, when Elias enriches the previously

⁶⁵⁵ BayHStA HeA 11 418

⁶⁵⁶ BayHStA HeA 11 418-419

mentioned bestial episode with the presence of “ein jäger und spillman [...] welcher spillman sonst zu Wagrain der geiger Carl genant würdt.”⁶⁵⁷ As far as the hearing procedure was concerned though, subtleties like these remained unregistered, either because they were situated beyond the judges’ attention span, or simply because their imprecise character opened no new vistas for investigation. Hence, the next question inquires when the Finckh boy last saw Jackl the Sorcerer. After a convenient answer is served, the session ends, with the defendant being ‘temporarily dismissed’.

At the 14th April hearing, the judges try to put some chronological order in the list of the boy’s alleged encounters with Jackl (at Hallein, Lueg and Khuchl). Apart from Finckh’s zoophilic menagerie being somewhat bigger (featuring lambs and calves), no new information are produced. The defendant being obviously disinclined from introducing the expected characters into his confession, the judges proceed with well-aimed questions, a technique that seems to do the trick:

Alß er ausser Hallein bey dem weißgärber von dem schinter Jäggl geschniten worden, wer sonst auch zugegen gewesen?

Ein jäger in schwarzen bart, breiten nasen, grienen hietl, und darunter ein khäpl, grosse hendl und neue starckhe shuech antragent, welcher zu ihme constituto gesagt, er seye sein brueder, massen dan auch gedachter jäger nit allain damalß, sonder auch zu Khuchl und im Lueg bey ihnen gewesen seye.

Wohin der schinter Jäggl ihne deponenten sonsten geführt?

Jäggl hab ihne constitutum zu Khuchl und zu Lueg nachtszeit auf einem braunen roß, dabey auch der jäger gewesen und mitgeriten, zu einem tanz in ein wüthshaus geführt, und habe Jäggl vorgeben, das selbiges roß ihme zuegehöre, welches mit allen vier fuessen geschwint gerent.⁶⁵⁸

This account only superficially resembles others of its kind. The fact that the Hunter is pictured wearing ‘new, strong shoes’ concurs not only with the garment-related wishful thinking documented in the statements of some other young beggars (as we have seen on the example of Martin Hibis⁶⁵⁹), but also with the smooth elegance of the Sabbath attendants, as they were imagined by Elias Finckh. So far we can discern a fairly recognizable pattern manifested as a connection between the comfortable and the unreachable which makes the boy associate attributes of wealth to unusual, extraordinary figures. Nonetheless, he still stubbornly resists ‘mythologizing’ these figures in a way

⁶⁵⁷ BayHStA HeA 11 419

⁶⁵⁸ BayHStA HeA 11 419-420

⁶⁵⁹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 54

that would make the judges' task easier. The Hunter, who is almost everywhere else depicted as a creepy, semi-defined presence one could easily place into a setting of a silent horror movie, is namely entirely human (his most unusual features being his 'big hands'). Despite the boy's unenviable position, it is *his* fantasy that counts, not that of the interrogating grownups: what appears to matter to him is being 'accepted' by well-to-do individuals whose inclination to him is friendly in a fraternal sort of way. The Hunter calls him his brother, whereas Jackl allows them both to ride his very own brown steed, another display of wealth i.e. of social rootedness ("und habe Jäggl vorgeben, das selbiges roß ihme zuegehöre"). The Hunter's presence on most previous occasions is retroactively underlined, perhaps because imagining oneself as a part of a team invoked a sounder sense of cohesion within a context of belongingness. This will not prevent Elias from weaving all the male protagonists into the context of what appears to be a same-sex orgy:

Was er sonst neben den fählen, lämpl und khalbmen zumachen gelehrt?

Khinder hab er auch neben dem Jäggl gemacht.

Wan? Wo? Und auf was weiß, auch mit weme?

Ein schenes petlmensch nammenß Traudl, welches enthalb des taurns zu haus, sey ihme und dem Jäggl ausserhalb Khuchl bey einem pauernhaus, davon nit weit ein padstübl(?) gestanden, begegnet, welches sie in das bett geführt, und an ihr khinder gemacht.

Weil seinem vorgeben nach er auf Traudl gelegen, was sonst dabey vorgangen?

Weil er auf der Traudl gelegen, hab ihne deponenten auch der Jäggl, jäger und spillman im hintern braucht.

Ob die Traudl nit auch bey dem tanz gewesen?

Sey wol dabey gewesen, wie dan der jäger sie Traudl damalß auch gebraucht, und khinder gemacht hat.⁶⁶⁰

There can be no mistake that sex is the theme of the foregoing section. Interestingly, Elias seems to distinguish two separate kinds of sexual activity: 'brauchen' and 'khinder machen'. The criterion for the differentiation is apparently procreativity, since the anal intercourse between him and the males is described as 'im hintern gebraucht', while both the heterosexual contact with Traudl and the bestiality episodes perceived as attempts of 'creating' animal youths can be jointly defined as

⁶⁶⁰ BayHStA HeA 11 420

activities conducive to 'khinder machen'. (The rudimentary character of these expressions does not seem to indicate that the distinction stems from either the judges or the scribe).

The episode with Traudl ends in what seems to be a threesome involving the girl, Jackl, and Elias. The Sorcerer and his little companion are the active parties: 'they took her to bed and made children with [on] her'. What could have functioned as a boyhood-to-manhood moment is, however, soon diluted by an exhibition of the boy's sexual submission. And, oddly enough, the mysterious violinist seducer is a part of the dryly summarized homosexual gang bang. At the risk of an overinterpretation, his reappearance here might be evaluated in light of the boy's earlier assertion "deme er nur ja geantwort". In general, it is fairly difficult to speculate on the frequency of homosexual practices among Early Modern beggar males based on evaluating the court protocols alone. Indeed, given that the bestiality episodes themselves happen in an all-male setting, betraying an adolescent peer practice of working out a hormone surge by experimenting on domestic animals, the connection between zoophilia and homoerotic intercourse does seem somewhat tighter in this particular case. Thus, the notion of 'sodomy' in its medieval interpretation (encompassing both types of sexually 'unnatural' behaviour) may have had partial footing in the way people used either of the two activities as a sort of backdoor to the other one. Whether this was indeed the case here cannot be claimed with certainty. However, the reason Elias endures a sexual assault of the three men has perhaps very little to do with homoerotic motivation, since this happens "Weil er auf der Traudl gelegen". Is it a punishment for the sexual transgression of a young male who has dared to tread the territory of adult males? "Ein schenes petlmensch" sounds like a status symbol which the male members of a wandering beggar group would have coveted, but could not obtain without showing disrespect for various social mechanisms the purpose of which would have been to prevent excesses and control behaviour of individuals within the group. It is perhaps of importance that Traudl is said to have been 'sexually used' *and* 'fertilized' at the (witch) dance by none other than the Hunter, a figure already heavily marked out as an alpha male within the boy's confession, and that this machismo display is what has earned the description of their intercourse a 'double whammy'. In other words, Elias may be narratively re-enacting a situation that either has taken place in (his) reality, or could have, according to his understanding of gender issues. If, on the other hand, we observe the sentence "Weil er auf Traudl gelegen" from another perspective, the interpretation falls into line with the standard Sabbath scenes. Indeed, "Weil" may be an abbreviated version of "Weilen" (although no curved ligature standing for "-en" is traceable on the folio page itself) and hence its meaning would be 'while'. This implies that, during the intercourse, Elias was sandwiched between Traudl under him and the three men above him. The defendant will make at

least one more homoerotically oriented confession before the judges strike a sentence, but deriving his sexual inclinations out of it would be little more than guesswork.

Before they confront him with his mother, the judges ask Elias about any knowledge she might have had of his acquaintanceship with Jackl; the boy replies “Sie hab vorhero nichts davon gewußt, nachdem er ihr aber solches gesagt, sey sie beß gewesen.”⁶⁶¹ This is not the first time that the mother of a young warlock is described as having expressed dissatisfaction over such a suspicious social liaison. Considering that Elias, in the statement that immediately follows, denounces his mother as an accomplice of the Sorcerer, this ‘angry reaction’ is surely not motivated by a child’s wish to protect the parent (whose indignation places him or her into a ‘righteous’ frame of mind). This accusation implies the forming of a triangle (Elias-Jackl-mother interaction) within which Jackl and Magdalena Hueberin, according to the rules of provincial social logic of ‘single man meets single woman’, quite expectedly, become sexual partners: “massen dan seine mueter bey dem Jäggl auch zu Werfen, Lueg und zu Khuchl gewesen sey, und alzeit beide beyainander, wie ihme selbige in der Taurach bekhant, gelegen, und die unzucht getriben haben”.⁶⁶² The appropriate section, however, sounds ambiguous, as it is not clear who exactly is she supposed to have had sex with: the Sorcerer or her son? Either the boy’s formulation indeed sounded confusing in this respect, hence necessitating additional questions, or the judges simply wanted to explore all attackable points (the incest alternative, as it were):

Wan er mit seiner mueter im petln oder zu haus umbgezogen, wo er alzeit gelegen?

Bey seiner muetter.

Was sie miteinander gethan, und ob sie nichts von ihme zuthuen begert?

Habe nichts mit ihr gethan, weniger sie von ihme begert, das er sie brauchen solle.⁶⁶³

It is not unusual that issues such as incest become relevant within the context of a witch trial, but it is important to note that, in this case, the potential guilt lies with the mother, not with the boy himself. From this particular angle, he is innocent. It is unclear which particular characteristic of Elias Finckh was it that sensitized the judges into showing this sort of leniency in the second degree: it could be the defendant’s youth, or some other facilitating circumstance (his simple-

⁶⁶¹ BayHStA HeA 11 420

⁶⁶² BayHStA HeA 11 420-421

⁶⁶³ BayHStA HeA 11 421

mindedness, according to Heinz Nagl⁶⁶⁴) that ultimately earned him hard labour instead of an execution. At any rate, the defendant categorically rejects the court's insinuation, apparently one size too large for his confabulatory enthusiasm. Incidentally, the statement subsequently furnished by the boy's mother indicated that she had been an insider to the hype surrounding Jackl the Sorcerer. In her explanation, formulated in a smartly self-defensive undertone, she claims: "Den Jäggl kenne sie nit, sein mueter aber hab sie wol khent, weil man sie die Schinter Baberl gehaissen, und, solle, wie man gesagt, damals ein zauberin gewesen sein, sie deponentin aber khönne nit zaubern."⁶⁶⁵ Therefore, the Hueberin woman, given that she said she knew Barbara Koller, could actually have been one of the channels through which stories of the beggar 'arch-magus' reached the ears of Elias Finckh in the first place. In fact, this possibility is not to be ruled out at all, if only because there are no chum-accomplices ('Gspän') involved; what is more, the Finckh boy is *never* asked to supply any names either.

The misunderstanding between Elias and his mother culminates into a conflict during the 17th April session, in an episode which the protocol renders with a stark degree of plasticity:

Ob es wahr sey, das der schinter Jäggl bey seiner mueter im Lueg, zu Werfen und zu Khuchl gelegen, auch sie geschniten habe?

Sey alles wahr, dan sie ihm solches selbst gesagt, und zum thail auch gesechen hab, das der Jäggl, weil er nit weit davon gelegen, auf sein mueter gesprungen seye.

Ob er ihm getraue, der mueter solches under das gesicht zusagen?

Gar woll.

Nachdeme constituto vermerkht, das ihm die mueter vor augen gestellt werde, ist dieselbe ganz rot worden, auch daraufhin als die mueter vorgeben, das sie den Jäggl nit kenne, weniger bey ihme gelegen sey, hat Finckh alles widerumb revocirt, und beständig auf deme verharret, das er die unwahrheit wegen der mueter in ain so anderem vorgeben gehabt.

Hierauf ihme in abwesenheit der mueter zur straff solcen ungrundts 10 ruthenstraich geben worden, auch darauf versprochen, wolle sein lebtage nit mehr liegen⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ Although Nagl names *Einfältigkeit* as the reason why the court decides to spare Finckh's life, there are nonetheless no unequivocal indications for this in the interrogatory itself.

⁶⁶⁵ BayHStA HeA 11 421

⁶⁶⁶ BayHStA HeA 11 422

One should bear in mind that the hearing of Elias Finckh is conducted by the *lizenziat* Johan Franz, who apparently does not share Sebastian Zillner's eagerness to produce little beggar warlocks. For some reason, this particular interrogation urges him into taking notice of all the salient inconsistencies, and rephrasing the questions until the defendant breaks under the burden of his own contradictions. Rather than to make the accused boy entangle himself into an intricate web of lies – a procedure conducive to a death sentence –, he skillfully deconstructs the confabulation tissue. Since the boy's statements essentially lack magical ingredients, and are repetitive in character, how can they be credible?

It appears that in the renewed confrontation with Elias' mother one seemingly marginal detail, duly registered by the scribe, co-steers the action: upon facing the accusation of having had coitus with Jackl Magdalena gets red in the face – a unique demonstration of emotional excitement provoked by an indictment for promiscuity. Regardless of whether this surge of blood into the head may be translated either as blushing with shame or as boiling with rage (or both), it seems to indicate that the lower stratum women of Early Modern era, i.e. those too subordinated to the dictates valid for the entire gender, were far from sanitized from prudishness. Whichever applies, it may give us a faint idea of how nonverbal aspects of communication could have influenced an Early Modern witch trial. There are two possible levels of influence: 1) Elias gets frightened by his mother's reaction, and withdraws his little piece of calumny, or 2) the court perceives the woman to be genuinely nonplussed, refraining from pressuring her into confessing to witchcraft (a charge she would hardly have been able to refute, under the circumstances). Again, the sobriety of the interrogating judge certainly contributed to the clarity of evaluation.

Now that Elias has promised not to tell lies anymore, a dynamic examination summary ensues, involving both Magdalena and her son:

Ob wahr, das er das messer gemolchen?

Sey nit wahr.

Warumb er dan solches gesagt?

Gleich gern, weil er die ruethen, welche ihm gar wehe gethan, geforchten.

Ob sie mueter, als welche zugegen war, gewusst, das ihr sohn von dem Jaggl geschniten worden?

Habs wolgewußt.

Wer ihr solches gesagt?

Die paten.⁶⁶⁷

That Elias recants his statement referring to the ‘milked knife’ is not as important as the accompanying justification: the ludicrous declaration was made solely to prevent yet another series of branch strokes. This in itself is no new information – the internalization of the threat of suggested torture is, after all, one of the major driving forces of witch trials in general. It is the interrogated individual’s perception of the distribution of torture that is an issue here. The ‘milked knife’ was served to the judges on 11th April, immediately following the first explanation of ‘fäkhil machen’. That clearly shows us that, after relating all the details of the bestiality episode, Elias felt obliged to simply go on producing new statements based on the same penetration discourse. In other words, he understood the question “Was er sonst gelehrt oder gethan?” as an unspoken threat – maybe precisely because he had nothing else ‘in stock’. Maybe all the talk of mating with animals produced a primitive image of what psychoanalysts would interpret as an ejaculating phallus, although it is not clear why a symbol representing something tabooed should be a chronological sequel to a description which ultimately breaks up with the taboo. The story of the ‘milked knife’ actually seems to be just an abstract variation of the preceding account, since its product (a piece of green bread) bears the same preoccupation with a ‘something-out-of-nothing’ type of *participation mystique* predominating in child-witch trials.

Since it is clear that they were both examined at the same time, it is likely that Magdalena formed her share of answers according to the re-instated lucidity of her son. She may have feared that Elias would start refuting everything about Jackl, a development which could have earned her discredit, and possibly even a witchcraft accusation into the bargain. This may be why she declared that everything related to Jackl *was* reality after all, except for her own active participation in the debauchery. Not only is the initiatory cut regarded as a fact, but the presumed godfathers (of the diabolical baptism) retroactively mutate into *informants* – it is the act of profiling them as purveyors of a relevant rumour that lends them corporeality. The woman thus symbolically partakes of the collective delusion, which she nonetheless sanely integrates into the totality of her confession: “Widersprichts, das sie den Jäggl gekhent, ausser was andere leith von ihme gesagt haben.”⁶⁶⁸ The spirit of contradiction inherent in her last answer does not disturb the interrogator, since it is obvious that separate questions pertain to different realities. In other words: Jackl exists, and his

⁶⁶⁷ BayHStA HeA 11 422

⁶⁶⁸ BayHStA HeA 11 423

helpers have confirmed that he has marked her son; she, on the other hand, has never seen him, but is impeccably *au courant* with the rumours. This manoeuvre of Magdalena Hueberin, though potentially dangerous, seems to have appeased the court: she did not endanger the Jackl-construct, but distanced herself sufficiently from it.

The defendant's statement made on the last but one hearing on 29th April was neither commented upon, nor have there been any incitements of the court to deepen it. It featured almost no new information:

Als diser abermahlen über vorige interrogatoria gefragt worden, hat er alles denen gethanen depositionibo gleich, widerumb ausgesagt, neben deme, das Jäggl und constituto aneinander in die schamb griffen, auch Jäggl befolchen, soll unsern herren und unser liebe frau nit zuvil ehren, noch anbeten, sonder ansipben, über das obige auch unsern herren einen pernheiter und naren gehaissen habe.⁶⁶⁹

Apparently neither of the two new elements in the story, homosexual innuendo and the verbal blasphemy of the Lord and the Virgin Mary, were considered groundbreaking. Indeed, they may have sealed the conclusions the court may have already had made. Even though the account contains fairly 'inflammable' confessions, little seems to have been done other than registering it. In the end it may have been a matter of sheer luck that the boy escaped execution, and that the mother was set free for lack of incriminating evidence.

⁶⁶⁹ BayHStA HeA 11 423

PART TWO: MOTIVES, CONCEPTS, IDEAS

Motives

The present research can tackle only a tiny selection of Jackl-trial motives, without cataloguing all of them extensively. The work that comes closest to such a task is Fritz Byloff's study *Volkskundliches aus Strafprozessen der österreichischen Alpenländer*, which reproduces excerpts of the witch trial protocols where particular folkloric themes occur. The following 'clusters' from this compendium concur with those recurrent in our own case study: body parts of newborns used as magical props⁶⁷⁰, weather magic (weather invocation)⁶⁷¹, concocting witch salves⁶⁷², magical actions related to cows and milk⁶⁷³, man-to-animal metamorphosis⁶⁷⁴, the female demon Perchtl⁶⁷⁵, amulets against robber attacks⁶⁷⁶, and the Devil's cloak.⁶⁷⁷

The 'Zauberer Jackl' - who was he, what was he?

The tale of a charismatic younger man of suspicious (or at least unclear) origins, and who is able to enchant children and gain them over to a nefarious cause must ring a bell to anyone acquainted with the legend of the Ratcatcher of Hamelin (German: Hameln), popular in late medieval and Early Modern German-speaking Europe. There are no contemporary sources to the *Exodus Hamelensis* - the earliest written trace of the supposed event being the late 14th century 'Lüneburg MS'. At that time, the image of some 130 children parading in a trance behind a young man playing a silver flute is already a century old.⁶⁷⁸

The historian O. Lauffer is credited with the hypothesis that the fast spreading of the Ratcatcher tale is owed to a mnemotechnic strategy concocted by medieval artisans in need of „Wahrzeichen“ -

⁶⁷⁰ F. Byloff : *Volkskundliches aus Strafprozessen der österreichischen Alpenländer mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse 1455 bis 1850*, pp. 11-12

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid*, pp. 15-16

⁶⁷² *Ibid*, p. 19

⁶⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 22

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 24

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 31

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 52

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 53

⁶⁷⁸ O. A. Erich / R. Beitzl (Begr.) : *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde*, p. 662

tools used to facilitate the differentiation of the many towns visited.⁶⁷⁹ Lauffer's pragmatic explanation is more down-to-earth than Radu Florescu's semi-romanesque attempt to resuscitate the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher's mid-17th century theory according to which the *Exodus Hamelensis* was really a migration of Germans from Hamelin to Transylvania.⁶⁸⁰ Yet, lack of appropriate sources put aside, no hypothesis, however plausible, can explain the fascination to which the Hamelin story has owed its long life. The story itself being extremely simple, it is probably its anecdotic character that made it culturally malleable. Interestingly enough, only the most recent Jackl-scholarship drew the parallel with the Ratcatcher yarn, albeit without investigating the similarities.⁶⁸¹ Despite the obvious difficulties implicit in proving any palpable connections between the Pied Piper of Hamelin and Jackl the Sorcerer, at least four parallels remain intriguing: 1) the idea of a dubious outsider 'seducing' i.e. recruiting the local children or youth; 2) the notion that this figure is able to summon rats out of nowhere ("razen / Meißl machen"), and, more general, 3) the motif of a wandering stranger who retaliates against the local community for not having been properly paid for his services; plus 4) the strangely coinciding number of victims: 130 missing children in Hamelin, more than 120 persons executed in Salzburg. One of the explanations could be that the *Kommissar* Sebastian Zillner, having learned of the Hamelin story either by word of mouth, or from relevant pictorial representations such as *Flugblätter*⁶⁸² (both of which mediums are known to have been in circulation throughout the 17th century), used it when 'modelling' the hunt for Jackl (conscious intention), or simply could not help projecting the anxieties relative to the Pied Piper onto the stressful circumstances he happened to be presiding over (unconscious intention). One can only speculate on the nature and scope of Zillner's, or any other contemporary's reactions to a legend which, though referring to a geographically remote place, would retain its distinct place in the German lore. An indicator that the Hamelin legend went on circulating closely after this mass trial is Theodor Kirchmaier's edifying piece of *Kuriositätenliteratur*, published in 1702.⁶⁸³

It is curious that a parallel - howsoever strained - between Jackl and the Ratcatcher starts shining through once we start following the 'mice' trace. The first warlock boy to have mentioned "Mäuse

⁶⁷⁹ O. A. Erich / R. Beitzl. (Begr.) : Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde, p. 663

⁶⁸⁰ R. Florescu : In Search of the Pied Piper, pp. 133-147

⁶⁸¹ G. Müllender : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 247

⁶⁸² H. Dobbertin : Quellensammlung zur Hamelner Rattenfängersage, *Abbildung 22* and *Abbildung 23*

⁶⁸³ J. G. Meister : M. Theodori Kirchmayeri Curiöse Historia von den unglücklichen Ausgange der Hamelischen Kinder, in H.-J. Uther (Hrsg.) : Merkwürdige Literatur [CD-rom], pp. 13950-13999

machen” was namely Mathias Thoman Hasendorfer⁶⁸⁴, soon followed by Kleiner Hanerl. I am aware of the danger inherent in overinterpreting this confabulatory item. Rats and mice were, after all, a part of everyday life in an early modern household. The art of magically ‘zapping’ them from out of nowhere could simply be an inverted type of wishful thinking, since these creatures were an inevitable nuisance anyway. But when one throws the flute in, things start looking differently. One of the references most evocative of the Ratcatcher of Hamelin is namely the statement excerpt reading “haben umb den teufl getanzt, darzue der Jäggl aufgepfiffen”.⁶⁸⁵ It is interesting that the piper figures already in the witch trials of Treves in 1587, in the confession of a 16-year-old Jesuit college boy who claims having served as one.⁶⁸⁶ Though drawing parallels between the two anachronous belief clusters centered around a fatal stranger confronts us to an intricate mixture of legends and half-truths, there does seem to exist some affinity between the two ‘sagas’, and it is possible that Jackl beliefs were partly conditioned by a (folkish and learned) reception of the Ratcatcher tale. There is an additional ‘mutual reflection’ of the two stories, inasmuch as the Pied Piper of Hamelin is – despite individual, sometimes ludicrous attempts of proving the contrary – essentially a folklore character thickened into a historical persona, whereas the apparently genuine historical existence of an *abdeckerssohn* Jakob Koller served as a trampoline for launching the legendary anti-hero into the public space of the prince-archbishopric, turning him into a folklore figure that has survived into the 21st century.

Not the historical background is of importance, but the tenacity of a medieval story able to survive well into the Early Modern Era. After all, mythical accounts like these may also be interpreted as an inversion of Jesus and his flock of believers – consequently, the Ratcatcher and Jackl could be described as ‘diabolical shepherds’. Perhaps this indicates some sort of weakness that the German people seems to have for seductive foreigners who promise them salvation?

A parallel drawn between Jackl the Sorcerer and the Ratcatcher of Hamelin does not exhaust the similarity the Alpine magician has with some other folk entertainment figures: that of Medieval Robin Hood and the Early Modern Scaramouche. In modern lay conscience Robin Hood steals from the rich and gives to the poor. However, H. J. Leonardy rightly pointed out that Robin Hood’s ‘noble’ side coexisted with his selfish, ruthless dimension from the legend’s very beginning in Late Medieval times. Hence the ‘stratal antagonism’, which was not originally immanent to Robin Hood, started cropping up at a later point (i.e. during the 17th century), as a natural result of romantic

⁶⁸⁴ BayHStA HeA 10a 47

⁶⁸⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 a 521

⁶⁸⁶ B. Duhr : Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge, Band I, p. 742

stylizations.⁶⁸⁷ And though Jackl the Sorcerer had a shorter genesis and a narrower cultural radius than the famous English outlaw, he was turned into a legendary character owing to a very similar procedure. So, whether Jackl, Robin and Scaramouche are invented or not is of secondary importance, since all three are loosely linked along the lines of „banditry as a social phenomenon“⁶⁸⁸, as Eric Hobsbawm would put it. In all of the three cases the underlying persona is that of an individual who thrives so well on the margin to which he has willingly exiled himself that this act of social disobedience itself suffices to furnish him with diabolical traits. Hobsbawm underlines that „the bandit’s invulnerability is not only symbolic. It is almost invariably due to magic, which reflects the beneficent interest of the divinities in his affairs.“⁶⁸⁹ Incidentally, the connection between magic and invulnerability that Hobsbawm rightly recognizes in an outlaw may in fact be a two-way street, since one can also claim that it is his invulnerability that makes Jackl a sorcerer...

Indeed, a character epitomizing a supra-individual quality ceases to be a common human, and becomes both invulnerable and untouchable. This seems to be especially true for theater figures. In his article about the child-witches of Freising, Rainer Beck pointed out that the origins of the warlock boys’ play were partly to be looked for in contemporary theater tradition. A ‚devil‘ referred to as ‚Kilian‘ by one of the interrogated boys could, according to Beck, have been none other than Kilian Brustfleck, a scene figure moderately famous at the time (first half of the 18th century).⁶⁹⁰ And though there is no explicit reference to any carnival traditions in the witch trial acts as such, there is a vague awareness of it on at least one occasion, i.e. in Ursula Cobiaanckhin’s statement of ‚masks black in the face‘.⁶⁹¹

Of course, comedians enjoyed their own marginal niche, just like the rest of the *fahrendes Volk*. Jammed up with the other ‚freaks‘, they had no special status. This ignited folk imagination into engendering hybrid forms. In a novel *La vie de Scaramouche*, written by a certain Angelo Constantini, and published in Brussels in 1699, the protagonist undergoes a short but exciting and not always unpleasant experience of what it is like to be a beggar: „il trouvoit si bien son compte en ce genre de vie qu’il ne l’auroit sans doute pas quitté si-tôt sans l’accident qui lui arriva dans la ville

⁶⁸⁷ H. J. Leonardy : Der Mythos vom „edlen“ Räuber, p. 77

⁶⁸⁸ E. Hobsbawm : Bandits, p. 10

⁶⁸⁹ E. Hobsbawm : Bandits, p. 57

⁶⁹⁰ R. Beck : „Das Spiel mit dem Teufel. Freisinger Kinderhexenprozesse 1715-1723“, in *Historische Anthropologie* 10, Heft 3 (2002), pp. 397-401

⁶⁹¹ BayHStA HeA 10 c 345

d'Ancône“.⁶⁹² The hero, who mutates into a comedian early during the story, finds it quite legitimate to live on collecting alms and parasite the society's good will. The account is in fact a novellized biography of the Italian comedian specialized in interpreting Scaramouche, Tiberio Fiorilli (1604?-1694). But Scaramouche has a theatrical ancestor who even more closely resembles Jackl: Harlequin. Incidentally, there are two interesting woodcuts featuring Harlequin in the company of children: „Harlequin brings the children home to their real father“⁶⁹³ and „Harlequin and his brood“⁶⁹⁴, from the 16th and 17th century, respectively. Naturally, one can only speculate on whether such hybrid infant/adult figures are, at some level, construed as exhibiting affinities for the company of children, on account of the unformed (or alternately formed) identity they supposedly share...

It would be exaggerated to claim that a twisted folk perception of certain stage figures operative in peripheral pockets of Europe was what made the Jackl character come into being - the end result was undoubtedly shaped by elements of local superstition. Nonetheless, the process seems to have been based on a reception of entertainment characters, the lot of which sprung up almost simultaneously in several cultural centres of Europe (Paris, Rome, Vienna). These comedian figures, outlined so sharply that they were highly typifiable, may well have enjoyed something of a ‚reversed‘ perception by the masses geographically distant from the urban centres where theatrical art was actually performed. In other words, while evaluation of this art by a cultivated urban audience implied accepting the symbolical as a conduit of figurative meaning, it is not unthinkable that the same contents were being taken at face value outside this sphere. Indeed, given that the German-speaking theater was still fairly underdeveloped after the Thirty Years' War, there could hardly have been any mutual reception between the *commedia dell'arte* and the German stage life. An appropriate cultural platform, the one that would have furnished the deciphering codes, was missing in Salzburg, for which reason the protagonist of the *commedia dell'arte* not only lost his place in the system but was purposefully recycled according to local i.e. regional needs. Of course, the reverse may also have been true: some theatrical plots could have been influenced by certain demonological superstitions. For example, certain dramatic moments featured in the *commedia dell'arte* may have originated from the tropes related to the Devil's banquet. When writing of the

⁶⁹² A. Constantini : La vie de Scaramouche, p. 23

⁶⁹³ A. Nicoll : The World of Harlequin, p. 143

⁶⁹⁴ A. Nicoll : The World of Harlequin, p. 142

Old Viennese folk comedy, Otto Rommel evokes a scene in which a table full of delicacies magically appears in front of Scaramouche, whom a spell hinders to taste of the food.⁶⁹⁵

We must concede a certain entertaining quality to the way the Jackl stories were conveyed. Very often (and especially at the local court level) this aspect dominates the whole narrative. But who exactly is being entertained here, the interrogators or the children - or both groups, each with its own motivation?

Broadly speaking, adventure comics are pop-cultural myths for children and young adults i.e. teenagers.⁶⁹⁶ The Zauberer Jackl seems to exhibit the characteristics of a comic book hero, if not an outright superhero. Psychology appears to have recognized the value of these modern fable figures in the development of contemporary urban children. Pedagogues who do not refrain from using action heroes in their therapy practice emphasize that „superhero fantasy play and its use in metaphor development are forms of personal myth making that can be a means for growth and change in the individual“.⁶⁹⁷ The mass market has long since intuited that its purposes are best served if such figures are described either as orphans or as children with thwarted or difficult parental bonds: Batman, Superman and Harry Potter offer self-mythologizing vessels for the processing of one's own oedipal dramas, and that not so much thanks to the noble innocence they themselves incarnate, but precisely thanks to the ‚bad guys‘ who extract the best out of them...

An excursion into 1980's cinematography can perhaps admirably illustrate these dynamics. The *Star Wars* motion picture franchise by George Lucas would certainly not have had such huge resonance with children and adolescents worldwide had it not been for the Dark Vader character, the closest modern counterpart to ‚der böse feind‘. In the episode V, *The Empire Strikes Back*, this chthonic villain meets the solar hero Luke Skywalker for the first time, and, inevitably, they cross swords. Since young Luke is not a Jedi - an accomplished solar hero - yet, Vader attempts to win him over to the Dark side. But joining the ranks of a villain who has murdered his father Anakin is no option for Luke Skywalker. The plot assumes the shape of a malicious emotional blackmail as Darth Vader throws the poisonous truth at the young warrior's feet: „Luke, I am your father!“.⁶⁹⁸ Viewed through the prism of depth psychology, Vader's role is to incarnate a demonic split of the

⁶⁹⁵ O. Rommel : Die Alt-Wiener Volkskomödie, p. 41

⁶⁹⁶ G. Hummel : Religion in Comics, in J. Wermke (Hrsg.) : Comics und Religion, p. 102

⁶⁹⁷ L. C. Rubin : „An Introduction to the Use of Superheroes in Psychotherapy“, in L. C. Rubin (ed.) : Using Superheroes in Counseling and Play Therapy, p. 16

⁶⁹⁸ L. C. Rubin : „Luke, I Am Your Father! A Clinical Application of the Star Wars Narrative“, in L. C. Rubin, op. cit., pp. 213-224. I am indebted to both Lawrence C. Rubin and Roger Kaufman for their original, inspiring reflections associated to the Darth Vader character.

‚father imago‘, whereby the suggestive euphony of the name Darth Vader (which sounds like a hallucinatory distortion of *dark father*), whether intentionally or by accident, additionally underlines the oedipal drama.⁶⁹⁹ Just like the Salzburg Sabbath Devil, or the Sorcerer Jackl in his supernatural version, Darth Vader is not ‚real‘ - what is real are the psychological truths these figures articulate.⁷⁰⁰ The father imago - or, rather, the perception of a parent figure as such - is split into two halves, one being that of a good, noble and protective life-sustainer, the other one representing a horrifying demon dominated by a Saturnian urge to devour his offspring. In the comics and in the movies, if everything goes well, this Janus-like energy crumbles under the burden of its own ambivalence, and good cathartically triumphs over evil.

But is it always the right catharsis? The urge to identify oneself with an action hero is, of course, not without its sociological relevance. In his study *Apokalyptiker und Integrierte*, Umberto Eco opted to decipher American comic book superheroes as guardians of the mainstream status quo:

*Die einzige sichtbare Form, die das Böse annimmt, ist der Anschlag auf das Privateigentum. [...] Man hat, mit Gründen, gesagt, Superman sei das eklatante Beispiel eines staatsbürgerlichen Bewußtseins, das vom politischen Bewußtsein abgetrennt ist. Sein Bürgersinn ist durchaus perfekt, doch er bewegt und bekundet sich in den Grenzen einer kleinen geschlossenen Gemeinschaft.*⁷⁰¹

Though Sorcerer Jackl’s connection with the dark arts might tempt one to mark him as an antihero, in light of Eco’s remark it would perhaps be more accurate to characterize him as a trickster variety of a superhero. Like Superman or Batman, he never strives to destroy the root of the opposing force (by attempting to overturn the existing power order), merely choosing to temporarily conquer its external manifestations. However, given that Jackl exists solely within the adolescent beggars’ narratives (not as a visual equivalent of an Early Modern comic), his role of a superhero is in fact shared with each particular warlock boy and girl witch. Independent in catering to his own vagabond needs, Jackl nonetheless necessitates an army of little recruits as a pretext for using his powers.

It has hopefully become evident throughout this analysis that the interrogated children and adolescents had mostly no alternative to avoid spinning a Jackl-tale with themselves as apprentices of the supernatural. Eventually, they would end up investing their own confabulatory skills pretty

⁶⁹⁹ R. Kaufman : ‚Heroes Who Learn to Love Their Monsters: How Fantasy Film Characters Can Inspire the Journey of Individuation for Gay and Lesbian Clients in Psychotherapy‘, in L. C. Rubin, op. cit., p. 307

⁷⁰⁰ F. Flahault : *L’interprétation des contes*, p. 91

⁷⁰¹ U. Eco : *Apokalyptiker und Integrierte*, p. 217

thoroughly into the story which, in its most essential features, remained orchestrated by the authorities. This ‚plot structure‘ closely resembles Eco’s analysis of American comics, in that both Jackl-narrative as well as regular instalments of e.g. Superman-comics rest on the respective establishment’s control mechanisms:

In der Werbung und ebenso in der Propaganda und in den Praktiken der *human relations* ist die Abwesenheit des „Entwurfs“ ausschlaggebend. Nur so kann der Paternalismus der heimlichen Überredung wirksam werden, die Einflüsterung, das Subjekt sei weder für seine Vergangenheit verantwortlich noch Herr seiner Zukunft, noch den Gesetzen der Zeitlichkeit unterworfen. Statt dessen werden ihm „Fertigwaren“ angeboten - angeblich um seinen Wünschen zu entsprechen, in Wahrheit jedoch, um in ihm Wünsche zu erzeugen oder zu befestigen, die ihn das Angebotene als etwas verkennen lassen, das er selbst gewollt und entworfen habe.⁷⁰²

This gives us grounds to suspect that the need for Jackl is therefore artificially induced by the authorities, with the intention to keep the beggar children’s socially disruptive potentials in check. Not the children are the ones who need Jackl - *the authorities are those who need children to need a supernatural, semi-diabolic Saviour-like figure as a pretext for hunting them down*. The message underlying the entire mass trial might read as follows: „You beggar youths need a supernaturally powerful, invincible leader, and, although he might as well be nothing but a fictitious character for all we know, it is precisely this desperate need of yours that makes you subversive, which is enough for us to execute the lot of you!“ In a very similar vein, Klaus Theweleit diagnosed the nature of his famous ‚double double bind‘, i.e. the intricate mechanism of metaphorical blackmail and compulsion as practiced by Nazi leaders: „du sollst das Verbotene tun, wirst aber dafür bestraft (wenn die Mächtigen es wollen).“⁷⁰³ Again, we should not forget that Jackl the Sorcerer (as opposed to Jakob Koller) never dies. More precisely, the perishability of Jackl’s fictitious persona is never actualized. There are but two statements vaguely imputing to the Sorcerer a prophesy of his own imminent death. In the first one, made by Gertraud Gollingerin on 17th May 1678, Jackl’s death was announced for the upcoming Saturday⁷⁰⁴, whereas in the other one, dated 21st June same year, Jackl’s quotation ‚paraphrased‘ by the 16-year-old Thoman Weidinger was eschatologically tinged („geantwortt, das er vom Jaggl selbst sagen gehört, er wollte sich gern fangen lassen, [...] dan sein zeit habe schon ein ende“).⁷⁰⁵ However, these seem to have been merely emergency

⁷⁰² U. Eco : Apokalyptiker und Integrierte, p. 205

⁷⁰³ K. Theweleit : Männerphantasien. 2. Band, p. 391

⁷⁰⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 b 215-216

⁷⁰⁵ BayHStA HeA 10 b 347

improvisations motivated by a wish to shorten the questioning, and, more importantly, they left no imprint on the bulk of the confessions. (Other children did not catch on the idea of Jackl's mortality, which they nonetheless could have propounded within a certain gray area). It is only to a certain extent that the main protagonist's immortality can be said to stem from an average comic consumer's „Unfähigkeit, mit dem leid fertig zu werden“.⁷⁰⁶ Not the beggar children would have missed Jackl - a figure that was forcefully imposed to them in the first place - rather, the threadpoolers of criminal justice (Sebastian Zillner above all) would have lost a vital ,magical prop' had they allowed the children's narratives to be steered in the direction of Jackl's possible death.

In his controversial bestseller on the roots of religion, the British biologist Richard Dawkins compares the adult need for believing in god with a child's need to believe in an imaginary friend, one such friend being Binker from Alexander Alan Milne's *Now We Are Six*. Dawkins says that “[a]t least some of those normal children who have imaginary friends really do believe they exist, and, in some cases, see them as clear and vivid hallucinations. [...] A being may exist only in the imagination, yet still seem completely real to the child, and still give real comfort and good advice.”⁷⁰⁷ Without entering the whole debate about Dawkins' book, I would like to extend this interesting thought to our own matter of concern, and derive a new question: is Jackl the Magician basically a Binker? And if he is, is that a ,delusion'? And if it is, can it be characterized as ,bad'?

Strictly speaking, Jackl is not a ,Binker' in Dawkins' sense, as nothing proves that he was a guardian angel whom beggar youths would have invoked in tight situations. Any arguments in this respect would have to be searched for beyond the interrogatory situation, in the vast no man's land extending beyond the frontiers of the court protocols. Therefore, since it was the interrogatory situation that infused him with life in the first place – Jackl-rumours spread by common folk being its corollary – the Magician, though an imaginarily stylized lowlife, is not a character of the Binker calibre. Or is he? Dawkins' observation that both binkers and gods are to be seen as “by-products of the same psychological predisposition”⁷⁰⁸, placed in the context of the late 17th century hunt for Jackl's accomplices, suggests that Sebastian Zillner rightfully intuited how the initially non-religious notion of an untraceable (imaginary) friend making mice with a runaway child could have been remodeled into a crime of heresy, all of which based on the following type of reasoning: ‘Jackl or no Jackl, there is one God – and He tolerates no competition’. The need to create a case out of nothing resulted in Jackl being loosely profiled in a certain way, and then cemented within the

⁷⁰⁶ A. Stahl : „Die Mythologie der Comics“, in J. Wermke (Hrsg.) : Comics und Religion, p. 23

⁷⁰⁷ R. Dawkins : The God Delusion, p. 349

⁷⁰⁸ R. Dawkins : The God Delusion, p. 351

minds of those who shared the hype. The bottomline is: though this process was indeed instigated and dictated by the adults, the related mental notions were in themselves not controllable once the cat was out of the bag. Given that social learning is, according to Stuart A. Vyse, one of the most significant channels for propagating superstition,⁷⁰⁹ the proportions of the hysteria are understandable, although we cannot measure to which extent conformity played a part in rendering Jackl stories tenacious. (Unfortunately, I have found it impossible to examine the effect of Jackl-rumours on sedentary i.e. *non-beggar* children and youths).

Furthermore, the Binker-argument need not be limited to Jackl only: the Devil himself is just as prominent in the protocols. However, both the Devil's negative religious connotation and the fact that he is a universal bogeyman appear to have discouraged the children from construing him as an 'ally'. This role was reserved for the binker from their own stratum. After all, who could have resisted an imaginary friend whom even the adults believed in?

One of the facial features most consistently attributed to Jackl is his *gebogne Nase*. However, there is nothing in the sources that unequivocally identifies Jakob Koller in particular as the proud owner of this aquiline nose. Hence, one is allowed to assume that a special sort of stylization is at work here. In his study of mythological female beings, Victor Waschnitius uses the example of the Germanic folk demon Perht to explain how such a piece of 'mythological evidence' ought to be evaluated:

Schon ihr Aussehen ist das übliche dämonischer unheimlicher Weiber. Sie erscheint als alte Frau, in Lumpen gekleidet, mit zerzaustem Haar und auffallend langer Nase. Diese beiden letzteren Motive sind nicht unmittelbar mythisch zu deuten, wie es bezüglich der Nase [...] tut, sondern sie sind aus dem Bestreben erwachsen, den in menschlicher Gestalt gedachten Dämon vor den Menschen durch besondere Eigentümlichkeiten auszuzeichnen, vor allem ihm ein abschreckendes, unheimliches, übermenschliches Aussehen zu verleihen. Zu diesem Zweck eignet sich vor allem der Kopf und das Gesicht. [...] Übrigens wird die lange Nase auch anderen mythischen Wesen zugeschrieben⁷¹⁰

Nevertheless, the only explicit mention of Perht that I could find stems from a Carinthian interrogatory dated 17th June 1662 (i. e. more than a decade before the outbreak of the Jackl-trials), in which she is featured as an abstract, non-anthropoid force of nature.⁷¹¹ One may likewise try to link this particular facial feature to the 'Jewish physiognomy' cliché introduced by a French

⁷⁰⁹ S. A. Vyse : Die Psychologie des Aberglaubens, p. 178

⁷¹⁰ V. Waschnitius : Perht, Holda und verwandte Gestalten, p. 150

⁷¹¹ F. Byloff : Volkskundliches aus Strafprozessen der österreichischen Alpenländer mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zaubereri- und Hexenprozesse 1455 bis 1850, p. 31

chronicle as early as 1321,⁷¹² but this connection may prove just as strained as the previous one. There was notably nothing pejorative about Jackl, a quality that certainly would have loomed large had the Sorcerer figure been molded from the unfortunate stereotype of a Jew with a crooked nose. In general, I cannot say at which point exactly the aquiline nose of Jackl the Magician managed to impose itself as an alleged sign of recognition, but the hearing dynamics appear to have necessitated such a 'mark'. Indeed, everything about this character was so nebulous that some firm feature was perhaps deemed desirable.

Consequently, after having somewhat erratically combed through a number of aspects that make up the intriguing Jackl-myth, we might as well regard him as a carrier of a particular idea. In her transdisciplinary study dedicated to human attitudes to the transcendent, the Italian psychologist Marina Zaoli speaks of *finalismo* as

il bisogno di interpretare tutti gli eventi che intercorrono, come se si verificassero per uno scopo, per un fine ben preciso. Come nell'animismo il bambino giustifica ogni azione proiettando un suo personale significato in ogni evento che capita, così il finalismo è determinato dalla convinzione che ci sia un fine più o meno palese, a cui tutti dobbiamo sottostare, forse gestito da un entità superiore.⁷¹³

Ascribing finalistic tendencies to the arrested beggar children would most probably be exaggerated. Whether any, or all of them followed an overall pattern when describing Jackl-rites must remain an open question. One way or the other, they were all in a quest for meaning.

A history of (beggar?) childhood

A research of this kind is expected to be adorned by an appropriate section on the 'history of childhood'. In an attack of academic conscientiousness, one aims to pluck the appropriate body of works for whatever seems even remotely worth applying to the sample in question. Such an approach may work wonderfully if, thanks to the copious sources, one is able to delve through the lives of sedentary, e.g. *burgher* families whose circumstances - and deviations - somewhat resemble our own. Traces left by vagabond adolescents, however, tend to be too few for anyone to build a marketable theory upon. A 'history of beggar childhood' sounds like a paradox, since, as we could deduce from the court protocols, these individuals often had no 'childhood' to begin with. Applied

⁷¹² F. Vanhemelryck : Marginalen in de geschiedenis, p. 161

⁷¹³ M. Zaoli : Dalla fiaba al mito dal rito all'inconscio, p. 496

to the majority of Jackl's followers, childhood remains a chronological category. It is not a socially recognized life phase.

Before consulting modern studies on the effects of poverty on children, a few distinctions should be made.

What are the differences between a poverty-stricken fourteen-year-old coping to survive in late 17th century Salzburg and his equally disfavoured peer living in an early 21st century Los Angeles slum? The economic deprivation between the two may be perfectly equal: to put it bluntly, they are both essentially poor. But, do their respective states *subjectively* match, particularly against the backdrop of their horizons of expectation? It is only natural to assume that both of them primarily long for a minimum of comfort, such as food, water, and a roof above their heads. This assumption is based on Abraham Maslow's famous hierarchy of needs.⁷¹⁴ Maslow's theory has been criticized, among others, by Manfred Max-Neef, who sees fundamental human needs as non-hierarchical: "Human needs must be understood as a system; that is, all human needs are interrelated and interactive. With the sole exception of the need of subsistence, that is, to remain alive, no hierarchies exist within the system. [...] food and shelter must not be seen as needs, but as satisfiers of the fundamental need for Subsistence."⁷¹⁵ Indeed, the cluster of legends the child witches spun around the Magician Jackl seems to confirm the idea that, in spite of an objective context-bound shortage of satisfiers, it served the needs that went beyond mere subsistence.

Now, the civilisations both of the aforesaid boys dwell in are rather different, and so are the social ideals their less favoured members are able to choose from. This means that, in the Holy German Empire, one could develop only within a particular self-actualisation frame. Under appropriate circumstances, it was possible to work oneself up from a beggar to an artisan, but becoming an aristocrat without the necessary prerequisites (like noble parentage) was not an envisageable option. The modern American (U. S.) Empire, on the other hand, construes itself as a paradise for self-made individuals, a culture where belief in one's own potentials and consequent hard work ultimately trump any given, as unfavourable as it may be. Therefore, it is to be expected that the adolescent resident of a Los Angeles slum suffers proportionally greater deprivation pressure in light of the visible, copious wealth ostentatiously displayed in the very same city, perhaps only a few blocks away. So, the visual saturation in both cases is different, and so is the bitterness derived from the

⁷¹⁴ A. Maslow : „A Theory of Human Motivation“, in A. Maslow : Motivation and Personality, pp. 35-58

⁷¹⁵ M. Max-Neef : “Development and human needs”, pp. 197-213, in P. Ekins and M. Max-Neef (Eds.) : Real-Life Economics: Understanding Wealth Creation, p. 199

deprivation. In an attempt to explore fantasies of children and young individuals from the society's lowest ranks factors like these would undoubtedly have to be considered.

The effects of poverty on adolescents is not to be underestimated:

Poverty is a significant source of stress in the lives of millions of adolescents, and for adolescents who live in poverty it is a stable source of risk throughout childhood and adolescence. [...] Although the effects of poverty are especially pronounced in the development of very young children, poverty is one of the most significant markers of negative outcomes in the mental and physical health of adolescents. Numerous studies have established an association between poverty and psychological problems in youth [...], and adolescents who grow up poor are at heightened risk for a wide range of psychological problems [...]. Poverty has pronounced effects on children's cognitive development and academic achievement. [...] Poverty is also related to socioemotional development during adolescence as evidenced by the association of poverty and increased rates of internalizing and externalizing problems and disorders. [...] Research has not clarified, however, whether the effects of prolonged poverty increase linearly, whether there are changes in the strength of this relationship with development, or whether there are qualitative changes in the effects of poverty as individuals move from childhood into adolescence.⁷¹⁶

Of course, poverty is a powerful driving force for migrations, which is perhaps a more honest label for the wanderings of beggars. However, uncontrollable migrations of the socially rootless are perceived as disruptive not least because they can be based on a psychological disorder. *Vagabondism* is a sort of habitual, constant wandering of those persons not adapted to social life, those incompetent of organizing their life or gaining foothold within it.⁷¹⁷ Modern psychiatry concedes that vagabondism is not necessarily a pathological condition, since it can occur for a number of reasons: individual circumstances (unemployment, exile), collective adversities (refugee state, starvation), personal inclinations or simply because it is a character trait.⁷¹⁸ The boundary delimiting these 'mundane' justifications from pathological vagabondism is often fluent. Without entering a discussion on the causes and effects, we can say that it correlates with various manifestations of social insufficiency, as in invalids and alcoholics on the one hand and psychologically unstable delinquents on the other.⁷¹⁹ Dysfunctional families are thought to be the main reason for vagabondism in children and youths, which can even manifest as a collective phenomenon.⁷²⁰ But how far can one go in attempting to determine the type of pathology at work?

⁷¹⁶ B. E. Compas : „Processes of Risk and Resilience During Adolescence: Linking contexts and Individuals”, pp. 263-296, in R. M. Lerner / L. Steinberg (Eds.) : Handbook of Adolescent Psychology, pp. 279-280

⁷¹⁷ A. Porot : „Fuge“, in A. Porot : Enciklopedija psihijatrije, p. 172

⁷¹⁸ C. Bardenat : „Vagabundizam“, in A. Porot (ed.) : Enciklopedija psihijatrije, p. 702

⁷¹⁹ C. Bardenat : „Vagabundizam“, in A. Porot (ed.) : Enciklopedija psihijatrije, p. 702

⁷²⁰ C. Bardenat : „Vagabundizam“, in A. Porot (ed.) : Enciklopedija psihijatrije, p. 702

According to the hierarchically construed world view prevalent in the Middle Ages, beggars were a God-given fact of life. However, from the second half of the 17th century onwards, the poor turned into a target of state politics, which, having narrowed down its definition (and criminalizing everything beyond it)⁷²¹, slowly demoted the phenomenon to a social aberration. In fact, the psychiatrist distinctions mentioned above appear to have been derived from those made by Early Modern legislations, able, howsoever rudimentarily, to differentiate the ‚justified vagabondism‘ (of the physically handicapped) as opposed to the ‚unjustified‘ one (able-bodied individuals who shunned work).

Generally speaking, history of childhood - and, I might add, history *tout court* - is difficult to research because we ultimately never know which sources to understand literally, which metaphorically. Autobiographies, often considered as something of a trump card by childhood historians, are perhaps the most subjective of all the ego-documents. In addition, their accuracy is undermined by the very fallibility of human memory (as discussed elsewhere in this thesis). On account of their subordination to specific artistic canons, the visual sources to childhood history are just as questionable. For example, Jean Delumeau remarks that society’s attitude to children in the 17th century may possibly have had little to do with the exemplary, cuddled infant from contemporary iconography, and that children were generally perceived as brats in need of correction, and treated accordingly.⁷²² Taking sides in a debate as to whether Man’s (and Woman’s) historical attitude to their offspring was essentially human or essentially inhuman reflects this methodological cul-de-sac only too painfully. Of all the relevant studies, Colin Heywood’s *A History of Childhood* summarizes the main issues and problems of the topic more lucidly than any other work I have come across. I shall therefore limit myself to discussing the matter of child victimization, and try to examine how atavistic fears *for* the children correlate with fears *of* the children.

Child victimization

Aside from not being mature in an adult way, children are largely unconscious individuals. But, throughout history, they were also viewed unconsciously. Indeed, it seems that, in the past, perception of children functioned solely via the thickly woven filter of the grownups’ cultural conditioning. However, the threats of everyday life are only partly responsible for the

⁷²¹ K. Keller : „Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte: Alte Themen, neue Akzente“, in A. Völker-Rasor (Hg.) : Oldenbourg Geschichte Lehrbuch: Frühe Neuzeit, pp. 161-162

⁷²² J. Delumeau : Histoire des pères et de la paternité, p. 212

contemporaries' fascination with children in their role of victims preyed upon by the witches. The child itself often epitomizes a kind of 'liminal' quality. Early Modern treatises (and, for that matter, the Salzburg protocols as well) make use of the expression *unschuldige Kinder*, of whose ambivalence even contemporaries seem to have been aware. There are indications that, at various phases, this phrase signified more than just sexual chastity. For example, a seminal German work of early 20th century ethnology describes a Swabian folk medicine against horse disease, underlining that the concoction should contain lice "von einem Knaben [...], der noch nicht sieben Jahre alt, d.h. der noch unschuldig ist."⁷²³ In other words, the seventh birthday *per se* symbolised the crossing of a threshold beyond which the child, socially speaking, was to be regarded as 'tainted'. Conversely, the infant is branded as an "unfertiges Wesen [...], beladen mit der Last der Erbsünde" from Early Christianity onwards.⁷²⁴ Hence, the phrase *unschuldige Kinder* epitomizes the collision of two traditions, heathen and Christian, the former treating the child as originally pure, the latter as originally impure. In Early Modern era, however, at least where common people are concerned, the two attitudes seem to have been indiscriminately fused, with either one getting the upper hand according to the whims of the situation that involved children.

In his article on the origin of child victimization within the witch-hunt context, Richard Kieckhefer propounds a view to what seems fit to be described as *cultural pedophilia* that spans through the ages of human history. What starts out as genuine concern for one's children's wellbeing mutates, under the right circumstances, into a legally exploitable device. Thus, in Kieckhefer's words, "[t]he frailty of children [...] becomes a lightning rod for the apprehension of adults."⁷²⁵

Not having been able to ascertain whether murders of children actually have taken place, some of those somber events likely to have been purely fictional⁷²⁶, the cases of Early Modern abduction and murder of children by witches ought to be treated as ideological constructs i.e. products of a particular cultural pattern prevailing at the time.

It would have paid to investigate who exactly was in charge of such a question being raised in the first place: the women or the men - the mothers or the fathers involved? Legal hunts would normally have been undertaken by men, the possessors of secular and ecclesiastical power, possibly

⁷²³ E. Fehrle : Die kultische Keuschheit im Altertum, p. 61

⁷²⁴ J. Gélis *et al.* : Der Weg ins Leben, p. 24

⁷²⁵ R. Kieckhefer : „Avenging the Blood of Children: Anxiety over Child Victims and the Origins of European Witch-Hunts“, in A. Ferreiro (ed.) : The Devil, Heresy, and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages, p. 92

⁷²⁶ R. Kieckhefer, *op. cit.*, p. 98

but not necessarily at the instigation of communitarian women, with whom, again, they may or may not have been personally and/or emotionally affiliated.

If we consider the sort of gain acquired by means of persecuting child-killing women, beyond the witch's now largely undisputed scapegoat role, we may speculate along the gender line of thought. What the Late Medieval / Early Modern man's response to such an allegation, i.e. his motivation to raise it altogether betrays, is not only his perception of women, but of children as well. In the accounts described by Kieckhefer, children are, unsurprisingly for the epoch, nothing but *objects* of extreme affective value (it is only from Enlightenment onwards that they obtain the privilege of being treated as persons of their own, even at tender age). However, the affective value infant children may have to a man is them being something of a materialized confirmation of his masculinity, and, by extension, of his existence on earth. Thus the flesh-eating witches represent a direct threat for the man's progeny, which may indirectly be perceived as devastating for his lineage. The infants thus take the form of a failed investment, which makes this scenario not much different from crops being destroyed by the witches' weather magic, at least as far as the perception of household damage is concerned.

It would be wrong to believe that the infanticide hysteria – connected to the crime of host desecration imputable to Jews – had anything to do with a particularly pronounced love for children. Had this been the case, infanticide fantasies would have included a range of various perpetrators, not only those selected for their scapegoat aptitude, as the case was with Jews and, later, witches as well. Those fantasies were rather based on fear of being annihilated. The collective Self was invariably identified with the body of Christian congregation/believers. Hence, the notion of non-believers attacking Christian younglings (infants) was perceived as a tribe-reducing threat - dynamics redolent of homophobic claims that a disinclination from parenthood, perceived to be a constituent of gay lifestyle, is a boost to a gradual extinction of humans. After all, the last link in the typical 'Jewish infanticide' story is a canonization of the murdered child and its consequent century-long worship.⁷²⁷ Scapegoats may have figured more prominently in times of augmented religious scepticism. As results of a sin-imbued procreation act, the scenes of infant children being eaten alive, roasted and tortured in a number of ways at the sabbaths appear to bespeak the early modern man's fear of sexuality. The idea of witches relentlessly degrading the baby might be read as projected guilt over the pleasure experienced in the act of procreating, possibly linked to his female partner's active, pleasure-enhancing role in it. Hence, from a male perspective, the 'sin' of

⁷²⁷ M. Schultz : Die Ritualmordbeschuldigung – eine kindzentrierte projektive Reaktion gegen Fremde“, in C. Lüth *et al.* (Hg.) : Der Umgang mit dem Fremden in der Vormoderne, p. 244

the woman naturally boomerangs into an image of her destroying the product of what his religious conditioning forces him to consider an inwardly immoral ritual. Indeed, in accordance with the split morality of Christian dogmas, a child can only have ‚value‘ if it has been conceived out of sacred obligation that obliterates any lust. The dramatic vehemence of some of these descriptions further emphasizes the highly suspect emotional investment of its creators. Perhaps it is along these lines too that one should analyze the formative witchcraft treatises of the 15th century summed up by Kieckhefer. It is curious at the least that their authors, three of which - Johannes Nider, Claude Tholosan and Johannes Fründ - all famous ecclesiasts, should have had infanticide as their primary concern.⁷²⁸ It seems more likely that infanticide was a convenient cover-up for passionate exploring of these demonologists‘ personal fears ignited by the frictions typical of the overall cultural pattern of their time. One need throw no more than a furtive glance at the hysterical reception of child abuse in the Western society of the early 21st century to imagine the impact this issue might have had in less illumined times.

However, myths are always perpetuated by both genders. So what of the women? *Their* ‚fear of infanticide‘, if irrational, must have been perfectly legitimate at times of high infant mortality. Even so, we are obliged to dig still deeper in search for layers of motivation. What, then, can a woman‘ s secondary gain be in stirring up the fantasies leading to the prosecution of the supposed infant-devouring witches?

In order to tackle this question, we have to go back to what seems to be one of the main issues in the history of childhood: the mother‘ s emotional bond to the child. Nowadays considered obsolete, Philippe Ariès‘ once widely accepted assumption of a perfect lack of parental feelings in Medieval and Early Modern times nevertheless points to how difficult it is to ascertain the existence of such an involvement purely on the basis of historical sources rather than modern ‚common sense‘ speculation based on modern sensibilities. Still, even more recent works on the subject tend to fall prey to heated subjectiveness. This is true both of the studies easily attackable on account of their obvious partiality, as the case is with Lloyd deMause‘ s *The Emotional Life of Nations*, as the ones construed from a seemingly balanced point of view, such as Linda Pollock‘ s *Forgotten Children*. DeMause‘ s main idea being that all historical periods prior to our contemporary times were just an obscene nursery of unhealthy upbringing, he even goes as far as explaining wars fought by

⁷²⁸ R. Kieckhefer, op. cit., p. 102

humanity in general as ‚restaging of the fetal trauma‘.⁷²⁹ Conversely, Pollock in her debate attempts to postulate the universality of motherly love by using examples from the animal kingdom.⁷³⁰ The image of a witch who, operating in some sort of a sinister sorority gang, steals babies away from their cradles, transports them to a place intended for a joyous feast, and then tortures, murders, and eats them, seems to indicate that the feelings that mothers experience towards their newborns actually must be highly ambivalent. There is no obvious reason why the psychological adjustment to having had a baby should be a luxury reserved exclusively for modern, rather than Early Modern mothers. For what it is worth, stories like these might have, at least in part, originated from some kind of postpartum depression. Surely not all women would have felt automatically accepting of their babies. One must not forget that, in these stories, the prey of the witches are *newborns*. How else would a young mother, having just lost an infant to an epidemics, have been able to channel the complex emotions both of dire loss and of subconscious relief, than to accuse some demonic female beings for her misfortune, availing herself of the scapegoat patterns at her disposal?⁷³¹ Modern studies on postpartum depression examine it as a normal occurrence, not as some kind of pathology.⁷³² Actual infanticides seem to suggest that fantasies of killing the newborn baby do preoccupy a certain percentage of the new mothers, though, luckily enough, almost none of them actually resorts to such an act. In any case, a discussion on infanticide fantasies should not ignore the issue of postpartum psychosis. If the circumstances in which neonaticide takes place are transposed to earlier times in history, one can see that the dynamics are quite similar: psychological isolation, extramarital pregnancy etc.⁷³³ In light of some cases which make it specific that witches prey solely on unbaptized children, and in combination with the depersonalized status of the baby prior to being baptized (one need only recall the custom of posthumous baptisms known as *sanctuaires à répit*⁷³⁴), the fantasy of such a baby being lost to the Devil’s realm may not have the same moral implications as the death of a child otherwise integrated into the community. The niche

⁷²⁹ L. deMause : The Emotional Life of Nations, p. 76

⁷³⁰ L. Pollock : Forgotten Children, p. 39

⁷³¹ The pattern is recognizable in the more frequent superstition theme relative to the so-called ‚changelings‘ (*Wechselbälge*), i.e. belief that a supernatural being (e.g. a fairy) has abducted the real, healthy baby, substituting it with its own faulty offspring. The deceived parents, considering themselves as exonerated from responsibility, felt free to punish such children as they pleased. Source: J. Simpson : Evropska mitologija, p. 50

⁷³² P. Romito : La naissance du premier enfant, p. 248

⁷³³ Mark I. Levy : ‚Post Partum Depression, Psychosis and Infanticide‘, URL <http://www.lawandpsychiatry.com/html/Post%20Partum%20Depression%20Psychosis%20and%20Infanticide.pdf> [accessed 22nd June 2009], entry also available in N. A. Jackson (ed.) : Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence, New York / London : Routledge 2007

⁷³⁴ E. Pahud de Mortanges : ‚Der versperrte Himmel. Das Phänomen der *sanctuaires à répit* aus theologischer Perspektive‘, in *SZRKG*, 98 (2004), pp. 31-47

thus opened might lend social approval to sadistic urges that in normal circumstances would have had to remain unpronounced. That child deaths allegedly imputable to witches should in many cases have been purely fictional speaks of how appealing this fantasy must have been to women as well as men.

The fact that Lloyd deMause's conclusions regarding German childhood history almost invariably slide into indiscriminate generalizations is understandable enough, given the author's exuberantly styled monocausal exclusivity. However, he does base his opinion on bona fide observations made by other scholars (Aurel Ende, John E. Knodel), which concern high infant mortality rates in Early Modern Germany.⁷³⁵ In addition, it should perhaps not be ignored that difficult childhood is nonetheless a recurrent theme in Medieval and Early Modern folklore of German-speaking Europe:

While infanticides involved the killing of newborn infants or children slightly older, usually by mothers who could not and did not want to raise their illegitimate children, purposeful neglect or even intentional abandonment or the killing of older children could occur within the structure of a family, most often in rural areas, commonly in response to food crises or to conflicts generated by remarriages. Child abandonment is a central motif in German folktales: the archetypal „cruel father“, „mean stepmother“, and „unkind mother-in-law“ are familiar types in the folktales collected by the brothers Grimm in the nineteenth century; the tales also tell of children being sold to the Devil or abandoned to wild animals or the elements.⁷³⁶

In light of Hsia's observation, it appears that a group of abandoned children - such as the one in Salzburg - would have been a black spot on the collective conscience of the entire community that silently condoned the practices of child abandonment. Consequently, children like these had to be satanized in order for the community to regain its moral high ground, or, less indirectly speaking, to purify itself. According to René Girard, „[t]he function of ritual is to ‚purify‘ violence; that is, to ‚trick‘ violence into spending itself on victims whose death will provoke no reprisals.“⁷³⁷

Peers and gangs

Is there a correlation between what was construed as Jackl's „gang“ of boy magicians and early modern juvenile gangs?

First of all, the idea of several boys intersecting at the same time and place must have made prefabricated models readily jump into mind of those concerned, at least at the outset of the

⁷³⁵ L. deMause : *The emotional life of nations*, p. 188

⁷³⁶ R. Po-chia Hsia : *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, p. 154

⁷³⁷ R. Girard : *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 36

persecution. One of these models could have been the early modern juvenile gang. This phenomenon, typical of the 15th and 16th centuries, implied afterwork youth groupings aimed at inter-masculine competition and prospective spouse courting. According to Robert Muchembled, the emergence of a strong state during the 16th century made this particular institution pale, with youth excesses having to be successively reigned in.⁷³⁸ It is, however, logical to assume that the coming together of older boys and/or younger men must have continued in a different form throughout the Early Modern period. What distances these mostly small groups, comprising mainly of two to three young beggars, from the 15th century juvenile gangs, is primarily the unregularity of their situation - their own grouping not having been sanctioned by a social consensus. The early modern mandates aimed at regulating the streams of beggars did not have their social integration in mind.

The fact that the beggars of Salzburg were a fairly distinguishable social stratum and that many among them went to begging expeditions in groups does not mean that there have been no subgroups of the ‚youth gang‘ type among them. Numerous statements of the *Zauberbuben* indicate that this was indeed the case. Neither was begging the sole purpose for several boys to form a group. Mutual respect and personal chemistry dictated the choice of the beggar companions, which highlights the necessity of human closeness in a socially unfavorable context. This is a clear example of mutual socialization among peers. In other words, joining a peer group was relevant both psychologically and sociologically. One trait which probably was a prerequisite for peer groupings of the Salzburg beggar children was “a group’s self regulation of its own members”, the type of mechanism that John A. Mayer claims was at work within sub-cultural ethnic groups in the nineteenth century.⁷³⁹ Modern psychology underlines the importance of peer relationships in the process of socialization:

In a very real sense, children live in two worlds, the world of their parents and other adults and the world of their peers. These worlds can exist side by side with remarkably little overlap. The world of peers is a subculture, influenced in many ways by the larger culture but also having its own history, social organization, and means of transmitting its customs from one generation to the next. As many naturalistic and experimental studies show, much of a child’s understanding of social behavior and of how to relate to others is transmitted by peers, not by adults.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁸ R. Muchembled : Une histoire de la violence, pp. 40-41

⁷³⁹ John A. Mayer : „Notes Towards a Working Definition of Social Control in Historical Analysis“, pp. 17-38 in S. Cohen and A. Scull (eds.) : Social Control and the State, p. 23

⁷⁴⁰ P. H. Mussen et al. : Child Development and Personality, p. 439

However, it is important to note that the power of peers as socializers is considered as culturally and epoch-specific⁷⁴¹; in fact, certain (anti-Freudian) scholars insist that the same applies to all aspects of children's behaviour (their wishes, etc).⁷⁴² At any rate, we have to differentiate the picture of the socializing peer. First, our sources make it clear that most beggar boys operated either independently or within a small group of peers (which may or may not have been lead by a dominant ‚gang‘ member, Jackl or anyone else). Some of them, like the Debellackhs, begged as a family. But, in order for the Jackl legend to have been construed, the beggar children were supposed to have roamed the prince-archbishopric on their own. What is more, the boys' families are often described in ways that make them appear dysfunctional and violent; in several cases, the act of running away from a sadistic parent catapults the child into begging. In other words, to these children, the world of their peers was of supreme importance: not only did it help them survive in a hostile world, mutually socializing each other - it was, for all practical purposes, their surrogate family. Fantasies of the Devil's parent-like treatment of the young initiates at the sabbath only reinforces the centrality of this need. P. H. Mussen *et al.* confirm the viability of this with their example of six infants who have literally ‚reared‘ each other while being confined in a range of concentration camps during World War II; they are known to have matured into perfectly normal adults.⁷⁴³ In general, marginalized groups „wurden weniger durch gemeinsame Überzeugungen und Einstellungen geeint als vielmehr durch ihre extrem mobile Lebensweise und ihr Ziel, in einer überwiegend feindseligen Welt zu überleben.“⁷⁴⁴ While this may be more or less true for adult marginals, in light of the ideas suggested above it is fairly safe to assume that younger members of this social layer had a somewhat different set of priorities, dictated more by personal bonds than by survivalist calculations.

Adolescent rebellion?

Could it be that these young people embraced the type of behaviour also because they drew satisfaction out of their ‚patrician‘ elders' horrified reaction? Is it reasonable to interpret the circumstances related to the Zauberer Jackl trial as an example of adolescent rebellion gone awry? According to Xavier Pommereau, modern adolescents are subject to a threefold task: to regain a

⁷⁴¹ P. H. Mussen *et al.* : Child Development and Personality, p. 440

⁷⁴² H. Bosse : Diebe, Lügner, Faulenzer, p. 38

⁷⁴³ P. H. Mussen *et al.* : Child Development and Personality, pp. 439-440

⁷⁴⁴ R. Jütte : Arme, Bettler, Beutelschneider, p. 245

body which estranges itself, to distance themselves from their parents (at an age during which all interactions are forcibly sexualized), and to find suitable identification models within society.⁷⁴⁵ However, we do not know to which extent such needs could have been overshadowed by the specific social situation of the Salzburg sample, provided that these could have existed in 17th century in the first place. Consequently, the authorities' fear of a „dépossession par les fils“⁷⁴⁶ would imply that the young beggars were, at some level, held in high esteem after all. Otherwise they would not have been dispensed with as dramatically. The (foucauldian) question is where the subordination (to the fantasized Other) ends and the domination (over the actual Other) begins...

The consequences of poverty - runaway children

The idea of poverty-stricken children being forced to beg for survival denotes a clear manifestation of social pathology. In many cases, children had to look for alms independently, either because their parents had sent them away, or because they had abandoned their violence-prone nuclear families. What sort of individuals could such children possibly become?

We still do not know enough of the affective bonds between 17th century parents and their children, even less when it comes to marginal social layers. Modern children do tend to experience separation from their parents in a negative way, but the consequences of it are debatable and not to be generalized. Studies which discuss this issue follow in the wake of Donald Winnicott's 'deprivation theory', according to which a stressed infant, having concluded that the environment is to blame for the experienced adversity, aims to punish the environment by turning antisocial.⁷⁴⁷ It appears that evidence only partly supports Winnicott's views. Clarke & Clarke's 1976 study *Early Experience*, for instance, does not confirm assumptions of a chronic disadvantage in abandoned children unless cumulative long-term stresses are involved. "Several independent studies have shown that children can be separated from their parents for quite long periods in early childhood with surprisingly little in the way of long-term ill-effects [...] Yet, most studies have shown that children subjected to separation experiences in early childhood do have a slightly increased risk of later psychological disturbance".⁷⁴⁸ The updated version from year 2000 reiterates that early experience "does not by

⁷⁴⁵ X. Pommereau : „Adolescence“, in M. Marzano : Dictionnaire du corps, p. 24

⁷⁴⁶ R. Muchembled : Une histoire de la violence, p. 352

⁷⁴⁷ D. W. Winnicott : Aggression. Versagen der Umwelt und antisoziale Tendenz, p. 162

⁷⁴⁸ M. Rutter : „Parent-Child Separation: Psychological Effects on the Children“, pp. 153-186, in A. M. Clarke and A. D. B. Clarke : *Early Experience: Myth and Evidence*, p. 161

itself set for the child a predetermined future. [...] When reinforced, however, its effects will be strengthened.”⁷⁴⁹

However, evaluating our sources against the backdrop of early experience literature assumes application of modern criteria on Early Modern samples, since psychological resilience can also be said to have cultural roots. This automatically raises the question of whether we should treat our children beggars-come-witches as cases of “severe adversity” or “less severe adversity”. Is the fact of them having been forced out into begging to be equalled with child labour? In the developing world (parts of Africa, India, and Bangladesh) child labour is considered crucial to children’s socialization, and is, in fact, part of the cultural heritage.⁷⁵⁰ This is in line with Early Modern views on children in Germany. As Jürgen Kuczynski reminds us, “Die Kinder waren in erster Linie da, um zu arbeiten. Sie waren eben wirklich „Erwachsene“ mit 7 Jahren oder gar noch früher und hatten das Leben von Erwachsenen zu führen.“⁷⁵¹

In addition, Clarke & Clarke emphasize that many children previously exposed to extreme deprivation had increased chances of recovery precisely because they had little to be *separated from*.⁷⁵² At any rate, the majority of beggar children involved in the Zauberer-Jackl-trial seem to have had a capability for coping, which is “one of the primary processes through which resilient outcomes are achieved”.⁷⁵³ Moreover, apart from a few examples witnessing either of a low IQ (simulated or not), or lack of possibility for coherent retelling, the accused child witches (both children and young adults), as they appear in the protocols, do not lend an impression of being psychologically unhealthy. Those who claim to have run away from the parents who had used to beat them up thereby show just how mentally sound they must have been. Having paired up with one or more sympathetic companions, they were mutually socialized by their peers from whom it was more likely they gained emotional support. It is evident that the approach conditioned by such insights sharply opposes Donald Winnicott’s deprivation theory. Daniel Ogilvie reminds us that the scholarly tendency to link youth delinquency with (or rather chain it to) deprivation, is itself founded on the preoccupation of personality psychology with personality traits.⁷⁵⁴ Although

⁷⁴⁹ A. M. Clarke and A. D. B. Clarke : Early Experience and the Life Path, p. 99

⁷⁵⁰ R. Larson / S. Wilson : “Adolescence Across Place and Time: Globalization and the Changing Pathways to Adulthood”, pp. 299-330, in R. M. Lerner / L. Steinberg (Eds.) : Handbook of Adolescent Psychology, p. 312

⁷⁵¹ J. Kuczynski : Geschichte des Alltags des deutschen Volkes, Band 2, p. 194

⁷⁵² A. Clarke & A. D. B. Clarke : Early Experience and the Life Path, p. 55

⁷⁵³ B. E. Compas : „Processes of Risk and Resilience During Adolescence: Linking Contexts and Individuals“, pp. 263-296, in R. M. Lerner / L. Steinberg (Eds.) : Handbook of Adolescent Psychology, p. 289

⁷⁵⁴ D. M. Ogilvie : Fantasies of Flight, p. 221

discussion of individual traits can hardly be avoided, it should not be allowed to ‚pathologize‘ the research subject at the outset, and relevant studies have proven conscientious enough in this respect. For example, Brennan *et al.* (1978) concede that some 20% of clearly nondelinquent U.S. runaways may have simply been „motivated by a search for emancipation, adventure, or freedom“, and consequently allow for the possibility that the social-psychological framework applied „obviously does *not* cover all the important personality or psychological features which might be potentially associated with runaway behaviour.“⁷⁵⁵ Needless to say, the cases that interest us here are far more difficult to evaluate - my attempt to hypothesize on every individual case within the sample has hopefully shown some meaningful directions.

Discussion on resilience

„Resilienz“ nennen Forscher [...] psychische Widerstandsfähigkeit - eine strapazierfähige Verfasstheit der Seele.“⁷⁵⁶ However, we should guard ourselves against upgrading resilience as a criterion measured against the background of the interrogatory situation. Such an extreme circumstance was not a ‚regular‘ i.e. repetitive daily adversity that called for psychophysical stamina. The Salzburg mass trial was a one-time occasion with fatal consequences for the majority of the arrested children and youths. It is regarding their lives before the trial that resilience comes into play. Following George Devereux‘ line of thought, it is not unthinkable that the beggar children could have had at their disposal cultural - or rather subcultural, even substratal - defense mechanisms aimed at soothing or buffering the stress.⁷⁵⁷

Modern psychology appears to have starkly relativised its traditional way of perceiving childhood trauma as having an exclusively scarring effect on individual life, as observed by the U.S. psychologist Polly Young-Eisendrath in her 1997 study *The Resilient Spirit*.⁷⁵⁸ In her expert deconstruction of the static view predominant in earlier works on the subject, Young-Eisendrath draws on pioneering studies of childhood adversity made by Michael Rutter, who identified six major childhood stressors that involve risk for future emotional disorders: severe marital discord, low social status of the family, overcrowding or large family size, criminality of the father,

⁷⁵⁵ T. Brennan *et al.* : The Social Psychology of Runaways, p. 307

⁷⁵⁶ K. Thimm : „Die Kraft der Widerständigen“, in *Der Spiegel* Nr. 15 (06.04.09), p. 65

⁷⁵⁷ G. Devereux : Normal und anormal, p. 16

⁷⁵⁸ P. Young-Eisendrath : The Resilient Spirit, pp. 63-64

psychiatric disorder of the mother, admitting the child into care of local authorities.⁷⁵⁹ This list of factors finds its approximate counterpart in the words of Friedrich Lösel, psychology professor at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg: “Je früher ein Kind aus der Bahn geworfen wird, desto härter treffen es die Folgen. [...] Ein Risiko wird meist erst im Zusammenhang mit anderen Risiken bedeutsam“.⁷⁶⁰ Lösel’s observations are based on his research of the life circumstances of socially jeopardized boys and girls in Germany. However, the somatic foundation of child development processes merely underline just how open-ended the outcome can be. In an article on African child-soldiers and child-witches, Naomi Cahn has pointed to a neurobiological explanation for the pliability of adolescent brains:

Adolescents may be more likely to engage in risky behaviour because their brains are insufficiently developed to engage in counterfactual reasoning, that is, reasoning that requires imagining an alternative outcome based on a change in a critical earlier event. [...] Thus, because the brains of juveniles themselves are changing, juveniles are in a constant state of change.⁷⁶¹ [...] the neurobiological research still cannot predict how any specific abused child will react as she grows older.⁷⁶²

Before we start examining whether the beggar children of Salzburg were resilient or not (and if so, to which extent), we should explain why this is relevant at all.

Previous scholarship has, for various reasons, not dealt with Jackl’s warlocks from the developmental perspective. The achievements of childhood history, which has only recently started blossoming beyond the generalizations of Philippe Ariès’, could not have been integrated into previous works on the Zauberer Jackl trials. However, it appears that the scholars involved simply ignored the issue, which is why they chose to view the defendants as static providers of information and not much else. But failure to acknowledge the existence of a dimension does not necessarily mean that there are no preconceptions at work. For example, reducing the children’s testimonies to wishful thinking focused on food betrays the belief in Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, a concept that has been challenged by the more universalistic approach of Manfred Max-Neef. According to Max-Neef, “any fundamental human need that is not adequately satisfied [...] reveals a human poverty.”⁷⁶³ The Maslowian model is, consequently, debatable, because “[t]he ways in

⁷⁵⁹ P. Young-Eisendrath : *The Resilient Spirit*, p. 68

⁷⁶⁰ K. Thimm : „Die Kraft der Widerständigen“, in *Der Spiegel* Nr. 15 (06.04.2009), p. 66

⁷⁶¹ N. Cahn : „Poor Children: Child „Witches“ and Child Soldiers in Sub-Saharan Africa“, in *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law*, Vol 3:2 (Spring 2006), p.426

⁷⁶² *Ibid*, p. 427

⁷⁶³ P. Ekins / M. A. Max-Neef : *Real-life economics*, p. 200

which we experience our needs, hence, the quality of our lives, is, ultimately, subjective.”⁷⁶⁴ In other words, resilience, rarely thematized as such, has nonetheless been implicitly present in the Zauberer Jackl scholarship within the frame of the accused children’s unsatisfied or frustrated needs. I agree with Gerald Mülleder that Jackl and the imaginary tissue spun around him was a projection canvas for most of the defendants.⁷⁶⁵ I propose further differentiation, based on the children’s and youths’ need for fun, excitement, direction in life, comradeship, love, social bonding etc. Since resilience, based on an optimistic outlook on life, is a precondition for survival (the alternatives being depression and self-undoing), I believe that we cannot afford to ignore this question when dealing with Early Modern child poverty.

The next question pertains to methodology. Are the observations drawn from modern studies applicable in an analysis of a three-centuries-old sample? When we turn to Rutter’s six trauma-inducing factors, we see that not all of them fit the circumstances that seem to have dictated the beggar trajectory of Jackl’s recruits. In fact, the only common denominator is ‘low social status of the family’. The sparse information from the protocols are not revelatory of the parents’ ‘marital discord’, and, unsurprisingly, there is usually very little on the subject of the mother’s or the father’s individual pathology. Sometimes an unbearable situation at home is explicitly stated as a reason for running away. For instance, the 15-year-old Cristian Reitter specified that his uncle and his stepmother „ihne consitutum dahaimb nit gelitten“⁷⁶⁶, and we have heard Bastl Mayr complaining of something similar.⁷⁶⁷ At any rate, we would have to be very careful in estimating the traumatic potential such episodes could have had. In Early Modern era, sending the child away from home was not an exception – it was the norm, and even more so for families from low social strata. At times, the protocols indicate what a hardship this was for some children: „Sey schon von disem sommer von haus und zwar der ursachen hinweckh, weil ihn sein vatter umb brott zubetlen ausgeschickt, sey aber in dessen und vor martini ainmall widerumb haimb gereist“.⁷⁶⁸ It is not unthinkable that contemporary children themselves would often have come to the conclusion that alms-seeking was the only alternative. Thrown into the survival game, they would have quickly developed resilience, if not street-smart qualities. But on what grounds? In other words, are there universally valid elements of the resilience theory that would be applicable on the 17th century

⁷⁶⁴ P. Ekins / M. A. Max-Neef : Real-life economics, p. 203

⁷⁶⁵ G. Mülleder : Zwischen Justiz und Teufel, p. 294

⁷⁶⁶ BayHStA HeA 10 b 141

⁷⁶⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 c 143

⁷⁶⁸ BayHStA HeA 10 a 112

beggar children as well? It has been observed that the most significant outer protection factor is the existence of a reliable *Bezugsperson*: “ein Mensch, der verlässlich mit Zuneigung reagiert, der Bedürfnisse erkennt und ihnen gerecht wird, der Grenzen setzt und Orientierung bietet inmitten all der neuen Eindrücke, die auf ein kindliches Gehirn einprasseln.“⁷⁶⁹ Some of the cases we have examined indicate that the role of a *Bezugsperson* was played by the beggar child’s ‘partner in adversity’. What little we can glean from the protocols does not suggest how reliable this other person could have been, nor whether the benefit was mutual.

However, the presence of one single *Bezugsperson* overarches all of the individual cases: Jackl the Magician. Though he recruits with perfidy, often ruthlessly, he comes off as the one who *cares*. Those warlock boys who did find it necessary to invest themselves emotionally into the story reveal their own *need* for a figure who would have taken them under his wing. The fluid quality of the Jackl figure intertwines and melts together the fantasies of adults, adolescents, and children.

„Mändl machen“

Among the few works that deal with this particular superstition within the context of the ‘Zauberer Jackl’ trials is Norbert Schindler’s study *Widerspenstige Leute*. The explanation of it is as follows:

[I]m Volksglauben galt das Kunststück, Mäuse und ähnliches Kleingetier herbeizuzaubern, als die niedrigste Stufe, sozusagen als der Kindergarten der schwarzen Magie, und die kleineren Bettelbuben redeten in den Verhören häufig von solchen Kunststücken. Als sie die 18jährige Dienstmagd Magdalena Langmayerin bezichtigten, der Zaubererjackl habe in Hallein in ihrer Gegenwart „khlaine Mändl... gemacht“, lachte diese schallend darüber, vermutlich auch wegen der ungewollten sexuellen Anspielung. In der Umgangssprache bezeichnete der Ausdruck die Verhaltensweise von jemandem, der seine Kenntnisse in den Dienst nichtiger Zwecke stellte. Es handelt sich also abermals um ein abschätziges Urteil über den praktischen Nutzen der Schulbildung, gepaart vielleicht mit einem Schuß Respekt und Scheu vor jener Gelehrsamkeit, die mit ihren unverständlichen Reden und Praktiken ihre Herrschaft über die unwissende Bevölkerung wie eine Kaste von Magiern ausübte.⁷⁷⁰

As to this last point, it is indeed not excluded that mystifying the book and the learning process in general could have been ‘barrier strategies’ exploited not only by illiterate folks, but even by schoolchildren themselves.⁷⁷¹ And although Schindler, as an ethnologist, may be on the right track with the rest of his assumptions, he greatly simplifies the matter by regarding the ideas of animal-

⁷⁶⁹ K. Thimm, op. cit., pp. 70-71

⁷⁷⁰ N. Schindler : *Widerspenstige Leute*, p. 301

⁷⁷¹ R. Walz : „Kinder in Hexenprozessen. Die Grafschaft Lippe 1654-1663“, in G. Wilbertz *et al.* (Hrsg.) : *Hexenverfolgung und Regionalgeschichte: die Grafschaft Lippe im Vergleich*, p. 219

creation and humanoid-creation as one single category in his opinion so essentially marginal that, once classified as a ‘kindergarten of black magic’, it necessitates no further insight. It is true that, with some defendants classifiable as ‘young adults’ (as the case is with Magdalena Langmayerin), the idea was indeed sexually connoted. The problem is that this rarely happened. In other words, most confessions relative to the creation of *khleine mändl* are sexualized inasmuch as the little humanoids are said to have ‘committed acts of debauchery with each other’. The act of creating them is in itself almost never eroticized – which means we have to look for other sorts of parallels. Incidentally, Schindler’s assertion that *mändl machen* expresses one’s inclination to waste one’s knowledge on trivialities, whichever layer of language usage it may refer to, does not seem to bear any relevance upon the way the defendants actually dealt with this notion as a confession item. In the language of the defendants, zapping ‘little men’ with the help of magic salves almost never has the meaning of ‘making babies’. Instead, the creatures are brought about in a process that closely resembles Paracelsus’ idea of the *homunculus*. We are basically confronted with ready made humanoids that appear to have sprung out of a retort. However, the idea is in itself not Early Modern. Ronnie Hsia reminds us that “[t]he 13th-century German *Hasidim* were especially intrigued by the problem of generating a human being; from them comes the use of the word *golem* to designate a homunculus created by the magical invocation of names”.⁷⁷² Interestingly, on 8th July 1677 - i.e. parallel to the Zauberer-Jackl-investigations - , a certain Ursula Vurischighkin was executed in the Alpine village of Anderburg for having caused illness and death by means of „ain khleines mändl von läm oder khott formirter“.⁷⁷³ In the whole geographical area, therefore, the ‚little men‘ seem to have been generally perceived as an affront to the Creator, and, consequently, as creatures predestined for the role of *maleficium* props.

The work *De natura rerum*, traditionally attributed to Theophrast von Hohenheim, is said to have come about in Villach, around 1537. In it, Paracelsus examines the artificial i.e. non-natural variant of the twofold ‘generation of natural things’. The state of wrotting is postulated as a common denominator to both processes: “die putrefaction ist der höchst grad und auch der erst anfang zu der generation”.⁷⁷⁴ With the following explanation, the author openly expresses his belief in the cyclicity of all things – and hence, the awareness of the recyclability of dirt as a betterment device: “dan die putrefaction ist ein umbkerung und der tot aller dingen und ein zerstörung des ersten

⁷⁷² R. P. Hsia : The Myth of Ritual Murder, Footnote 88, p. 224

⁷⁷³ F. Byloff : Volkskundliches aus Strafprozessen der österreichischen Alpenländer mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse 1455 bis 1850, p. 45

⁷⁷⁴ T. von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus : Sämtliche Werke, 11. Band, p. 312

wesens aller natürlichen dingen, daraus uns herkomet die widergeburt und neue geburt mit tausentsacher beserung.”⁷⁷⁵ Does this principle resemble the magical matrix for the creation of ‘little men’ from our corpus? These creatures, in many instances accompanied by various sorts of animals, but often enough appearing solo, are mostly brought about by means of magical salves the use of which varies from case to case. The defendant may claim to have smeared his hands with the salve, whereupon mice and little men supposedly appeared out of nowhere. However, there are examples of the creatures being zapped out of a hole in the ground, or out of a dish. Each defendant clung to his own manner of construing this particular item, a choice that was not questioned as long as it was made in the first place. Some of the accused, therefore, had an understanding of this process not dissimilar from notions expounded by Paracelsus. This, of course, does not mean that Salzburg beggar children actually read alchemical treatises! I am inclined to ascribe these parallels to the effect his writings must have made in the long run; what is more, even in cases when relevant writings chronologically overlapped with the mass trial, as Johannes Praetorius’ *Anthropodemus plutonicus* (the publication of which in 1666/1667 closely preceded the Salzburg witch hunt), one cannot go far beyond stating the resemblances of the ideas prevalent in the period. We could indeed resort to a *passe partout* key of the psychoanalytic orientation, and unmask every appearance of the *khleine mändl* as an infant’s fantasies of birth. However, that way we would not be doing justice to the wide range of ages of the defendants, most of whom were indeed young, but certainly no infants. Even an attempt to universalize the trait of an arrested development in this area (i.e. assuming that the majority of mature people struggle with it) would not solve the problem, since we would have to analyze every grownup advocating the idea – even Paracelsus himself. But, over-psychologizing the issue tends to darken aspects that should not be ignored. For, if this is a theme that subconsciously preoccupies pretty much everyone, what particular thought ingredient transforms it into sorcery? Paracelsus gives us an answer to that, when he states that “durch kunst und eines erfarnen spagirici geschicklikeit mage in mensch wachsen und geboren werden”.⁷⁷⁶ And, just like Paracelsus claimed it took an experienced alchemist to create a *homunculus*, it turned out that children persuaded into making similar confessions were labelled as experienced sorcerers. An aspect that weighs even heavier is that the author of *De natura rerum* points out that, once the process is properly carried out, “wird ein recht lebendig menschlich kint daraus mit allen glitmaßen wie ein ander kint, das von einem weib geboren wird, doch vil kleiner.”⁷⁷⁷ The idea that alchemy is,

⁷⁷⁵ T. von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus : Sämtliche Werke, 11. Band, p. 312

⁷⁷⁶ T. von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus : Sämtliche Werke, 11. Band, p. 313

⁷⁷⁷ T. von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus : Sämtliche Werke, 11. Band, p. 317

at best, capable of producing only a *miniature* humanoid, rather than a human being in its own right, strangely coincides with the notion of the *little* men magically invoked by the Salzburg child-witches. Sorcery is itself implicitly present in the treatise, which claims that “aus solchen homonculis, so sie zu menschlichem alter komen, werden risen, zwerger und ander dergleichen große wunderleut”⁷⁷⁸, thus underlying their supernatural character.

In the section of *Anthropodemus plutonicus*, entitled “Von Chymischen Menschen” Johannes Praetorius demonstrates his indignation over the idea of Paracelsus, whom he stamps as ‘godless’:

Es ist nicht allein lächerlich / sondern auch gottloß / des *Paracelsi* (eines verdammten Menschen) seine Meynung / von der Geburt und Empfängnüß eines Männleins im Glase. [...] Sintemahl auß einem verfaulerten / und im Glase unterm Miste verstackten Saamen durchauß keine Menschliche Geburt werden kan: Denn wie der Urheber ist / so ist auch die Wirkung: Und derentwegen kan auß einem vergangenen Dinge nichts anders als ein verdorbenes werden.⁷⁷⁹

Though the author openly negates the possibility of such an (al)chemical experiment ever succeeding, he nevertheless takes up several pages to ridicule it, as if he intimately were not quite convinced of the futility of the experiment. Moreover, given that Praetorius’ work belongs to the genre *Kuriositätenliteratur*, it is a passionate pseudoscientific analysis of all the possible ‘freaks’ of nature and para-nature, beings on which the compiler apparently feels psychologically compelled to elaborate. Comparing a portion of this work with the child-witches’ confession sharpens the contextual paradox of the two types of fantasy production. Though he blatantly outs himself as a frenetic admirer of the strange creatures to whom he devotes more than 1500 pages of his treatise, all the obsessed compiler has to do is tread the path of his brothers-in-crime, the demonologists, and – declare disbelief. Conversely, his contemporaries, the beggar children accused of sorcery, are bullied into declaring having ‘fathered’ magical *homunculi*, despite the fact that the lifeless character of the extorted descriptions clearly indicates that creating little men was no major concern in their troubled lives.

In my opinion, not the dogmatically scandalous aspect of this belief that has haunted the Early Modern spirits is what ‘speaks’ to junior witches and warlocks. This fantasy imputed from without and filtered through the cognitive apparatus of the individual in question is subordinated to a different set of laws. What seems more important is that, as a group of several (an actual number is never stated) small-sized people, the sum noun *khleine mändl* declares them as a non-individualized

⁷⁷⁸ T. von Hohenheim gen. Paracelsus : Sämtliche Werke, 11. Band, p. 317

⁷⁷⁹ Johannes Praetorius : *Anthropodemus plutonicus*, in H.-J. Uther (Hrsg.) : *Merkwürdige Literatur* [CD-rom], pp. 21159-21160

mass of uniformly identical products; like the *homunculus*, they represent a creature *type*, never an entity with personalized traits (demonic, elfic or other). What jumps to my mind in relation to this problem is Bruno Bettelheim's exasperation over the mutilation of a medieval fairytale used for the Disney cartoon *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), the authors of which opted to give names and individual characters to every single dwarf, for the purpose of dynamizing the story. According to Bettelheim's psychoanalytic approach, the folkloric wisdom had the dwarfs in the original fairytale be intentionally left nameless precisely because they were supposed to incarnate a preindividual form of existence that needs to be transcended if maturity is to be attained – through their personalization, the inherent didactic purpose of the tale was rendered obscure.⁷⁸⁰ Although this opinion should be viewed from the perspective of Bettelheim's pro-European, anti-American stance⁷⁸¹, an attitude he seems to have shared with Theodore Adorno, he nonetheless intuited one essential dimension shared by all artificial men of the Old World: that of their lack of distinct identity. The first attempt of transcending this topos (not accidentally placed towards the twilight of the Early Modern era), Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818) demonstrates the heavy brunt borne by the miserable humanoid creature, as well as the tragic (and the only possible) outcome of its thwarted quest for humanity.

Maybe it is precisely because of the personalization of the artificial humanoid heralded by Mary Shelley that newer history has cast the 'little men' in roles infinitely more challenging, active and disturbing than Paracelsus could ever have anticipated. The 20th century gave rise to community threats involving UFOs best known through their crystallized stereotype of the little green Martians construed as invaders from outer space by folk imagination. According to the sociologist Robert E. Bartholomew, "[t]hese myths are supported by a spiritual void left by the ascendancy of rationalism and secular humanism."⁷⁸² But, regardless of the attire adopted by the topos at various epochs of human history, these phenomena apparently lie within the scope of 'non-naturally generated' humanoids – except that at our times the universe has substituted the alchemical dish as an incubator. It should be pointed out, however, that the *khleine mändl* are not the focus of this particular social auto-hypnosis, but simply constitute an element within the iconography of the Salzburg witch trial, a phenomenon that, under the circumstances, could be characterized as a collective delusion, inasmuch as the term 'delusion' describes "the rapid, spontaneous, temporary

⁷⁸⁰ B. Bettelheim : *Kinder brauchen Märchen*, footnote on p. 199

⁷⁸¹ G. Jones : *Killing Monsters*, pp. 143-144

⁷⁸² R. E. Bartholomew : *Little Green Men, Meowing Nuns and Head-Hunting Panics. A Study of Mass Psychogenic Illness and Social Delusion*, p. 21

spread of false beliefs within a particular population”, and thus “refers to the socially constructed nature of the episode”.⁷⁸³

Play as wish fulfillment

It is certainly tempting to explain the Sabbath feast away as a wish-fulfillment of a beggar child. And yet, none of the descriptions contain any indications of euphoric overeating - which is what one would expect from a chronically starved individual belonging to the lowest social stratum. Indeed, food is no fantasy locus *per se*, but it not being a salient aspect calls for careful evaluation. In his study of medieval fantasies centered on ‘the land of plenty’, the Dutch historian Herman Pleij reminds us that the dream of food being spontaneously placed at one’s disposal belongs to the category of longing for paradise lost, and that this self-serving Western obsession can be traced back both to Antiquity and the Bible.⁷⁸⁴ However, the Salzburg defendants do not seem to have longed for a ‘paradise lost’: probably because they have never known conditions that could even remotely be described as paradisiacal. So what is the part of pretend play? According to the *Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Social Development*, „[p]retend play is a pleasurable and intrinsically motivated activity in which participants transform the meaning of objects, identities, situations, and time. [...] Pretend play is an activity framed by metacommunicative messages and it embodies representation of emotionally significant experiences.“⁷⁸⁵

To claim, therefore, that children’s play is manifold is to utter a superfluous platitude. Nevertheless – or maybe precisely because of its protean quality –, once this theme is rounded out within the scope of a non-specialized research (as the case is with witchcraft studies in general), children’s play conveniently assumes exactly the shape harmonious with the respective researcher’s line of thought. Hence, children tend to be presented either as empty receptacles aping whatever they may have observed in the behaviour of adults (peer relationships are not often taken into account), or, if the other extreme is embraced, as little monsters who exhibit a pathology of an at least middle-aged grownup with a heavy vice-packed CV. Scarcity of historical sources regarding children and the relating modes particular to them contributes to a tendency of analyzing children’s play as though the phenomenon (as manifested in the sources) were a distortion of something that, under some different, ‘optimal’ circumstances, would have been devoid of those elements that make

⁷⁸³ R. E. Bartholomew : op. cit., p. 12

⁷⁸⁴ H. Pleij : *Dromen van Cocagne*, p. 171

⁷⁸⁵ P. K. Smith and C. H. Hart (eds.) : *Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Social Development*, p. 419

it look like a pathology. In her book *Witch Craze*, Lyndal Roper discusses the games children of early 18th century Augsburg admitted to playing within the context of what seems to have been a generational conflict between a group of (Catholic) parents and their children, which eventually took on a shape of a child-witch hunt spiced with demonic possession. Apparently, the games these children indulged into sometimes implied inflicting real wounds:

The children also seem to have engaged a good deal in cutting and biting – the odd tooth in the parental bed, the cutting of fingers – an interesting detail, since normally the Devil required only pricking to draw blood for signature. They emerged, too, in one sacrilegious version of what we might call a ‘doctors and nurses’ game. On Good Friday, one child played Jesus on the cross while his girl counterpart was pierced with Mary’s seven daggers of sorrow. Again, complex mythical structures were being reduced to physical processes in the children’s play. Mary’s seven swords of sorrow became real cutting implements, piercing the little girl’s body; Christ’s wounded body becomes part of a sadistic cutting game. The parents reported that the game had left real marks on the children’s bodies: a lump ‘about the size of a pea’ was seen on the boy’s hand, while ‘seven yellow dimples’ circled the region of the little girl’s heart.⁷⁸⁶

Judging from this example Roper appears not to distinguish between the pranks the Augsburg children aimed against the parents – the acts she tends to interpret as offspring rebellion – and the actual games that they played among themselves. Instead, she tries to present the whole complex of children’s activities as confusedly marked by their alleged obsession with regressive sexuality. All of the described activities do appear to be well-documented in the sources. But: while the ‘sorcery’ acts directed against the parents were a manifestation of some momentary crisis (at least that is how this scholar’s mentalist approach would have it), the games themselves may have both predated *and* outdated them.

Now, considering the variety of alternatives concocted by Salzburg beggar children when relating details of the ‘initiatory cut’ scene, the one thing that is sure is that, in order to give a satisfactory answer, they had to visualize it the best way they could. And, given that the entire corpus of Jackl legends is nothing but a collective fantasy, we would probably not be wrong in assuming that the children simply fantasized the required scenes through.

But what if not all of this was just fantasy? We do not know how the whole Jackl hype may have influenced children’s play, but we must allow the possibility that it could have. It is, indeed, highly unlikely that the rumour machine spread along a span of several years would not somehow have seeped into the social tissue of Salzburg children and, consequently, influenced their games. Therefore, certain elements in the accounts of the beggar children may have reflected *real* play, with or without Jackl as a variable. In the paragraph above, Roper evokes play occasions both of

⁷⁸⁶ L. Roper : *Witch Craze*, p. 212

symbolic *re-enactments* of pain and of *experiencing* real pain. Both of these dimensions could have constituted children's play in late 17th century Salzburg as well.

In other words, it is not excluded that some of the beggar boys actually did engage in games, the results of which remained visible as bodily scars. Those games need not necessarily be branded as ritualistic *per se*; tests of courage and endurance by means of which individual peers tend to measure themselves up against their in- and outgroup members are not unlikely to leave traces on the skin. Whenever a defendant evoked a scene of initiation supposedly performed by Jackl or the Devil (thus being forced to explain the nature of the scar pointed to during the visitation) he may just as well have been retelling an actual event.

Finally, the act of active confabulation in the interrogatory situation could *itself* be regarded as children's play, if a sort of self-entertainment could be subsumed under that category. It appears that, however hardboiled many of these children may have been – and we must take care not to stretch this self-imposed prejudicious assumption too far (for once, not all of them could have had superb coping strategies) – this particular trait itself would not have *neutralized* the faculty of playfulness inherent to childhood and early adolescence. To credit all of these young defendants with lucidity as regards their own situation, and intelligence sharp enough to outmaneuver the claws of the authorities would be exaggerated, especially when one considers the sheer amount of trouble that children's playacting could cause in supersition-prone times. In Lyndal Roper's Augsburg corpus, one single confession, that of the boy David Kopf, seems to have activated the avalanche of denunciations.⁷⁸⁷ Likewise, in spite of the fact that Jakob Koller was first mentioned in the context of being a gang leader in early 1675, the local fame of Jackl the Sorcerer appears to have started gaining ground some two years later, after 14-year-old Dionys Feldner hinted at the strange man's supernatural qualities.

Host, Eucharist, blood

If, for a start, we claim that host desecration is nothing but a pathologized inversion of the Eucharist ritual, which is itself deeply anchored in the religious-cultural tissue of the modern Western civilization, we would only be stating the obvious.

Whereas the significance of the Host prevalent in Early Christian era was mainly that of a sacrificial gift, a further specification was arrived at during the Middle Ages. The medieval host is namely a thin disc of non-spiced wheat flour Eucharist bread, which gradually gets invested with all sorts of

⁷⁸⁷ L. Roper : Witch Craze, p. 214

cultic attributes.⁷⁸⁸ The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 systematized these attributes into a from then on officially recognized teaching of transubstantiation, according to which the Host swallowed in the Eucharist ritual, becomes the body of Jesus Christ. However, it appears that the lay reception of the Eucharistic cult has rarely been unproblematic. The idea of the oblate cookie being literally transformed into the Lord himself presupposed a certain capability for symbolic thinking on the part of the believer. And yet, reconciling the literal with the imaginary in a satisfactory way was apparently a problem to many Christian followers. Some scientists have argued that the bleeding Christ on the medieval altars served as a visual compensation for the dry abstractness of the Eucharistic ritual.⁷⁸⁹ Nonetheless, over the course of time the syncretistic tendencies of cultic logic promoted the Host into a source of magical powers. Even if transubstantiation was a tough nut to crack for the average churchgoer, the sanctity of its edible vehicle was mostly undisputed.

The element aimed to buttress this sanctity, rendering it credible, was the miracle of the bleeding host. The churchfathers felt that, without resorting to such dramatic *dénouements* it would have been difficult to gain the folk over to the desired doctrine. The examples of the Host drooping with blood were therefore supposed to furnish the missing link between God imagined and God incarnate. They were, in the words of Gary Waite, „the most powerful antidote to doubtfulness regarding transubstantiation“.⁷⁹⁰ In his book *Vom heiligen Blut* Karl Kolb argues that a total lack of theological understanding was what made large masses of believers all the more ready to accept miraculous ‚proofs‘ of the Lord’s presence in the altar sacrament.⁷⁹¹ The sheer amount of these accounts throughout history has incited scholars to look for a physical explanation of the bleeding Host phenomenon. An appropriate justification appeared to have been found in *Micrococcus prodigosus*, a mould fungus that, having spread itself across a poorly stored oblate cookie, causes rusty red spots which, with a little imagination, could pass off as curdled blood. This somewhat constrained attempt of an explanation should be viewed in the perspective of Early Modern church practices, as some priests have been known to visually manipulate the Host by dyeing it red.⁷⁹² Intelligent ecclesiasts seem to have been perfectly aware of the host’s lack of potential for inducing

⁷⁸⁸ A. Döring : „Hostie/Hostienwunder“, in Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Band XV, p. 604

⁷⁸⁹ J. Wirth : „L’ apparition du surnaturel dans l’art du Moyen Âge“, in F. Dunant et al. (dir.) : L’image et la production du sacré, p. 160

⁷⁹⁰ G. Waite : Eradicating the Devil’s minions, p. 175

⁷⁹¹ K. Kolb : Vom heiligen Blut, p. 90

⁷⁹² A. Döring, op. cit., p. 605

hallucinations of God, a failure which the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk ascribes to a systemic lack of narcotic bliss; he claims that, without that one essential drop of, e.g. LSD, the Eucharist complex is nothing but a „katholisch nährstoffarmes Brot für die Laien“. ⁷⁹³

Still, even if invested with the utmost religious fervour, the host-related beliefs would have been downright insipid (and ultimately ineffective) without an imagined villain supposedly eager to humiliate this symbol of divine purity. For this reason, the host desecration accusations brought against the Salzburg beggar children are an almost xerox reflection of the similar crimes once imputed to medieval Jews. The Christian mainstream perceived the Jews to be heavily disinclined to Christian icons, ready to destroy them at any price. Summing up these alleged crimes, Joshua Trachtenberg says that „the Jews threw stones and refuse at the images, spat on them, made lewd gestures and insulting remarks, pierced and slashed and shattered them.“ ⁷⁹⁴ The fact that an incarnation of the Lord in the Host actually mattered little to followers of a different religion ⁷⁹⁵ did not prevent Christians (theologians as well as layfolk) to construe a sadistic attitude of the Jews towards the Host out of thin air. This is what constitutes the genre of *Frevellegenden*. Yet, host desecration accounts could feature other folk groups, too: the historical circumstances coupled with personal preferences dictated which unacceptable entity was to be the intended animosity focus (Lutherans, Turks, Sarassins etc). ⁷⁹⁶

Now, Early Modern Germany and Italy were regions which had a pronounced taste for blood mystic i.e. host-related miracles ⁷⁹⁷; in addition to this, the Alpine regions seem to have nurtured a special *liaison* with another intriguing element: the cult of Holy Simon. ⁷⁹⁸ In the year 1475, in the bishop city of Trient, the Inquisition conducted a trial against the local Jewish community, accusing its members of having ritually murdered a two-year-old boy named Simon. At first sight, it looks as though the cultic logic would have it that every child appearing in the religious discourse would undergo forced identification with the baby Jesus. However, it seems more likely that the ones responsible for this witch hunt *avant la lettre* deliberately played the strings which would turn the unfortunate child into a martyr, and the notorious case itself into what Ronnie Hsia labeled as „a

⁷⁹³ P. Sloterdijk : *Weltfremdheit*, p. 134

⁷⁹⁴ J. Trachtenberg : *The Devil and the Jews*, p. 118

⁷⁹⁵ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 8, pp. 1040-1043

⁷⁹⁶ L. Kretzenbacher : *Das verletzte Kultbild*, pp. 94-95

⁷⁹⁷ M. Rubin : *Corpus Christi*, p. 314

⁷⁹⁸ W. Behringer / G. Jerouschek : „„Das unheilvollste Buch der Weltliteratur“? Zur Entstehungs- und Wirkungsgeschichte des *Malleus maleficarum* und zu den Anfängen der Hexenverfolgung“, in H. Kramer (Institoris) : *Der Hexenhammer*, pp. 42-43

symbol of political propaganda“.⁷⁹⁹ Incidentally, Richard Kieckhefer’s observations on late medieval child-snatching witches suggest that exploiting social anxieties caused by infanticide seems to have had priority over the adults’ worries for the wellbeing of their infants.⁸⁰⁰

Christian legends featuring „the Child in the Host“ indicate that beliefs related to baby Jesus were an additional part of the Host-cluster. Art historians argue that the reason why baby Jesus starts appearing in medieval art, in the course of the 13th century, lies in an iconographic shift: featuring the holy Mother-Child-Dyad i.e. the Virgin Mary *and* the Lord, supposedly resulted in an economization of the iconographic space, so that Jesus now had to be presented as an infant with body language of a grownup - an esthetic solution the corollary of which was the suppression of the Lord’s virility and his ultimate infantilization.⁸⁰¹ Furthermore, Miri Rubin’s idea of the „two strains of eucharistic symbolism“ seems to bear relevance to the beliefs in the prince-archbishopric Salzburg, at least the way they are reflected in the protocols. Rubin namely argues that the notions of 1) the presence of Christ’s suffering body, and 2) the redemption best attainable via the (biblical) act of sacrificing one’s own child, correlate within the body of Eucharistic beliefs.⁸⁰²

On a more worldly level, the Eucharist lent itself quite neatly to political exploitation. According to Gary Waite, the fusion of individual religious notions of Austrian princes on the one hand and local theologians on the other culminated in mid-fifteenth century as a belief in an all-pervasive conspiracy, the purpose of which he explains thus: “Charges of Host desecration were a means of confirming for anxious Christians the veracity of their sacramental beliefs”.⁸⁰³ Consequently, the connection between witchcraft and host desecration was established over the course of the 16th century. This ecclesiastical crime functioned, at least in case of Tyrol, mainly against the background of the Anabaptist rebellion. The scenario of this ritual had already then been firmly outlined. The desecrators i.e. Anabaptists who have renounced Catholicism – were accused of sabotaging the Eucharistic ritual by throwing the host down onto the floor and trampling it underfoot. Apparently, acts like these *did* take place.

The information contained in the protocols look too sparse to help us reconstruct the role that religion may have played in the lives of the Salzburg beggar children. Indeed, being baptized was

⁷⁹⁹ R. Po-chia Hsia : The Myth of Ritual Murder, p. 45

⁸⁰⁰ R. Kieckhefer : „Avenging the Blood of Children.“, in A. Ferreiro (ed.) : The Devil, Heresy and Witchcraft in the Middle Ages, pp. 91-109

⁸⁰¹ J. Wirth, op. cit., p. 146

⁸⁰² M. Rubin : Corpus Christi, p. 136

⁸⁰³ G. Waite : Eradicating the Devil’s minions, p. 168

the only thing common to all of the accused children - this can be inferred from their accounts of the diabolical baptism scene, invariably accompanied with a phrase like „die alte tauf sey nichts werth“. Other than this, most of them were able to recite their *Vaterunser* („khönne betten“), while some knew additional prayers as well. Most interrogated children and young people had some notion of the Eucharist, since they claim having received Communion a couple of times before. In general, however, any religious background knowledge the little vagabonds may have possessed must have been rudimentary. They are not likely to have benefitted from what Marc R. Forster describes as the Church's post-Thirty-Years'-War interest in catechizing children of Southwest Germany. He claims that these catechism classes, known as *Kinderlehr*, „were held every Sunday after services, and were widely accepted“.⁸⁰⁴ In absence of such an organized course of ecclesiastical action in the prince-archbishopric of Salzburg, any attempt to analyze the children's reception of the notions relative to the Eucharist must remain speculative. As Caroline Walker Bynum suggested in *Wonderful Blood*, a concept as fluid as this presented difficulties to lay believers, for whom it was apparently not very easy „to distinguish clearly between the sacrifice of Christ and the killing of Christ.“⁸⁰⁵ The *zauberbuben* themselves do not seem to have even attempted to differentiate between the two. Nonetheless, the image of the bleeding Saviour, typical of baroque iconography, must, at least to some degree, have been a constituent of their mental imagery. In addition, the hard life these people led, with its accompanying corporeal wounds (to which the body visitations, after all, regularly refer) may, in some cases, have facilitated their identification with the tortured Lord. However, even after having calculated such a connection into the analysis, it seems that, to the child-witches, the oblate itself was essentially not much more than an unsavoury piece of pastry. Though the sources do not mention Salzburg children actually playing with the Host or imitating aspects of the Eucharist, it would not be difficult to imagine playful parodies similar to those practiced in 14th century Montaillou, where the rite was reenacted with slices of beet. From the shocked disapproval of a parodied Host elevation performed by a young harvester Pierre Acès it appears that, from a certain age onwards, such a simulation was not socially tolerated.⁸⁰⁶

But - the taste of the host is just an accompanying symptom, not the cause of a (in these cases tragic) misunderstanding on the part of the believer. The problem runs a little deeper than that. The notion that a sacred object tolerates being brought along to the witches' Sabbath, without any divine

⁸⁰⁴ M. R. Forster : Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque, p. 126

⁸⁰⁵ C. Walker Bynum : Wonderful Blood, p. 240

⁸⁰⁶ E. Le Roy Ladurie : Montaillou, p. 263

counteraction whatsoever, speaks in favour of the fragility that the entire Host construct seems to have shouldered from the outset. The oblate cookie, which should normally represent both the Lord's might as well as the Lord himself *in statu nascendi*, is thus potentially imbued with tremendous transformative powers. And yet, in spite of its sacred character, the role of the Host in the witchcraft trials i.e. in the Sabbath-related accounts is that of an easily degraded object. This is exactly where the paradox kicks in. For, in comparison to the medieval *Frevellegenden*, the host desecration accounts extracted from Salzburg child-witches lack the didactic ‚numinosity‘ that would have served to reinforce the faith in a Medieval genre consumer. After all, the intention of the prince-archbishopric's authorities is to punish, not to act pedagogically. The catharsis is, indeed, not absent from the statements, but, as we shall see, it is no catharsis of a believer who has found God again.

It is important to emphasize that accusations involving the host were in no way an Alpine particularity, but could be found in other child-witch trials of Early Modern Europe as well. For instance, some English witchcraft trials involving children also included Eucharistic elements, though these were neither as central nor as elaborately outlined as the ones exploited on the Continent. The following example is taken from Ronald Seth's study *Children Against Witches*:

In his examination before the magistrates, the boy had admitted that two years earlier, on Maundy Thursday, Old Dendike [*an old woman accused of being a witch*] had bade him go to church to receive Holy Communion. He was not, however, to eat the bread the minister gave him, but was to bring it out of church „and deliver it to such a thing as should meet him in his way homewards“. When he was about forty roods from the church „a thing in the shape of a Hare“ met him and asked him whether he had brought the bread. When he said he had not, the thing threatened to tear him to pieces. Frightened, he had crossed himself, and the thing had immediately vanished.⁸⁰⁷

Naturally, the denominational makeup of the witch-hunting communities of the British Isles is markedly different from the religious context within which the Salzburg beggars were, among other things, being accused of host desecration, as the crime's specific weight understandably augments in a Roman Catholic area.

What, then, is the ‚standard‘ Host desecration story that we encounter in the Salzburg Protocols, and how did it come about? Upon interrogating the very first arrested beggar boy, 12-year-old Dionys Feldner in 1677, the *Kommissar* Sebastian Zillner, who seems to have already had a fixed idea of what kind of confession as regards host desecration he wanted to extract, used both ruse and violence in order to bring the boy to the point of confirming that the host had bled. Moreover, once

⁸⁰⁷ R. Seth : *Children Against Witches*, pp. 76-77

the little beggar confessed to having received communion (understandably avoiding the alternative negative answer), the road to a forced construal of the crime was open, and this scenario was subsequently applied to every such confession. Heinz Nagl's assumption that acts like these were actually, maybe even habitually performed by members of Salzburg's *fahrendes Volk*⁸⁰⁸ is therefore not particularly plausible. In addition, Gerald Mülleder, author of the most recent study on this matter, emphasizes that details relative to „defaming the host [...] are almost always absent in records from local courts“, i.e. that these accusations stemmed from the interrogatories led at the criminal court in Salzburg which was the archbishopric's sole criminal court.⁸⁰⁹ Hence, after having realized that confessions extracted (and extorted) during this mass trial were basically prefabricated, we can only investigate any personal variations contained therein, and consequently evaluate the insights they offer us.

Coprophilia

One aspect of the confessions refers to the type of behaviour which psychology broadly categorizes as coprophilia. The term is used to define a range of scatological obsessions, among which a tendency to feed on dung and/or on body excretions (coprophagy).⁸¹⁰ We have seen that certain confessions from the Salzburg protocols feature acts of eating the Devil's feces. Acts like these were *not* included in the interrogatory catalogue, which implies that mentioning this particular aspect of blasphemous behaviour was entirely optional i.e. entirely dependent on the examinee's tastes. As a rule, the appropriate scene happens at the beginning of the Sabbath episode, when the newly arrived initiate is supposed to demonstrate a sort of bodily veneration of the Evil One. The child witch in question claims to have been forced to cover the Devil's body with kisses, or simply lick him all over, with an emphasis on the penis and anal area. As we have seen, manipulating the Devil's penis often assumes the description of fellatio with the ensuing act of swallowing the ejaculate (described as *unflath*). In its turn, the *osculum obscenum* – which, by the time of late 17th century, had long since become a firmly established ingredient of Continental witchcraft trials – is in some cases accompanied with an act of swallowing of the Devil's excrements. It is difficult to ascertain which of the two scenarios emulates the other, if it does at all. Chronologically speaking, the notion of kissing the Devil's behind does seem to predate the oral sex pattern as an operative

⁸⁰⁸ H. Nagl : „Der Zauberer-Jackl-Prozeß. Hexenprozesse im Erzstift Salzburg 1675-1690. Teil II“, in *MGSL* (114), p. 111

⁸⁰⁹ G. Mülleder : „Prince-archbishopric of Salzburg“, in R. Golden (ed.) : *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft*, p. 1000

⁸¹⁰ B. Aubin / H. Aubin : „Kopromanija, koprofilija, koprofagija“, in A. Porot : *Enciklopedija psihijatrije*, p. 302

Sabbath element in witch confessions in general. The fantasy element in the confessions of the beggar children could then be said to follow a certain logic: if one swallows the excrements from behind, one is expected to have swallowed the liquid from out of the other side of the same object. Still, that remains moot, since, in our sources at least, both elements parallel each other. The theological implications of the *osculum obscenum* being opaque to these children, they tended to interpret it in their own way. Indeed, why else - the children thought - would one be degrading oneself in this way if not with the aim of ingesting feces, which must be the kisser's ultimate intention?

Why indeed. At the time of this trial, the problem is already a couple of centuries old. Worshipping the Lord in an unsavoury manner is namely an aspect of Medieval Christian mysticism, some of whose female proponents, such as Catherine of Siena, were reputed for having had a taste for swallowing the most abominable human secretions as a sign of their love for Jesus Christ. Such a self-denying act is undertaken for a 'therapeutic' purpose.⁸¹¹ The anxiety on which such an urge is based seems to have been there from the very start. According to Edward J. Tejirian, "the doctrine of demonic influence prevalent in early and medieval Christianity presupposed precisely the reverse of projection. It signified *injection*. In this sense, the fear of the Devil was not, *consciously*, a fear of the self, it is *a fear of having something alien and beyond one's control inserted into oneself by a malevolent force.*"⁸¹²

If we concentrate on one single dimension of the Sabbath as it is construed by the witch-children of Salzburg – the notion of the swallowing – a parallel with the thwarted ingesting of the host can hardly be circumvented. When juxtaposed, the two acts can serve to decode each other. The outright self-abasement inherent in the Sabbath coprophagy might in fact be interpreted as a symbolical extension of devouring the Lord's body.

Indeed, the eucharist cookie seems to have been judged such a meagre and insipid excuse for a pastry that not a single child-witch confession features it as even a temporary alternative for a daily meal – which, as one would expect, would have been perfectly justifiable under the circumstances. This may be one of the reasons why the children had no difficulties in depicting their distaste for the oblate cookie. Swallowing implies eating, and one can only eat that which is tasty. The only example of 'regular' swallowing is the Sabbath feast. Its rich menu does not follow the inverted pattern typical of cases in which the theologically directed inversion is brought to its extreme

⁸¹¹ G. Tétart : « Des saintes coprophages. Souillure et alimentation sacrée en Occident chrétien », in F. Héritier / M. Xanthakou (eds.) : *Corps et affects*, p. 354

⁸¹² E. J. Tejirian : *Sexuality and the devil: symbols of love, power and fear in male psychology*, p. 168

(sitting with one's back turned to the table, eating disgusting dishes etc). All the Sabbath courses referred to during the hearings are objectively tasty. On the other hand, there is nothing transcendental about eating God. Or: there is nothing transcendental about eating – period. What I am saying is that the theological implications related to swallowing the host may have been colliding sharply with what some representatives of a chronically hungry marginal group tended to subsume under eating. The barrier between religious symbolism contained in the eucharist and the spook cannibalism lurking underneath may have been too much for some of these young individuals. So, whenever a piece of food put into one's mouth implied something other than satisfying one's bodily need, an internal conflict may have ensued. In short, it appears that eating the Devil's feces is really a thinly disguised repulsion of the eucharist and its cannibalistic message, nominally accepted but apparently not properly internalized. Since the act of swallowing will not happen of one's own volition, it must be enforced from without (“und sein Unflath schlinden müessen”), not so much by the Devil himself (whose crude corporeality, though passive in the act of allowing to be kissed, already adverts his more active role of a rapist in the ensuing orgy), but rather by the socio-religious setting of the diabolical congregation, a group in which one loses one's individuality, having surrendered it to the (higher) needs of the rite, which seems to be the case with every religious gathering.

Examining obedience mechanisms

An essential dimension of the witch hunts, its persecution enthusiasm resulting in scapegoating and torture, seems to rest on obedience patterns that, although nicely fitting the cultural climate of the 17th century's Absolutist state, are actually universal. The most famous 20th century research into obedient behaviour, fuelled by the horrors of the two World Wars, is the one performed by Stanley S. Milgram. His experiments, aimed at examining human attitudes to authority, had the participants administer shocks to the 'victims', as instructed by the person in charge. It turned out that almost two-thirds of the participants chose to ignore the victims' protests and pleas i.e. to comply with the 'chief's' urging to pursue, and tortured the victims at the most severe levels (without knowing that the shocks were simulated). This led Milgram state far-reaching conclusions regarding human nature. Hence, obedience extremes would stand for “eine gefährlich typische Situation in der komplexen Gesellschaft: daß es nämlich psychologisch leicht ist, Verantwortung nicht wahrzunehmen, wenn man nur ein Zwischenglied in einer Kette übler Aktionen ist, sich aber von

ihren letzten Konsequenzen weit entfernt befindet.“⁸¹³ The universalistic approach of Milgram’s findings functioned as a refutation of Theodore Adorno’s attempts to diagnose torturers such as the Nazis with inborn sadism.

The most glaring reason why Milgram’s experiments have recently reentered the scientific focus are the widely mediatized atrocities of Abu Ghraib. The two most recent related studies seem to have largely confirmed the results from the 1960’s. A meta-analysis of some Milgram data, conducted by Dominic J. Packer, revealed that the disobedient participants’ non-compliance followed a certain pattern, but that their respect for the learner’s wish to discontinue the shocks appears to have had nothing to do with the severity of the treatment.⁸¹⁴ On the other hand, Jerry M. Burger’s replication of Milgram’s Experiment 5 resulted in obedience rates only slightly lower than those of the original research. The reason why Burger did not perceive the 45-year gap between the two procedures as an impediment was, “that the same situational factors that affected obedience in Milgram’s participants still operate today.”⁸¹⁵ Whether we can stretch this argument to fit any obedience patterns of an Early Modern European witch-hunt-condoner must remain an arguable point, as it would inevitably get us caught in a vicious circle of trying to reconcile our modern notions of normality with *Zeitgeist* normality. Relying on his concept of a ‚social alter‘ (which is, succinctly put, every person’s own psychological repository of traumas⁸¹⁶), Lloyd deMause believes that the outcome of Milgram’s experiments would have been different had they not been preceded by a social trance: „If he had not framed it as a *group* experience [...] he would not have been obeyed, because they would not have switched into their social alters. [...] It is the internal content of the social alter and not obedience to authority that is effective in producing destructive obedience.“⁸¹⁷ However, as the state of being dependent on an outward force is nonetheless fundamental to deMause’s explanation, we shall have a closer look at a famous theory dealing with the obedience to authority.

⁸¹³ S. Milgram : Das Milgram-Experiment, p. 28

⁸¹⁴ D. J. Packer : „Identifying Systematic Disobedience in Milgram’s Obedience Experiments. A Meta-Analytic Review”, in *Perspectives on Psychological Science* Volume 3, Number 4 (2008), pp. 301-304

⁸¹⁵ J. M. Burger : „Replicating Milgram. Would People Still Obey Today?“, in *American Psychologist* Vol. 64, No. 1 (2009), pp. 1-11, quotation p. 9

⁸¹⁶ L. deMause : The emotional life of nations, pp. 100-102

⁸¹⁷ L. deMause : The emotional life of nations, p. 107

The authoritarian personality

A (morally) blind obedience which Milgram's experiments rendered visible is often just an executive complement of an initiating force (incarnated by a command-giving leader), but the dictate of ruthless pulsions they both seem to obey resembles what 1950's 'Frankfurt school' scholarship labelled 'the authoritarian personality'. It was only logical that witchcraft historians should start wondering whether Adorno's model could be used to explain the motivation of the pursuers of witches:

The *psychology of the witch-hunters* is another as yet unsystematically tilled field of research. [...] The observation that many theologians imagined God not as a kind father but rather as a cruel fundamentalist, ready to burst into wild fury on the slightest occasion, had already been made by contemporaries like Friedrich Spee, who had claimed that this God seemed to resemble a pagan Moloch, demanding human sacrifice. The character profile of the *authoritarian personality* not only applies to Fascist or Nazi voters, but also to those jurists, theologians, councillors or princes who embarked on the business of witch-hunting around 1600.⁸¹⁸

The modern world does not lack examples of social pathology ultimately reducible to AP-dynamics. The phenomenon known as *social cleansing* is a characteristic of many agglomerations both in the developing and the underdeveloped countries, where local guerillas eliminate socially disfavoured people such as drug addicts, street children, and prostitutes. The advocates and perpetrators of social cleansing use 'authoritarian' vocabulary, by means of which the victims are reduced to disposable products.⁸¹⁹ The disturbing motivation behind such demonstration of 'private justice' is that „[t]he respectable citizens and law enforcement officials involved *believe they are under assault from violent and dangerous juveniles* and that they are acting to protect themselves and society at large.“⁸²⁰ Through the process of dehumanizing the victim, promoted into a vessel of life threat, the situation is turned upside down, so that the victim can be annihilated in good conscience - a conveniently twisted ethical frame strangely resembling the attitude of the Salzburg authorities. Incidentally, class fight is not the only matrix within which such a superstitious delusion can take place. An even more complex (and extreme) type of witch-hunting activity echoing the 'bottom-up model' can be encountered in Guatemala, where the so-called People's Social Cleansing Group

⁸¹⁸ W. Behringer : *Witches and Witch-Hunts*, p. 163

⁸¹⁹ J. Wehrheim : „Privatjustiz oder faschistisches Phänomen? „Soziale Säuberungen in Kolumbien“, on URL <http://www.uni-muenster.de/PeaCon/wuf/wf-98/9810207m.htm> [accessed 9th August 2007]

⁸²⁰ A. Jensen : „A Childhood Stolen, A Society in Fear“, on URL http://www.paho.org/English/DPI/Number2_article4.htm [accessed 26th April 2007], [my italics]

comprising mostly of Mayan Indians is known to have executed people believed to be *brujos* (warlocks), notably after having investigated into the case for eight months, and having given the intended victim „two chances to change“.⁸²¹ Like in Early Modern Europe, the targeted persons are held responsible for a social crisis, in this case a rise in robberies, and the coinciding drop in crime (imagined or actual) seems to furnish these paramilitary formations with the same kind of authority allegedly exercised by the Transylvanian prince Vlad Țepeș during his reign of terror (1456-1462).⁸²² Finally, recent debates on the militarization of EU borders, relying on Jacques Lacan's ideas relative to the fear of being flooded by a threatening Other (manifested in the shape of non-Western migrants), conclude that an entrenchment within an armoured security bubble - a so-called ‚gated community‘ - is both ineffectif and morally questionable.⁸²³ The aforementioned mechanisms can, however, assume the shape of an individual, rather than an institutional, vendetta, as in the case of two indigenous Costa Rican who murdered a local shaman, under a transparent pretense that started with „Creemos que era el diablo“.⁸²⁴

However, stamping any individual protagonists of the Jackl-hunts with the AP-label - the relentless zest of the *Hofrat* Sebastian Zillner turning him into the likeliest laureate - would make sense only if we could offer arguments that speak in favour of some kind of a lemming-like attitude adopted by the victims themselves, since every manifestation of ‚dominant vs. recessive‘ dynamics necessitates both extremes of the polarity. In its capacity of an intimidating Other, the Salzburg beggar group (and gradually the whole stratum) was indeed stylized into a supernatural ‚gang‘. Conversely, the stern and lofty court apparatus probably appeared just as threatening to the warlock boys - but there was never any dilemma as to who had the executive power, which is why the two positions are not interchangeable.

Where's the folklore?

It appears that most of the beggar youths exhibited ritualistic behaviour rooted in a special kind of ‚folkloric awareness‘. Folk customs typical for people with fixed abode obviously do not play a

⁸²¹ N. C. Aizenman : „Self-Styled Justice in Guatemala“, on URL <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/23/AR2006022302285.html> [accessed 26th April 2007]

⁸²² R. T. McNally / R. Florescu : *U potrazi za Drakulom*, p. 23

⁸²³ H. van Houtum / R. Pijpers : „Angst en protectie in het grens- en immigratiebeleid van de Europese Unie. Over ‚tsunami's‘, ‚cherry picking‘ en ‚gated communities‘“, in E. Brugmans *et al.* (red.) *Mythen en misverstanden over migratie*, pp. 115-143

⁸²⁴ Á. Murillo : „Muerte al brujo de hechizos malignos“, in *El País* 24th January 2008, URL http://www.elpais.com/articulo/internacional/Muerte/brujo/hechizos/malignos/elpepuint/20080124elpepuint_3/Tes [accessed 24th January 2008]

prominent role in our source corpus, except when sorcerous irruptions into the home sphere of the local peasants are being described. The conspicuous absence of such elements from the protocols gives an impression that we are facing two separate realities: one referring to the sedentary population with their rituals of pacifying the forces of nature, the other one, far more opaque, referring to the ‘folk on the move’ [‘fahrendes Volk’], a social layer whose members could not give way to their propitiatory urges in quite the same manner. They could achieve this solely within the frame of their nomadic lifestyle.

Understandably enough, every kind of a young male get-together can be perceived as a grouping aimed at venting out aggressions. Following this line of thought, Nathalie Zemon Davis attempts to explain the violent rites of Early Modern youths as a socialization strategy. In her opinion, the violent youth groups in question should be viewed „als Gewissen der Gemeinschaft, indem sie sie zur rauhen Stimme dieses Gewissens machten.“⁸²⁵ Apparently, such a deflection of anger did not always work in practice. In a recent work, Robert Muchembled states an example of a murder occurring among the members of a *jeu d’armes* brotherhood on 19th May 1624, in northern France: a certain David Leturcq, mad for having to give his one-year title of ‘king of the youth’ to a successor, kills one of his companions in a fit of rage. Demoted from his post of a chief controller of juvenile excesses, he commits one himself, and with tragic consequences.⁸²⁶ Gaudy episodes like these are indeed easiest to trace. This makes one conclude that, in general, Early Modern youth culture is more accessible through its violence than through any other aspect.

Though it is widely accepted that the custom of *charivari* or *Katzenmusik* had down-to-earth regulative purposes in an Early Modern community, one of its main functions, grossly synthesized by French advocates of *Sozialdisziplinierung* theory, seems to have been the channelling of youth energy that would otherwise have been released in a destructive manner. In the words of Robert Muchembled, „Leur puissance sexuelle étant impossible à réprimer sans produire de graves tensions, la société villageoise la canalise pour la mettre au service du bien commun.“⁸²⁷ In spite of the criticism directed at Muchembled’s hypothesis on *acculturation*⁸²⁸, the ‘absorption of libido’ suggested above is understood as a given community’s internal affair, not as an act of meddling on the part of higher instances. After acknowledging the relevant caveats regarding this custom, such as the one brought up by Ernst Hinrichs, “tous les pays catholiques allemands n’ont pas connu le

⁸²⁵ N. Z. Davis : *Humanismus, Narrenherrschaft und die Riten der Gewalt*, p. 119

⁸²⁶ R. Muchembled : *Une histoire de la violence*, pp. 111-112

⁸²⁷ R. Muchembled : *Une histoire de la violence*, p. 108

⁸²⁸ W. Rummel / R. Voltmer : *Hexen und Hexenverfolgung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, p. 84

charivari! La où nous disposons de sources sûres sur des cas singuliers, elles nous prouvent l'existence de l'usage pour un village, plus rarement pour une ville⁸²⁹, we nonetheless must ask ourselves what shape this redirection of youthful hormones could have assumed across the villages of the prince-archbishopric of Salzburg. Why were the children and young people – not all of whom were full-time beggars – deprived, or at least not deemed worthy of having the right to their own symbolic ‘as if’-rites, such as carnivals, carnivalesque ‘mock rites’, or something along the lines of *charivari*? Is it because they made no part of the sedentary population? After all, such rites serve specific principles of the community. When not sanctioned by the community, they are perceived as subversive. Consequently, the tolerant attitude of the locals towards the beggars’ nomadic, ‘outlandish’ way of living would have burned up the ‘patience threshold’ normally reserved for the youth occasionally on the loose, but otherwise integrated. Perhaps the reason for this incongruity rather lies in the attitude towards entertainment as such. While *charivari*-like customs counted as an innate folkloric tissue grown out of some perhaps meanwhile pretty obscured communal necessity, the entertaining performances of the ‘people on the move’ offered at mass festivities differed from any such local *usance* in that they were both *payable* and *supra-communal*. I believe that some factor pertaining to the displeasing difference from the known and the familiar must have contributed to the “ehrlose Spielleute” topos, a cliché which Gerhard Ammerer has shown was exploited by the church authorities as well.⁸³⁰ Again, the problem with the Salzburg trials is that there was no counterculture or subculture to begin with: the ‘rites’, created during the hearing process (out of the blue, so to speak) were tailored according to the notions of the sedentary majority. But for which reason? In a historical overview of the 17th century society, Thomas Munck uses the Quakers as an illustration of the revolutionary social ideas of the period, stating that: “[t]heir profound disregard for social convention and customary deference seemed to threaten the whole fabric of hierarchical society.”⁸³¹ Our examination of the protocols has hopefully demonstrated in what manner the witch-children were being conditioned into stylizing themselves as a threat to the societal harmony of the territory.

This is where we have to go back to the *charivari*-issue. Does it mean that it was okay for young boys to go on the loose as long as the rite was embedded into a socially relevant performative act? This reminds me of the difference between the more or less libertarian attitude which average male

⁸²⁹ E. Hinrichs : “Le charivari et les usages de réprimande en Allemagne. État et perspectives de la recherche », in J. Le Goff / J.-C. Schmitt (eds.) : *Le charivari*, p. 299

⁸³⁰ G. Ammerer : *Heimat Straße*, p. 407

⁸³¹ T. Munck : „Society“, in J. Bergin (ed.) : *The Seventeenth Century. Europe 1598-1715*, p. 77

Cariocas, apparently sensitized by the local carnival traditions, have been habituated to nurture towards richly attired transvestites with a lot of make-up, which apparently correlates with the doubly charged hostility aimed against ordinarily looking homosexual men. Since the latter group lacks visible signs of differentiation, this has an intimidating effect on sexually ambivalent alpha-males, as it lends a ‚subversive‘ quality to the plain-looking homosexuals. According to this logic, the ‚ordinary‘ homosexual has got to pay the highest price for not being readily recognizable, for having fled the ‚make-up ghetto‘ and shunned the campy regalia which serve to put the ‚decent‘ unsuspecting male folk on their guard. After a heterosexual actor assumed the role of a gay character on a Brazilian night soap opera, the death threats started flooding in: „He played a young man like anybody else, and that’s what bothered people. He wasn’t exotic.“⁸³² If we transpose this mechanism onto our sample, we may hypothesize that the beggar boys of Salzburg were first forced to admit having worshipped some parallel rites of their own – i.e. performative acts not socially approved! – only to be most severely sanctioned for this practice afterwards.

It would certainly be interesting to examine more thoroughly the preconditions under which Jackl the Sorcerer could have become a part of the local folklore in the first place. For instance, some 19th century beliefs from the valley of Rauriß (which runs parallel to the valley of Gastein, both villages having been scenes of the Jackl-hunt) seem to witness of an impressive continuity as far as contents go: local stories of the magician Rester („Der Rester war ein im ganzen Tal gefürchtetes Mandl, denn er konnte „verticken“ (verzaubern).“)⁸³³ which seem to bespeak the need of the community for a magician figure responsible for bringing about evil fortune. I suspect that Jackl himself is but a manifestation of a superstition matrix (albeit ‚enriched‘ by learned constructs) that probably had existed long before him.

A need for secrecy

In the broadest possible perspective, the term ‚secret society‘ can be explained as a social compensation for the missing feeling of a sense of belonging believed to be prevalent in small, close-knit (and hence cohesive) communities.⁸³⁴ In practice, of course, secret societies come about for reasons that are both diverse and complex. In his legendary article published a century ago, Georg Simmel pointed out an important characteristic of the human longing for secrecy: „das

⁸³² L. Goering : „Brazil’s Gay Men Appear Singled Out, Attacked for Living Ordinary Lives“, in *Chicago Tribune* 4 April 1997, URL <http://www.aegis.org/news/ct/1997/CT970402.html> [accessed 11th December 2010]

⁸³³ M. Andree-Eysn : *Volkskundliches aus dem bayrisch-österreichischen Alpengebiet*, p. 211

⁸³⁴ N. MacKenzie : „Zaključak“, in N. MacKenzie (ed.) : *Tajna društva*, pp. 249-250

Geheimnis ist eine allgemeine soziologische Form, die völlig neutral über den Wertbedeutungen ihrer Inhalte steht.“⁸³⁵ Hence, sociologically speaking, secretiveness as such is beyond any ethical judgment.

Simmel did not leave children's secretiveness unmentioned: „Unter Kindern gründet sich oft ein Stolz und Sich-Berühmen darauf, daß das eine zum andern sagen kann: „Ich weiß doch was, was du nicht weißt“ - und zwar so weitgehend, daß dies als formales Mittel der Prahlerei und Deklassierung des andern geäußert wird, auch wo es ganz erlogen ist und gar kein Geheimnis besessen wird.“⁸³⁶ In other words, Simmel recognizes both that, to children, secret is primarily a vehicle for peer bonding and that its formally binding character is more essential than any contents it is supposed to convey. Among the Salzburg beggar youths peer bonding would have taken place with or without the sorcerer hunt. They were secretive for very pragmatic reasons. And yet they could have observed some kind of ceremonious behaviour whenever they welded their mutual bonds. I believe that Simmel was right in not underestimating the value of the ritual:

Durch die rituelle Form erweitert sich der Sonderzweck der geheimen Gesellschaft zu einer geschlossenen, sowohl soziologischen wie subjektiven, Einheit und Ganzheit. Es kommt dazu, dass durch solchen Formalismus ebenso wie schon durch die Hierarchie, die geheime Gesellschaft sich zu einer Art Gegenbild der offiziellen Welt macht, zu der sie sich in Gegensatz stellt.⁸³⁷

This ‚reversed reflection of the official world‘ is not necessarily the intention of every imaginable cryptic group on the planet, but the fact that non-initiates tend to look at it that way has had important consequences throughout history...

Initiation and all-male cults

Earlier authors' insistence on the *Männerbund* character of Jackl's 'gang' has meanwhile been persuasively discredited.⁸³⁸ However, the initiation aspect has, in my opinion, remained insufficiently clarified. Admittedly, serious scholars must have felt estranged by the ideological charge that relevant studies on initiation have had from the outset (e.g. Heinrich Schurtz's

⁸³⁵ G. Simmel : Soziologie, p. 273

⁸³⁶ G. Simmel : Soziologie, p. 274

⁸³⁷ G. Simmel : Soziologie, p. 292

⁸³⁸ G. Müllender : „Unterschiedliche Deliktvorstellungen bei Ober- und Unterbehörden am Beispiel der Salzburger Zauberer-Jackl-Prozesse (1675-1679)“, in H. Eiden / R. Voltmer (Hgs.) : Hexenprozesse und Gerichtspraxis, footnote 105 on pp, 373-374

Altersklassen und Männerbünde [1902]; Lily Weiser's *Altgermanische Jünglingsweihen und Männerbünde* [1927]), and which seems to have haunted subsequent scholarship on the matter ever since.⁸³⁹ Strange though it seems, information recently provided by the young Austrian historian Tina Walzer suggest at least a semblance of continuity between the rites imputed to the followers of Jackl the Magician and the cryptic male youth associations of modern Austria (*Burschenschaften*), many of which are suspected of cherishing right-wing ideology:

“Pour être accepté dans une Burschenschaft, il faut passer par une sorte de rite initiatique, commente l'historienne autrichienne Tina Walzer. Pendant un an, les étudiants candidats n'ont droit à rien. Ils n'ont que des devoirs. On vérifie leurs origines et ils sont placés sous la tutelle d'un membre actif, censé tester leurs limites psychologiques et leur résistance physiques, mais aussi leur courage, leur loyauté et leur détermination. Dans certains cas, cela peut donner lieu à des dérives sadiques. » L'initiation prend fin lors d'un duel à l'épée, au cours duquel le nouveau membre se devra d'être... marqué au visage. « On ne fait pas ça pour le plaisir », s'offusquait récemment dans la presse le député autrichien d'extrême droite Harald Stefan, membre démasqué d'Olympia, sans toutefois faire la lumière sur les us et coutumes de son clan.⁸⁴⁰

The homosexuality of the late BZÖ leader Jörg Haider (who died in an accident in late 2008) – allegedly an Austrian *secret de polichinelle* stubbornly suppressed by the sternly conservative mainstream⁸⁴¹ – exemplifies, at the very least, the tendency of the wider masses to attribute a stamp of eccentricity to certain socially opaque groups. What exactly the late Haider may have done to contribute to this folk eroticization of his (predominantly) all-male grouping must remain a moot point. However, the dynamics at work are in themselves not negligible, since our sources strongly suggest that the issues of sodomy and initiatory cuts were inextricably paired up with each other in late 17th century, just as they seem to be in early 21st century, and that in pretty much the same geographical area. The irritated remark of the outed fraternity member, Mr Stefan, ('We do not do it for pleasure') is interesting insofar as it attempts to render credible the initiatory act of being branded with a sword by underlining its honour-related, obligatory aspect at the expense of all the other, more questionable motives.

Are these coincidences just a hall of mirrors reflecting back the clichés? Can these two anachronistic initiation 'clusters' be compared at all? The huge body of anthropological literature thematizes initiation as an inevitable ingredient of traditionalist societies. Following this route

⁸³⁹ See bibliography under entries „Initiation“ and “Jünglingsweihe” in O. A. Erich / R. Beitzl : Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde, p. 397 and p. 421

⁸⁴⁰ Blaise Gauquelin : „Les cercles de l'Autriche ultra“, in *L'Express* № 3015 semaine du 16 au 22 avril 2009, p. 73

⁸⁴¹ Jan Feddersen : „Die Tränen von Stefan Petzner“, URL <http://www.taz.de/1/leben/koepfe/artikel/1/die-traenen-von-stefan-petzner/> [accessed 22nd April 2009]

would imply that the young beggars of Salzburg spontaneously tended to get assembled into a group centered around a dominant leader of their ‘tribe’. This, indeed, is how the authorities construed the matter. Now, it is not impossible that, at some points in the course of the mass trial, certain identification with the arch-beggar could have crystallized itself in the minds of some of these young people, i.e. those anxious of being accepted into an in-group (if not *the* in-group) and desirous of following directions. However, we have already seen that the protocols of the selected cases exhibit a range of various motivations for confessions, and that there can be no question of the defendants pursuing a pre-fixed agenda in the interrogation process where answers can only be furnished erratically. Moreover, it would be far-flung to put an equality sign between the initiatory enthusiasm of these ‘people on the move’ and, for instance, those tribal cultures where initiation *is* the norm. Relevant works on Early Modern beggars do not seem to suggest that pauperised strata maintained initiation as a viable form of individual upgrading of any kind, though this should not automatically imply they had no *rites de passage* of their own. One may recall Hunter S. Thompson’s observations of the way new initiates into the Hell’s Angels group deliberately smear their brand new jeans clothes with filth and urine in order to legitimate their membership.⁸⁴² It would not be difficult to imagine an Early Modern counterpart of such a ceremony (though it most probably would not have been based on anti-hygienic social statements...). Nevertheless, in case of Jackl and his child-witches, there simply was no dogmatic cohesion on which initiation could rest. In each separate case, the initiatory cut scene – based on demonological preconceptions – appears to have been imagined anew, with the purpose of explaining away the scars earned in the daily fight for survival.

The question of scars, however, is herewith not clarified. Previous research of child-witch trials has repeatedly pointed out to children’s rituals consisting of inflicting wounds to each other or to themselves. Since most perpetrators of these masochistic episodes were actually adolescents, we must ask ourselves whether their acts are comparable to self-injuring tendencies of modern adolescents. An author of one relevant study, the psychologist Marilee Strong, states that

[a]dolescence is a stressful passage for even the most well-adjusted teenagers. It is the stage at which we must come to terms with our sexual bodies and all the anxieties and responsibilities of becoming an adult. This task is especially difficult for children who have been sexually abused, who feel ashamed and disgusted by their bodies and fear that becoming more sexually desirable will only put them at greater risk of victimization. [...] The phenomenon of “body alienation” may help explain why the peculiar war self-injurers wage against their bodies often begins in adolescence. Children who suffer experiences during childhood that make them dislike or feel cut off from their bodies are likely to

⁸⁴² H. S. Thompson : Hell’s Angels, p. 80

feel even more alienated from their physical selves when their bodies begin to mysteriously change at puberty, say Barent Walsh and Paul Rosen.⁸⁴³

Are the self-inflicted wounds – even in a playful context – equal to waging war against one’s own body? Perhaps the abused ones replay the trauma by somatizing the psychological wounds once inflicted upon them? Psychologists nowadays tend to interpret autodestructive lifestyles as symbolic self-hatred,⁸⁴⁴ following the observations made by Karl A. Menninger in *Man against himself* (1938).⁸⁴⁵ Assuming a definitive attitude to questions like these within the scope of the present research is fairly difficult, inasmuch as it remains inconclusive whether the scars were imagined or genuine.⁸⁴⁶ It is practically impossible, solely on account of the ego-documents at hand, to gauge the susceptibility of Salzburg beggar children to the same kind of self-deprecation diagnosed in modern adolescent ‘cutters’, for whom it is „une réponse inconsciente mais puissante au sentiment de chaos qui menace de tout emporter“.⁸⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the nature of our sample teaches us nothing of puberty i.e. the ways it was dealt with in Early Modern Salzburg. But the aforementioned ‚chaotic feelings‘ may have been at work nonetheless. For example, we could ask ourselves whether all the talk about the scars might not be - at least in some of the cases - just a symbolic discourse by means of which physical changes induced by puberty were given a verbal outlet under the pretext of claiming tabooed marks on the body.

At any rate, the custom of using the skin as a memo pad was too convenient an invention to have been left over to local witches and warlocks. Paragraph 6 of the 1768 *Constitutio Criminalis Theresiana* prescribed the procedure of branding vagabonds condemned to exile with the so-called *Relegationszeichen*: “Diese schmerzhaftige Prozedur sollte einerseits die Funktion haben, Beweis für eine etwaige Reversion zu sein, andererseits den Verbrecher auf Dauer zu stigmatisieren und für jedermann als solchen kenntlich zu machen.“⁸⁴⁸ But, though the culprit’s back was smartly selected as an ideal surface for branding, the stigmatization, instead of provoking abstinence, only multiplied

⁸⁴³ M. Strong : *A Bright Red Scream*, p. 53

⁸⁴⁴ Z. Milivojević : *Emocije*, p. 464

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 472

⁸⁴⁶ The fabulation aspect certainly adds to the general confusion: Porot (1990) hints that mythomania can result in acts of self-mutilation. I cannot determine whether these two phenomena correlate or merely coexist, but the presence of both of these being suggested by the sources might have yielded interesting conclusions in the face of more substantial evidence.

⁸⁴⁷ D. Le Breton : „Scarification“, in M. Marzano : *Dictionnaire du corps*, p. 850

⁸⁴⁸ G. Ammerer : *Heimat Straße*, p. 248-249

the crimes.⁸⁴⁹ Given that Jackl's marks – themselves a regional variant of the Devil's mark – precede the *Theresiana* by more than a century, we may postulate a certain kind of continuity between the two groups of 'subject signifiers' in this geographical area. The matter would necessitate a research of its own.

Sodomy

In her study of ecclesiastical perception of sexuality in the Roman Catholic Church, Uta Ranke-Heinemann reminds us that Christianity has from its very outset been hostile against homosexuality; an attitude consequently fossilized within custom laws (*Gewohnheitsrecht*) has thus found way into Article 116 of *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, which states „Wenn ein Mann mit einem Mann, ein Weib mit einem Weib Unkeusches treibt, soll man sie *der allgemeinen Gewohnheit nach* mit dem Feuer vom Leben zum Tod richten“.⁸⁵⁰ This general attitude explains why sodomy could not have been left out from the bouquet of witch crimes. Still, it is important to emphasize that Jackl's followers were being accused of sodomy within the frame of their apprenticeship to the Devil, not because of their homosocial-to-homoerotic centeredness around a dominant male. In one of his last interviews, Michel Foucault pointed out that homosexuality started turning into a social problem first during the 18th century, after the institution of male friendship lost the unquestionable legitimacy it had had at earlier times: „une fois l'amitié disparue, en tant que relation culturellement acceptée, le problème s'est posé : « Que fabriquent donc les hommes ensemble ? »“.⁸⁵¹ Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, on his part, emphasizes that the habit of marking 'sodomite' with the word 'ketzer' ('heretic'), which went hand in hand with the development of the Inquisition, dates back to the first half of the 13th century,⁸⁵² and it is this particular facet that is operative in the Jackl trials as well. This is evident from the occasional expression *khezerisch gebraucht* that, typically enough, points to the interchangeability of the two kinds of transgressions.⁸⁵³

The scarcity of the sources, along with other limitations, did not permit me to conduct a separate micro-research on Early Modern homosexual practices. According to Jacques Le Goff, circumstances prevalent in Medieval Europe were not conducive to the genesis of homosexual

⁸⁴⁹ G. Ammerer : Heimat Straße, pp. 249-252

⁸⁵⁰ U. Ranke-Heinemann : Eunuchen für das Himmelreich, p. 499 [*her italics*]

⁸⁵¹ M. Foucault : „Que fabriquent donc les hommes ensemble?“, in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 22 novembre 1985, p. 75

⁸⁵² B.-U. Hergemöller : Sodom und Gomorrha, p. 20

⁸⁵³ BayHStA HeA 10 a 549

desire, in that the typical nuclear family dynamics lacked prerequisites for the Oedipus complex.⁸⁵⁴ As for the Early Modern Age - in Netherlands at least -, homosexuality among common people was not all that uncommon, especially with mariners and peasants who often shared the same bed, although these individuals tended to consider such episodes as one night stands.⁸⁵⁵ In his article on Early Modern masculinity in the context of German witch trials Robert Walinski-Kiehl observed that “[h]omosexual sodomy, in particular, constituted a threat to notions of masculine honour that focused on marriage and the household and it was, therefore, the kind of offence that could be readily associated with male witches.”⁸⁵⁶ But, which way exactly could the beggar boys of Salzburg have possibly threatened the predominant notions of masculine honour? They could not have done this from their socially marginal position, as that itself discredited them as serious pretenders to the throne of prescribed masculinity. Admittedly, accusations of sodomy are a second-rate constituent of the sorcery cluster; allegiance to Jackl the Magician was not sexualised, if indeed episodes resembling ritualistic rape can be encountered here and there. This is in line with Hergemöller’s conclusions regarding the late medieval persecution of sodomites in Imperial cities such as Cologne. He observes that “die “sodomitischen” Delikte überwiegend durch Zufall im Zusammenhang mit anderen strafrechtlichen Ermittlungen in Erfahrung gebracht wurden, daß heißt, daß die Räuber, Diebe und Mörder, wenn sie gefasst und vorgeladen waren, mit Hilfe der Folter unter anderem auch nach potentiellen sexuellen Taten „befragt“ wurden.”⁸⁵⁷ One has to credit Walinski-Kiehl with duly observing academic precaution when he states that “witchcraft accusations were complex, multifaceted phenomena and did not always neatly target persons who behaved in a manner that challenged gender ideals.”⁸⁵⁸ In light of the case study presented it must be pretty clear that Jackl’s warlock boys did not challenge gender ideals. But it does not mean that they did not occasionally get engaged in homoerotic behaviour. It’s just that, to paraphrase Rainer Beck, proof of such behaviour often rests on descriptions of playacts which in the process of interrogation may have *mutated* into a crime of sodomy.⁸⁵⁹ For instance, Lyndal Roper’s Augsburg corpus features some episodes that might be interpreted in this respect. She invokes the example of

⁸⁵⁴ J. Le Goff : De cultuur van middeleeuws Europa, p. 400

⁸⁵⁵ P. Spierenburg : De verbroken betovering, p. 306

⁸⁵⁶ R. Walinski-Kiehl : „Males, „Masculine Honour“, and Witch Hunting in Seventeenth-Century Germany “, in *Men and Masculinities* January 2004; 6; 254, p. 265

⁸⁵⁷ B.-U- Hergemöller : Sodom und Gomorrha, p. 69

⁸⁵⁸ R. Walinski-Kiehl, op. cit., p. 266

⁸⁵⁹ R. Beck : “Das Spiel mit dem Teufel. Freisinger Kinderhexenprozesse 1715-1723“, in *Historische Anthropologie* 10 (2002), p. 385

two boys, Joseph Betz and Franz Anthoni Ludwig who “were found to ‘have been milking themselves, and committing indecency’; or as Ludwig put it, ‘pressing one another like dogs, when they are on heat’.”⁸⁶⁰ The case refers to the 1723 episode – approximately co-terminous with Rainer Beck’s child-witch-trials of Freising – when a group of children was accused for concerted disobedience of parental authority and accompanying loose behaviour. So, what are we to make of such accounts? J. L. Mathis emphasizes that „there is no such thing as 100 percent homosexuality or 100 percent heterosexuality. It is more accurate to think of human sexuality as on a continuum from heterosexuality to homosexuality with most people lying somewhere between these two poles.”⁸⁶¹ We should also remember that psychiatry has its own way of categorizing confessions based on forced sodomy: when discussing the ways malicious mythomania manifests, Caillard & Loo speak of the so-called *genital heteroaccusations*, which is a mythomaniac tendency to accuse innocent people of rape.⁸⁶² The accusations of sodomy in the context of the Zauberer-Jackl-trials could, by analogy, be diagnosed as genital homoaccusations. Adopting this term would imply that these events are to be categorized as perjury based either on flights of fancy or on actual mythomania. Again, there is no way of telling the cases of genuine rape from the imagined ones. Something resembling a distinction between tabooed erotic pleasure and the feeling of ‚sinfulness‘ one is supposed to be deriving from it shines through on at least one occasion in the Jackl-trials. The statement of the 12-year old Michael Hirschpacher suggests that the effects of passive sodomy can last no longer than the (mostly unpleasant) act itself: “auf ihme sey auch der teufl gelegen, im hintern braucht, auch khalt empfunden, und ain halbe stundt continuirt, welches ihme under wehrendem actu wehe, hernach aber nit mehr gethan habe”.⁸⁶³ However, the same defendant gives a pretty vivid account of the Devil’s visits during the boy’s incarceration in Golling:

Zu Golling sey der teufl zu ihme in den vier wochen, als er in den stuben gelegen, nur 2 mall in der kheichen aber gar offt khommen, iedes mall im hintern braucht, und ihme wol gethan, iedoch khalt, als wie der teufel gewesen, hab ihne teufl mit einem strohe im hintern auswischen, unsern herren ainen schelben, schinter und zauberer Jaggl, unser liebe frau aber ain läppin, zauberin, zanckh und diebin, hingegen den teufl einen teuflvatter haissen müessen, und gesagt, er wolle sein sein.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶⁰ L. Roper : Witch Craze, p. 217

⁸⁶¹ J. L. Mathis : Clear Thinking about Sexual Deviations, p. 19

⁸⁶² V. Caillard / H. Loo : „Mitomanija“, in A. Porot : Enciklopedija psihijatrije, p. 380

⁸⁶³ BayHStA HeA 10 c 315

⁸⁶⁴ BayHStA HeA 10 c 318-319

This is one of the rare examples of the intercourse with the Devil being perceived as pleasurable. Hirschpacher knows that, when questioned, one must emphasize the icy coldness of the Devil's phallus, and, being eager to make his point, makes a kind of inverted comparison by saying that it was ‚cold like the devil‘. This demonological notion apparently became so thoroughly ingrained in the minds of the accused children, that at least in this one case it dethroned terms normally used to express coldness, such as ‚ice‘ or ‚snow‘.

It is a fact that the sexually charged demonologist discourse did exert a heavy influence on the trial. How it must have affected each of the children in question, one can only imagine. This would probably have been influenced by a number of factors, such as age and personal receptivity. This atmosphere tense with orgiastic fantasies (from whomever they ‚initially‘ may have sprung up) can, in my opinion, claim no heteronormativity *per se*. It would be reasonable to assume that a certain percentage from among the *zauberbuben* had a sexualized perception of some of their companions. Sometimes it is overtly stated, but more often such inclinations can only be inferred from the context. However, the overeroticized ideological environment in which many a modern researcher appears to be steeped poses a considerable impediment to gauging both the quantity and the quality of such a perception.

Bestiality

Manfred Tschaikner names the popular *Beichtspiegeln* from mid-15th century as indicators that notions of bestiality had been freely floating in Early Modern Vorarlberg communities, even if these particular sources might not bespeak actual practice.⁸⁶⁵ In spite of the hundreds of reports „from the boom of bestiality trials from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries“⁸⁶⁶, it appears that not many protocols have actually survived as sources. If Midas Dekkers is right when he states that “[t]he trial papers were often also thrown into the fire ‚so that no trace of the gruesome deed should remain‘”, the few available sources having been preserved almost by accident⁸⁶⁷, it can only mean that zoophilia was the most repressed of taboos. Hence, it is not surprising that marginal individuals slowly became its unwilling representatives in the lay mind. Dietegen Guggenbühl, who has examined evidence of 400 years of zoophilic practices in the Basel region, claims that zoophilic acts perpetrated with horses, cows, goats and other domestic animals were „eine Tat, die vor allem

⁸⁶⁵ M. Tschaikner : „Damit das Böse ausgerottet werde“. Hexenverfolgungen in Vorarlberg im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, p. 97

⁸⁶⁶ M. Dekkers : Dearest Pet, p. 119

⁸⁶⁷ M. Dekkers : Dearest Pet, p. 121

von unbescholtenen Männern oder jungen, unreifen Jugendlichen begangen wurde, die sich aus Einsamkeit und sexueller Not den Tieren zuwandten.“⁸⁶⁸ In the Early Modern Age socially unintegrated young men apparently ran great risks of being pinned down with appropriate accusations. The Salzburg beggar youths, however, do not correspond to the profile of socially aberrant eccentrics who resort to animals out of desperation. The sheer exaggerations and coarse contradictions that characterize most of the bestiality confessions read like routine gap fillers of sorcery questionnaires. Still, we have no way of knowing which of these stand for the small percentage of assumed acts. For a group of young Basellers from Guggenbühl's corpus zoophilic feats were indeed the topic of the conversation, which, in the Swiss scholar's opinion, „dem einen oder andern Anlass gab, es auch selbst zu tun.“⁸⁶⁹ In general, Guggenbühl's study makes it clear that bestial acts did not happen solely on account of a particular predilection - more frequently, they were a substitute for nuptial abstinence or general unavailability of sexual partners.⁸⁷⁰ Yet both of these causes seem to be derived from sedentary modes of living; whether exactly those types of deprivation can be ascribable to wanderers remains open.

The Black Man

One remarkable feature of many child-witches' accounts - in Salzburg and elsewhere - is the prominence of the Black Man. We have seen that this figure works exceptionally well for very young children, regardless of their geographical (and confessional) origins. Besides the confessions made by the Augsburg child-witches, there is e.g. the 5-year-old girl from the Franken county, who in 1656 reported that a black man had seated himself at her hearth and courted her.⁸⁷¹ As we can see from de Lancre's *Tableau* - „In this case, it is not a matter of inventing and feigning the appearance of a big, black man with an extremely cold mouth. This is the language of the witches“ - the persecutors treated The Black Man as a fully established ingredient of a witch confession.⁸⁷² But accounts like these are not reduced to the Continent. The black hairy thing threatening to smother

⁸⁶⁸ D. Guggenbühl : *Mit Tieren und Teufeln*, p. 56

⁸⁶⁹ D. Guggenbühl : *Mit Tieren und Teufeln*, p. 71

⁸⁷⁰ D. Guggenbühl : *Mit Tieren und Teufeln*, p. 97

⁸⁷¹ H.-J. Wolf : *Hexenwahn*, pp. 427-428

⁸⁷² G. Scholz Williams (ed.) : *On the Inconstancy of Witches*. Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons* (1612), pp. 313-314

and kill the 6-year-old son of a worker in Bendenden, Kent, in mid-17th century⁸⁷³, can, in terms of the unspeakable horror it evokes, likewise be categorized as the Black Man. Moreover, this figure is featured in New World witchcraft scenarios as well. Sarah Osburn, one of the accused witches of Salem, stated that “she was frightened one time in her sleep and either saw or dreamed that she saw a thing like an Indian, all black, which did prick her in her neck and pulled her by the back part of her head to the door of the house”.⁸⁷⁴ The satanic figure seems to be shaped according to alterity criteria of the culture in question: to a superstitious Anglo-Saxon woman of late 17th century New England, the figure of the Other is an Indian i.e. a Native American. The U. S. psychologist James Hillman offered his interpretation of black persons in dreams:

It is a Jungian convention to take these blacks as shadows, a convention to which there can be no objection. [...] Moreover, the content of the black shadow has further determined by sociological overtones. Personal associations to blacks in the culture affect the interpretation of the image [...] I think it would be archetypally more correct, and so more psychological, to consider black persons in dreams in terms of their resemblance with [the] underworld context. Their concealed and raping attributes belong to the “violating” phenomenology of Hades [...]. They are returning ghosts from the repressed netherworld [...]. They bring one down and steal one’s “goods and menace the ego behind its locked doors. [...] They present death; the repressed is death.”⁸⁷⁵

That the Black Man imagined by Early Modern children should translate as a fear of death appears logical both in the cultural and in the developmental context. To adult early modern (and, to a lesser degree, modern) Westerners this sinister figure certainly is a vehicle for repressed sexuality, criminality and brutality as well. However, the greatest and most encompassing fear that children experience is indeed the fear of death. Child psychologist Dorothy Bloch indicates that children are “universally predisposed to the fear of infanticide by both their physical and their psychological stage of development, and that the intensity of that fear depends on the incidence of traumatic events and on the degree of violence and of love they have experienced.”⁸⁷⁶ It is this fear that fuels the child witches’ fantasies, be they repeated as a convincing litany, or imaginatively co-created. Only a thorough systematization of all the representations of the Black Man in Early Modern culture – a study which, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet been made – could adequately underpin more specified analyses. The human tendency to anthropomorphize natural phenomena,

⁸⁷³ K. Thomas : „Die Hexen und ihre soziale Umwelt“, in C. Honegger (Hrsg.) : Die Hexen der Neuzeit. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte eines kulturellen Deutungsmusters, p. 271

⁸⁷⁴ Quoted from C. Hansen : Witchcraft at Salem, p. 58

⁸⁷⁵ J. Hillman : The dream and the underworld, pp. 144-145

⁸⁷⁶ D. Bloch : „So the Witch Won’t Eat Me?“. Fantasy and the Child’s Fear of Infanticide, p. 3

such as sickness and death, need not be discussed here. For our theme it is far more important to discern what other (superimposed) meanings this anthropomorphized death, if that is what the Black Man ultimately represents, could have had in the Early Modern children's universe, as opposed to that of their elders. For instance, in his book about hunger in pre-industrial Europe Piero Camporesi adopts a literalistic, perhaps even reductionist attitude, claiming that frequent starvation furnished the premodern Man both with appropriate iconography⁸⁷⁷ and with hallucinatory effects that would bring it about⁸⁷⁸, and concludes that the Black Man figure is essentially the result of a collective defense mechanism by means of which the Western culture dulled its pangs of conscience (NB for occasional outbreaks of cannibalism) by reducing them to a bogeyman.⁸⁷⁹ According to Camporesi, the crystallizations of the Pest-cum-Black-Man-type are invariably yielded by great famines and other major cultural traumas. The proverbial cultural trauma of the Holy German Empire being, principally, the Thirty Years' War, it is no wonder that earlier scholarship, too, tended to interpret the Black Man of Early Modern children's games as a personified vestige of earlier atrocities:

Es muß schon eine große, tiefbewegte Zeit sein, wenn die Erinnerung an sie im kindlichen Gemüt, d.h. im Spiele weiterlebt. [...] die Türkennot, die dreißigjährige Kriegszeit und andere schwere Zeiten leben in oft unverständenen Erinnerungen in der Kinderseele. Als ein Rest aus der Zeit der Pest- und Totentänze wird seit Wackernagel das Kinderspiel „Wer fürchtet sich vor dem Schwarzen Mann?“ aufgefasst; ebenso das Kartenspiel „Schwarzer Peter“.⁸⁸⁰

And yet, the Black Man invoked by the witch-children of Salzburg is not a monochrome scarecrow-like embodiment of some previous social crisis. In fact, his appearance can be remarkably non-conflictual even in other sorcery trials with children as the accused. For example, the hearing of the werewolf of Labourd, the 13/14-year-old Jean Grenier dated 2nd June 1603 gives an impression that the Black Man's acts in a spirit of complicity, without attempting to conquer the defendant with fear:

In the forest they found a big man all alone, dressed in black and mounted on a black horse. They said “Good morning” to him because it was dawn; and then he dismounted and kissed them with an extremely cold mouth. [...] He testified that he marked both of them on the buttocks with a pin that he held in his hand [...]. And he said that when they want to

⁸⁷⁷ P. Camporesi : Das Brot der Träume, p. 24

⁸⁷⁸ P. Camporesi : Das Brot der Träume, pp. 157-158

⁸⁷⁹ P. Camporesi : Das Brot der Träume, p. 60

⁸⁸⁰ E. F. von Künssberg : Rechtsbrauch und Kinderspiel, pp. 44-45

Speak to him, they go to the forest to find him. They went there three times. There he made them rub down his horse, promised them money, gave them a glass of wine. Once they drank it they left.⁸⁸¹

Along with vampires, terrorists, dogs and the like, the fear of men in black occupies a firm position in the catalogue of modern Western children's anxieties. Argentieri & Carrano emphasize that "i bambini possono provare spavento per i zingari, per i negri, ma anche per le suore tutte vestite di nero, perché quei volti, quegli abiti evocano l'ansia di ciò che non è familiare sia nel mondo esterno reale che nel mondo interno."⁸⁸² Viewed against the background of the Salzburg beggars' polychrome clothing, a person whose garments were exclusively black would have stood out, possibly arousing suspicion. The European demonization of negroids, on the other hand, has had a long history; it dates back to Early Christianity and was broached by Thomas Aquinas.⁸⁸³ This sort of cultural continuity flows unperturbed into the present century. In a study on Black Man symbolism in Estonian folklore, Ülo Valk has argued that the figure's modern cultural adaptations are indeed 'legal heirs' of the more ancient diabolical bogeyman. Valk laconically posits that "[b]eing still the embodiment of demonic danger and evil, the men in black serve a new role of extraterrestrial humanoids".⁸⁸⁴ But, though he is not as polyvalent as the Devil, the sources seem to indicate that the Black Man was something more than merely a hypostasis of the diabolized Unknown.

As we have seen, the beggar children largely perceived the Black Man as the Devil, while the Hunter - out of an urge for complementarity or for some other reason - was essentially seen as a 'Green Man', i.e. an anthropomorphization of nature. Throughout the Middle Ages the Green Man figure was obviously polyvalently vague enough to serve both as an ornament in Church façades⁸⁸⁵ and as an object of ecclesiastical scorn.⁸⁸⁶ Unlike the Devil, the Hunter is hardly a clearly distinguishable character. Bächtold-Stäubli's reference work on German(ic) superstition lists various versions of Nature deities clothed in green. The 'green hunter' as such seems to be documented in Germanic folklore material, as does a child-snatching green goblin, the latter

⁸⁸¹ G. S. Williams (ed.) : On the Inconstancy of Witches. Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons* (1612), p. 271

⁸⁸² S. Argentieri / P. Carrano : Dall'uomo nero al terrorista, p. 202

⁸⁸³ Ü. Valk : The Black Gentleman, p. 53

⁸⁸⁴ Ü. Valk : The Black Gentleman, p. 62

⁸⁸⁵ G. R. Varner : Gargoyles, Grotesques & Green Men, p. 57

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 80

apparently present in the Alpine folktales, too.⁸⁸⁷ However, the two figures do not seem to be relatable to each other. I therefore suspect that this nebulous pagan figure simply lacked an adequate counterpart in the theological construct on which the Salzburg witch hunt was based. As far as the Alpine region is concerned, the *Jäger* remained fused with the Devil (i.e. as one of his hypostases) well into the eighteenth century.⁸⁸⁸

The Devil as ‚surrogate father‘?

In his capacity of a polyvalent projection wand of the Western civilisation, the Devil has traditionally been seen fit to play a range of seemingly heterogeneous roles. Having recognized the potential contained in the role of the godfather's both religious and cultural ‚antipode‘, early Christians attributed an engendering quality to the Devil: they declared him a ‚father of lies‘. The ambivalence of the original expression from John 8: 44 allowing for an alternative translation ‚father of a liar‘ merely underlines the Devil's potential to breed both biological and ideological spawn: „Ihr habt den Teufel zum Vater, und nach eures Vaters Gelüste wollt ihr tun. [...] Wenn er Lügen redet, so spricht er aus dem Eigenen; denn er ist ein Lügner und der Vater der Lüge [des Lügners].“⁸⁸⁹ That this judgment is not to be found in the Old Testament but in the New one is no accident - Norman Cohn reminds us that the Devil is barely prominent in the former, whereas in the latter he is stylized as an arch-opponent of entire Christendom.⁸⁹⁰ The New Testament Satan was additionally chiselled by Christian theologians⁸⁹¹, and the resulting construct was used by demonologists as a theoretical point of departure. However, apart from the Devil of the learned, there was also the Devil of the common people, and these two figures - the folk Devil and his demonological counterpart - indistinctly intermingled with each other throughout the totality of diabolical lore. Historians of religion agree that it is difficult to sift the theological from the folkloric element⁸⁹², mostly because both of the branches heavily borrowed from each other. This process was based on a kind of circular reciprocity: through religious indoctrination of the masses

⁸⁸⁷ H. Bächtold-Stäubli (Hg.) : Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, Band 3, p. 1182

⁸⁸⁸ F. Byloff : Volkskundliches aus Strafprozessen der österreichischen Alpenländer mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse 1455 bis 1850, p. 54

⁸⁸⁹ „Das Evangelium des Johannes“ (Johannes 8: 44), in „Die Bibel nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers: Das neue Testament“, p. 122

⁸⁹⁰ N. Cohn : Europe's Inner Demons, pp. 60-64

⁸⁹¹ N. Cohn : Europe's Inner Demons, p. 65

⁸⁹² A. M. di Nola : Il Diavolo, p. 317

learned constructs were implanted into common superstitions, and, *vice versa*, demonologists compiled indiscriminately everything there was to gather about the folk Devil, one of the famous examples being Martin DelRio.⁸⁹³

If the Devil was theologically construed as a father of lies and liars, his ‚fatherly‘ aspect stood free for exploitation. However, according to Behringer (1988), Sigmund Freud’s early attempt to explicate the Devil as a father figure (in the famous case of the painter Christoph Haitzmann) should be disregarded for its lack of both scientific objectivity and methodological consistence.⁸⁹⁴ Admittedly, as a pioneer of a new science based on unusual syntheses, Freud was hardly flawless. For instance, fairytale analysts begrudge him a tendency to decontextualize symbols, as well as not to differentiate between fairytales and dreams.⁸⁹⁵ That being said, many psychological findings are nonetheless only conditionally based on a rational type of deduction, which can often prove to be just a methodologically clumsy justification for an insight based on empathy or any other ‚nebulous‘ faculty the use of which necessitates it being wrapped in scholarly robes to make it presentable. Indeed, if we are to make anything out of the Salzburg protocols, in which the Devil is occasionally *explicitly featured* as a father figure, we should not refrain from treading the path other than the one prescribed by the guild.

There is a tendency within newer psychoanalytic research to examine the phenomenon of social marginality from the perspective of ‚fatherly deficiency‘. The term *Vaterdefizienz* is the one I came across while delving through the research results of an Austrian psychoanalyst Josef Christian Aigner, who has worked on the problem of the marginality of youths. According to Aigner, the *Vaterdefizienz* refers not only to a mere absence of the father in a child’s life, but rather to the absence of a reference object (*Bezugsobjekt*), with the absence being compensated by either positive or negative idealisations of the father. Jürgen Grieser, a fellow psychoanalyst, adds that „[e]ine negative Idealisierung des Vaters kann besser sein als keine Vaterphantasie, denn auch eine negativ besetzte Vaternvorstellung repräsentiert eine Beziehung und füllt den Ort des Vaters aus.“⁸⁹⁶ Naturally, the circumstance of being deprived of a reference person is not a monocausal pretext for delinquency, which means that *Vaterdefizienz* is just one out of many factors, the totality of which can, within a certain context, result in criminogenous behaviour.

⁸⁹³ H.-J. Wolf : Hexenwahn und Exorzismus, pp. 212-213

⁸⁹⁴ W. Behringer : Mit dem Feuer vom Leben zum Tod, pp. 12-14

⁸⁹⁵ F. Flahault : L’interprétation des contes, pp. 77-78

⁸⁹⁶ J. Grieser : Der phantasierte Vater, p. 170

We should perhaps not read too much into the habitual expression *wolle sein sein* which, in the hearing protocols, was intended to signify a declaration of surrendering oneself to the Devil. Though some child-witches may have genuinely wanted to belong to the Devil, the overall tone of the Jackl-hunt rather indicates that the court wanted them to expressly desire such an allegiance. Beyond this demand, some boys, like Stephan Vestlberger, tended to invest themselves more profoundly into the Devil-father scenario, or else their way of narrating creates such an impression. Without repeating what has already been discussed in the section on Vestlberger's case, it should nevertheless be pointed out that the 'adoption fantasy' - be it grounded in actual orphanage or not - helps the child to act out the separation conflicts, especially where experience of parental figures is flawed. Statements such as that attributed to the 15-year-old Georg Riser from Gastein, „Der vatter leb zwar auch noch, sey aber von ihme gannz verlassen“⁸⁹⁷, seem to suggest that, even under the chaotic circumstances to which a beggar nuclear family was normally exposed, abandonment was still recognized for what it was, and experienced accordingly. Hence, the Devil would have had a niche in which to nest, symbolically speaking. One might even assume that, by extension, the Devil and the irresponsible parent would have exchanged positions, in a process of permutation dictated by the child's needs. The question is which factor in particular would have triggered the suggested permutation. The *locus* of a typical Sabbath scenario being a richly arranged banquet table, it seems to be the food. The food fixation in the 'Zauberer-Jackl' trials has previously been discussed by Gerald Mülleder, albeit from a different standpoint.⁸⁹⁸ In addition, David W. Sabean emphasizes that those who share the food should be regarded as members of a 'moral community',⁸⁹⁹ whereas Elias Canetti, in a Darwinian-Freudian spirit, cynically opts to view the act of group eating as nothing less than wisely deflected cannibalism.⁹⁰⁰ Canetti's insight may well have some explanatory value, but only if we limit ourselves to the European material, as some African child-witches report no disgust in feasting on human meat during a local version of the Sabbath orgy, the 'orgies of the witch-bush'.⁹⁰¹ On the whole, we can merely state that Early Modern acts and rituals relative to

⁸⁹⁷ BayHStA HeA 10 b 429

⁸⁹⁸ G. Mülleder : „Unterschiedliche Deliktvorstellungen bei Ober- und Unterbehörden am Beispiel der Salzburger Zauberer-Jackl-Prozesse (1675-1679)“, in H. Eiden / R. Voltmer (Hgs.) : Hexenprozesse und Gerichtspraxis, pp. 366-367

⁸⁹⁹ D. W. Sabean : Power in the Blood, p. 109

⁹⁰⁰ E. Canetti : Masse und Macht, p. 252

⁹⁰¹ R. Brain : „Child-Witches“, in M. Douglas (ed.) : Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations, p. 173

food and feeding are indeed manifold, and that they deserve to be treated in separate studies.⁹⁰² The present discussion will be limited to one single component of the food theme - the issue of faulty supply (*Versorgungsproblematik*). The results of his research made Josef C. Aigner namely wonder whether the dissociation of a modern nonconformist-deviant (*unangepasst*) youth might not be at least partly ascribable to a „Desouveränisierung der Männlichkeit im Erwerbsleben“.⁹⁰³ According to this view, the system of socio-economic marginalization destabilizes the youth, in that it renders the father incapable of gainful employment, consequently depriving the ill-provided son of his last male identification model. A certain similarity of contexts between the modern ghetto of socially disfavoured and disillusioned (possibly also migrant) youths, which probably served as a basis for Aigner's hypothesis, and what we know of the lives of the Salzburg beggar children seems to justify an attempt to apply this thought onto our own sample. By doing so, we obtain a new speculative conclusion: a beggar child would have stuffed its disappointing experience of the father-weakling into the imaginary figure of an almighty Devil, supposedly a phantasmatic counterpart of the real father. In other words, the Devil would have become a surrogate father, the one capable of supplying its offspring with food, in his capacity of a non-failed, copious provider.⁹⁰⁴ Aigner's theory, however, does not encompass both genders. Indeed, the ‚fathered by the Devil‘ idea appears to have been a ‚boys‘ thing‘: I have not come across any little girls expressly claiming to be the daughters of the Evil One. (Again, considering the gender distribution, this could be understandable enough). What Aigner likewise points out is that ‚father deficiency‘ ultimately necessitates that mechanisms of the displacement of hatred (*Hassverschiebungsmechanismen*) be socially supported,⁹⁰⁵ if it is to develop into a factor of social pathology.

For all his ‚fatherly‘ shades, the Devil is too complex a figure to be reduced to one single role. In children's testimonies from some Scandinavian witch trials he is featured as a neutral-to-benevolent trickster, and functions essentially as an amusement figure.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰² For example, if we were to evaluate the effects of the beggar children's possible malnutrition caused by an insufficient and inadequate diet - both the one endured in freedom and the one suffered in captivity - we would have to allow for the possibility that prolonged states of hunger may have provoked *hallucinations*. In its own turn, this would have reflected on the fantasies the children produced. Such a research would have to rely on the most recent results of regional nutrition research, as well as on any available works on the psychology of hunger.

⁹⁰³ J. C. Aigner : Der ferne Vater, p. 250

⁹⁰⁴ J. C. Aigner : Der ferne Vater, p. 257

⁹⁰⁵ J. C. Aigner : Der ferne Vater, p. 290

⁹⁰⁶ B. Ankarloo : „Blakulla, ou le sabbat des sorciers scandinaves“, in N. Jacques-Chaquin / M. Préaud, op. cit., p. 256

CONCLUSION

No analysis of this type, however thoroughly executed, can ever be anything but a faint glimpse into what we think we see or believe to have recognized. At best, we may now be a little closer to understanding the complexities underlying the circumstances of the hunt for Jackl the Magician. Some insights are worth emphasizing at the end:

- 1) Both younger and older children (adolescents) were far from passive participants of the interrogatories. Though most have been unable to escape their fate, all had a certain amount of initiative and leeway when it came to the contents of their confessions.
- 2) It appears that the hearings were often perceived as a kind of a game - perhaps an intellectual stimulus that the beggar children otherwise lacked. The ‚secondary gain‘ obtained from narrating a sorcery tale with oneself as the roleplaying hero(ine) is what I mean by the ‚kick‘ that most witch-children seem to have had from the otherwise unpleasant trial circumstances.
- 3) It is irrelevant whether a man with the nickname of *zauberer Jackl* ever really existed, or whether a young knacker-come-petty-thief Jakob Koller was some kind of a real-life model for this figure or not. What matters is that the Jackl person somehow managed to appear in the protocols as the beggar children’s life-size companion, and that he soon became larger than life. Why is that? Jackl seems to have been that one single prestigious thing that beggars had and non-beggars did not. Normally destitute, they found themselves in a position of being able to calculate with their statements. It was hard to resist spinning tales about their invented or semi-invented travels with Jackl, and that in spite of the trial’s harshness. More still, the Jackl-adventures may have been a device to buffer that harshness. At any rate, the source material seems to suggest that the *zauberer Jackl* figure created a kind of a ‚cultural space‘ for the beggar youths to recognize or reflect themselves in. As some sort of a compensatory beacon, Jackl may have had importance for the child-witches of Salzburg even apart from the mass trial context.
- 4) Since belief in Jackl’s feats was ultimately a group fantasy shared by both pursuing adults and interrogated children and youths, we should carefully juxtapose the aspect of inquisitorial brainwashing with that of cross contamination, without favouring either of them. This *caveat* may be valid for other mass witch trials as well.

Since this work is mainly about fantasy, we have to take one last close look at what the French elegantly call *la part du mystère*, and try to clarify what we have summed up in the previous four

points. Reducing the nature of the interrogations to just one single component is rendering a great disservice to the interpretation. There simply was no ‚umbrella recipe‘ that young warlocks felt bound to observe over the course of the hearings. At times there was game (i.e. ‚playacting‘) involved - or at least something that from my present platform appears like a game - at other times negotiations were obviously at hand. Furthermore, there are examples of unimpeded associative confabulation with no apparently visible safety net (in the form of a backup story or the like). Of course, the element of torture - anything from mild forms of *territio* to gruesome measures applied in the case of Maria Willbergerin Sr.) - however infrequently it may have been used, must not be underestimated. And yet, what we should not lose out of sight, at least where children and adolescents are concerned, is the *irrational* part of it all: the hallucinatory effect of the circumstances, which make the young victims of this witch hunt appear as lemmings consciously scurrying towards their own undoing. The mythological metaphor for this kind of obviously self-destructive behaviour is the story of Icarus.

Though C. G. Jung associated the Icarus myth with the negatively charged archetype of the *puer aeternus* as an immature attention-seeker, modern analytical psychology took a somewhat more differentiated view of the matter. Hence, Peter Tatham in *The Makings of Maleness* argues that

at another and deeper level it is clear that someone who is compelled to seek attention in this way does so because they need it and never got it when young. Or it suggests that the attention they received as children was of the wrong kind. In other words, the outer behaviour reflects the inner lack and desire. Attention-seeking is better described as attention-needing. [...] The acting-out is an image of what is missing within and symbolizes what must be done to retrieve it as an experience. Thus, a person in the grip of adverse, *puer aeternus*-type behaviour really needs a better connection with that archetype at an inner level.⁹⁰⁷

So, the urge to let one’s wings get burned - the way Icarus did - might have been the part of the deal struck with the men in power, the prize for which consisted of receiving, and being able to hold, attention. To some of these children and youths, attention may have seemed more valuable than life (survival) itself. After all, imagining themselves as parts of Jackl’s sidekick-entourage could have opened up the Pandora’s box of needs and longings, a genie’s bottle that never could have been corqued again. Both the fatal stardom which the witch-trial earned them and the construed sense of falsely realistic unity among the ‚gang members‘ were a one-way street.

Operating with the term ‚rationality‘ does have impressionistic overtones... This being said, the *zauberbuben* were as rational as the circumstances allowed. For indeed, could they remain 100%

⁹⁰⁷ P. Tatham : *The Makings of Maleness*, p. 22

rational while being constantly forced to draw fantasies from the well of wishful thinking - their own and that of the society in general? I would sum up this issue as the one containing both a ‚hardware‘ and a ‚software‘ aspect. The hardware aspect is a prescribed sorcery account a defendant is expected to deliver. The software aspect is what he or she *actually* delivers. These two cognitive levels should not be confused, because the result of this relatively rigid prescription is often more fluid and less predictable than the ‚recipe‘ itself. The individual variations to the demonological construct have in this study been used as a key to the subtext of the sources.

A word or two need to be mentioned on the subject of interpretation methodology. We have seen that communication is a tricky thing, even outside of the Early Modern interrogatory context. The sender may believe that the message is unambiguous and unequivocal, and be emitting it with an intention to make himself clear. There are, however, various possibilities of interpretation, not least because there exists a number of factors that steer the interpretation. Among other things, it depends on the recipients‘ threshold of expectation, their prejudices (cognitive prerequisites) and, of course, the context itself. A chain of such repetitive links would have resulted in the recipient becoming a sender of such a ‚corrupted‘ message in his own turn, thus blurring the initial meaning.

Questions of ‚Are you a witch?‘-type necessitate a ‚yes‘ or ‚no‘ answer. But even so, the fact that the Inquisition operated in what it thought to have been fairly clear codes of communication does not deprive the interrogatory situation of a certain naivete which is inherent in its open-endedness. We have witnessed often enough the ways an interrogated child could be ‚guided‘ through the mazes of denunciation and self-denunciation. However, the court was ultimately *dependent* upon the defendants‘ confessions being presented in a certain form. In cases where this form could not or would not have been respected - the gibberish talk of subsequently released Blasi N. is a blatant example - the court considered it futile to pick up the pieces in order to extract a coherent message.

What can be said about the ideological orientation of the fantasies? Given that we are in the age of confessionalization, can we say that we are dealing with Roman Catholic fantasies? While elements of Catholic imagery certainly pervade the confessions, their confabulatory nature is not necessarily relatable to any particular religious affiliation within Christianity. In fact, I am not sure what kind of a filter one would have to apply prior to gauging the denominational nature of a particular ‚piece of imagery‘. For instance, the sight of young grownups lucidly accepting Jackl‘s grace while being sprinkled with urine could (with enough imagination) have been read as a ritual with Anabaptist overtones. Naturally, Zillner & Co. would have connected the dots. After all, beggars would indeed have been among the first ones to pick up on heretic tendencies during their wandering journeys

across the region. The question is why the authorities would have chosen to ignore such a thinly disguised symbolism, and go on pretending that they were after something else.

In all, the fantasies reach deeper than any religious indoctrination. Again, one should differentiate between *prefabricated confessions* (relative e.g. to Host desecration) and the *fantasies originating from them*. I do not believe that acts of defying the dogmatic skeleton of Catholicism, as manifested in verbal blasphemy, or occasional invocations of Hell reflected the beggar children's extremist attitude (of either polarity) towards religion. These 'tasks' were inspiring inasmuch as the defendants used them for verbalizing i.e. venting out their own psychological issues. These personal themes are the socle on which most of the confabulations seem to have rested.

Why were the Salzburg authorities so interested in the beggar children's fantasies? As is generally known, every witch trial is founded upon a certain degree of confabulation, be it forced or willingly delivered. The fictional dimension in most confessions usually refers to the supposed 'witch persona' of the denigrated person: an individual previously perceived as innocuous is stylized into a supernatural criminal. The fictionality inherent in the Zauberer-Jackl-trials seems to have advanced a notch further than the usual scenario. Rather than imagining qualities essential for actions of black sorcery and consequently pinning them down to real-life persons, the confabulation potential manifested in creating the main protagonist out of thin air, and consequently stylizing him into a gray eminence who puppeteered the children. I believe it is safe to conclude that Jackl the Sorcerer was something of a virtual construct which had in fact very little to do with the petty thief who may have served as its model. The son of an *abdeckher* turning into a haunted prince of the local beggar youths reads more like a mini-version of an intrastratal *Räubersroman*. Again, as we said, claims of any supposed continuity between Jakob Koller and Jackl should not be stretched too far: there is a connection, but, as far as fantasies are concerned, there is no continuity.

We would also have to differentiate our attitude to the problem of the 'secret society' rituals. It does not seem likely that we shall ever know for certainty whether the *zauberbuben* ever really participated in rituals redolent of cult initiations. Conversely, there are no arguments to indicate that they did not. It is perhaps safe to assume that the narration was partly driven by an urge for adolescent secretiveness. I would therefore argue that the 'recruits' of Jackl (i.e. those boys old enough to bond into a vagabond peer group) were most likely not a secret society. Rather, their innate human secretiveness came into focus and was instrumentalized. Perhaps some of the warlock boys actually went as far as practicing unorthodox rituals, whether for fun, or simply because they felt these could offer them some kind of structure. It appears, however, that rituals, irrespective of

whether they were Roman Catholic or diabolical, were mere paravans for much more important contents.

After having processed the source materials, are we in the position to say we know more of the history of childhood? I believe the most adequate answer would be: yes *and* no. Yes, because we gained as close an insight as possible into the mechanisms of imaginative associations to which children and adolescents are prone. Still, factors such as individual resilience threshold or personal emotional self-sufficiency level account for a great deal of variations which resist a pragmatic positing of patterns. A very broad rule suggests that younger defendants tend to tell confessions that are both imaginative and blurry (Maria Willbergerin Jr etc). Not only Jackl the Sorcerer, but also protagonists that are obviously fantasy creatures, like the Hunter and (to a far greater extent) the Devil, seem to play an important symbolic role.

We have also examined the ways adult defendants availed themselves of the Jackl-puzzlepieces at their disposal. Adults approach the task more lucidly, in that they instrumentalize the Jackl story for their own ends. Unsurprisingly, their confessions are based far less on fantasizing and more on conscious recounting. To women, Jackl is often a sexual partner, to adult men mostly a conspiring ,chum‘. In all, the nature of the investment is different for adults and non-adults.

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The purpose of this work was to explore the nature of the confessions delivered during court hearings by those vagabond children and youths who, accidentally or on purpose, got themselves involved in the biggest witch-sorcery hunt in late 17th century prince-archbishopric of Salzburg. The basis for the confessions we have explored was a local variety of the demonological constructs relevant for witch hunts elsewhere in Europe. However, the fantasies with which those confessions teemed were more than just derivatives of certain theological notions. They were a complex result of a cultural circuit which took place between the ruling stratum and those individuals it perceived as its own disaffected children. But even if many defendants indeed were nothing but plain pawns to unfortunate circumstances, this does not mean that every statement in the protocols was as generic as the questions from the interrogatory catalogue. Looking back to the processed source corpus, one can observe that the attitude of the young wanderers caught into the dialectic cat-and-mouse play with the authorities was frequently marked by desperate and repetitive victim-like mannerisms. But when they were not - at those moments when the arrested recruits of Jackl the Sorcerer took to flights of fancy - the responses to the paradoxes of an Early Modern witch trial were so individualized and meaningful that we can consider ourselves fortunate for having been

allowed to peep into this one relic left behind the beggar children of Salzburg, executed not only for being who they were, but for daring to dream.

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