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On a summer day, the people of Ellingen, Germany awoke to the news that a young woman had been attacked by a neighbor who had threatened her the previous morning. The victim was lying in bed when the neighbor entered and assaulted her. During interrogation the neighbor admitted to being a part of an extensive group of criminals with notorious leadership and powerful associates. A rich and prominent member of society and avid church-goer was named in the testimony. This report could easily be mistaken for modern news if it were not for several unusual details: The neighbor was a woman and she admitted to practicing sorcery for the devil. The report, which draws on fears of violence and people committing unexpected evil deeds, stems from a 1590 pamphlet on witches in southeast Germany the “Erweytterte Unholden Zeyttung.” The work displays a variety of tactics to induce fear among citizens while claiming to spread reliable information.

This thesis is about reframing the analysis of the German witch persecutions by exploring rhetoric and images in early modern German print media. The focus lies specifically on strategies of persuasion in pamphlets and broadsides published from 1589 to 1591.

“The Rhetoric of Persecution” utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on sociological, historical, and literary concepts and frameworks. While the witch persecutions have long been a topic of historical study, there is less scholarship on the use of rhetorical devices in print media at the time and the potential effects of their use. Furthermore, many studies explore large-scale reasons behind the witch persecutions such as environmental and economic factors. In contrast, this thesis explores cultures of persecution by examining how media—and

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1 Ensuing references to the “Erweytterte Unholden Zeyttung” will be written as “EUZ.”
particularly printed works—incite fear and encourage the persecution of representative figures at which anxieties can be directed.

**Methodological & Theoretical Approach**

My main material for this thesis consists of primary source documents, which were written in late 16th century Germany. The documents include a pamphlet from 1590 (“Erweytterte Unholden Zeyttung”) as well as two broadsides from the years 1589 (“Warhafftige und wunderbarliche Newe Zeitung”) and 1591 (“Erschröckliche und zuvor nie erhörte newe Zeitung”). The selection of these materials stems from their close proximity in time and locale – all were printed in southern Germany – during a time of intense witch hunting. These works will be translated and analyzed both rhetorically and in connection to their imagery in *Chapter 2: The Pamphlet & the Broadsides*. My analysis of rhetorical strategies is set against the backdrop of the extensive and deeply-rooted rhetorical tradition of the early modern period. I will focus on devices such as hyperbole, repetition, and direct address in order to investigate how texts are crafted to persuade their audiences. My assumption is that tools of persuasion were utilized intentionally to foster persecutory cultures and that various devices were used with the goals of fear-motivated responses. Chapter 1 lays the historical foundations for my analyses of rhetoric and imagery in Chapter 2. The last chapter offers Prospects & Afterthoughts that detail ways to move forward with research while discussing possible connections between the premodern and the modern. Appendices I-VI provide translations and transcriptions of the works discussed in Chapter 2.
CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In this chapter, I provide a historical background for my primary source analysis. I explore the ways in which cultural figures of persecution were created, conceptualized and perceived in early modern Germany, and I detail the historical and cultural aspects, which contributed to the views regarding this figure. My focus specifically highlights the historical significance of the novelty of print to the sixteenth century and the use of rhetorical devices that—against the backdrop of an antique and slowly-emerging German rhetorical tradition—developed under the rise of this new form of media. In correspondence with the bulk of scholarship on the question of persecution in the early modern period I use the term “witch” to denote a type of human target of collective anxiety that displays many of the characteristics that have attracted the attention and caused the baiting of persecutors over the decades. I will, however, point out etymological variations and their semantic and contextual specifics that can only artificially be subsumed under a single term. Finally, my analysis of primary sources will add to a more subtle understanding of a terminology that is often applied too self-evidently.

General Historical Overview

Early modern German-speaking Europe has achieved notoriety for excessive persecutions of cultural figures generally termed as witches. Encompassed by the Holy Roman Empire, it has been described as the “center” and “heartland” of the frenzy of accusations, trials, and executions (Burns 112, Robisheaux 179). The “most zealous period” occurred from 1590-1630 (Robisheaux 185). Several scholars note that a minimum of 30,000 trials took place in Germany alone (Burns 112, Robisheaux 179). Germany is also responsible for about half of “legal executions for witchcraft” in Europe (Robisheaux 179). What seems to have added to the intensity of
persecutions was the fact that “witch images generally circulated more widely in Germany than elsewhere” (Burns 113). Witch persecutions achieved multimedial significance and what Lyndal Roper pointed out as their representational and imaginary efficacy. In early modern Germany, the numerical predominance of witch trials and executions seems to have been interwoven with an intense fascination with the figure of the witch and the suspicious practices ascribed to it.

Historians have also noted two major features of the German lands in the early modern period that made them more prone to witch persecutions: fragmentation and decentralization (Burns 112, Robisheaux 180, Roper, *Witch Craze* 15). “Across Germany, ecclesiastical boundaries, areas of legal jurisdiction, lordship and political boundaries rarely coincided, a confusion that left its mark on the witch hunt” (Roper, *Witch Craze* 15). Ambiguity and confusion are significant elements of the witch hunts, and they can be observed in power structures at the time of the trials. Many German territories operated under unclear or mixed jurisdiction, which naturally led to many issues, one of which was the heightened possibility for unchecked witch hunts and trials. Furthermore, the uncertainty over leadership was connected to both the religious and the secular, but unclear religious control was particularly significant at a time of great religious dispute.

The major divisions between Catholics and Protestants during the early modern period are critical for an understanding of the problem at hand. The latter half of the 1500s was marked by the emergence of the Counter-Reformation and a new age of reformers who had lived their entire lives under the extreme disputes between Protestants and Catholics of the time; this set the stage for the heightened persecution of witches (Roper, *Witch Craze* 16). As noted, such a massive divide in the religious world of the time led to separation and disputes in terms of land and political power. And the tense confessional split also contributed to opposing views on guilt.
Both Protestants and Catholics blamed the witch trials on each other (Clark 526). But despite their opposition and different views on how to address the problems of witches, and the witchcraft that they were alleged to perform, Catholics and Protestants were almost equally likely to carry out hunts (Burns 54-55, Clark 527, Robisheaux 181). The main indicator for greater levels of persecution, however, was the existence of confusing power relations.

A number of changes added to the aforementioned confessional tensions when it came to the way the Church understood witchcraft in the early modern period as compared to the medieval period. One significant feature of early modern Christian thinking was the active condemnation of all practitioners of magic, as opposed to the less active condemnation of some magic users in the Middle Ages. Anyone who practiced magic was seen as a witch and deserving of condemnation, including “cunning folk,” who had previously been regarded as benevolent practitioners of magic (Burns 31, Clark 459). Stuart Clark notes that this change is related to the desire of the church to position itself as the only “solution” for witchcraft (459). Because of this, any use of magic would be viewed as evil, and the witch was connected to various kinds of magic. Their practices mostly involved altering conditions of life, harming living things (from plants to neighbors), or making potions. Another notable form of magic was flying at night, often to the sabbat as can be seen in many works of art (Brauner 122, Roper The Witch 33).² Sometimes, depending on denomination, religious rituals could also be viewed as magical in nature and, therefore, as malevolent products of witchcraft.

Along with views on magic and its practitioners, there were also changes from the medieval to the early modern period in the way the Bible was used to address witchcraft. Firstly, it was interpreted in a more literal manner (Burns 31). The reformation brought about word-for-

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² For an example of witches’ flight depicted in art, Roper mentions Michael Heer’s and Matthäus Merian’s 1626 broadside “Zauberey” (41-42).
word interpretations of the Bible, initially from Protestants but eventually from Catholics during the counter-reformation. This change led to beliefs that biblical prescriptions such as death were not intended to be metaphorical and should always be carried out. Secondly, sin was reconceptualized from the medieval framework of the seven deadly sins to the framework of the Ten Commandments with the acts of witchcraft, on the whole, seen as transgressions against the First, which involves the worship of false gods (Burns 30). The witch was still associated with and depicted in connection to a number of the seven deadly sins during the early modern period, including lust, gluttony, envy, and greed (Morris 83, Roper *The Witch* 17, 91, 97). But sins like envy and lust are also mentioned in the Ten Commandments. Biblical passages of importance to views on witchcraft at the time included Exodus 22:18, Romans 13, and Deuteronomy 18:10-11 (Burns 31, Clark 462). All of these condemn witchcraft or associated practices, and the passage from Exodus suggests death as the solution for addressing it.

Not only occupying the role of the witch, but also carrying out the acts of the witch (i.e. the elements of witchcraft) placed one in opposition to the Bible and its religious moral standards. Firstly, through its actions, the witch was connected to the ultimate figure of evil from a Christian perspective: the devil. Devil pacts were seen as a key element of witchcraft in both art and literature of the time. But the witch was not only imagined as making deals with the devil; she also engaged in sexual activity with him. The witch is thereby connected to the pinnacle of sexual deviance, evil, and immorality. It should be noted that both women and men were accused of sexual activity with the devil or, in the case of most men, demonesses (Roper *The Witch* 150). However, there is no denying that in connection to this act, in a similar way to other acts of the witch, women were at the center of attention. But the witch’s link to sexual

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3 Despite the greater standard of literality, there was still diversity in biblical exegesis; thus, general perceptions of the Bible were somewhat ambiguous.
deviance went beyond acts with the devil. Roper notes that the witch was a figure whose
depictions could verge on “pornographic” (The Witch 29, 31). Such depictions consisted mostly
of women and reflected men’s fears and desires. Feminine sexual deviance stands in clear
opposition to biblical notions of chastity, particularly the kind required by the Seventh
Commandment, which speaks against adultery. For many Christian thinkers of the time, adultery
extended beyond the modern notions of adultery and included a much wider array of sexual
behavior outside the confines of marriage.

Another aspect of the witch that established it as a being that was opposed to biblical
morality is the threat a witch allegedly posed to fertility and children. The witch as a figure that
attacks fertility is a central concept in Roper’s work The Witch in the Western Imagination.
Fertility is clearly connected to life, and the fact that the witch is seen as harming fertility in a
number of spheres positions the figure against life, nature, and, correspondingly, God. The witch
was not only alleged to kill and eat children and babies, but it could also influence them (Roper
The Witch 134). Witches were known to corrupt their own children, and many children of
alleged witches were accused of witchcraft as well, but the witch was also seen as a threat to
other people’s children through seduction (Roper The Witch 135). The witch notably goes after
the vulnerable (e.g. those who represent new and fragile life) with a murderous intent that stands
in direct contrast to the Sixth Commandment. Roper also discusses the connection of the witch to
envy, especially in its destruction of life (The Witch 83, 91). This feature lies in direct opposition
to the Tenth Commandment, which speaks against covetousness.

Christian standards are further violated through the witch’s engagement in cannibalism.
Roper notes cannibalism as “a feature of witchcraft” and also points out that witches were known
to eat babies and children (The Witch 92, 134). Additionally, the medieval conceptualization of
witches as foreign and heretical involved cannibalism (Morris 83). Cannibalism in the artwork of the early modern period was often associated with Native Americans as well as with the Greek god Kronos (Zika 90-91). Both of these associations placed the witch in the realm of inversion not only in terms of eating customs, but also in terms of religion. For the early modern Christian, cannibalism strongly related the witch to the inhumane, the immoral, and the irreligious and clearly went against the Sixth Commandment when combined with murder.

Although the Bible does contain some commentary on witches and makes it clear that many actions associated with the witch are immoral, perhaps the most interesting point on the Bible and its relevance to the witch hunts is that it actually does not provide many definitive and detailed descriptions of witches themselves, at least not in concordance with the popular and scholarly images of the early modern, German witch (Burns 32). Certainly, religious ideas about witches as well as the limited information about witches in the Bible contributed to the cultural image of the witch. But the Bible’s lack of an elaborate image of the witch is part of what led to unique, non-biblical understandings of witches from religious thinkers. In this way, the Bible also serves as yet another area of uncertainty and source for ambiguous understandings. For a culture that relied very heavily on the Bible, and often on its literal meaning, a lack of detail regarding such an important cultural figure could lead to insecurity and discord.

Another significant religious element of the time period was an eschatological perspective, an idea that the rise in witchcraft and Satan’s power indicated the end of times, which pervaded the views of both theologians and the populace (Clark 321). This has been described as “apocalyptic thinking” and was drawn from the concepts presented in the biblical book of Revelations (Burns 77). Although Protestants were more focused on eschatological views, eschatology played a role for both major confessions at the time (Clark 323, 344). For
early modern people, the view that the world was ending served as an explanation for the great number of witchcraft cases that they were observing. Moreover, it necessitated action (Clark 376). Given that many considered themselves to be living in the end times, and witches were an indication of the devil’s rise to power, they felt that they were responsible as Christians for addressing the problem.

While religious context helps to clarify some aspects of the witch persecutions such as reasons for confusion, heightened levels of dispute, and connections to the devil and evil in general, it does not tell the whole story. There were also other elements that contributed to the widespread tensions and persecutory culture of the trials.

Climate change was a significant factor, which contributed to tension in the latter portion of the sixteenth century. The early modern period is known for being subject to the Little Ice Age. The more wide-scale change in climate following 1560 led to a number of problems for agriculture and health, and the decades following this change involved an increase in witch trials (Robisheaux 181, Wittenburg 6). Furthermore, it is significant to note that around this time witches were often associated with “weather magic and harm to crops” (Robisheaux 182).

Naturally, the damage caused by shifts in the climate led to economic problems and a desire to place blame. The figure of the witch could be assigned to people who were blamed for economic problems and served as scapegoats. But there were also general changes through the rise of early capitalism (Wittenburg 5). The cost of food increased dramatically and was, in some cases, sold at three times its prior price. There were also price increases in a variety of markets outside of food (Wittenburg 30). Many people, especially those at the bottom of society, consequently, faced intense insecurity and change, and blaming these problems on witchcraft was one means of attempting to explain these negative life alterations.
Another area of change in the late sixteenth century was the reconceptualization of crime, including the crime of witchcraft. People perceived an increase in crime, which is largely related to many of the changes that have already been addressed. Additionally, people became more aware of crime because criminals were being prosecuted more seriously and to a greater degree than before (Wiltenburg 5-6). Witchcraft became a more pressing social issue because it was reimagined in the 1580s as a large-scale, social crime (Robisheaux 182). This is primarily connected to the ideas about the sabbat that were disseminated. The sabbat was a witches’ meeting carried out at night that could involve flying, dancing, sex with the devil, and cannibalism (Burns 253). As a congregation of evil-doers for the purpose of worshipping the devil, it represented a sort of antithesis to the Church. It also has connections to anti-semitism “because sabbats were at first often referred to as ‘synagogues,’ and the term ‘sabbat’ itself derived from the Jewish Sabbath” (Burns 253).

The reconceptualization of crime further led to massive, “chain reaction” hunts in which great numbers of people faced trial and execution (Robisheaux 186). However, immense trials like this involved complicated systems and processes.

The legal code which was significant for addressing witchcraft in the early modern period, the Carolina, was established in 1532 and was considered to be a “model of rational justice” (Wiltenburg 5). It relied on rational processes for handling a variety of crimes including witchcraft and even set limits on the practice of torture. However, because of the problem of decentralization and fragmentation, many German localities favored their own methods to those of the Carolina (Burns 114). Ambiguity was rampant in the realm of law in a number of ways. There was the aforementioned ambiguity of jurisdiction and decisions regarding which laws were preeminent in a decentralized land. There were also ambiguities in what exactly the law
was addressing. “Most [laws] did not clearly distinguish [harmful magic] from poisoning” (Robisheaux 193). And there was further ambiguity in addressing crimes like witchcraft, which often involved intangible and invisible evidence and practices. According to the law, physical evidence was necessary to sustain confessions, but many exceptions were made for witchcraft (Wiltenburg 31). The typical lack of physical evidence is the reason why the confession was viewed as so important for prosecution (Robisheaux 194). Although the law was largely more rational than it had previously been, it was being utilized under ambiguous conditions, which fostered misapplication and ignorance of proper procedure. Nevertheless, it was generally felt that carrying out the law to penalize criminals “was a religious as well as a secular responsibility, and failure to suppress evildoing could invite divine wrath against the whole community” (Wiltenburg 90). Despite feelings of divine and social commitment, carrying out accusations was not a simple process.

Accusations came in many forms and often related to matters connected to areas addressed above (e.g. agricultural issues, weather, religious issues) as well as personal disputes and individual problems for which people sought to blame intentional actors rather than circumstance. Moreover, “Accused witches were almost always familiar figures in the community” (Robisheaux 191). Accusation was complicated because people feared that they would face consequences such as counter accusations, revenge, or further legal trouble (Burns 2). Many people, despite their desire to see the law carried out, did not want to become entangled in legal complications themselves. This quality made accusation particularly serious, and reports of accusation, therefore, carried a certain weight of veracity just by nature of their riskiness. An individual would need to be confident in their claims to chance their own potential involvement in the legal scrutiny.
Towards a Deeper Understanding of the Witch

Possibly the most significant and terrifying aspect of the witch for late sixteenth century Germany lies not in the area of certain, determinable qualities but rather in that of uncertainty. As historical context has displayed, ambiguity and uncertainty were significant features of the time due to shifts in decentralized power, confessional disputes, biblical ambiguity, and legal confusion. The witch as a figure reflects these tensions and, in many ways resists limitations and singular, static definitions.

The witch’s feature of uncertainty and lack of boundaries are pushed to an extreme through its status as a figure of change. Change—as it relates to the nature, religion, health, and other facets of life—was a highly-discussed topic in the late 16th century, and the witch represents a significant threat as a figure with the capability of restructuring the natural order. Through its actions, from altering the weather to murder, the witch exists as a danger to order in general and, in particular, divine order. The witch was even known to transform itself, usually into animals, and some witches were claimed to transform specifically into cats or wolves (Burns 8, 319-320). The latter has been noted as a particularly striking image for early modern culture because the wolf was seen as a major predator for sheep, which often served as a metaphor for the Christian populace under God’s guidance (Burns 319).

The ability to change into an animal adds the witch’s quality of ambiguity because it is reminiscent of other monstrous figures. It is crucial to understand that supernatural beings were not necessarily as distinct in the early modern period as they are in modern culture. Nowadays, many would think of a witch, a vampire, a werewolf, and a demon as entirely different things, but the lines blur when it comes to early modern conceptualizations. This is not to say that these figures did not have some distinctions but rather to point out that the depictions of figures of this
time are too complicated to definitively distinguish representations as characteristic of only one of these beings. This understanding is particularly important for examining early printed works that involve witches transforming into wolves. The classical image of the sorceress involved shapeshifting (Roper *The Witch* 33). And the witch is connected to several animals etymologically and in popular culture (Burns 7, Morris 92). Another interesting connection to emphasize the witch’s ambiguity is between the witch and the vampire. Witches were called “milk thieves” in Franconia (Roper *The Witch* 97). Vampires were also known to steal milk (Thornton). And there are parallels between their respective forms of harvesting vital fluids, even when the primary thing the vampire is stealing is blood. Also, both vampires and witches are known to carry out evil at night. One can conclude from the above that the witch is an ambiguous and uncertain figure in a number of ways, but these characteristics even extend to what the figure is called.

Because of its varied qualities, the witch as a figure is often resistant to specific labels, and the terms that are applied to her are often ambiguous in nature as well, as reflected by their etymologies. Linguistically, all of the primary German terms used to refer to the witch in the early modern period originated as terms to describe beings with some connection to spirits and the unknown. Both “Hexe” (“Witch”), which was “Hagazussa” in Old High German, and “Unholde” or “Unhold” (“Witch”) originally referred to spirits from Norse Mythology (Brauner 121-122). “Zauberin” (“Sorceress”) was used in connection to those who utilized spirits to carry out sorcery (Brauner 122). Most of these terms developed new meanings in the early modern period and were used to refer to witches, but their origins and paths to becoming words for witches were varied and unclear.
The prime example of an ambiguous etymology can be observed in the term “Unholde.” During the late sixteenth century, this was the most popular German term used to discuss the figure of interest to this thesis, and it is modernly translated as meaning “witch” (Brauner 122). But the term “Unholde” had ambiguous origins. It ranged from referring to evil spirits to being used to describe both good and evil beings (Brauner 122). The witch was only fully attached to evil with the rise of Christianity in Europe (Morris 82). The term also contains some ambiguity because it can be either masculine or feminine. Modernly, it means “fiend,” and this is close to the meaning of its masculine variant, which could also be used to refer to the ultimate fiend, the devil, but the feminine form primarily meant witch, especially in the sixteenth century (Brauner 122, “Unholde”). Moreover, the term that went on to become the most popular word for “witch” in the German language “die Hexe” is feminine. Its predecessor “Hagazussa” displays the femininity but also ambiguity of the figure in its meanings as a “fence hag” or “fence straddler,” one who straddles the line between the known and the unknown, the natural and the supernatural (Brauner 121, Morris 82). Many of the terms used for witches in the early modern period in both German and Latin referred specifically to women or have etymological origins in connection to female figures, and terms like the Latin “ganea” carried both the meaning of “witch” and “whore” (Morris 83). Despite the general ambiguity of the figure of the witch, there is a clear association between this figure and femininity within the terms used to describe it.

Connections between women and witchcraft are deeply rooted and extend beyond terminology. There was a major shift starting around 1560 towards women being the majority of those persecuted. This can be ascribed to associations between the “material harm and misfortune” of the time and “the work of women” (Robisheaux 191). In other words, women were strongly associated with tasks such as childbirth, childcare, food preparation, and other
areas in which people observed negative occurrences that they ascribed to witchcraft. Many men faced persecution too, but the often vastly higher numbers of women and the overall majority of those persecuted being women must be acknowledged. Most sources suggest that women were around 80 percent of those tried for witchcraft (Burns 114-115; Robisheaux 191; Roper, Witch Craze 17-18).

Sexism has been a notable factor in the persecution of women throughout history and in modern times, and this holds true for the witch hunts. Femininity was, and continues to be, regularly viewed as an inversion of a sexist masculine ideal. However, as the historical contextualization showed, sexism must be recognized as only one, yet crucial, element of the persecutions.

The witch is often an evil, magical woman who is capable of effecting great change and who carries out a number of malevolent acts that place her in opposition with the Christian Church, but a witch’s most central feature is complexity. Sometimes the witch doesn’t eat anyone. Sometimes the witch is not a woman. And sometimes the witch resembles another supernatural being. This ambiguity explains why the witch was so greatly feared in early modern Germany. It is also the reason why it is necessary to continue to develop the concept of the figure of the witch and to allow historical documents to shape understandings of what this figure was. This thesis looks toward printed works with some of the widest outreach at the time for answers; thus, the history of printing must also be considered to further develop ideas about what a witch was and how it was utilized as a tool to incite fear.
Print Culture in Early Modern Germany

Within the historical environment of division, change, and uncertainty described above, the relatively young print culture was a major factor in the expression of ideas about the witch. Printed materials were a significant means of spreading information in early modern Germany, and they also contributed to the spread of propagandistic views about witches, often through the use of rhetorical devices. These materials also had an element of novelty. The first “single prints” only emerged after the invention of the printing press around 1440 by Johannes Gutenberg, and pamphlets took off as a significant form of media during the Reformation, which was followed by a peak in printed works with images, such as broadsides, from the latter half of the fifteenth through the first half of the seventeenth century (Schröder 128).

Certainly, when one thinks of printed materials, the first type to come to mind is the book; however, books were not very accessible in the early modern period. Few people could afford books, and the vast majority of them focused only on religious content (Niefanger 85). By contrast, there were several kinds of printed works, which were accessible and regularly focused on popular interests: pamphlets and broadsides. Pamphlets were typically printed on folded sheets of three to forty pages, while broadsides were usually poster-like sheets of one to two pages (Niefanger 85, Wiltenburg 10). Because of their small sizes, these printed works were significantly cheaper than books. In fact, they were “the cheapest of printed materials” (Wiltenburg 9). Broadsides often cost “between four and eight Pfennig” which meant that some “master craftsmen and artisans” could buy them (Walinski-Khiel 52). This made them much more accessible to the public; thus, they are of greater interest for studying the way information was transmitted popularly.
However, there are other elements of broadsides and pamphlets that made them accessible. Only up to thirty percent of people were literate in Germany in the early modern period (Walinski-Khiel 52, Wiltenburg 11). But pamphlets and broadsides utilized more than text to convey messages. Both regularly contained images. People were aware of the typical use of image and text to concordantly communicate messages. An example of this is the use of the emblem, which was very popular at the time. Prints with both forms of media would often be displayed in public areas (Niefanger 77). Public reading also occurred and was significant for spreading the content of pamphlets, and this was sometimes done in the form of a song (Walinski-Khiel 49, 52). The visual and auditory element of these works helped to attract a wider audience and made content more accessible to those who were illiterate.

To produce printed materials as a combination of image and text, woodcuts were often used, and a brief digression from the general discussion of accessibility is merited to provide significant context about the creation of printed materials that also is relevant for the conditions of production of the texts analyzed in this thesis. The common use of woodcuts is particularly important because “woodcuts were intended for the public” (Strauss 1). As an art form, they existed to appeal to various people within the populace. During the sixteenth century, woodcuts were the preferred printing method although the cutting process could take some time (Strauss 3). There was often a multistage process to produce a work such as a pamphlet or a broadside because woodcuts required multiple skills to create. Initially, these skills were divided up between separate kinds of artisans, but eventually the distinct roles of Briefmaler (the painter for woodcut images), Formschneider (the woodblock cutter), and Reisser (the designer) became mixed. Individuals would promote their works under one of these titles while doing the work of more than one of these artisan-types (Strauss 3-5).
Not only was the production style used to create pamphlets and broadsides geared toward the general public, but the content was as well. In the past, broadsides and pamphlets have been dismissed as exaggerated entertainment by historians, but their content can actually provide significant information about “early modern mentalities” (Walinski-Khiel 50-51). Although the newspaper (a regularly occurring news publication) was not developed until the seventeenth century, the broadside has been described as containing content similar to that of modern newspapers (Strauss 5). Moreover, despite the ideal of objective reporting, many newspapers and other media forms today contain elements of entertainment and bias. In a study of the large broadside collection of Hans Jakob Wik, who sought to amass a large amount of these works in the sixteenth century, text categories reflected an interest in the supernatural and the strange but also common topics like weather and politics, and despite limited news reporting, news topics were popular (Strauss 5-7). To expand on this notion, it is important to recognize that even the discussions of strange or supernatural topics drew on real events for contents, which were then reworked to appeal to the public (Walinski-Khiel 62, 72; Wiltenburg 21). The public was often in mind at every level of pamphlet and broadside creation in terms of content, format, images, and publication. People from most levels of society were intended to partake in these printed works in one way or another. A range of people from poor illiterate children, who could view the images on broadsides and hear songs at public readings, to wealthy nobles who could purchase and obtain large collections of printed works, served as an anticipated audience, and the works were designed to be appealing to many.

Certainly, the populace was under consideration when it came to the goal of propaganda. Robert Walinski-Khiel has examined the often propagandistic qualities of pamphlets and broadsides about witches. He defines propaganda as a work that “aims to disseminate a particular
religious or political doctrine and exclude rival beliefs” and notes that the effectiveness of propaganda is increased by concording with and drawing on currently held beliefs (55-56). Part of his argument lies in noting that the censorship of printed works by city officials was an indication that these officials feared the works’ ability to “incit[e] witch scares” (50). He further notes that the goal in many pamphlets on witches was to spread learned, demonological thought to the common people (55).

Perhaps most significantly, Walinski-Khiel discusses the use of propagandistic techniques, which mainly consist of rhetorical devices. Rhetorical devices are abundant in early modern, German pamphlets and broadsides on witches, and their ability to aid the goal of propaganda merits their analysis for a deeper understanding of early modern thought and content that was accessible to the common person.

**Rhetoric and Its Applications to Printed Works**

Analyzing rhetoric, or the art of persuasion, provides insight into how producers of media in early modern Germany attempted to elicit fear in the public regarding the figure of the witch. Provided the understanding that print media was being utilized to spread propagandistic messages to the populace, rhetoric can inform us as to how they did so. Close readings and rhetorical analyses of individual texts, therefore, can provide interesting details about how these powerful devices function in the context of a complete work to produce fear and develop cultures of persecution.

Rhetoric was yet another area of uncertainty in the early modern period in Germany. The seventeenth century saw significant progress in the development of German rhetoric by authors who often sought to address the rhetorical problems and the lack of standard rhetorical
framework for the German language, issues which were characteristic of the sixteenth century. The following will give an overview of early modern rhetoric in Germany and some of the most popular rhetorical devices of the time.

In the sixteenth century, the study of rhetoric was mainly limited to Latin for an understanding of the works of antiquity and the production of learned works. The first German rhetoric books did not appear until the early seventeenth century (Niefanger 74). This was the reason why a number of writers sought to apply classical thinking and rhetorical ideals to the German language. Martin Opitz’s Book of German Poetics, written in 1624, was an effort to form a German poetics and establish German as a learned language. His poetics heavily drew on rhetoric (Niefanger 90-91). He maintained stylistic ideals of daintiness, purity, clarity, euphony, and appropriateness (Niefanger 98). Opitz’s work in and of itself indicates a view that a problem existed with the application of German rhetoric at the time. Early modern, German rhetoric often faced criticism, and in part this was related to the lack of formal guidelines for it. It was especially critiqued for its ornate style, and this topic was addressed in Kindermann’s German Speaker of 1660, a work created to aid the instruction of German rhetoric (Niefanger 73). Various writers worked to develop a standard German rhetoric, but during the sixteenth century ideals for German rhetoric were neither widely known nor available. Therefore, the use of rhetoric at this time reveals the ways in which people utilized rhetoric without more formal standards to informally regulate more extravagant practices. Certainly, people’s works could be regulated through censorship, but the main point is that such regulation would not have been standardized because learned society was not yet fully accustomed to analyzing German rhetoric and its associated devices.

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4 In German: Buch von der Deutschen Poeterey
5 In German: Der Deutsche Redner
The most popular German rhetorical devices according to Niefanger included: insistent mentioning (repeatedly acknowledging a topic), accumulation (any number of devices that draw on a growing element that becomes increasingly emphasized), pun (often humorous wordplay that connects two different concepts through the connection of terms), onomatopoeia (the use of words that represent sounds), antithesis (the close positioning of opposing ideas or images), hyperbole (intense exaggeration), punch line (the humorous and necessary conclusion to a joke), and salutation (direct address to the reader) (98-100). Many of these devices focus on emphasizing, exaggerating, and drawing attention. They were likely popular due to their ability to evoke emotions, which were used for the purpose of persuasion.

Song is another common device, which functions as a tool that aids memory, dissemination, and association (Niefanger 85, Walinski-Khiel 57-58, Wiltenburg 72). It can involve other devices like salutation. Walinski-Khiel discusses how pamphlets often contain direct addresses and personal pronouns to create a “conversational tone” (Walinski-Khiel 58). An additional tool is the use of emotional and provocative stories, which can be used to garner sympathy for victims or amplify disgust for perpetrators (Walinski-Khiel 69, Wiltenburg 80). These kinds of stories are often hyperbolic in nature, but this is not simply because they tend to use the device of hyperbole. They also exaggerate of the relevance of shocking events by promoting them as if they were not extremely rare occurrences.

This chapter has provided context to the study of early modern, German pamphlets and broadsides about witches that were produced during the witch persecutions. These persecutions took place in a land of decentralized power, disputes over religion and the face of evil, environmental and economic strain, and ambiguity regarding law and legal involvement, and shifting ideologies about crime. The witch has been defined within this historical context as an
evil woman who practices magic with various deviant traits but also a great complexity about her, which contributes to her horror. The chapter has also explained the novel system in which problems and news of the time were addressed on a large scale to the public by detailing the print culture of shorter printed works, which at every level, were concerned about the delivery of messages to the people, including propagandistic messages. Lastly, it has addressed the persuasive tools that comprise much of the content of printed works on witchcraft by discussing the history of rhetoric in early modern Germany, commonly used devices, and their relevance for study. The following chapters utilize all of these contextual elements to provide a detailed analysis of the rhetoric in several printed works produced in early modern Germany. They, furthermore, display the ways in which these tactics could contribute to the production of fear and persecutory cultures regarding witches.
CHAPTER 2: THE PAMPHLET & THE BROADSIDES

The “Erweytterte Unholden Zeyttung” is a 12-page pamphlet, which was produced in July of 1590 in the city of Ulm. It details cases of witchcraft and executions in the region of southeast Germany. The print provides numbers of executions and general information about the harms caused by witches as well as stories of their misdeeds.

The author of the source is unknown, but the work of historian Wolfgang Behringer has shed some light on both the possible religious affiliation of the author and some of his likely reasons for creating the pamphlet. Because the author mentions saints as enemies of witches, we can deduce that the author is most likely Catholic (Behringer 354). In concordance with this, and the fact that the author neglects to mention several Protestant cities in which major trials took place while praising many Catholic and imperial cities (of mixed confessional leadership), Behringer concludes that the author’s primary goal was to encourage Catholic nobility and other leaders to carry out further persecutions of witches (Behringer 359). The author’s target audience consisted of the educated, Catholic elites; Behringer does note, however, that there are several elements of the work that were intended to be observed by a wider audience. Behringer’s layout of the historical background of the text even touches on some of the rhetorical tools being used in the work such as its didactic elements and lack of claimed objectivity. The following will entail a closer look at these kinds of persuasive tools in order to explore the question of how the author attempted to convey his message to his audience.

One of the first elements that the reader, or rather viewer, encounters when approaching the “Unholden Zeyttung” is the woodcut image on its first page. A figure with long hair stands unclothed with hands clasped in prayer in a large cauldron. Behind it stands a second cauldron, which is empty, and there are two executioners present. One crouches low and fuels the flames
under the first cauldron. He points an accusatory finger at the figure while the other executioner, using a large ladle, douses it with liquid. In the background, billows of smoke emanate from this gruesome scene of an execution by boiling.

The image is striking not only because it displays cruelty but because it provides a grim scene that defies expectations regarding the typical means of executing witches. Through this unusual scene of execution, the image raises quite a few questions for readers. The text is rife with examples of executions, but there is no mention of boiling. Moreover, boiling was not the method of execution for witches as demanded by law. The execution method for witches described in the Carolina was burning at the stake. Burning at the stake was the primary means of executing witches in early modern Germany and elsewhere in Europe, but it was sometimes accompanied by an initial beheading or even the use of explosive powders to reduce the length of suffering (Abbott “Burning”, Andrews). Boiling was applied to poisoners under the law of Henry VIII in England during the 1530s and ’40s (Abbott “Boiling”). It is possible that in early modern Germany the connection between poisoning and witchcraft could have triggered the association with the punishment of boiling. The law in Germany, however, reserved boiling primarily for coin forgers (Abbott “Boiling”).

Art historian Charles Zika has thought about a possible connection between the image and an execution described in the text in which powder is placed under two women in preparation for their execution. However, Zika himself expresses doubts about whether the comparison is accurate (Zika 188). I argue that Zika’s doubts are justified and that the description in the text is very likely a stake burning. The text describes a scene of two women bound to a pillar, which is not part of the image. The cauldron of powder placed under them was probably used as an explosive device for instantaneous death. More convincing is Zika’s
recognition of the similarity between the image and the martyrdom of Saint John who was boiled alive in oil but survived (188). Zika does not explore this idea further and only suggests that the artist possibly wanted to connect the motif of the powder execution from the text to people’s knowledge about the famous martyr (188).

The conclusion that can be drawn from Zika’s observation is that the reference between text and image cannot be clearly determined. The image is a confusing aspect because of the lack of a death by boiling in the text. It provides an element of the unexpected at the very beginning of the print, and such an early mismatch in the work merits closer examination because a defiance of expectation is an important feature when looking at texts involving witches. In order to understand the reasons for the seemingly arbitrary combination I will have a look at the image’s possible functions and compare them to the rhetorical means that the text employs.

The image functions on multiple levels. The first level is that of a basic and general shock factor. The author sought to provide an attention-grabbing image with a connection to execution, which is a major focus of the text. On the surface, a woodcut depicting a rarer and more gruesome form of execution is eye-catching, and so is the figure standing in the first cauldron. There is a certain ambiguity about it, since it is obscure in terms of gender. The figure’s primary and secondary sex characteristics are conveniently hidden, and this concealment contributes to the possibility that the figure could be a male or a female. The figure’s long hair does not provide any concrete information either, but this lack of clarity adds to the intrigue of the image for its audience. On this level, the image is about capturing attention, and a gruesome scene of execution that is atypical and defies expectations aids this goal and also develops curiosity through its ambiguity. It would have likely piqued the interests of those familiar with the law and those who were not, those who could read, and those who could not.
The second level is more complex and revolves around religious allusion. This is where the connection to Saint John’s martyrdom becomes relevant. For those that were familiar with depictions of this martyr, it would have been an easy scene to identify. Several earlier artistic works display the blatant parallels. From the pouring device to the hands in prayer, there are clear similarities.⁶

Those capable of making this connection would have likely experienced initial feelings of disharmony and unsettlement at the concept of comparison between the holy figure of Saint John and the quite profane figure of the witch. The concept of the witch as a martyr would have been disturbing, but there is a deeper meaning behind the incorporation of Saint John on the title page of the “Unholden Zeyttung.” Some readers would have recognized the highly appropriate nature

⁶ The work on the right is Albrecht Dürer’s 1511 woodcut of the martyrdom of St. John.
of including an image of a man who wrote about the apocalypse in the Book of Revelation on the front of a work with the goal of inciting fears about the apocalypse. In this way, the image cooperates with the text in terms of one of its most important features.

The two levels of persuasion in the image of the “Unholden Zeyttung” indicate well-thought-out and intentional strategizing on the part of the artist and a very conscious—even though not immediately obvious—connection with the text. Both in terms of content and function, the image is a combination of specificity and ambiguity. The reference to Saint John as a connection to the end times is particular and has a very specific aim, yet a reader’s ability to interpret this image is initially clouded, much like the smoke that swells in the background of the picture. The disconnects between boiling and burning at the stake and between the figure of the martyr and that of the witch add to its ambiguity. It promotes a sort of confusion and discontent with the conflation of sacred and profane images but also directs attention pointedly to the spot at which the sacred and profane meet: the apocalypse. The apocalypse is a source of mystery and insecurity because of its blend of horrific and unknowable qualities. But it also exists as a necessary final battle between good and evil, which results in the triumph of the former.

The dynamic of specificity and ambiguity can also be observed in the text of the “Unholden Zeyttung.” I will show that it primarily contributes to the work’s propagandistic goals. Three general types of rhetorical devices highlight the blend of ambiguous and concrete elements: claims of objectivity, tools to incite fear, and tools that promote a call to action. Several rhetorical devices fit into more than one of these categories because the call to action here often depends on the response of fear, and producing fear can lead to a desire to take action. The separation into these categories serves primarily to display that the devices in this work operate in multiple forms, which contribute to its status as a work of propaganda.
One staple of propaganda is the inaccurate claim of objectivity. Although scholarship has already shined a light on this element of the “Unholden Zeyttung,” it is worth noting because of its specific relevance to persuasion. The most obvious claim of objectivity is that the “Zeyttung” asserts that it gives a genuine overview of the amount of witches and their actions in southeast Germany. In his discussion of the matter Behringer has characterized the “Unholden Zeyttung” as “a journalistic product of multi-layered polemics from which ‘objective’ reporting can only be expected under very great reservations or not at all” (359). He further points out that the author’s exclusion of major Protestant executions while praising those of Catholics gives the work a significant subjective bias, and he notes the lack of verifiability for a number of the author’s statements.

One of the most ironic examples of unprovable content can be seen in one of the author’s main claims to credibility. In the final paragraph of the text he writes, “This I have (gathered) in the shortest way / as I found in part in the copy printed in Ulm / in part saw myself / and also heard from other trustworthy people /” (“EUZ”). Several points of this claim can be broken down. Behringer claims that no previous work from Ulm has been discovered (354). Moreover, the author says that he has gathered the material in the shortest way possible despite detailing even comparatively minor executions and providing quite a few anecdotes (several of which are impossible to confirm). Beyond these matters, he informs his readers explicitly that he has used “glaubwürdige” or “trustworthy” sources. This is a fairly empty claim because there is no way to verify it, and the reader is simply expected to take the author’s word that the content comes from trustworthy people without any reference to whom those people are.

7 In the following, all translations from Behringer’s work, the “Unholden Zeyttung,” and the broadsides are mine. 8 For a complete translation and transcription of the “Unholden Zeyttung,” see Appendix I and Appendix II.
The author takes another step in his conclusion to bolster his credibility through the use of a challenge to the reader. He writes, “...I ask the good-hearted reader / if he knows of a better and more extensive report / to share it with me” (“EUZ”). On the surface, this appears to be a well-intended request for more information and an opportunity to correct the author, but he has just stated that he used trustworthy sources, so the provision of more information becomes not only a risk of going against the author but against a variety of unknown but allegedly reputable sources. Furthermore, with a knowledge of the author’s intentions to highlight Catholic executions of witches and encourage more while selectively ignoring Protestant ones, it becomes clear that his request is a deceptive. He is obviously already aware of his omissions and has no intention of providing a fully exhaustive list. Therefore, the request is actually just a means of superficially garnering more credibility through a facade of being humble and yearning to know the full truth. The author’s claims to credibility are another example of making specific assertions (e.g. referencing specific events, publications, and sources) that are actually quite ambiguous due to their lack of verifiability.

Moreover, in declaring that his work is objective and true, the author opens the door to a wide range of methods for inciting fear. Many elements in the work serve this purpose, such as the use of ellipsis throughout the pamphlet to increase the sense of urgency and tension for the reader. An example of this can be found even in the text of the title page, “Short tale about how many of the Evil-doers here and there/ particularly in Upper Germany/ [were] caught and imprisoned . . .” However, most of the devices utilized to incite fear revolve around claims that the problem of witches is immense. A reader of the “Unholden Zeyttung” is led to believe that witches and their evil deeds are all around.
Indeed, the concept of witches lurking around every corner is present in several lines early on in the text, which focus on location: “While then in our times all the sorcery and devil’s ghosts take the upper hand to such an extent/ that almost all cities/ markets and villages in all of Germany (I don’t want to talk about other peoples and nations) are full of the same vermin and devil’s servants” (“EUZ”). This section is filled with hyperbolic statements through the repeated use of the word “all”. The author is heavily promoting the idea that witches and other malevolent forces are operating in just about every area in the whole of Germany. But beyond the use of hyperbole and repetition to emphasize the near-omnipresence of witches, the author also utilizes a more subtle rhetorical device. By saying that he does “not want to talk of other peoples and nations,” he is indirectly suggesting that the problem of witches extends even further than Germany, possibly to the rest of the world. If he truly did not want to talk of other lands, he could have simply not mentioned them at all, but bringing them up in this manner contributes to his goal of exaggerating the scope of the problem at hand, which, consequently, helps to foster fear. This fear develops specifically out of unclear boundaries for the witch. It arises because there is basically no place in which one can be safe from witches.

But the scare tactics do not end in terms of place; they continue into the realm of quantity. From the title page alone, the repetition of the phrase “wie viel” highlights that this work revolves strongly around the concept of “how many.” As noted previously, an abundance of witches was seen as an indicator of the end times, which was certainly a matter of fear for many because of its unpredictability and finality. The author counts witches as well as their victims to emphasize the extent of the problem. Regardless of their accuracy numbers can be powerful rhetorical devices, especially if they are large. Many of the author’s numbers relating to those executed for witchcraft concord with records of the events, and he certainly could have

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9 My translation of “how many” reflects the plural sense of number that is present in the text.
obtained the quantity of victims (though ludicrously high in some cases - namely those involving midwives) from other sources. But along with the counts, which are regularly emphasized throughout the work, he occasionally uses numbers to make dramatic, hyperbolic statements: “Many also want to bear witness (say) / that not five pious married people remained in the whole of Ellingen: Because among all those / who were judged there / there are few / who didn’t live in a home in Ellingen” and “In a village by Trier so many women were burned / that no more than two / who were pious / remained” (“EUZ”). In these examples the author mentions small numerical figures to draw attention to unreasonably large amounts of witches. Ellingen and Trier both had very large witch hunts, and the author notes the numbers of the executions for each, so despite the fact that his suggestions are potentially ludicrous, they add to a very serious fear that a witch could exist not only in all places but also among all sorts of people. Once again, the use of specificity to bring about a troublesome ambiguity is on display. On the surface, the author is merely reporting very specific numbers to produce a methodical list of the quantities of executions and victims, but at the same time, he implies that there are few, particularly few women, who are not witches. Of course, this suggestion is not verifiable, but hidden within a report that claims to operate on the principles of truth, it becomes a more sinister persuasive tool to increase fear and suspicion.

Numbers, however, are not the only rhetorical tool that the author uses to emphasize that just about anyone, anywhere could be a witch. He also carries out a meticulous system of praise and insult relating to the figures of noble leadership and witches in the work. For the most part, this is evident in continuous laudations of leaders of cities that carried out executions who are often described with terms such as “praiseworthy” and “wellborn”\(^\text{10}\) as well as insults for the women who were executed for witchcraft who were labeled with terms like “wicked,” “loose,”

\(^{10}\) In German: “löblich”, “wolgeborn”
Despite the general consistency and expected binarism of this pattern, there are multiple descriptors that stand out because they provide a degree of praise to executed women. Several women who were executed for witchcraft are described as “respectable.” One woman is described in more detail as “a rich noble widow, / who previously had had the scribe/secretary of the same place for a husband, / who had had a very respectable life / and in appearance / had led a Christian life” (“EUZ”). These examples of praise for negative figures is discordant with the typical system of praise and insult in the work, but they depart from the conventional system in order to emphasize the author’s point that any kind of woman could be a witch. This element, like many of the others in the text, seems to offer more information regarding witches and their characteristics but at the same time makes the image of the witch even more confusing and complex. It leads to the insight that if a seemingly respectable, Christian woman could be a witch, then there is less of a limit on whom one should suspect of witchcraft.

The running theme of ambiguous, or even nonexistent, boundaries also extends beyond the witches themselves into their victims and objects of harm. Victims are listed very specifically, but the end result is a work that mentions such a wide range that one questions if it has helped to define anything. The author discusses many kinds of victims and harmed objects, which are often accompanied by descriptors that provide elements of pathos and appeal to religious sympathies. He claims that witches “destroy the dear fruits on the field, which the Lord allows to grow for us through his blessing” and names a variety of livestock and human victims of the witch including “the young and unbaptized little children”, “old people,” and “men” (“EUZ”). Children are mentioned quite a few times, and the corruption of a witch’s own children is also a recurring theme. One witch is described as attacking newly married couples and female victims ranging from a maid to a noble woman. Stories about witches bathing in beer and

11 In German: “verruchten”, “lose”, “gottlosen” Same here
providing poisonous medicines give the impression that even the intimate spaces of leisure and healthcare are not safe. The author manages to create an ambiguous and concerning image in regard to the victims of witches that contributes to fear by suggesting that the witch will harm anyone and everything that she can. This ambiguity stems from the lack of boundaries and the inability to truly define the characteristics of the witches’ targets. To say that everyone is at risk does not help to define the witch and her goals, and this is scary because the witch and her actions become impossible to predict. Under these conditions, everyone becomes both a suspect and a potential victim with no clear way to avoid either categorization.

Essentially, no one is safe, but the exaggeration of threat does not end there. It is also made clear on three separate occasions that witches act “according to all of their abilities” (“EUZ”). Further emphasizing the broad scope of the witch’s threat, the author repeats the concept of the tirelessly, hardworking witch to encourage equal effort in opposition. He is encouraging rigorous action by mentioning that of his targeted enemy.

The call to action, a central element of propaganda, is driven in the “Unholden Zeyttung” by a variety of appeals to religion. Religion is a key motivator in the work and also contributes to the author’s goals of a semblance of credibility and provoking fear in the populace. Most importantly though, it provides the author with the fundamental support for his call to action.

Religion is visibly present at the beginning and end of the work in the forms of both advice and prayer. Behringer observes the “semi-didactic” qualities of these sections, which stress the “danger of witches” and draw on “the laws prescribed in the Old Testament” for support (357). The author does attempt to instruct at several points in the text, and the first sentence following the content of the title page explicitly notes the ideal of man making judgements based on “the commandments of God” (“EUZ”). He insistently mentions God’s
commandments and even more specifically the Ten Commandments, which makes sense given the fact that they were viewed as one of the primary lenses by which people could assess sin at the time. But the application of the Ten Commandments to the execution of witches is complicated.

At two points, the author falsely states that death by “fire”—one of these points also says by “sword”—is the method for executing witches that God commands in the Bible. He writes, “the Lord God expressly commanded in the law of Moses that such practitioners of magic/ be expelled from His people and burnt with fire” (“EUZ”). Behringer points out that fire is actually the method for executing witches demanded by the Carolina (346). The claim that the common practice of burning witches is justified explicitly by the Old Testament is inaccurate. The importance of this deceit is that God’s commands are repeatedly cited as the reason for carrying out the action of executing witches. Therefore, even in his call to action the author blends specificity and ambiguity. While the call to action and source text of justification are specific, their connection is unclear and held together by false claims.

The Broadsides

Like the pamphlet, broadsides offer a combination of image and text to deliver information to the public, and both mediums can contain a wide variety of propagandistic rhetoric. But while the “Erweytterte Un Holden Zeyttung” displayed this through an intentional and particular pairing of superficially specific claims that create a general sense of ambiguity to foster fear, the dynamics of specificity and ambiguity function differently in the broadsides.
The two broadsides under consideration here are the “Warhaftige vnd wunderbarliche Newe Zeitung,”\textsuperscript{12} printed by Johann Negele and the “Erschröckliche vnd zuoor nie erhörte newe Zeitung,”\textsuperscript{13} printed by Georg Kress. Negele’s work was written in Augsburg in 1589, and it details the story of Peter Stump a man living near Cologne who gained the ability to transform into a wolf through witchcraft and carried out various crimes including murder and incest. This work is probably a copy of a 1589 broadside by Lucas Mayer, which was produced in Nuremberg and contains essentially the same image and text aside from the portion at the end regarding authorship (Strauss 795). The Peter Stump case became very popular and many broadsides were generated to detail it. Kress’s work was written in Augsburg in 1591, and it describes how 300 women and girls in Jülich practiced witchcraft by making a pact with the devil in order to transform into wolves. In this form they slaughtered and ate a number of men, boys, and animals. In terms of intent, both texts have a strong and direct moral focus on the avoidance of working with the devil. Their brevity and lyrical form indicate that they were intended for a larger public audience. These works were likely sung publicly and posted in various areas. Nobles and wealthier figures could collect these texts, but unlike in the “Unholden Zeyttung,” there is not a clear goal to reach this particular audience.

Like the “Unholden Zeyttung,” the broadsides utilize several elements of ambiguity. The fact that Peter Stump is a man goes against the feminine associations with witchcraft. The shocking number of 300 women being involved in witchcraft in Jülich also raises questions that are similar to the ambiguity of ludicrously large numbers mentioned in discussions of the “Unholden Zeyttung.” And there is also the complicated matter of the witches in both works

\textsuperscript{12} For a complete translation and transcription of the “Warhaftige vnd wunderbarliche Newe Zeitung,” see Appendix III and Appendix IV.
\textsuperscript{13} For the translation and original “Erschröckliche vnd zuoor nie erhörte newe Zeitung,” see Appendix V and Appendix VI.
turning into wolves, a factor that has led many modern writers to label both cases solely with the term “werewolves” despite the fact that both directly mention elements of witchcraft such as devil pacts and sorcery.

Ambiguity can also be observed in the work’s claims of objectivity. The Negele piece employs such a claim in its title, which begins with “True and Wondrous News...” From the start the audience is expected to believe its contents, and this is not the only kind of claim to objectivity in the work. The author also uses the phrase “as it is known” when describing Peter Stump’s transformation, which suggests a level of truth to a process which has not actually been observed and cannot truly be known. The Kress piece also makes claims of objectivity, but most of these claims are not entirely direct. An example is the insistence that the questioning of the mother involved in witchcraft at the end of the work was “peinlich” or “meticulous.” This repetition suggests that the information obtained from these events was rigorously and credibly collected.

Both pieces also attempt to gain credibility through the acknowledgement of doubt. Negele is very aware of the possibility of doubt as indicated by the descriptor “Wondrous” in the title, and he mentions the skepticism of the neighbors when the farmer tells them about his encounter with the wolf, “The farmer soon picked up the paw/ Carried it home [and] told the story/ His neighbors wouldn’t believe it.” Kress’s title begins with “Shocking and Never Before Heard News...,” and he uses the term “unerlogen,” which means “not made-up” to describe a particularly violent scene in his work. These elements of doubt are not intended to distract from the story’s claimed truth but rather serve to acknowledge doubt. A claim to truth for an odd story is more powerful if it can successfully and preemptively grapple with the reality that it will likely incur some skepticism. Therefore, though it may seem counterintuitive, the acknowledgement
that the contents are “shocking” or difficult to believe can actually aid credibility as long as the
acknowledgement is limited and the concept that the stories are true remains the prevailing idea
in the works. Nevertheless, one must recognize that the contents of these works are hard to
believe, and while they claim to be true, they fail to provide reliable sources for their contents.
Neither of the accounts is backed by official records (Priest). In terms of claims to objectivity
and related tactics, ambiguity certainly plays a role in the broadsides, which is similar to the use
of ambiguity in the “Unholden Zeyttung.” Yet there are other propagandistic components that
display a much more complicated relationship between specificity and ambiguity.

The primary difference between the broadsides and the “Unholden Zeyttung” is their
greater degree of specificity. An example of this can be observed in the images of the texts.
While the “Unholden Zeyttung” utilized an image with ambiguous connections to the text in
order to produce fear connected to both executions and the end times, the broadsides maintain
very specific connections between image and text. The audience is expected to recognize the
components of Peter Stump’s execution and his attack on his neighbor in Negele’s piece. And
they can note the devil pact, violent attacks, burning at the stake, and the debacle in which one
woman’s son puts on her belt and terrifies other children in the work by Kress. The meticulously
specific images highlight the most striking moments of the text such as acts of violence, murder,
harm to children, and especially execution. Below are the images from Negele’s and Kress’s
respective works.
Furthermore, the broadsides rely more on specificity to produce fear as opposed to the “Unholden Zeyttung,” which relies more on ambiguity. Rather than suggest that the witch could be anywhere and anyone, they limit the situation to specific locations and people. Peter Stump is a particular man living in the village of Bedbur near Cologne. And despite the large number of women and girls involved in the Jülich case, there is a very clear boundary set with essentially all of the witches being women and girls and all of the victims being boys and men. In terms of both the demographics and the descriptions of events in the works, the broadsides rely heavily on specific gruesome details and distinct categories of people to produce fear as opposed to the confusion and ambiguity that were the staple of fear production in the pamphlet.

On a few occasions, the concept of the works being scary is openly stated in the text. The Negele text refers to its contents as “terrifying to hear.” And both texts use descriptors of the witches or their actions that suggest a horrific or “gruesome” quality about them. At other points, the authors provide explicit descriptions of vice to produce fear. In the Negele piece, Peter Stump confesses in a condensed segment, “I murdered thirteen children small/ Among which was my own son/ I ate and split their brains/ Along with that, I also killed three old people / To the livestock, I was also harmful/ I fornicated for twenty-five years/ Even with an evil she-devil/ Who was my next-door neighbor/ I have also slept with my daughter…” The majority of Stump’s crimes is summed up in this brief section of the text, but the format of condensing so many misdeeds into a small segment of the work spoken by the one who committed them increases their impact through emphasis.

The Kress piece takes a different approach and rather spreads out the evil deeds of the women, but the author still uses vivid descriptions of murder and violence. The middle sections of the work contain several stories of the women attacking people as wolves, and one example
reads, “In the night they killed 15 men/ And six boys/ From whom they sucked out the blood/
And also ate their good brains.” Emphasizing acts of murder, cannibalism, and even incest serves to shock the reader and go against specific aspects of morality. Unlike the terrifying ambiguity provided by the “Unholden Zeyttung,” the broadsides provide very specific elements to terrify, which are stressed for their grotesque nature.

Another majorly emphasized topic in the broadsides is execution, and once again, the authors are particularly descriptive in addressing this topic. Peter Stump goes through a lengthy execution, which involves being placed on a wheel, being pinched with pincers, having his hands and feet cut off with an axe, having his head cut off, and being burned with his daughter and female neighbor. The many forms of execution become a list that hyper-focuses on a morbid scene that is also given a spotlight in the image of the broadside. The women in Kress’s work meet their end through burning at the stake and the repetition regarding the concept of these women burning alive draws attention to the punishment. One of the more horrific aspects of this execution, however, occurs when the devil arrives to claim two of the women, “Then came a strong wind/ And caused two of the women/ To instantly disappear there/ The devil had taken them/ And immediately tore them up there” (Kress). The concept of punishment is drawn out and specific in nature.

Inciting fear is not limited to earthly processes and punishments. Religion serves as both a significant source of fear and a call to action. Asking for religious piety and an avoidance of the devil are clear goals of both works. Stump’s execution is said to be “an example/ to avoid such devilry indeed./ God’s judgement does not sleep” (Negele). Moreover, the “monstrous” execution of the women in the other broadside and the fact that they will spend the afterlife in “eternal hell” are provided as the “lesson of the devilish story of the wolves” (Kress).
The devil is the most prominent religious figure in both works and plays a larger role than in the “Unholden Zeyttung” through a focus on the devil pact. Over a third of the Kress text is about such a pact, and the act of this particular binding is emphasized when the devil lists several different verbs that convey similar meanings, “To commit to him and obey him/ And associate with him alone.” Furthermore, verbs such as “promise” and “commit” are grouped together and used at least four times in the first few sections of the text, which creates a significant repetition to focus on the act of making a deal with the devil. The devil pact is important in Negele’s work too, and Peter Stump admits through direct speech, “I have devoted myself to the devil/ so that I intend to live with sorcery.” The incorporation of this confession as a quote highlights a connection that goes against the moral message of the work. It is odd that Stump would have admitted something so scandalous freely to his neighbor, and this factor makes the connection with the devil stand out even more than if it were not admitted openly. Both contain specificity in their religious prescriptions to avoid the devil and his dealings. Rather than confusion, they are providing a very clear means of staying away from vice and its consequences, which the audience is expected to follow. But there are other ways that the texts call the readers to action as well.

An important aspect of the call to action in these texts involves expressing the importance of communicating knowledge about witches. Stump’s revealing of his pact with the devil is followed by a brief section involving neighbors spreading information about him “Till it was commonly known” (Negele). Moreover, the capturing of the witches in the Kress work is a direct result of the confessions of a son who tells of his mother’s crimes through direct speech as well as the proceeding interrogation of the mother. This scene communicates a clear fear regarding harm to children and the witch’s involvement of their own children in their practices, but it also
says something about the importance of communicating about witches. Both texts display that the apprehensions of the witches are direct results of people sharing information. Although it is not a direct moral lesson in either case, spreading information about witches and sharing their secrets is an encouraged action as evidenced by the texts.

As a final note regarding the goals of the broadsides and their calls to action, the element of gender in the Kress text must be addressed. Both broadsides contain intriguing elements in regard to gender. In Negele’s work, Peter Stump complicates the figure of the witch by being a male witch, but there are also specific elements to his gender such as the inversion of the typical process of female witches having sex with the devil to conform with heterosexual, but still deviant, standards (i.e. Rather than have sex with the devil, Stump has sex with a she-devil as well as with his own daughter.). But the Kress piece focuses much more on gender and makes it a specific element of its call to action, which warrants further discussion. In the title of the text, the final segment reads, “Put into print for all pious women and girls as a warning and example.” One would expect a significant focus on gender due to the high rate of women who faced persecution during the witch trials, but this text is much more explicit in its gender related goals. It starkly positions women and girls as the evil-doers as well as the group that is claimed to need admonition and men and boys as the primary victims. The latter is evidenced in the title as well as with the line “how many men, boys, and cattle they killed” (Kress). The “Unholden Zeyttung” is also very gendered, with almost all of the witches being women and girls, but the Kress piece is far more blatant about a focus on gender being one of its primary goals, and it is also much more specific in distinguishing witches from the “pious women and girls.”

Overall, the “Erwettterte Unholden Zeyttung” and the two broadsides discussed in this chapter reflect different approaches to the use of specificity and ambiguity to produce fear, but
the authors utilize their particular approaches to carry out propagandistic goals. In the “Unholden Zeyttung” a wide range of examples is provided to develop an ambiguous image of the witch, its victims, and biblical evidence. Fear is produced not simply from the descriptions of the witches’ evil deeds but from the lack of distinction about who is and is not a witch and who is in danger. But most importantly, fear stems from the looming prospects of the nearing end times. The apocalypse is largely connected to the unknown, and because of this quality it encourages an ambiguous rhetoric as a means to address it. The propaganda of the text operates on a broader social level and raises philosophical questions about not just the death of one but of all. The greatest fear that the text evokes is that of an unpredictable end to life, society, and the world that contains it, and it does this through rhetorical ambiguity. This is used to encourage Catholic nobles to take large-scale social action.

The broadsides contain elements of ambiguity as well, and they discuss the afterlife, but the concepts of fear and death are more individual, specific, and short-term than that in the “Unholden Zeyttung.” While the witches remain ambiguous in some ways, particularly in their existence as both witches and “werewolves”, they also become more specific and limited (e.g. as distinct individuals or a specific gender). And the victims become clearer as neighbors or only men. Fear is drawn from vivid descriptions of the witches’ attacks, the connection between witches and the devil, harm to children, and detailed scenes of execution. Perhaps the most significant takeaway is that one fears their own death when experiencing these texts - whether it be at the hand of a witch, the devil, or an executioner - as opposed to the end of the entire world, and this serves to morally regulate the individuals in society. Death becomes less philosophical and unknown as it takes the form of a punishment for misdeeds and the cruel fate of some victims as opposed to the dreaded and mysterious end to all life that it is in the “Zeyttung.”
In looking towards future research on the topic of the witch persecutions, there is still much to be done in terms of historically focused work, but it can also be worthwhile to consider possible applications to modernity and how the past can inform us about the present. The term “witch hunt” is fairly difficult to avoid nowadays. If one watches American news in the 21st century or scans through social media, they will likely come across it in some form or fashion, and it has increasingly been used to describe situations such as the criminal investigation of current US president Donald Trump. In fact, Trump himself has tweeted the term “witch hunt” 174 times since 2017, primarily regarding claims against him and fellow politicians in connection to assertions of collusion with Russia (Trump qtd. in “Trump Twitter Archive”).  

If one examines the use of the term in its rhetorical functions, it becomes clear that we are observing a process distinct from the historical witch hunt. The history of the witch trials is complex, and this thesis has indicated that they were not only a product of large-scale societal strain, but also of a persecutory culture fueled by rhetoric utilized to generate fear on a philosophical and moral-behavioral level. They were furthered through religious argumentation that insisted upon the God-given solution of death for witches. Within this ideological framework, the death of witches was viewed as merited to avoid both personal death and the end of the world. The modern use of the term “witch hunt” to only describe the accusations of political adversaries is reductive because it fails to acknowledge the complexity of the witch hunts and their culturally specific application. However, it is possible to make connections between the historical witch hunts and the modern concept of the “witch hunt” as long as one recognizes that they are distinct phenomena.

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14 Ensuing references will abbreviate “Trump Twitter Archive” as “TTA.”
The modern rhetoric of the “witch hunt” can be described as an inversion of the original witch hunts in a variety of ways. Rather than insisting on the credibility of claims, the modern tactic insists that accusations are not true. It serves to make the statement that the alleged charges against the president and others are false. Those utilizing the term are making an assumption based on popular beliefs about actual witch hunts that they were carried out simply to persecute for personal gain and that these persecutions were unmerited.

Secondly, the witch in the modern sense becomes a victim and even a sort of social martyr. The president and his allies are positioned as blameless victims. This is apparent in the president’s repeated use of the term “innocent” to describe those who have been accused (Trump qtd. in “TTA”).

With this reconceptualization of the witch comes a reconceptualization of accusers as well. The term “witch hunt” positions those investigating the president as irrational attackers. The accusers become the figures who are “ruining lives” (Trump qtd. in “TTA”). The modern rhetoric regarding witch hunts appears to be much less concerned with literal death and much more focused on a sort of societal death, and it is claimed that those making accusations about the president and those who have worked with him are hurting people by eliminating them socially and politically.

Moreover, the inversion of the witch and the accuser goes further as the witch also takes on the role of the accuser. A recurring theme of the president’s tweets on the “witch hunt” issue involves an insistence that Democrats be investigated, namely Hillary Clinton in relation to her emails. Here we can observe a call to action that demands charges on political opponents as a means of diverting attention away from the accusations against the accused. But this inversion does not only divert attention, it redirects the accusation process completely. The result is a
conflicting figure of a witch carrying out a hunt of its own. In this way, the use of the term “witch hunt” is a means of capturing the best of both worlds in which the utilizers not only claim to be victims but also prop themselves up as purveyors of their own righteous movement to punish those who have accused them.

Through this modern reconfiguration, the witch remains ambiguous but in a novel way. “Witches” in the past were able to accuse others of committing similar acts but not in a way that absolved them of their crimes and gave them the power to carry out their own persecutions. The modern “witch” simultaneously takes up a defensive and offensive role in the accusatory process in which it comes out on top with more power as an alleged victim but also a fierce harbinger of justice.

It is necessary for the historical witch trials to be understood with nuance and cultural context in order to avoid their use as a modern propagandistic device. Moving forward, research can continue to examine the figure of the witch, the rhetorical system of specificity and ambiguity in relation to propaganda, and the roles of the media in contributing to the witch persecutions. Through further exploration, we can perhaps reduce modern terminological misapplication while making discoveries about the witches of the past.
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Appendix I: “Erweytterte Unholden Zeyttung” Translation

Extended Witches Newspaper

Short tale about how many of the witches here and there / particularly in Upper Germany / [were] caught and imprisoned: what great damage they did to the people/ by way of their confession and about how many of those there were / in the year 1590 until the 21st of July who were brought from life to death through execution and burning.

Even though man [should use and apply] his reason implanted by God / to judge according to the commandments of God / which serve to praise and glorify his holy name/ for man’s own salvation and for the welfare of his neighbor: Man allows himself however to be beguiled by the devil / so that he adjusts intelligence and reason/ more to the will of the devil than to God’s commandment / and wants always in an impertinent way to search for and experience more / than God has commanded.

It comes from there / that so many people turn towards sorcery works of the devil/ which however is completely against the commandment of God / which is also why the Lord God [expressly commanded in the law of Moses that] such practitioners of magic/ be expelled from His people and burnt with fire.

While then in our times all the sorcery and devil’s ghosts take the upper hand to such an extent / that almost all cities/ markets and villages in all of Germany (I don’t want to talk about other peoples and nations) are full of the same vermin and devil’s servants / which not only [dare to spoil into the ground (destroy) (Insert: With the help and assistance of the devil) the dear fruit on the field / which the Lord allows to grow for us through his blessing, / (destroy) with unusual

15 Parentheses indicate a significant change in the position of a part of the text in a sentence or paragraph, and brackets indicate implied insertions. Slashes, which serve essentially as commas in the original text, are simply maintained for the comparability of segments.
thunder / lightning / showers / hail / storms / white frost / drought (water emergencies) / mice / worms / and what other things there are / that they are capable of / and that God has allowed them to do / through the help and assistance of the devil: But also (they aim with all of their ability/power) (to take away and remove) from man his nourishment through the spoiling of livestock such as cows, / calves, / horses / sheep / and other such things / but not only the livestock and fruits of the Earth / but also that of their neighbors and possibly of their blood relatives / and this is quite pitiable / they do not spare the young and unbaptized little children / but rather execute them in great numbers / and they use their tender little bodies for their magical arts and wellbeing: (They apply all effort to) to bend old people make them lame / bring them to painful diseases and finally to bring them death / … / through that then all kinds of misery and despair grow among men.

In this situation, / higher-ups do praiseworthily / well / and according to God’s command / if they (remove) such devil’s children, / that go against God and mankind / and who are their declared enemy, / from the Earth / [and] take them from their midst through fire and sword. This is what the well-born Count of Wisensteig began a few years ago / and just this year did it again.

In the same way the honorable Prince and Lord (Lord Marquart Bishop of Augsburg) (executed) / three of those wicked women two years ago and in Dillingen had them burned. Among them was a midwife, who (took the lives of) over one hundred children / as she received them from their mother’s body / with a mean trick / … : She practiced and did great pranks and murderous pieces on livestock and people. Just this year of 1590 the honorable Bishop also had many such women burned in Schwab-Memmingen, / which is located three miles from Augsburg.
Following this praiseworthy lord, the German Lord in Ellingen also added to these things and started to catch such godless witches and also (removed) many of them (from the midst of the community) in this ongoing year. …

This execution or extermination, however, had such a beginning: A poor maid who did not want to stay any longer in service to her lady of Ellingen had offered her service to another and also (placed herself into service) by the upcoming term of payment. When she came home again, indicated her intent and her lady became somewhat indignant about it, a neighbor lady, who was coincidentally present, punished the maid for it with words saying: she should not have done that from now on she will not have any more luck. The following night, the same neighbor came to the maid over her bed and gave her a pinch on the arm from which she immediately felt inhumanly great pains on the arm and she said that because the woman had spoken such words that she could not assume otherwise, than that she had visited her at night having given her the grip that she could not think otherwise, than that she had caused and inflicted on her such pains. When such things were brought to public attention the honorable lord caught and imprisoned her because she then not only admitted her own devilish sorcery but rather also revealed more of the same place among which was a rich noble widow, who previously had had the scribe/secretary of the same place for a husband, who had had a very respectable life and in appearance had led a Christian life.

The same woman after she was sentenced has come so far in the recognition of her sins that she recognized that such devilish acts would not be accepted because of that (she provided) as one could believably say from her possessions to the extermination of such witches 1,000 Gulden and to the poor people 400 Gulden. After that she was sent up in smoke alongside others from this Earth the same as just in the past month of May many of them there
were executed from life to death / always two bound to a column / under which they set tar
buckets with powder / that were lit / . Many also want to bear witness / that not five pious
married people remained in the whole of Ellingen: Because among all those / who were judged
there / there are few / who didn’t live in a home in Ellingen.

In the same way the Bishop of Eichstätt / of honorable memory / had four women burned/ /
the same as how 5 were killed on the 13th of July in Amberg in the Eichstetter Bishopric.

There were also many such women executed in Thonawerth / among which there was a
pharmacist (f.) / who poisoned the pharmacy canisters and gave the people poison instead of
medicine: as she then admitted / that she (gave) the abbot of Kaisersheim / as well as two men
from the monastery Thierhaubten / some of her medicine.

As well, half a mile from Elwangen such witches / that were bound with the devil / held a
dance / and a loose witch set up the daughter of her own flesh and blood with the devil and gave
her to him as a wife.

Furthermore, another 27 were captured there / from which on just the 21st of this month of
July 20 were burned / of whom one admitted / that she had killed 20 people. Another admitted
that she poisoned many there in Spring and made harmful fog for the fruits. This means that until
this date 69 women were burned in Ellingen alone. In Ellwangen, in many bowls, they boiled
snakes / toads / human bones / together with many spices / which they bury in houses and stables
/ and who then walked over there / people or livestock / became hunched and lame / of which
many of them became aware through unbearable pain / and they couldn’t be helped again until
their death. Furthermore, they also made a magical salve / the one on whom they rubbed it / he
(became) swelled up / lame / blind / or otherwise miserable.
But because it was revealed through an act of God / they were caught and imprisoned / and after they admitted to uncountable pranks and devilish things, / they were (punished with fire) together with their magical bowls / many of which, upon their indication, / were dug up / . Of those people there are firstly 12 / for the most part rich and respectable women / among which (there was) also a young boy / whom his own mother taught and deceived into such art.

Further, a witch was captured in Mergenthal / who admitted / that she had been practicing the devil’s art till the age of 41 / and with her lover the devil she interacted / and killed 87 children: she dried out the limbs of old people and made them weak: They also did not spare the young people / many of whom / they ruined and most of the time in weddings: In the same way, she admitted, smiling, / how she created great discord among the married people / (she ruined) much good corn and wine / together with other fruits. She was heard saying / that for 10 miles around Mergenthal / there was no pious midwife: Also, she famously testified: when so many men as well as women practice magic / they want to do so in public / without reservation / and they would like to see who would dare to prevent them from doing such a thing. This one was pinched with glowing tongs / had her right hand removed / and afterwards burned to powder.

Also, the wellborn Count of Oettingen / who lives in Wallerstein / had eight witches burned / among whom were two midwives / who had killed 140 children / whom were also pinched with tongs / robbed of their right hands and burned. From whose confessions one read for three hours / and these were nevertheless not half read.

In the same way in Westphalen / Sachsen / and other places many of these magical people were burned. In the electorate of Trier around 250 were executed. In a village by Trier so many women were burned / that no more than two / who were pious / remained.
On the Mosel lies a Monastery named Maxime; there they wanted on the first day of May to ruin corn and wine / in every place where it was not hindered. After this more were (captured) / as well as the innkeeper of the same village who also received the same punishment.

In the same way, the serene, highborn Prince and Lord / Lord Ferdinand / Duke of Bayern in Schongau on the Lech and otherwise in his shire had then 40 such women executed / among whom there was one / for whose release her husband paid 500 florin / to which she answered: Dear Husband / why would you charge yourself [with this]? I would let you live for another half a year / then I would kill you. When the man heard this / he didn’t want to ask about her anymore.

The same thing was done in Munich / with the permission of Duke Wilhelm / so that already many of them there were put in prison / among which an old woman / over 70 years old / [was taken] from the hospital / on the 15th day of June and was burned / who killed 60 young children: also (she touched) a respectable woman with her little cane / with which she walked // so that she had to die. She also injured a person of high status on an arm / so that it had to be broken and newly healed again. Following this, at the beginning of the month of July five of them were burned in Munich. Among which there was a well-known brewer / who apparently testified / how she and many hundreds with her (had bathed) / in the Mertzen beer / before she poured it / . She admitted the same of her flesh-and-blood daughter / who was just 12 years old / who was taken in (imprisoned) but sent back home again. In the same way, there was one among these who slaughtered her own biological child and used it for her devilish art.

There were also three caught in Freisingen / who testified and admitted: how they intentionally wanted to push the castle and the church there over the mountain / which they also then did / which those in Freisingen in the past year of 1589 became aware of because of damage
unfortunately on the mountain and this year also on the windows. Which is why they then on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of this past June were burned with fire with righteous judgement.

The same was done in Nördlingen on the reported day with four respectable women.

After the same day, 7 more were caught violently since then in Freisingen and on that they were also judged.

Also, the lords of Augsburg have had many of their wives apprehended.

In sum, there have been already in this year of 1590 many apprehended and burned here and there and should all of their testimonies be put together it would produce a large book.

This is however in sum their most distinguished confession: that they namely kill many of the young children, many old people, not only do they make them hunch and cause them great diseases, but they also completely kill them, among married people they create very great discord: (they spoil) the corn, wine and other fruits on the field: (They inflict great damage) on mankind with the spoiling of the useful livestock and the drinking up of the best wine.

Because of those women the high authorities not unfairly have to acknowledge this. Although many think, one should wait for their conversion, that, however, cannot very well be because they happen to be (rejected enemies) of God their creator and savior of all of those holy to God and of all other creatures. They even invest all of their abilities with spite how they could possibly inflict damage on mankind as well as the livestock and the dear fruits on the field according to the advice and the teaching of their master the devil. Because of that they are not unfairly exterminated according to the command of God.

This I have (gathered) in the shortest way as I found in part in the copy printed in Ulm in part saw myself and also heard from other trustworthy people so that it becomes more
likely that many guard themselves from it / and command themselves in the protection of the Almighty / and also in the power of the same / that they may be safe from such harmful people / and I ask the good-hearted reader / if he knows of a better and more extensive report / to share it with me. God, protect all pious hearts from suffering and pain. Amen.

First Printed in Ulm
Appendix II: “Erwøyttette Unholden Zeyttung” Transcription\textsuperscript{16}

Erwøyttette Unholden Zeyttung


Obwol der Mensch sein von Gott ihm eingepflantzte vernunft / nach den Geborten Gottes richten / die zu preiß und lob seines heiligen Namens / zu seinem selbst eygenen heil unnd zur wolfart seines Nechsten gebrauchen und anwenden soll: So lasset sich doch der Mensch von dem Teuffel also behören / das er sein klugheit und verstandt / mehr nach dem willen des Teuffels weder nach Gottes Gebott richtet / und will immerzu fürwitziger weiß / mehr suchen und erfahren / weder Gott befolhen hat.

Daher kompt es / das so vil leuth sich auff zauberey und Teuffels werck begeben / welches aber gantz wider Gottes Gebott ist / darumben auch Gott der Herr solche zauberische Künstler / inn dem Gesatz Mosis außtruckenlich gebeut / auß seinem Volck auß zureytten / und mit fewer zu verbrennen.

Dieweil dann zu unsern zeitten alle zaubereyen und Teuffels gespänst dermaßen über hand nemen / das schier alle Stadt / Märckt und Dörffer im gantzen Teutschland (will von andern völckern und nationen nicht reden) desselbigen unzifers und Teuffels dienern voll seindt / welche nicht allein die liebe frucht auff dem Feldt / die unß der Herr durch seinen segen wachsen lasset / mit ungewöhnlichen Donnern / Blitz / Schawr / Hagel / Sturmwinden / Reiffen / Wassernöthen / Meüsen / Gewürm / und was andere sachen mehr sein / soviel an

\textsuperscript{16} This transcription is mostly from the work of Wolfgang Behringer though some significant edits have been made.
ihnen / und ihnen Gott verhenget, durch deß Teuffels hilff und beystand / in den grundt zu
verderben sich unterstehen: Sondern auch dem Menschen sein nahrung durch verderbung des
Viechs / als Khü / Kelber / Pferdt / Schaff / und dergleichen zunemen unnd abzuspannen / nach
allem ihrem vermögen trachten / ja nicht das Viech und Frücht der Erden allein / sondern auch
ihrer nechsten und etwan gesipter Blutsfreundt / und daß wol zuerbarmen ist / der jungen und
ungetauften Kindlein nicht verschonen / sondern mit grosser anzal hinrichten / deren zarte
leiblein zu ihrer Zauber kunst und wolleben gebrauchen: Die alten leuth zu erkrummen / zu
erlamen / inn schmertzliche kranckheiten und endtlichen inn den Todt zubringen / allen Fleiß
anwenden / dadurch dann allerley jammer und noth under den Menschen erwachsen thut.

Weil dann diesem also / thut ein Obrigkeit löblich / wol / und nach Gottes befelch / da sie
solche Teuffels Kinder / die Gott und dem Menschen zuwider / und deren abgesagte Feindt sein /
von der Erden wegräumen / durch fewer unß schwert auß dem mittel nemen. Wiedann vor
etlichen wenig jaren der wolgeboren Graff von Wisensteig solches angefangen / und erst dieses
jar widerumb inn das werck gesetz hat.

Dergleichen hat auch der hochwürdige Fürst und Herr / Herr Marquart Bischoff zu Augs-
purg / vor zweyen jaren drey deren verruchten Weyber hinrichten unnd zu Dillingen verbrennen
lassen. Darunter ein Hebamm gewesen, welche über die hundert Kinder / als sievon Mutter Leib
empfangen / mit einem schelmen grifflin umb das Leben gebracht: Auch sonst an Viech unnd
Menschen grosse Büberey und mörtliche Stück geiebet und verbracht hat. Es hat auch
hochvermelter Bischoff erst dieses 1590. Jar sollicher Weiber etliche zu Scbwab Memmingen /
drey meil von Augspurg gelegen / verbrennen lassen.


Dieselbige nachdem sie verurtheilt worden / ist sie so weit zur erkendtniß ihrer sünden kommen / das sie erkennet / solchs Teuffelisches wesen nicht zugedulden / hat derwegen (wie man glaubwürdig sagen will) von ihrem Gut zu außrottung solcher Hexen / tausent / und armen Leuthen 400. gülden verortnet. Darnach ist sie neben andern in dem Rauch von diser Erden
geschickt worden / wie dann erst im verschienen Monat May / deren etlich da / alwegen zwo an ein saul gebunden / under sie Bechkübel mit pulffier zugerichtet gesetzt / angezüendet / und also vom Leben zum Todt hingerichtet worden sein. Es wollen auch etlich sprechen / das nicht fünff frommer Eheleut in dem gantzen Ellingen bliben seyen: Dann underallen denen / so man allda gericht / send deren wenig / welche nicht zu Ellingen mit Haß gesessen gewesen.


Als auch eine halbe meyl von Elwangen dergleichen Unhulden / so sich mit dem Teüffel verbunden / einen dantz gehalten / hat ein lose Hex ihr leib eygene Dochter dem Teuffel verkupplet und zum Weib gegeben.

werden. Über das haben sie auch ein zauberische salben gemacht / wen sie damit bestrichen / der ist auffgeschwollen / erlambt / erblindt / oder sonst elend worden.


Es hat auch der wolgeboren Graff von Oetting / zu Wallerstein wohnent / acht Unholden verbrennen lassen / under welchen zwo Hebammen gewesen / welche 140. Kinder
umm das Leben gebracht / die auch mit Zangen gezwickt / ihrer rechten Händ beraubt und verbrannt worden seindt. An deren urgicht man drey stund zu verlesen gehabt / unnd seind dennoch nicht halb verlesen worden.

Ebner massen seind in Westphalen / Sachsen / und andern ortten dieser Zauberischen Leuth viel verbrandt worden. In dem Trieischen Churfürstenthumb hat man bey 250. hingerichtet. Inn einem Dorff bey Trier seind so viel der Weiber verbrandt worden / das nit mehr als zwo / so fromb gewesen überbliben sein.


Dergleichen hat der durchleuchtig Hochgeborn Fürst unn Herr / Herr Ferdinandus, Hertzog in Bairn zu Schongaw an dem Lech gelegen unnd sonst in seiner Grafschaft mehr dan 40. solliche Weiber hinrichten lassen / under welchen eine gewesen / für welcher erledigung ir Mann 500. fl geben wollen / dem hat sie geantwort: Lieber Mann / was woltestu dich zeihen? ich liesse dich etwan noch ein halbes jar leben / so brächt ich dich dann umb. Da dis der Mann vernomen / hat er nach ir auch nimmer fragen wollen.

sind irer bey fünff en in München verbrandt worden. Under welchen ein wolbekante prewin
gewesen / die ausgesagt sol haben / wie sie und etlich hundert mit ir / in dem Mertzen bier / eh
sie dis ausgeschenckt gebadet habe. Sie bekennet auch auff ir leib eigene tochter / so erst 12. jar
alt / welche wol eingezogen aber doch widerumbern heim geschickt worden. Desgleichen ist
under diesen eine gewesen / welche ir leib eigen Kind geschlachtet und zu irer Teufflischen
kunst gebraucht hat.

Es sein zu Freysingen auch drey gefangen worden / welche außgesagt und bekannt: Wie
sie fursetzlich das Schlos und die Kirchen daselbst über den Berg haben abstürztz wöllen / das
sie dan auch in das Werck gesetzt / welches die von Freysingen vergangenes 1589. jars mit
schaden leider am Berg / und hewr auch an fenstern Innen worden. Darumb sie dann den 22 Junii
vergangen mit rechtem urthel mit Fewr verbrandt worden. Dergleichen hat man auch zu
Nördlingen auff gemeltem Tag mit vier ansehlichen Frawen gehandelt.

Nach denselbigen hat man auch Tetlich seythero zu Freysingen noch 7. gefangen /
darauff auch gerichtet worden sein.

Es haben auch die Herrn von Augsspurg deren Weiber etliche einziehen lassen.

In summa es seind in diesem 1590. jar schon vil hin und wider eingezogen und verbrandt
worden / solten alle ire aussagen beysamen seyn / es würde ein grosses Buch daraus werden.

Dis seind aber in summa ir fürnembste urgicht: das sie nemlich vil der Jungen Kinder
umb das Leben bringen / vil alter leut / nit allein erkrummen und inen grosse kranckheiten
verursachen / sondern auch gar umb das Leben bringen / under den Eheleuten gar große
uneinigkeiten anrichten: das Korn / Wein / und andere Frücht auff dem Feld verderben: dem
Menschen mit Verderbung des nützlichen Viechs und aussauffung des besten Weins / grossen
Schaden zufügen.


Erstlichen Gedruckt zu Ulm
Appendix III: “Warhafftige und wunderbarliche Newe Zeitung” Translation

True and wondrous news / of a farmer / who through sorcery / transformed himself into a wolf
for seven hours of the day / and how after that he was judged through the executioner of Cologne
/ last October in the year of 1589.

Four miles from Cologne well known /
Lies a little place named Bedbur
There a farmer was judged /
Who had a devilish way about him.
It is terrifying to hear /
This same man had a belt.
When he put it around his body /
He transformed himself immediately
Into the form of a gruesome wolf /
And ran like that into the woods.
Every day (his transformation) lasted for seven hours /
…As it is known.
Now (a farmer came) out of the woods one night /
… who became known to the wolf.
When the ravenous wolf endangered him /

The farmer very soon pulled out his sword
And cut off a paw from the wolf /
The wolf soon fled.
The farmer soon picked up the paw
Carried it home [and] told the story /
His neighbors wouldn’t believe it /
He wanted to pull out the wolf’s paw
But it had become the hand of a human
Understand, the wolf came home to his house.
And became very sick [and] laid himself in bed.
After that his neighbor visited him /
[And asked] what was [going on] with him and the heinous
Petter Stump soon spoke to him /
O neighbor, know that I /
Was the big wolf today by night /

Which had even attacked you /
And you cut off my hand
I ask you not to say anything about it
I have devoted myself to the devil
So that I intend to live with sorcery.
After the neighbor came home
He told his wife about it /
After that she also revealed it.
Till it was commonly known /
He, Petter Stump, was caught with eagerness in his bed
…
There they questioned him meticulously.
Then he said all this: /
I murdered thirteen children small
Among which was my own son

I ate and split their brains /
Along with that, I also killed three old people /
To the livestock, I was also harmful
I fornicated for twenty-five years
Even with an evil she-devil /
Who was my next-door neighbor
I have also slept with my daughter /
In reaction to this being the confession
He was placed on a wheel.
They gave him ten pinches in the end /
With an axe, I must say.
He had his hands and feet cut off
They cut off his head
And placed it high on a wheel /
They also put a wolf up there with him

Because he had led the life of a wolf /
After that, the body was burned
And also his daughter in the end
And his neighbor was also there.
They burned all three
Which to each should be an example /
To avoid such devilry /
Indeed, God’s judgment does not sleep.
As one writes the 89th year /
It happened last October
What one sees here in front of their eyes.
In Augburg / by Johann Negele document designer / 
in the little Saxon ally.
Appendix IV: “Warhafftige und wunderbarliche Newe Zeitung” transcription\(^\text{17}\)

Warhafftige vnd wunderbarliche Newe zeitung/von einem Bawren/
der sich durch Zauberey/deß Tags siben st(u)und zu einem Wolff verwandelt hat/vnd wie er
darnach gericht ist worden durch den Cölnischen Nachrichter/den letzen October im 1589. Jar.

Vier Mayl von Köln wohl bekannt/
Ein Flecken ligt Bedbur genandt.
Alda ein Bawr gericht wardt/
Der an sich het ein Teüflisch art.
Schröcklich ist es zu hören an/
Ein gürtel heet der selbig Man.
Wann er sie vmb seinen Leib thet/
Verwandelte er sich an der stedt
In eines grewlichen Wolffs gestaldt/
Vnd luff also hin in den Waldt.
All Tag vnd weret siben stund/
Sein verwandlung wie dann ist kundt.
Nun gieng eines Abents auß dem Wald/
Ein Bawr der wart dem Wolff bekand
In dem der Wolff fraßlich in geferd/

Gar bald der Bawr zucket sein Schwerdt
Vnd schlug dem Wolff ein Dapen ab/
Der Wolff gar bald die flucht gab.
Der Bawr hub auff den Dapen bald
Drug in bald heim sagt die geschicht/
Sein Nachbauren woltens glauben nicht/
Den Wolffs Dapen wolt er ziehen rauß
War eines menschen Hand worden drauß
Der Wolff kam heim zu hauß versteht.
Vnd wur gar kranck legt sich zu Beth.
Nach dem sein Nachbawr jn besucht/
Was jm da wär vnd der verrucht.
Petter Stump bald zu im sprach/
O Nachbawr wist das ist den Tag
Rechten der grosse Wolff war/

Der euch hat angeloffen gar/

\(^\text{17}\) This transcription has been obtained from the work of Elmar Lorey.
Vnd jr habt mir dhand abgeschlagen
Ich bit thut daruon gar nichts sagen
Dem Teüffel ich mich hab ergeben/
Das ich mit Zauberey mein leben.
Nach dem der Nachbawr heim kam
Sagt seiner Frawen auch daruon/
Die es auch darnach offenbart.
Biß das es gar lautbrecht wart/
In seinem Beth hat man jn gefangen
Den Petter Stump wohl mit verlangen
Da man jn peynlich hat gefragt.
Darauff ers solches alles sagt/
Ermord hab dreyzehn Kinder klein
Drundert den eygnen Sune mein

Ir Hirn gefressen vnd zerspalten/
Danneben vmbracht auch drey Alten/
Dem Vich ich auch gar scheidlich war
Gebult hab fünff vnd zweyntzig Jar.
Mit einer laidigen Teüfflin eben/
War mein Gefaterin darneben/
Hab bschlaffen auch die Tochter mein
Vnd auff solches die Vrgicht sein/
Hat man jn auff ein Rad gesetzt.
Zehen zwick gab man jm zu letz/
Mit einer Hacken muß ich sagen.
Thet man sein Händ vnd Fuß abschlagen
Den Kopff man jm abgeschlagen hat
Vnd steckt jn hoch auff ein Rad/
Ein Wolff macht man jm drauff eben

Weil er gefürt ein Wolff leben/
Darnach der Cölner man verbrendt
Vnd auch sein Tochter an dem endt
Vnd sein Gefater auch darbey/
Hat man verbrandt alle drey.
Welches yedem ein Exempel sey/
Zu meyden solche Teüffeley/
Gottes Gericht nicht schläfft fürwar
Als man schreibt 89. Jar/
Den letzten October ist geschehen
Was man hie thut vor augen sehen.

Zu Augsburg / bey Johann Negele Brief=
maler / im kleinen Sachsengäschlin.
Appendix V: “Erschröckliche und zuvor nie erhörte newe Zeitung” Translation

Shocking and never before heard news / how in the land of Jülich over three hundred women / bound with the devil / could transform themselves into a wolf’s form / and how many men, / boys, and cattle they killed / of whom then on the 6th day of May / in the year 1591 in Ostmilich / two miles from Jülich / 85 were punished with fire / Put in print for all pious women and girls as a warning and example.

Many strange and unheard-of things / 
Have been made public for a long time 
Still one has never heard of anything said 
Like what has been happening until recently. 
In the principality of Jülich / 
In many masses around / 
The devil set out / 
And delivered this quick trick / 
He addressed many women / 
[And said that] If each of them wanted 
To commit to him and obey him 
And associate with him alone / 
Then he would teach them such art 
That they would often be able to transform 
Into a wolf’s shape / in strength and nature. 
Like real wolves he had 
Brought together soon in this way 
More than three hundred young and old 
Girls as well as women / 
On a wide, green meadow 
He made it so that they then / 
Promised and bound themselves to him / 
And pledged (to cause) misery, fear, and distress / 
… / and even death 
Among the people / 
On such promises and commitments 
The evil ghost gave each one in particular 
A snakeskin with [the ability to cause] this miracle / 
As soon as they begirdle it 
They would have a wolf’s nature and shape. 
When they took it off from themselves 
They would return to being people.
Then he revealed to them /  
That each of them for twenty years  
Would promise and devote themselves to him /  
If in the meantime one among them  
Should die, she would from then on /  
Be his own in body and soul.  
And like that after their earthly deaths  
There they will rot eternally.  
The poor pack without thinking /  
Bound themselves to him in such a way.  
After that the devil disappeared from them  
Each of them transformed immediately  
Into a wolf’s figure / that (only pleased [as in it did not bother]) /  
all of them very much.  
One time (three waggoneers) came riding here /  
Without even [the intention to] fight  
The twenty-two horses / and two servants  
Were all badly ripped apart /  
Six Craftsman’s assistants around this time  
Were also turned to near Jülich  
By the violent wolves  
That ripped them apart / and after /  
They had sucked out their brains /  
They also ate their hearts, truly /  
There is one and a half miles from Jülich  
A small place named Ostmilich /  
In this village, the wolves have also /  
Ripped apart fifteen boys  
As well as thirty-four men /  
And have, in part, eaten their flesh.  
On a wide field by Keiserschwert  
One has also heard of wolves.  

Two butchers, well known there  
Had in the Westphalian country  
Bought 37 oxen /  
That they herded along to Jülich /  
The wolves dallied with them in a grizzly manner  
Ripping the men into five parts /  
As well as all of the oxen /
Also one saw after that time / 
Many wolves around the village of Düren / 
Which did damage aimlessly. 
In the night (they killed) fifteen men / 
And six boys 
From whom they sucked out the blood 
And also ate their good brains. 
Finally, it has come to the [light of] day 
The wolves deceit and the devils ruse 
Four children gathered in the village 
On a farm they are thinking about pastimes / 
The oldest runs quickly / 
Looks for a belt / he finds it somewhere else / 
The snakeskin / and begirdles it 
And soon he became a dumb wolf 
The children cry out with unrest 
The neighbors soon come running 
And want to beat the animal 
When the wolf begins to speak 
And he says: “Don’t be angry with me / 
I became a wolf because / 
Because my mother becomes a wolf daily / 
When she begirdles the snakeskin 
And runs out into the forest / 
Where she soon finds many wolves. 

They soon captured the mother/ 
And weighed her against meticulous questioning / 
And she soon admitted that / 
In the village there were another twenty-four 
Who all through the devil’s good will 
Had learned such art 
That’s why they (captured) all the women / 
At the same time 
The same women testified meticulously 
How they gruesomely 
Tore apart ninety-four men already / 
Because of that they gave them righteous judgement 
That one should upon their confession 
Burn them alive with fire.
The executioner binds them according to order /
Then came a strong wind /
And caused two of the women /
To instantly disappear there /
The devil had taken them /
And immediately tore them up there /
And the souls flee with him
To the source of eternal Hell.
The other women (took their end) through fire /
monstrously.
This is in short the lesson
Of the devilish story of the wolves.

G.D.

In Augsburg / by Georg Kress/ document designer in the Jacobian suburb, in Valentin Mayer’s house, in the bar / by the little bridge.
Appendix VI: “Erschröckliche und zuvor nie erhörte newe Zeitung” Original
Zu Augsburg, bey Georg Eber, 1569
in Jacobus Doylasch, bei Druck von Meyr
Bauß / Viersfelden, bey oem
Dietrich.