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Facial Disfigurement, Madness, and the Royal Touch in Early Modern Britain: Reconsidering Arise Evans [1](#)

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The Welsh-born prophet Arise Evans (c.1607–c.1665) was famous in mid-seventeenth-century London for publishing political predictions during the Civil Wars and Interregnum (1642–1660), and foretelling the Restoration of the monarchy. His historical reputation has been strongly influenced by his prophecies, his sometimes unusual behaviour, and his apparent indulgence by authorities, which led some contemporaries and later scholars to dismiss him as 'mad'. For his part, Evans consistently maintained that he was divinely inspired, and rejected any naturalistic interpretations of his visions. This article looks afresh at Evans' reputation for madness, and in particular how it affected his attempt to seek treatment for an upsetting facial disfigurement. Evans was born in Merionethshire (North Wales) in about 1607, and moved to London in 1629 after completing a tailoring apprenticeship. In 1660, Evans sought out the recently restored King Charles II in St James' Park to have the king touch his swollen nose. Contemporaries and historians have aligned this disfigurement with the King's Evil—a disorder that typically manifested in sores and swelling around the face and neck, and was supposedly cured with a touch from the divinely appointed monarch. Evans insisted that it *wasn't* the King's Evil, but he was convinced (and apparently correct) that the king's touch would fix it. He thus expanded Charles' curative potential at a crucial moment in his reign. Contemporary author John Aubrey provided a highly influential account of the scene that depicts Evans as a brusque and grotesque figure who thrust his foetid nose at the monarch. In stark contrast, Evans recorded a deferential interaction with the king. I argue that historians' focus on medicalised interpretations of Evans' mind and body have overshadowed Evans' own understanding and experience of facial disfigurement and seeing visions, and his resistance to naturalistic interpretations of his body and mind in favour of divine will. Moreover, we

have subsequently missed out on the utility of Evans' experience for understanding the variably disabling effects of physical and mental differences in early modern Britain.

In this article, I want to offer a fresh look at Evans' 'bodymind': that is, a holistic embrace of Evans' enmeshed physical and mental self. Though I borrow understanding of this perspective from Margaret Price and contemporary disability studies, it has also been long established by early modern scholars like Gail Kern Paster and Michael Schoenfeldt as the dominant way that early modern people understood their health, especially for those who held humoral imbalance responsible for everything from a cold, to wound inflammation, to anger. [2](#) The curative royal touch was itself interpreted by some as a physical manifestation of imaginative response and belief. [3](#) Religious interpretations also emphasised that God might manipulate the mind, body, and soul for diverse ends: illness and impairment were not ubiquitously seen as punishments for sin, but might convey messages to the individual or their community, be signs of His interest and thus love, spurs to humility, or even sites of potential miraculous cure. Conflicting interpretations abounded: as we will see, humoral explanations of mental disturbance were used to treat Evans, but he considered his visions divinely-inspired and that the people trying to stop them were "instrument[s] of the Devil". [4](#) I will be leaning into the sociocultural specificities of Evans' experience in mid-seventeenth-century London, as intersecting medical, religious, economic and other frameworks of incapacity and disability affected the practical circumstances of individuals and groups, *and* influenced their interpretations by others. I therefore approach Evans not only in the context of early modern religion and madness, but also as a vocal, political, Welsh, Royalist prophet who sought the royal touch from a newly returned king for a nasal swelling.

As such, this article answers the call of scholars like Chris Mounsey for close historicist analyses of disability that elucidate the contingent roles it has played and continues to play in society and culture. [5](#) While my first aim here is to provide a detailed understanding of Arise Evans in his specific historical moment, thus extending understanding of early modern facial difference and madness more generally, I argue that to do so will also provide fruitful material for scholars exploring the potentialities of disability across time and space. As such, I agree with Fuson Wang that deep historicist analysis of disability can provide "a welcome reminder to

interrogate the social and historical contingencies that foster [examples of] astonishing ableism". [6](#) Evans' exclusion for either sharing visions or his facial difference were by no means certain, nor could the same disfigurement today create a communal expectation of access to the British monarch. His experience is both utterly of its moment, and invites reflection on the conditions of our own.

Evans' reputation for instability, sometimes interpreted as madness, both restricted his practical access to medical care and tainted others' accounts of his encounter with Charles II. The thaumaturgical royal touch was an established and powerful belief, facilitated by formal ceremonies in which the monarch would lay their hands on the swellings of people suffering from the King's Evil and channel a curative power derived from their divine regality. Charles II would touch *thousands* of his subjects during his twenty-five-year reign, as he utilised the visual and symbolic power of the ceremony and popular belief in the touch to consolidate his divine authority after the Civil Wars (which had resulted in the execution of his father, Charles I, in 1649) and eleven years of republican rule. For Royalists and suffering believers like Evans, renewed access to the royal touch carried immense medical, political, social, and religious importance. Evans applied to Elias Ashmole for entry to the touching ceremony, but he denied him, "not thinking him a fit person to approach His Majesties Presence." [7](#) The touch is thus comparable to phenomena like Poor Law provision as a site for examining the relationship of health and disability to local and national authority.

I argue that Evans' facial difference was turned into a disability by a social and political exclusion that caused Evans to approach the King secretly, outside the formal touching ceremony, and to cover his face with a "Red Cloath" in public. However, I also argue that the Royalist Evans found agency and power in his disfigurement and rejection by pursuing the touch independently, and publishing an account of his condition and its royal cure as an act of service for his newly returned monarch. By embracing the position of a man disabled by others' reactions to his swollen nose, Evans turned Charles into an exceptional figure not only for his curing of the disfigurement, but more importantly for his grace toward a suffering subject. This parallels Evans' crediting of the foresight of authorities who heeded his published visions and rejection of naturalistic interpretations of them in the face of public laughter. In other words, Evans *participates* in his disabling

when to do so means that his impaired bodymind stands in flattering juxtaposition to that of the monarch. As such, he "constructs," in Allison P. Hobgood's words, "the disabled body, and its diverse rhetorical significations, against a dominant, able body that represents power, productivity, and longevity." [8](#) In a tense political moment, Evans offers his nose in the service of Charles II's divine body.

As Lennard Davis noted, "the body is never a single physical thing so much as a series of attitudes toward it." [9](#) For a historical figure like Evans, these attitudes have been constructed by his contemporaries and succeeding generations of researchers. Historian Christopher Hill and psychiatrist Michael Shepherd published an influential case study of Evans in 1976 arguing for the utility of intertwining current clinical information with detailed historical analysis. After assessing the "clinical data", especially Evans' own voluminous publications, Hill and Shepherd argued that Evans might have experienced "some form of severe mental illness in early life." They used his coherent writing style to argue that this only later shifted toward "abnormal personality", and Hill borrowed from George Rosen to conclude that Evans' ability to live an unstable life was assisted by the general instability of mid-seventeenth-century England and Wales. [10](#) While Evans was imprisoned on several occasions, he did not share the harshest punishments of other religious protestors like James Nayler or William Prynne, which included disfigurements like cutting the ears or nose, or branding the face, for blasphemy and seditious libel. [11](#) Hill concludes that Evans' reputation as "unbalanced" impeded his ability to recruit followers, and that this position as an "isolated individual" rendered him unthreatening to authorities. [12](#)

More recent historians of medicine and disability have highlighted the problems of retrospective diagnoses like that offered by Hill and Shepherd. [13](#) Other historians have pointed at Hill's assessment of Evans as mentally ill to ask whether he can therefore provide the snapshot of the "(relatively) common man[']s]" religious and political beliefs that Hill claimed. [14](#) Further scholars have pointed out the intellectual losses produced by this pathologizing reading. E. Pearlman, though apparently concurring with Hill and Shepherd's view of Evans as "lunatic", identifies their assessment as "an essentially agnostic study," which takes for granted an impossibility of divine inspiration. [15](#) Richard H. Popkin highlights that Evans' dialogue with Portuguese rabbi Menasseh ben Israel

(1604–1657) in 1655, which he published as *Light for the Jews* (1656), "has been used by Christopher Hill and David Katz to show how crazy Arise Evans was" while disregarding the account's utility for hearing ben Israel's thoughts or this rare example of Jewish-Anglican dialogue. [16](#) Jerome Friedman highlights the rarity of Evans' presentation of predictions based on his own visions, rather than the interpretation of astrology or ancient authorities. [17](#) Most recently, Bernard Capp has provided a brilliant new contextualisation of Evans' political role alongside fellow Royalist prophets John Sanders and Walter Gostelo. [18](#) Katharine Hodgkin notes of Hill and Shepherd's article and other studies of religious imagination as madness that "the relationship between religion and mental disorder in early modern England is close and troubling; it is also clearly still unresolved." [19](#) While unable to 'resolve' this conundrum, this article contributes to our understanding of it by drawing together the diverse intersecting facets of Arise Evans' health and wider experiences that have been separated out in other studies. Recuperating Evans from ableist dismissal provides an exciting example of the potentiality of previously overlooked disabled witnesses for historians of all subjects. I echo Hill in crediting Evans as a useful witness to the tumultuous events of his day, but I take my recuperation of him further by using the insights of critical disability studies to prioritise Evans' agency, his own experiences and perceptions of his mental state, and its relationship to intersectional points of facial difference and disability in his lifetime.

Early Modern Disability and the Face

Arise Evans' story provides an excellent case study for understanding early modern disfigurement and disability. I follow approaches to disability that recognise the construction of all bodies—taking the *homo debilis* engagement with 'dis/ability', for example, that forms of embodiment encompassing 'ability' and 'disability' cannot be understood or analysed separately. [20](#) While accounting for historical and geographical specificities, historicist studies of disability before 1800 are challenging assumptions about disability within industrialised and late-capitalist modernity, and contesting histories of disability that posit normalisation as a structuring condition only from the nineteenth century onwards. [21](#) Such studies instead explore the structuring of beliefs about bodies and minds and the limits of their 'natural' expressions on their own historic terms. [22](#) This is of course alongside a voluminous established historiography of madness,

monstrosity, medicine, and related phenomena. This examination has been particularly marked for stage representation, and these studies of facial masking, disfigurement, and disability greatly enrich our understanding of the important role that the representation and spectacle of visible impairments played in this period. [23](#) Our understanding of the early modern face in relation to gender, race, class, and other dimensions, can be further enhanced by heeding Douglas C. Baynton's and Catherine Kudlick's calls for disability to provide an equally important 'category of historical analysis'. [24](#) In Protestant early modern Britain there was an understanding of all bodies as imperfect, post-Fall, and an inheritance of spiritual approaches to infirmity that Edward Wheatley conceptualised as a medieval 'religious model' of disability. [25](#) Nevertheless, there was a hierarchizing of bodily imperfections, and an impetus toward medical care to balance and rectify significant aberrations that speak to quasi-medicalized approaches.

The variably disabling effects of facial difference are being explored in an increasing range of contemporary and historical contexts. [26](#) I follow Evans himself in describing his changed face as 'disfigured', but do so informed by calls from groups such as Changing Faces for greater education about visible difference, and ultimate aims of 'face equality.' [27](#) Few early modern Londoners could expect to have entirely clear skin, or all of their teeth, and many carried scars of injuries or infectious diseases like smallpox and scrofula. Yet significant facial difference was remarked upon, people covered burns and scars, and surgeons and physicians made efforts to minimise the scarring possible through injuries or their own treatments. [28](#) Publicly inflicted facial disfigurements were established judicial punishments, utilising the power of communal shaming alongside pain to permanently punish transgressors. [29](#) Oliver Cromwell famously (albeit perhaps apocryphally) took a 'warts and all' stand against idealised contemporary portraiture, while his enemies linked his bulbous nose to class ridicule. [30](#) The face's importance in this period cannot be understated.

Evans' Mind

Evans' experience of facial disfigurement in 1659–1660 must be understood within the long-term story of his bodymind. This included both physical and alleged mental impairments. Decisions about physical

incapacity to support oneself and one's household by labour were the most formalised bureaucratic settings in which 'disability' was assessed and constructed during this period, such as in Poor Law assessments, or petitions for support from men (and some women) injured during the Civil Wars. [31](#) In 1652, in his late forties, Evans already referred to himself as "old, not able to labour... and that nature decayeth, and sicknes increaseth, that my life is a burthen to me", which might suggest physical impairment. [32](#) He lost employment and even lodgings following some of his more dangerous proclamations, but he also mentions receiving some private financial support for his publications, many of which had been privately printed and sold at his own house in Long Alley in Black Friars. After the Restoration, Evans published a tract addressed to Charles II detailing his loyal service during the Interregnum. This had included publishing prophecies of the king's return, which he snuck into the hands of Cromwell and other Parliamentarians, as well as regular soldiers and citizens. He admits in the pamphlet that he needs financial support, as "I am old, and so weak for the want of outward comforts, that I am not able to work if I had it." Evans emphasises that "*Gods providence*" has brought him to a physical incapacity that disables him from labour, leaving him dependent on Charles' "Grace, as a child is left to his Fathers care, for food and rayment." [33](#) Evans' appeal to Charles for assistance for both money and the specific benefits of his touch were part of his "economy of makeshifts": a lifetime's intermittent reliance on formal and informal community support that fit alongside his tailoring work and selling of pamphlets. [34](#)

'Madness' in the early modern period was not an entirely medical or secular phenomenon. Multifarious explanatory frameworks—divine, naturalistic, magical—were accepted without necessary privileging or precluding any others, though these competitions were crucial for developing bodies such as the Royal College of Physicians. [35](#) Lionel Laborie discusses the overlapping physiological and supernatural understandings and experience of religious enthusiasm, with the naturalisation of this mindset gaining traction from the seventeenth century and medicalisation in the eighteenth. [36](#) Evans' descriptions of his reception highlight the tension between explanations for religious visions: he speaks of people "that slight my Revelations, saying, they are but fancies and the fruit of a distempered brain." [37](#) These are naturalistic diagnoses, which conflict with Evans'

understanding of the visions as divinely inspired, and his persecution as traditional for prophets. [38](#) Unsurprisingly, competing interpretations of men like Evans as divinely inspired, demonically possessed, mad, or fraudulent often fell along political lines. [39](#) The political figures who received Evans, and perhaps many of his readers, evidently entertained the possibility that his messages were more than the products of a 'distempered' mind, and this increased as individual prophecies came true. But many people treated Evans as mad, and this affected his health, career, and historical reputation.

Evans began experiencing visions when he was about fourteen. They intensified after he moved to London in his early twenties (1629), convincing him of imminent danger to the monarch and the kingdom. He later professed that they came with such amplitude that he could not resist sharing them with others, though it resulted in

many look[ing] upon me as a distracted man in regard of the impossibility of such alterations, and the desperate boldness of my affirmation, therefore they did fear to commune with me, or hear these things from me, and accounting it a delusion, forbid me their houses, and those with whom I constantly wrought would not now imploy me, so that now I was forced to seek for new Masters. [40](#)

In such circumstances, some "honest meaning" friends convinced him to stop spreading his prophecies, except among "some special friends that will take it well of you", and he did so temporarily. In this we can see the personal mediations that people could use to support friends to remain safe and at liberty in their communities. But a new vision in Evans' workplace chastised him for this silence: "I beheld the Angel of the Lord all in white, stood upon the shop-board with a flaming sword in his hand ready to destroy me." [41](#) At this point he actually travelled to Greenwich to deliver his written prophecies to Charles I. He later claimed not only to have delivered his writings to the king, but that "many times I have been at his house, and spoke with him" though he emphasised that he had not received any money or hospitality. [42](#) At this point, Evans implies that such support would have compromised him as an independent vehicle for divine messages. Writing within the republican period, this strengthens his position, but it also highlights Evans' later need to explicitly appeal for

financial help from Charles II on the basis of his loyal service and increased physical incapacity.

Prophecy and disability have well-developed historiographic and cultural affiliations, and hagiographies are being fruitfully reconsidered as evidence for historical understandings and experiences of disability. ⁴³ Evans himself published a pamphlet offering the "very sensible & profound" words of a woman from Cranleigh, Surrey, named Elinor Channel, for whom visions for Cromwell and the parliament came at the expense of periodic muteness. A range of female prophets were active during the Civil Wars and Interregnum, finding levels of access to political discourse and spaces that were atypical for women. ⁴⁴ Evans describes Channel's sensory impairment as a temporary exchange, as "when she is Dumb, all her senses are taken up, and then the matter which troubles her mind, is dictated and made plain to her by the Spirit of God." ⁴⁵ Her speechlessness apparently arrived after her first vision, after her husband refused to let her travel to London to spread the word: as Hilary Hinds notes, Channel's divine speechlessness is framed as not only a sign of Godliness but also "docile femininity." ⁴⁶ Evans cites 1 Corinthians 1:27–19, positioning Channel in her incapacity and himself by extension as interlocutor, as among the "weak" and "base" things of the world that will "confound the wise" and the "mighty." ⁴⁷ He says that beadle "dragged her to Bridewell [Hospital]" because "she stood mute [in Fleet Street] for a long while." ⁴⁸ Channel was turned away immediately and "the wanton mad crew... flocked about her and abused her, "until they evidently grew bored and left her in the streets around Bridewell until nightfall: "what is become of her since, God knows, we hear nothing more of her." ⁴⁹ Evans' compassion for Channel was perhaps enhanced by their shared experiences of disabling prejudice, which their genders, status, and social networks would allow them to negotiate very differently.

Early modern Britons understood themselves intersubjectively—their reactions to their own and others' differences are framed by their familial, cultural, social, political, and religious relationships, which is also why Evans felt compelled to share his warnings to the country in spite of personal peril. Internment in Bridewell (or worse) was the sort of fate that Evans' "honest meaning" friends tried to save him from by discouraging his proselytising, but which London visitor Channel did not have the community support to resist. In his late twenties, Evans returned to Wales to spread his

prophecies among family and countrymen (June, 1634). Here, different ideas of community protection prevailed: people who were convinced that Evans' visions were the result of "Frenzy" persuaded his mother and stepfather to have him temporarily confined, to stop him spreading "high treason" and "bring[ing] shame to them." [50](#) Evans and his elder brother, Owen, decided that it was actually by acceding to the "ignorant" and incarcerating Arise that their mother had invited ridicule on the family. [51](#) Evans later recognised that his wife and children "could not go no where, but we were mocked and despised" after his forecast that Charles II would return in 1653 failed to materialise. [52](#) In Evans' accounts, we thus see how his prophecies affected all those close to him.

The Welsh crowd's explanations for Evans' mental state are somatic. As a young man he naturally possesses the vigour of warm blood, but now it is excessive: "his blood boileth in his Veins" and must be rebalanced. [53](#) Evans insists that this diagnosis was only given after they had first recruited "the most ableist Ministers in those parts to confer with me," and that he displayed "so much reason that no reasonable man could with reason contradict me in what I did affirm." [54](#) His repetition of 'reason' further condemns those who read him medically as 'mad' as, in fact, ignorant yokels. He frames the locals' remedies as naturalistic rather than with any sense of exorcism: they resolve to keep Evans from sustenance and sleep in order to make him "weak" and "come to himself", and do so for three days in total. [55](#) Evans, in contrast, sees the man charged with guarding him as "a Witch, and an instrument of the Devil", and employs a folk remedy of drawing a drop of the guard's blood with some broken window glass in an attempt to overcome him. It is unclear if the guard perceived witchcraft, but Evans assures us that his refusal to return to his post after the incident was considered an overreaction by onlookers, suggesting that the guard's interpretation of the incident and the crowd's rationalisation of it were at odds. Evans also laments that "they took my Bible and all comforts from me." [56](#) While he saw this as a spiritual deprivation, it is likely that the Bible was removed because reading such engaging matter was thought to contribute to his overstimulation. He is also explicit about his divine preservation in the face of hunger, as God envelops him for fifteen minutes in a reviving rainbow-coloured cloud.

Although Evans considered the town's interpretation and treatment of his visions entirely misguided, their reactions and his Wrexham internment do

offer a glimpse of how madness was understood and handled in early modern Wales. This is important because Welsh experiences are regularly passed over in 'British' studies. [57](#) Evans is simply shut up in "a Chamber", suggesting the absence of any private madhouse in the area. [58](#) With the option of longer affliction, lunacy was generally regarded as a temporary state within which the individual was deserving of personal and legal protection. Their property was to be protected, their family supported, and they could not enter into contracts including marriage. [59](#) If the family's actions can be read as their genuine attempt to protect and *treat* Evans, it is not'ble that no one appears to have offered such medical assistance to him in London, and speaks to the importance of social networks in accessing—or being subjected to—treatment.

Evans recalls an incident immediately following his internment and release that further illuminates the tension between his family's concern and his desire to share his divine insights. One busy market day in Wrexham, as a "renowned man preached," Evans was filled with a need to warn the crowd of the imminent divine judgement. But he had promised his mother that he would not discuss his prophecies, perhaps as a means of escaping confinement. Evans arrived at an ingenious solution: "I went to the Market and bought me an earthen Platter, and came with it to Church, and when the Sermon was ended the People ready to depart, / flung up the Platter, which fell in pieces upon the stones, and said, Thus shall *England, Scotland, and Ireland* come to ruine." Evans emphasises that this was a deliberate and effective course of action, that "I knew the People upon this would inquire what I was, and that the Towns people who heard me before gave notice to the strangers of all that I had declared." [60](#) R. Geraint Gruffydd suggests that the interrupted preacher may have been the local puritan curate Walter Cradock (1610?-1659), who had already been dismissed from St Mary's church, Cardiff, for his schismatic views. [61](#) Evans' action was thus a carefully stage-managed theft of the limelight from a popular preacher on a different side of the period's complicated religiopolitical prism, and born of conviction in his own superior insight. There is evidence that his family and friends soon thought him 'well' despite such actions, since he was allowed to marry a local woman before his return to London in April 1635.

Hill represents Evans' London encounters with Charles I, Cromwell, and Charles II as part of a pattern of antisocial, even mad impositions on

others. There were a number of occasions and processes by which people of different ranks could gain direct access to the monarch. Evans was also not the only one to attempt to catch the king off-guard: London housewife Lucy Evans wrapped a handwritten message of confession and providence around a stone and threw it at Charles I's feet at one of the special outdoor sermons at Whitehall (Palm Sunday, 1626), while surgeon John Browne includes several examples of people shouting to Charles II to get his attention for a healing touch. [62](#) Judaist John Traske (c.1585–1636) thought himself capable of miracles, and in a neat reversal of the royal touch sought access to James I in order to cure him of his gout (and convert him, for which he was punished for sedition). [63](#) The manner and motive for approach, more than the fact, were what mattered.

Re-examining some of Evans' interactions highlights the variability of mind and outlook that could be accommodated in different religious and social circles. Evans speaks of calling on Cromwell in 1646 and speaking with him and Henry Ireton "untill midnight, and [we] could hardly break off then." [64](#) Margaret Ezell highlights Evans' use of printed, public petitions to Cromwell when his personal access to deliver a handwritten petition was temporarily cut off. [65](#) In around 1650 Evans accompanied his acquaintance Peter Chamberlain (1601–83), Charles I's physician-in-ordinary, to his Baptist congregation. In Evans' opinion he "offended" the group sufficiently with arguments that "they forbad me to come among them." [66](#) But he evidently retained some attachment to the group, since their records date "Arise Evans wholly forsaken the Faith" only on 1 January 1654. [67](#) This suggests capacity to maintain a connection in spite of his forcible disagreements, and an inclination toward personal and spiritual tolerance among that congregation.

Contemporaries substantiate Evans' regret at a mixed reception, including that "my words by some were counted ridiculous." [68](#) He was arrested in London in late 1635 and imprisoned for two years, and spent other periods in Bridewell and Newgate. In recalling a 1646 internment, Evans simply gloated that his Presbyterian enemies had not succeeded in casting him as sufficiently mad to be put instead in Bedlam. [69](#) Fellow Royalist prophet Walter Gostelow (1604–1662?) attested in 1655 that he had met Evans several times and discussed his visions and the success of his prophecies, swearing that he was a "good man (other I cannot call him) [who] hath for [the people's] good indured so much, and almost worn himself out... Too

many of you miscalling him Mad, Foolish, Babbling mistaken fellow." Gostelow assures his readers that Evans has indeed been entrusted with the truth by God, offering the irrefutable logic that if Evans was deceived, so must he be. [70](#) Also at about this time, Robert Loveday (1620/21–1656) wrote to his brother Anthony from London that he was "acquainted with a Welsh Prophet here, one E.", whose "saucy" petitioning of Cromwell's council for the return of Charles and his threat that "disobedience" would lead to their "utter destruction" left Loveday surprised that "this man has not only scap'd hitherto with impunity, but they say is privately cajold by some Starres of magnitude." This suggestion that "Starres" continued to seek out Evans' insights and protected him from arrest is amplified by Loveday's admission that many of his predictions had eventuated, so that his reputation had grown. Though he, perhaps like many Londoners, had initially read Evans' works "for nought but sport," he offers to send his brother a collection of them bound together, and adds that given the success of his predictions "he is not half so much laugh'd at as he was at first." [71](#) Some of Evans' texts were published in Dutch translation and even inspired pirate versions, testifying to his marketability.

There does not appear to have been contemporary suspicion that Evans was fraudulent. Instead, most placed him among the many visionaries of the period who genuinely believed themselves divinely inspired. [72](#) A possible exception is Royalist author Fabian Philipps (1601–1690), who in 1663 described Evans as "that pittiful pretender to Prophetie and Revelations." [73](#) After his death, Evans' writings continued to invite speculation about the nature of his visions as fraudulent, divine, or medical, as witnessed in letters between ecclesiastical historian John Jortin and William Warburton (later Bishop of Gloucester) in the 1750s, and roundly denounced by Arian churchman Henry Taylor in the 1770s. [74](#) Jortin describes Evans as a "strange fellow," but includes Warburton's defending letter with extracts from Evans' writing and a justification of his prophecies as an appendix. [75](#) Nineteenth-century interpretations of Evans' visions privileged physiological over divine explanations. [76](#) Manchester physician John Ferriar rationalised Evans' visions by suggesting possible influences like Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and that he gently "juggled" his pamphlets' publication dates to make them appear prophetic. [77](#) Evans' experience and shifting diagnostic fate provides a fascinating case study for the reception of mental illness in early modern England and Wales and for the

medical historiography of later periods, and will no doubt continue to do so. They also impacted his ability to access other medical care, and his conceptualisation, experience, and representation of his temporary facial disfigurement.

A (Mad) Welshman in London

Evans' reception and representation were inflected by his Welshness, and he offers further scope for discussion about disability and ethnicity within the early modern British Isles. [78](#) Evans' birthname was Rhys, and may have been mispronounced by his English listeners to give him his nickname, although Evans publicly attributed it to a former Welsh master, Hugh Jones. [79](#) After Evans' tailoring apprenticeship he joined his mother and stepfather in Wrexham, but he admits that his "heart was for London." When the Wrexham puritan and nonconformist preacher Oliver Thomas (1598–1652) gave a sermon on the Song of Solomon, Evans therefore took the phrase "Arise up my love, my fair one, and come away," as a personal instruction to travel. [80](#) From 1629 he spent most of his life in London, and Hill thus assigned him a small role in "*English* history." [81](#) But his writing continued to link back to Wales, he still spoke (but didn't write in) Welsh, he returned intermittently, and his reception was inflected by wider Anglo-Welsh tensions of the period. He was also part of a growing Welsh community in the capital: throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there were "far more" Welsh emigrants in London than in any single town in Wales. [82](#)

In displacing the Welsh-heritage Tudors, the Scottish Stuart dynasty represented a significant challenge to Welsh political influence. James I attempted to strengthen ties by investing first his eldest son, Henry Frederick (1603–1612), and then his younger, Charles, as Prince of Wales, and the future Charles II received a rousing welcome when he visited Wales as Prince in 1642. [83](#) M. Wynn Thomas, taking Hill and Shepherd's "lunatic" diagnosis based on a modern psychiatric reading as "plausible," nevertheless argues for "a significant cultural component to [Evans'] derangement," since his writing displayed Welsh jockeying for influence "in all its embarrassing nakedness." [84](#) The Welsh sided overwhelmingly with Charles I during the wars, and a socially-forward, ardently Royalist Evans would have fit relatively neatly with the stereotype of the Welsh as conservative, uncouth rustics that proliferated in innumerable anti-Welsh

pamphlets. [85](#) Evans' interpretation of Welsh landscape terms for his English-speaking readers parallels his explanations of his visions, closely implicating his powers of insight with his Welsh-speaking. [86](#) The latter could also be used against him. When Cardiff-born Presbyterian minister Christopher Love (1618–1651) visited Evans in Newgate, he gave Evans some beer and spoke Welsh with him, "so that I [Evans] thought some special friend was come to visit me." [87](#) It took the keeper to reveal that this was dissimulation by religious opponents, using Welsh to try to trick Evans into an incriminating slip.

Evans and the Royal Touch

It is clear from Evans' experience in London after the Restoration of the monarchy that simply being proved right was not enough to overcome the exclusion produced by an accumulated reputation for madness. But the dramatic change in political circumstances did have a significant effect on the disabling effects of both the Welshman's behaviour, and a developing facial disfigurement. Evans' nasal swelling is commonly linked to the King's Evil, and his encounter with Charles II is a standard inclusion in histories of that disease and the Royal Touch. [88](#) Evans *doesn't* classify his ailment as the King's Evil, instead remarking that "I nor any other can give a reason for it, but this, that it's a Sign of God." [89](#) But he did become convinced that the king could cure it, and his publication of the King's success extended the power of Charles' healing touch in the crucial period immediately following the Restoration.

The King's Evil, or *morbus regius*, is now commonly glossed as scrofula—a form of tuberculosis usually transmitted by consumption of unpasteurised milk containing the tubercular bacillus and primarily associated with swellings in the lymph glands of the neck. [90](#) The disfiguring effects of the Evil were widely acknowledged: surgeon Thomas Fern wrote in 1709 how "the *Scrofula*, of all other Distempers, takes [i.e. attracts] the *Eye* soonest, and is the most disagreeable Sight in Society: an ugly offensive Distemper, that often hinders People from appearing abroad in Publick; which for that Reason, they most of all covet the *Cure* of, to be like other Persons in open View." [91](#) This is a strikingly explicit acknowledgement of the disabling effects of visible difference, as Fern asserted that people hid themselves from view, and sought treatment to restore a normative appearance. Of course, Fern might be employing some hyperbole for the sake of his

medical practice, where a curative paradigm served his economic need to sell his "digestive balsam," a cure "*wrought with my own Hands.*" [92](#) But Evans was not alone in either covering his face or going to significant trouble to seek a cure for the Evil. Much has been written about the changing and contentious understandings and uses of the curative royal touch by medieval and early modern monarchs, politicians, medical practitioners, and others. [93](#) In moving between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' understandings of the cure, these studies have given us both the high politics of the monarchy, and the importance of the popular medical, religious and political understandings that empowered this ritual. Nevertheless, there are few first-person accounts from the touched about their experience of the cure or living with the disfigurement, giving Evans' testimony added value and increasing the need to engage with him more generously.

Tudor and Stuart monarchs participated in the royal touch to varying degrees through to Queen Anne (d. 1714). It carried similar resonance to the monarch's washing of paupers' feet during the Maundy Thursday service, which ended with William III (d. 1702). [94](#) Just as that ceremony emphasised subjects' visible poverty to show the monarch's grace and beneficence, so the touching ceremony platformed highly visible disabled bodies for political spectacle and authority. As Wheatley and Henri-Jacques Stiker have argued in relation to the medieval church, the monarch who could perform a miracle and the ill subject who received it were part of a mutually beneficial "system of exchange." [95](#) Charles I had never been a very enthusiastic participant in touching ceremonies, but is supposed to have embraced it more vigorously when in Parliamentary custody, to the extent that his guards at Holdenby House (February–June 1647) nicknamed him 'Stroker,' and parliament voted to prepare a declaration repudiating the practice. [96](#) Andrew Lacey argues that Charles I increasingly appreciated the power of his touching interactions with common people and their relationship to popular royalism. That he continued to do so despite his imprisonment and discomfort could attest to the depth of care toward his subjects, the power of the cure for signalling his link with God, and the capacity for his healing touch to transcend personal deprivations. [97](#) Rumours that Cromwell had tried and failed to heal by touch were repeated gleefully by royalists. [98](#) Forms of non-royal cure by touch were supported: Quaker founder George Fox (1624–1691)

not only professed to having visions, but also to performing at least 150 cases of miraculous healing, and the 'Irish Stroker' Valentine Greatrakes (1629–1683) became famous in Ireland before causing a stir for touching in London in 1666. [99](#) But the monarchical hand literally reigned supreme.

The formal touching ceremony was orchestrated for maximum royal spectacle. Elizabeth Lane Furdell argues that it was no coincidence that Elizabeth I dismissed the custom of distributing cramp rings in closed ceremonies while retaining the powerfully public spectacle of the royal touch. [100](#) The restored Charles II recognised the value of the service for reuniting him with the nation, and touched over 96,000 people during his reign. [101](#) His sergent-surgeon John Browne published an extensive discussion of the Evil that Lacey argues was intended to support the King and his brother James through the 1679–81 Exclusion Crisis, where members of parliament unsuccessfully attempted to block the Catholic James from the succession (he became James II in 1685). [102](#) The touching ceremony usually took place in the spectacular Banqueting House at Whitehall Palace, with a complex arrangement of participants, spectators and liturgical components, and was one of the key rituals that made manifest the divine powers and authority of the monarch. The ceremony's scale is foregrounded in the frontispiece illustration of Browne's treatise, centering the serene monarch among a sea of the great and the ill. In 1660 there was a backlog of applicants, and Charles II's reign was marked by an increasing bureaucratisation of the ceremony. Generally, people had to receive a certificate from their parish minister that they had the Evil and had not been touched before, before travelling to London for another inspection by the sergent surgeon, who provided a ticket of admission to a forthcoming ceremony. In 1660, this was John Knight (1622-1680). Knight opened his home to applicants every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon after Charles had set aside every Friday and then Wednesday for the ceremony. [103](#) At the service, prayers were said, and everyone received a gold Angel coin or 'touch-piece.' John Evelyn recorded that on Good Friday 1684, "There was so greate & eager a concourse of people with their children, to be touch'd of the *Evil*, that 6 or 7: were crush'd to *death* by pressing at the *Chirurgons* doore for Tickets, &c.". [104](#) While the Hanoverians from George I onwards dismissed the touch, some Britons and other Europeans pursued the exiled Jacobite court for their touch in the eighteenth century, and continued to support the power of the royal touch

into the nineteenth. [105](#) Just as competing interpretations for Evans' visions abounded, there were an increasing range of explanations for previously 'miraculous' phenomena like the touch, as religious reasoning jostled with but did not succumb entirely to rationalist theories born from the new natural philosophy. [106](#) So too, Simon Werrett notes, after the Restoration, "the discourse of divine kingship became one amongst many languages of power, no longer a natural or revealed mythology but an ideology designed to persuade." [107](#) Thus, the thaumaturgical touch was recruited to support this challenged explanation for monarchical authority, with Charles as the healer of the body politic.

Other medical treatment for the Evil was not unusual; however, the case notes of men like Joseph Binns (surgeon at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London) may indicate that such options were more common during the Interregnum, when a king was unavailable. Stephen Brogan highlights similar emphasis on medical options in a 1602 work by Elizabeth I's serjeant-surgeon William Clowes, who was eager to ease the elderly queen's workload. [108](#) Binns treats the afflictions very topically, opening swellings with a caustic or less often a lancet before using poultices of drying medicaments and bandages. In contrast to Fern's claims, Binns' cases show some individuals living with the visible swellings and tumours for some time, and only seeking out his assistance when they become sore or start weeping. Binns provides a detailed treatment account for Mrs Elisabeth Barker's "Scrophulous Tumors in the Necke" between 1655 and 1659. Finally, at the end of the Interregnum, and perhaps seeing insufficient progress in her case after four years, Binns records as a final note—with a hint of pique—that "She was after Touched by y^e Kinge." [109](#) So, Evans was not the only one for whom the return of the king as conduit of the thaumaturgic touch provided hope of both cure and the potential to offer their bodies in service to the new monarch. Evans gives no indication that he entertained any somatic understandings of his disfigurement or sought any other treatments: his interpretation of his disfigurement is entirely religious.

John Aubrey (1626–1697) includes his account of Evans' cure by the king within a chapter of "*Miranda*" (literally, 'worthy of admiration or wonder'), nearly all of which are cures wrought by specific forms of touch. The case of antiquary William Backhouse (1593–1662) parallels Evans for the disabling potential of facial difference in this period. According to

Backhouse's 'adopted son' and alchemical protégé, Elias Ashmole (1617–1692), Backhouse "had an ugly Scab that grew on the middle of his Forehead, which had been there for some Years, and he could not be Cured." [110](#) Jennifer Speake's biography of Backhouse records him as having an "outwardly obscure and uneventful" life, but as being a well-regarded figure among men in his field. [111](#) It's possible that his facial difference may have contributed to this retirement and obscurity, as Ashmole remarks that "it became so nauseous, that he would see none but his intimate Friends." Nevertheless, Backhouse took an annual summer trip to see "Cathedrals, Abbeys, Castles, &c.", and one year was visiting Peterborough. He had a dream in which "he was in a Church and saw a Hearse, and that one did bid him wet his Scab, with the drops of the Marble." Visiting the Cathedral the next day, he indeed saw a black fabric hearse draped over the coffin of Katharine of Aragon (long dead). He subsequently dipped his finger in some dew on a nearby marble gravestone and wet his scab, which was "perfectly Cured" seven days later. [112](#) Neither Backhouse's forehead scab or Evans' "fungous Nose" are described as the King's Evil, though both are cured by royalty: Evans by the direct touch of Charles II, and Backhouse by a more distant proximity to Katharine of Aragon. Evans and Backhouse give us glimpses of the lived experiences of facial disfigurement in this period, beyond medical intervention, as both altered their public behaviour as a means of negotiating their visible difference. Crucially, Backhouse's reclusiveness is not driven by the same political tensions or reputation for mental instability that affected Evans: instead, his case serves to reiterate the role of personal shame and embarrassment in turning visible difference into a disabling condition affecting full access to social life. As we will see, Ashmole would play a key role in Evans' experience too, obstructing his access to the king. As such, the juxtaposition of Backhouse's and Evans' experiences of similar physical symptoms demonstrate the contingency of disability from facial disfigurement, which must be taken into account in all historicist analysis.

Evans' Face

In 1659, Evans acknowledged that his face had become distinctive: "you may come to know me by my face, and form of my visage, which of late hath been changed." [113](#) We don't know what he otherwise looked like. The only likeness of Evans is an impersonal portrait in a line-up of religious

dissenters (Adamites, Baptists, divorcers, etc), where he appears holding one of his petitions, labelled "One Evins a Welch man [who] was lately committed to Newgate for saying hee was Christ." [114](#) We have no further physical descriptions.

Like the competing readings of his visions and the royal touch as natural or divine, Evans offers a celestial explanation for his facial disfigurement. In this, he is advantaged by the plurality of early modern medicine in a way that he has not been by historiography. Diverse medical frameworks and practitioners coexisted in this period, in "a raucous and disorderly crush of competing claims to truth." [115](#) Evans' capacity to offer his own diagnosis is amply supported by the widespread use of domestic and preventative healthcare that made every person their own primary doctor, challenging notions of a hierarchy of diagnostic capacity. Indeed, Evans would probably insist that his own diagnosis was superior in any such arrangement, since it came through divine insight rather than mere attention to the mortal body.

The infirmity of all bodies was an accepted part of belonging to post-Fall humanity. Moreover, specific periods of illness and pain could be interpreted as evidence of God's interest in the individual's humility and salvation. [116](#) Evans describes his nose's swelling as a "Sign of God, and a Seal to this work of God," and glosses his remarks with Isaiah 52:13–15, thus aligning himself with the Lord's loyal servant whose "visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men". [117](#) Evans is keen to present his visible difference as a sign from God, but never one that is a punitive mark: it is a difference that distinguishes but does not denigrate, and in fact creates potential for the loyal Evans to serve his King in a whole new way.

Evans' public approach, treatment, and cure by the King in 1660 is a uniquely high-visibility incident of early modern facial difference. It has also been cited by historians as a highpoint of Evans' irrational behaviour. The most widespread account of the meeting is the one provided by Aubrey, which for example closes Evans' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry. [118](#) So let us see that first:

Arise Evans had a fungous Nose, and said, it was reveal'd to him, that the King's Hand would Cure him: And at the first coming of King *Charles II.* into

St. *James's* Park he Kiss'd the King's Hand, and rubb'd his Nose with it; which disturb'd the King, but Cured him. Mr. *Ashmole* told me. [119](#)

Aubrey doesn't here diagnose the affliction as the King's Evil, but supports Evans' belief that "the King's Hand would Cure him" by reporting the successful result. Elias Ashmole had first met Evans on 20 April 1653, and in his description of the meeting appeared to credit Evans with some special foresight:

speaking of the Parliament I asked him when it would end: He answered the tyme was short, & it was even at the dore. / The very morning at 11 a'clock, the mace was taken away from the speaker, & the Parliament dissolved. [120](#)

The later impression that passes through Aubrey is less charitable. Aubrey, via Ashmole, objectifies Evans through this account of his behaviour and appearance, building up a network of healthy bodies that objectify the diseased Evans. The King is also on *their* side, "disturb'd" by the Welshman's action.

Surgeon John Browne also gained his knowledge of the meeting from Ashmole's ableist gossip, as he attributes the story to a Mr Butler who "tells me he had it from Mr Ashmole's own mouth." This may have been John Butler, Rector of Litchborough, Northamptonshire, and Chaplain to the Duke of Ormonde. He was an author of astrological works, which might explain his link to Ashmole and why the pair were discussing the efficacy of the thaumaturgical touch. Browne describes Evans as "being troubled with a very despicable and blasted Face, so that it was not only nauseous to view, but very fetid of smell." Unlike Aubrey, Browne clearly states that Evans had first attempted to use his acquaintance with Ashmole to request an audience with the king, and that Ashmole "utterly refused it, not thinking [Evans] a fit person to approach His Majesties Presence." The rejection of Evans as not "fit" might be linked to Ashmole's opinion of his mental state, showing how suspicion of madness could impede access to the medical care and political power involved in the royal touch. Ashmole's uncharitable reporting of Evans' actions in St James' Park might also reflect his annoyance that Evans had rejected his assessment of him, and had approached the king regardless. Browne's report is already more sympathetic than Aubrey's, since he highlights Evans' attempt to go

through the official channels, and his rejection not just by Ashmole but "many others," by which he was "stript of all hope or advantage." In this, Browne appears to corroborate Evans' belief that a suffering subject should have access to the curative touch. Browne shows that it is only at this desperate point that Evans take the course of polite ambush:

He being utterly denyed the attaining the favour of the Kings Presence by any interest of Friends, at last resolves with himself (with an assured Faith, that if His Majesty did but touch him he should speedily recover) to attend the Kings coming by him in the usual Walks he takes in St. *James's Park*; the King at length coming that way, his Face being covered with a Red Cloath, the which he lifted up till he saw the King near him, which he afterwards letting fall down, cries out, *I am 'Rise Evans*. The King coming nearer him with his Attendants which waited on Him, some of them told His Majesty that he was His Majesties Prophet; the King coming at him, he kneels down, and cries, *God bless Your Majesty*: The good King gives him His Hand to Kiss, and he rubbing his ulcerated and scabbed Nose therewith, which was plentifully stockt with purulent and fetid matter: within two days after his reception of His Majesties sacred favour, the abovesaid Mr. *Ashmole* saw this *Evans* cured, and his ulcered Nose dried up and healed. [121](#)

In context, Browne's vivid description of Evans' nose reads more like emphasis of the scale of his disorder that "His Majesties sacred favour" is able to heal than a shaming attack on Evans. With his face covered by the cloth, Evans relies on his name rather than appearance being familiar to the long-absent king. We don't get a description of the king as "disturb'd" by the interaction, which preserves his appearance of serene majesty in public: though Charles was away from the grand ceremony crowds, Evans would not have been the only person who set out to see the new king taking his "usual Walks" in St James' Park, putting both king and prophet on display. This also holds Evans within this network of men in a way that Aubrey's fracturing description precludes.

We now turn to Evans' own account. Evans' description of the interaction appears in his 1660 open letter to Charles II asking for support for himself and others who have assisted him financially and practically in carrying out work for God and the king in the previous years. Though addressed to the king, the 'you' of this letter changes many times, as Evans confronts

various enemies and critics of himself and the monarch. In a skilful rhetorical manoeuvre, Evans presents mocking speech from secretaries who argue that now he has his King back but is no better for it, whereas if he had served Parliament in the same way he would have been richly rewarded. It is in refuting this (possibly fictitious) charge that Evans recounts his recent encounter with the King:

And for your saying, *That His Majesty will take no notice of His poor servants*, That is not true, for I meeting His Majesty walking in Saint *James's* Park, upon my bare relating of my name, His Majesty called me to Him, gave me his hand to kiss, promising to remember me; which, I hope, will be by raising my fortune beyond mine enemies expectation; and having an evil humour that did disfigure my face much, the very touch from his *blessed hand* (for I did not kiss it because my mouth was sore) wrought such an alteration in my body, that on a sudden *the humour was gone*, and my Neighbours knew me not by my face. [122](#)

Evans closes his passage with a note that John Knight "said it was not the *Kings-evil*" in order to emphasise the miraculous powers of the king. If this was Knight's genuine belief, it would have been honest grounds to reject Evans' application to be touched at this busy time. But it demonstrates one of the ways in which medical practitioners were implicated in the politicised management of facial difference. In rejecting Evans, Knight might have been keen to avoid the possibility of a failed cure embarrassing or even discrediting the monarch's touch and all it stood for. But for Evans, the insistence on a diagnosis of King's Evil to grant access to the royal touch conflicted with his belief in the more expansive curative powers of the monarch, and that his body was marked by something beyond the surgeon's ken and capacity.

Evans does not mention covering his face with the cloth. He might have thought this too incidental a detail, but I am more inclined to read the omission as a sign of his embarrassment at conscious negotiation of his facial disfigurement. Evans turns the event into an unpremeditated interaction, with his cure an entirely incidental effect of Charles giving him his "blessed hand" to kiss and Evans' polite avoidance with his "sore" mouth, which a conscious unveiling of his face might undercut. Evans does not rely on the king's aids to facilitate his access to him, either through admission to a formal touching ceremony or to explain his identity as the

king's prophet. Nevertheless, social networks are evoked as witnesses and signals of reintegration, as it is Evans' "Neighbours"—a description that removes him from St James' Park, or even witnesses like Ashmole, back to his community—who must verify his radical transformation. Evans' description of the change as "of a sudden" is remarkable: where Browne and Aubrey write a scene of planning, waiting, crisis, and result two days later, Evans' account is the immediate manifestation of Providence. Katherine Schaap Williams has drawn attention to the temporal gap between touch and 'cure' in accounts of the royal touch. [123](#) Evans addresses this gap not only by publishing on the event, but by collapsing it altogether into one curative moment.

In all three accounts, the informality of the encounter is clear. The touching ceremony was usually one of the "elaborate and costly rituals" through which "awful majesty" was projected: Evans' unexpected approach, in contrast, stands as one of what Harold M. Weber describes as "the rare and complex moments when majesty relinquishes the tangible manifestations of its imperial self and the royal body consents to inhabit our mundane physical universe." [124](#) Evans approaches as a "poor servant" and Charles "call[s him] to Him" like a kindly father. Evans emphasises that it is the "very touch from his *blessed hand*" that cures him, and in rejecting that he kissed it with his "sore" mouth actually leaves ambiguous whether the hand touched his face at all, or was merely held in Evans' own. Like the foregrounding of Charles I's ability to heal outside of ceremony or even after death, Charles II's impromptu efficacy returns the power to his sacred self.

Charles honoured his "promis[e] to remember" Evans. Evans received £50 "for good service done to the king", which was registered on 31 January 1661 and thus after their meeting and Evans' publication of it (the pamphlet was licenced with the Stationers' Company on 29 August 1660). [125](#) He then returned to official procedures to solicit support, petitioning in March 1664 for a pension "suitable to one that hath done such noble acts; has done great service for His Majesty, his books being carried into all countries, and translated into divers languages; is now 60 years old, weak, sick, past labour, and in a beggarly condition" and receiving £20. [126](#) On 6 July 1665, Evans complained his pension was being withheld over disputes about the legitimacy of his prophecies. [127](#) Evans thus died at some point

between late 1665 and 1672, when Joseph Blacklock described him posthumously. [128](#)

Christopher Hill painted Evans as "endearing" but "mentally abnormal", based on his visions, and habit and manner of approaching people like the kings and Cromwell: even in the 1630s, "what strikes us is the relative tolerance with which this slightly barmy young Welshman was allowed to pester the Court with petitions." [129](#) His description of the encounter in Saint James' Park draws on Aubrey's, Browne's, and Evans' accounts, but emphasises Evans' impropriety. Hill created a scene befitting his image of Evans as indecorous madman, which is important to challenge when the episode and its relationship to Evans' experience of facial difference is so contested in the primary sources. Hill noted the "highly symbolic" nature of the meeting with Charles, as "the holy healing king and the holy afflicted man his servant, who claimed to have done so much for his restoration, met for the first and last time." [130](#) But I read Evans' conduct in the scene and his subsequent publication of it as more agential than Hill and others have given him credit for. [131](#) Capp has similarly noted that "Evans's own account suggests a more respectful encounter" than Aubrey's dominating representation. [132](#) In Evans' explanation, it is the king who beckons him over at "the bare relating of my name," and first offers his hand for him to kiss. His bracketing of "for I did not kiss [the king's hand] because my mouth was sore" also emphasises his reserve. It is not clear in Browne's report *when* Evans lifts the red cloth that is apparently covering his face, but he is certainly not alone in attempting to cover a disfiguring sore. People covered facial marks and diseases for diverse reasons, not only facilitating their own movements and social interactions, but in some cases preserving public health on account of beliefs in the impact of fear and visual shock on health, such as transmitting diseases like smallpox, or imprinting on a foetus through the maternal vision. [133](#) Evans was unable to retreat from society to the same extent as the independently wealthy Backhouse, or to access the formalised space of the touching ceremony at Whitehall. He was unwilling to remove himself from service to king and country despite risks to personal safety, as had earlier been evident in his sharing of visions. Evans therefore facilitated his access and service to the king by masking his disfigurement and publicising the results.

Conclusion

Evans' account of his rejection by the powerful men who are supposed to facilitate his curative access to the monarch, and the juxtaposing grace and condescension he receives from Charles, bathes the new king in a favourable light. Charles doesn't know that his touch will 'cure' Evans, or that his action in this public but informal setting will be spread by word of mouth and in print. Evans directly likens his disabled self to "a child" reliant on "his Fathers care, for food and rayment." [134](#) While it was very common to see the monarch framed as a father to the people, Evans shows how this rhetoric could be picked up to advocate for the rights of the disabled within this culture, and to provide an anti-ableist challenge to the rejection that Evans had received from the men who considered him not "fit" to engage with his majesty.

It's very possible that Evans' behaviour was somewhere between the reserved approach he suggests, and the more forceful rubbing attested by witnesses like Ashmole. As we have seen, Evans had a habit of imposing himself on people when official channels didn't work. Having been denied admission to a touching ceremony, he made the best of circumstances, not only by publicising his cure, but by doing so in a manner that promoted Charles' divine power and grace in the encounter. He saw himself as a conduit for divine signs, whether manifested through visions and insight, or in an "evil humour" causing visible disfigurement for the king's "blessed hand" to clear. Evans proves that people with impairments like disfigurement and madness not only had a place in early modern society, but could in fact play—or perceive and represent themselves as playing—crucial roles as vocal supporters of the fragile monarchy.

As critical disability studies turns increasingly toward historicist interpretations of individuals' bodyminds, experiences like that of the Welsh, Anglican, Royalist, disfigured, mad prophet Arise Evans should serve as case studies for the intersecting dimensions of identity that could determine the levels and potentials of disability for any person or group. Hill described Evans as a "tiny footnote to history," by which he primarily referred to the grand political and religious movements of the tumultuous seventeenth century. [135](#) Evans' inability to rouse a large crowd of followers or change political policies or events may well have saved his face from judicial disfigurement, but has relegated his lived experience of facial difference to incidental anecdote. In actuality, Evans' experience with the king and its subsequent representations demonstrate the effects of

intersecting physical and mental differences for the experiences of disability and embodiment in early modern Britain. Publishing the St James' Park scene not only foregrounded Evans' personal encounter with the new king, but allowed him to assert control over the story of his bodymind, even if the ableist narrative of Aubrey was destined to dominate. He similarly rejected naturalist diagnoses of his visions as madness, instead understanding them as divine and using them to serve the body politic. While some of Evans' audience might have read his works for entertainment (or at least claimed to), others sought genuine interpretations of the world around them and credited Evans with insights beyond their own. Some sufferers of the King's Evil and other disfigurements may also have read his account of the royal touch for further understanding of their own body, their affliction, and the possibility of cure. Evans' account is not only a result of disabled self-knowledge, but a use of that knowledge for shared benefit to himself, king, and community.

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Endnotes

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Modern Research and Reading University's Health Humanities Centre seminars for their questions and feedback. Any errors, of course, remain mine.

[Return to Text](#)

2. The four humours were blood, yellow bile (choler), black bile (melancholy), and phlegm, and controlled bodily and mental health through their delicate balance. Margaret Price, 'The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain', *Hypatia* 30 (2015): 268–284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12127>; Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1993) <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501724497>; Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

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4. Arise Evans, *An Eccho to the Voice from Heaven* (London: 1652), sig. D1^v. There are several editions and impressions of this text, so all quotations are from Wing 2245:11, accessed via EEBO.

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5. Chris Mounsey, 'Introduction. Variability: Beyond Sameness and Difference', in Chris Mounsey (ed.), *The Idea of Disability in the Eighteenth Century* (Lanham, MD; Plymouth, England: Bucknell University Press, 2014): 1-27.

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9. Lennard J. Davis, *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002),
22. <https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479820108.001.0001>
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10. Christopher Hill and Michael Shepherd, 'The case of Arise Evans: a historico-psychiatric study', *Psychological Medicine* 6 (1976): 357.
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11. Though Evans shows affinity with them and apprehension about sharing their fate in *An Eccho*, sig. E1^r.
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12. Christopher Hill, *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth-century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), 75.
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13. David Fraguas, 'Problems with retrospective studies of the presence of schizophrenia', *History of Psychiatry* 20.1 (2009): 61–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957154X08089453>; Jon Arrizabalaga,

'Problematizing retrospective diagnosis in the history of disease', *Asclepio* 54.1 (2002): 51–70. <https://doi.org/10.3989/asclepio.2002.v54.i1.135>; c.f. Osamu Muramoto, 'Retrospective diagnosis of a famous historical figure: ontological, epistemic, and ethical considerations', *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine* 9:10 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1747-5341-9-10>
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14. Hill, *Change*, 58; Iain M. MacKenzie, *God's Order and Natural Law: The Works of the Laudian Divines*, 2002 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 123–4. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315190136>
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18. Bernard Capp, 'Healing the nation: royalist visionaries, Cromwell, and the restoration of Charles II', *The Seventeenth Century* 34:4 (2019): 493–512. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268117X.2018.1462246>
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19. Katharine Hodgkin, *Madness in Seventeenth-Century Autobiography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007),
99. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230626423>
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20. I would like to acknowledge inspiration from the *homo debilis* project led by Cordula Nolte, Uta Halle and Sonja Kerth at Universität Bremen: <http://www.homo-debilis.de/>. Further, Anne Waldschmidt, 'Disability–Culture–Society: Strengths and weaknesses of a cultural model of dis/ability', *ALTER: European Journal of Disability Research* 12 (2018): 67–
80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alter.2018.04.003>; Justin Shaw, 'Rub Him About the Temples': Othello, Disability, and the Failures of Care' *Early Theatre* 22.2 (2019): 171–
84. <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.22.2.3997>
[Return to Text](#)
21. Most notably from Lennard J. Davis' pathbreaking call to historicize disability that argued for a fundamental shift in conceptualisation of 'normal' in the mid-nineteenth century: *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995).
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22. E.g. Elizabeth B. Bearden, *Monstrous Kinds: Body, Space, and Narrative in Renaissance Representations of Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.10014355>; Asa Mittman and Richard Godden (eds.), *Monstrosity, Disability, and the Posthuman in the Medieval and Early Modern World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Allison P. Hobgood and David Houston Wood (eds.), *Recovering Disability in Early Modern England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013).
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24. Douglas C. Baynton, 'Disability: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,' *Disability Studies Quarterly* 17 (1997): 81–87; Catherine J. Kudlick, 'Disability History: Why We Need Another "Other"' *The American Historical Review* 108.3 (2003): 763-793. <https://doi.org/10.1086/529597>. There are a large number of studies of the early modern face, beauty/ugliness, and physiognomy in relation to gender and race, but notable work in this area includes Naomi Baker, *Plain Ugly: The Unattractive Body in Early Modern Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Martin Porter, *Windows of the Soul: The Art of Physiognomy in European Culture 1470–1780* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, 1995 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018). <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501725456>; Edith Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power in Early Modern England: A Feminist Literary History* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230302235>; Kathryn Woods, "'Facing" Identity in a "Faceless" Society': Physiognomy, Facial Appearance and Identity Perception in Eighteenth-Century London' *Cultural and Social History* 14.2 (2017): 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2017.1290998>; Kimberly Poitevin, 'Inventing Whiteness: Cosmetics, Race, and Women in

Early Modern England.' *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11:1 (2011): 59–89. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jem.2011.0009>

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25. Edward Wheatley, *Stumbling Blocks Before the Blind: Medieval Constructions of a Disability* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010). <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.915892>

[Return to Text](#)

26. Significant medieval and early modern contributions include: David Shuttleton, *Smallpox and the Literary Imagination 1660–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Umberto Eco, *On Ugliness* (London: Harvill Secker, 2007); Kevin Stagg, "Representing Physical Difference: the Materiality of the Monstrous," in *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity*, ed. David M. Turner and Kevin Stagg (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 19–38. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203008522-2>; Patricia Skinner, *Living with Disfigurement in Early Medieval Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-54439-1>; David Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203117545>; Valentin Groebner, *Defaced: The Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Zone, 2004); Michelle Webb, 'As fowle a ladie as the smale pox could make her': *Facial Damage and Disfigurement in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Exeter (2017): <http://hdl.handle.net/10871/30058> and "'A Great Blemish to her Beauty": Female Facial Disfigurement in Early Modern England', in Patricia Skinner and Emily Cock (eds.), *Approaching Facial Difference: Past and Present* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018): pp 26–43. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350028326.0009>; Emily Cock, *Rhinoplasty and the Nose in Early Modern British Medicine and Culture* (Manchester University Press, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526137173>

[Return to Text](#)

27. Changing Faces, 'About Face Equality', <https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/campaigns/face-equality>, accessed 12 August 2018. For a discussion of terminology in current studies, and review of the field, see Nichola Rumsey and Diana Harcourt, 'Body image and disfigurement: Issues and interventions', *Body Image* 1.1 (2004): 83–97. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1740-1445\(03\)00005-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1740-1445(03)00005-6)
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28. Emily Cock, 'A small Scar will be much discerned': treating facial wounds in early modern England', *Science Museum Group Journal* 11 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.15180/191111>; Alanna Skuse, *Surgery and Selfhood in Early Modern England: Altered Bodies and Contexts of Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 56–61. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108919395>
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29. Martin Ingram, 'Shame and Pain: Themes and Variations in Tudor Punishments', in *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500-1900: Punishing the English*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Simon Devereaux (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 36–62. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230523241_2
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30. Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645–1661* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 19–21, 80, and *passim*.
[Return to Text](#)
31. For a fascinating exploration of these petitions for support, and many examples and bibliography, see *Civil War Petitions: Conflict, Welfare and Memory during and after the English Civil Wars, 1642–1710*, led by Andrew Hopper, David J. Appleby, Mark Stoyale, and Lloyd Bowen: <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/>
[Return to Text](#)

32. Evans, *Eccho*, sig. G2^v.
[Return to Text](#)
33. Arise Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince, Charles the II* (London, 1660), sig. C2^v, original emphases.
[Return to Text](#)
34. The 'economy of makeshifts' was first used by Olwen Hufton to describe the patchy, overlapping or intermittent forms of support and income through which the poor were able to maintain themselves: Olwen Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France: 1750–1789* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).
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35. Hobgood, 'Caesar'; Carol Thomas Neely, *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004). <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501729133>
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36. Lionel Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm: Prophecy and Religious Experience in Early Eighteenth-century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015). <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781784997250>
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37. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. A6^v.
[Return to Text](#)
38. *Ibid.* He cites Acts 7:52: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers". All Biblical quotations are from the King James Version.
[Return to Text](#)

39. Capp, 493.
[Return to Text](#)
40. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. C1^v.
[Return to Text](#)
41. *Ibid.*, sigs. C2^{r-v}.
[Return to Text](#)
42. Evans and Elinor Channel, *A Message from God, [By a Dumb woman] To his Highness the Lord Protector* (London, 1654), sig. A7^v.
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43. See e.g. Hannah Skoda, 'Representations of Disability in the Thirteenth-Century *Miracles de Saint Louis*', in *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. Joshua Eyler (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010): 53–66; Claire Trenergy, *Madness, Medicine and Miracle in Twelfth-Century England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351257329>. Christopher C.H. Cook provides a longer chronology in *Hearing Voices, Demonic and Divine: Scientific and Theological Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 110–144. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429423093>
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44. Manfred Brod, 'Politics and Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England: The Case of Elizabeth Poole', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 31.3 (1999): 395–412. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4052957>
[Return to Text](#)
45. Evans and Channel, *Message*, sig. A5^r.
[Return to Text](#)
46. Hilary Hinds, *God's Englishwomen: Seventeenth-century radical sectarian writing and feminist criticism* (Manchester and New

York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 73. On Channel's muteness, visions and corporeality see Diane Purkiss, 'Producing the Voice, Consuming the Body: Woman Prophets of the Seventeenth Century', in Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman (eds.), *Women, Writing, History: 1640–1740* (London: Batsford, 1991): 139–151; Melissa Hull Geil, 'Mutism and Feminine Silence: Gender, Performance, and Disability in *Epicoene*', in *Performing Disability in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Leslie Dunn (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 95–116. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57208-2_5

[Return to Text](#)

47. Evans and Channel, *Message*, sig. A6^v.

[Return to Text](#)

48. *Ibid.*, sig. A4^v; further Phyllis Mack, 'Women as Prophets during the English Civil War', *Feminist Studies* 8.1 (1982): 19–

45. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3177578>

[Return to Text](#)

49. *Ibid.* sigs. A4^v–A5^r.

[Return to Text](#)

50. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. C8^v.

[Return to Text](#)

51. *Ibid.*, sig. D2^v.

[Return to Text](#)

52. Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, sig. B1^r.

[Return to Text](#)

53. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. C8^{r-v}.

[Return to Text](#)

54. *Ibid.*, sic. C8^r.
[Return to Text](#)
55. *Ibid.*, sig. C8^v.
[Return to Text](#)
56. *Ibid.*
[Return to Text](#)
57. On pluralistic Welsh medical care more generally, see Alun Withey, *Physick and the family: Health, medicine and care in Wales, 1600–1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).
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58. I am grateful to Leonard Smith for asking about the specifics of Evans' location.
[Return to Text](#)
59. Michael Macdonald, *Mystical Bedlam: madness, anxiety, and healing in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 5–6.
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60. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. D3^v, original emphases.
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61. R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'In that Gentile Country...': The Beginnings of Puritan Nonconformity in Wales', The Annual Lecture of the Evangelical Library of Wales for 1975, online edition accessed 7 May 2020, <http://www.thomascharlesinstitute.com/styled-5/code-7/>; Noel Gibbard, 'Walter Cradock: 'A New Testament Saint'', The Annual Lecture of the Evangelical Library of Wales for 1976, online edition accessed 7 May 2020: <http://www.thomascharlesinstitute.com/styled-5/code-5/>; Robert Tudur Jones, 'Cradoc, Walter (1610?-1659), Puritan theologian', 1959, *Dictionary of Welsh*

Biography, <https://biography.wales/article/s-CRAD-WAL-1610>.

Accessed 7 May 2020.

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62. David Cressy, *Charles I and the People of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1–6, 158; Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia*, 135.

[Return to Text](#)

63. David R. Como, 'The kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of England, and the kingdom of Traske: John Traske and the persistence of radical puritanism in early Stuart England', in *Protestant Identities: Religion, Society and Self-fashioning in Post-reformation England*, ed. Muriel C McClendon, Joseph P. Ward, and Michael MacDonald (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999): 63–82.

[Return to Text](#)

64. Evans, *An Eccho*, sigs. F4^v–F5^r.

[Return to Text](#)

65. Margaret J. M. Ezell, 'Performance Texts: Arise Evans, Grace Carrie, and the Interplay of Oral and Handwritten Traditions during the Print Revolution' *ELH* 76.1 (2009):

49. <https://doi.org/10.1353/elh.0.0039>

[Return to Text](#)

66. Evans, *Eccho*, sig. G6^v.

[Return to Text](#)

67. Bodleian Library Rawl. MS. D. 282, extracted in Champlin Burrage, 'A True and Short Declaration, both of the gathering and joyning together of certain persons [with John More, Dr. Theodore Naudin and Dr. Peter Chamberlen]: and also of the lamentable breach and division which fell amongst them', *Transactions of the*

Baptist Historical Society 2.3 (May 1911): 139.

[Return to Text](#)

68. Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, sig. B4^r.

[Return to Text](#)

69. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. F3^r.

[Return to Text](#)

70. Walter Gostelow, *Charls Stuart and Oliver Cromwell United* (London: 1655), sigs. N3^{r-v}.

[Return to Text](#)

71. Robert Loveday (ed. Anthony Loveday), *Lovedays Letters Domestick and Forrein* (London: 1659), letter 94.

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72. Tobias B. Hug, *Impostures in Early Modern England: representations and perceptions of fraudulent identities* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 64,

72. <https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719079849.001.0001>

[Return to Text](#)

73. Fabian Philips, *The Antiquity, Legality, Reason, Duty and Necessity of Prae-emption and Pourveyance, for the King* (London: 1663), sig. Rrr3^r.

[Return to Text](#)

74. Henry Taylor, *Confusion Worse Confounded; Rout on Rout: Or, The Bishop of G—-R's Commentary upon Rice or Arise Evans's Echo From Heaven Examined and Exposed* (London: 1772).

[Return to Text](#)

75. John Jortin, *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* (London: 1751), 119.

[Return to Text](#)

76. See e.g. Samuel Hibbert, *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions; or, An Attempt to Trace Such Illusions to their Physical Causes*, second edition (Edinburgh, 1825), 420.
[Return to Text](#)
77. John Ferriar, *An Essay Towards a Theory of Apparitions* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1813), 81; Ferriar, *Illustrations of Sterne: with other essays and verses* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1798), 283–284.
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78. On English distinctions of Welsh ethnic identity in this period see Mark Stoye, *Soldiers and Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2005).
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79. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. B6^r; original emphasis.
[Return to Text](#)
80. Evans, *An Eccho*, sig. B6^v. He cites 2:10, but this is 'Rise' in the King James Version, so he may be blending 2:10 and 2:13: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."
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81. Hill, *Change*, 48; my emphasis. Hill's chapter is titled 'Arise Evans: Welshman in London'.
[Return to Text](#)
82. Emrys Jones, 'From Medieval to Renaissance City', in Jones (ed.) *The Welsh in London 1500–2000* (Chippenham: The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 2001), 36.
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83. Marisa R. Cull, *Shakespeare's Princes of Wales: English Identity and the Welsh Connection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

2014), 150–151.

[Return to Text](#)

84. M. Wynn Thomas, 'Morgan Llwyd and the Foundations of the 'Nonconformist Nation', in Stewart Mottram and Sarah Prescott (eds.), *Writing Wales, from the Renaissance to Romanticism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012): 118. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315546131-7>
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85. Lloyd Bowen, 'Representations of Wales and the Welsh During the Civil Wars and Interregnum', *Historical Research* 77.197 (2004): 358–376. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2281.2004.00214.x>; Lloyd Bowen, *The Politics of the Principality: Wales, c. 1603–1642* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).
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86. Katharine Hodgkin, 'Childhood and Loss in Early Modern Life Writing', *Parergon* 33.2 (2016): 128. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pgn.2016.0078>
[Return to Text](#)
87. *Ecco*, sig. Ee1^r. Love would be executed for his part in an anti-republican plot to restore Charles II.
[Return to Text](#)
88. This essay is not concerned with the positivist questions of what the ailment 'really was', or how the king's hand cured it, as these are largely immaterial to Evans' experience. C.f. Adam S. Komorowski and Sang Ik Song highlight the high rate of "spontaneous resolution of untreated infection with non-tuberculous mycobacteria" as a possible cause of faith in the thaumaturgic touch: 'A politics of the senses: the political role of the King's Evil in Richard Wiseman's *Severall Chirurgicall Treatises*', *Medical Humanities* (2018): 1.
[Return to Text](#)

89. Evans, *A rule from heaven* (London: 1659), sig. D1^r.
[Return to Text](#)
90. Stephen Brogan, *The Royal Touch in Early Modern England: Politics, Medicine and Sin* (London: The Royal Historical Society/The Boydell Press, 2015), 17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781782045106>
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91. Thomas Fern, *A Perfect Cure for the King's Evil* (London: 1709), sig. B1^r.
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92. Fern, sigs. F2^v–F3^r; original emphasis.
[Return to Text](#)
93. Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1w6t8q3>; Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006); Simon Werrett, 'Healing the Nation's Wounds: Royal Ritual and Experimental Philosophy in Restoration England', *History of Science* 38 (2000): 377–399. <https://doi.org/10.1177/007327530003800402>; Willis, 'Monarch and Sacred'; Brogan, *Royal Touch*.
[Return to Text](#)
94. Brogan notes that Anne I's own impairments may have stopped her continuing this tradition, as she "was too infirm to kneel down for very long": *Royal Touch*, 221.
[Return to Text](#)
95. Stiker, *A History of Disability*, trans. William Sayers (University of Michigan Press, 2019), 73, quoted in Wheatley, *Stumbling*, 19.
[Return to Text](#)

96. Andrew Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), 36.
[Return to Text](#)
97. *Ibid.*, 39–40.
[Return to Text](#)
98. Werrett, 'Healing', 381.
[Return to Text](#)
99. On Fox: Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978): 193–194. On Greatrakes: Peter Elmer, *The Miraculous Conformist: Valentine Greatrakes, the Body Politic, and the Politics of Healing in Restoration Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199663965.001.0001>
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100. Cramp rings were blessed by the monarch and usually distributed on Good Friday. They were supposed to protect the wearer against cramp and epilepsy. Elizabeth Lane Furdell, *The Royal Doctors 1485–1714: Medical Personnel at the Tudor and Stuart Courts* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 69. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781580466004>
[Return to Text](#)
101. Brogan provides this calculation based on Browne: *Royal Touch*, 99–101.
[Return to Text](#)
102. Lacey, *Cult of King Charles*, 37.
[Return to Text](#)
103. I.E. Willetts, 'John Knight and the King's Healing' *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 87 (1994): 757.
[Return to Text](#)

104. John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. De Beer, vol IV, 2000 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 374 (28 March 1684). Original emphasis.
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105. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England*, 1971 (London: Penguin, 1991), 166–167.
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106. See e.g. Jane Shaw's discussion of competing explanations for Martha Taylor's miraculous survival without food for a year: 'Religious Experience and the Formation of the Early Enlightenment Self', in *Rewriting the Self : Histories From the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (London and New York: Routledge, 1997): 61–71.
[Return to Text](#)
107. Werrett, 'Healing', 382.
[Return to Text](#)
108. Brogan, *Royal Touch*, 60.
[Return to Text](#)
109. Joseph Binns, Casebook (1633–1663), British Library Sloane MS 153, ff. 79^r–79^r; Cock, 'Small scar'.
[Return to Text](#)
110. John Aubrey, *Miscellanies* (London: printed for Edward Castle, 1696), sig. H2^v.
[Return to Text](#)
111. Jennifer Speake, 'Backhouse, William (1593–1662), alchemist and antiquary', 2012, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed 25 Jan. 2019. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614>

[128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-985.](https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128-e-985)

[Return to Text](#)

112. Aubrey, *Miscellanies*, sigs. H2^v–H3^r.

[Return to Text](#)

113. Evans, *A rule from heaven*, sig. D1^r.

[Return to Text](#)

114. *A Catalogue of the several Sects and Opinions in England and other Nations* (London: 1647), sig. A1^r. A physical description from astrologer William Lilly of his teacher, 'Evans', though occasionally cited as Arise, is actually of another Welsh astrologer, John Evans: William Lilly, *History of His Life and Times*, 1715 (London: Charles Baldwin, 1822), 54–56.

[Return to Text](#)

115. Harold M. Weber, *Paper Bullets: Print and Kingship under Charles II* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 53.

[Return to Text](#)

116. Jennifer Clement, *Reading Humility in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 63–

64. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315603728>

[Return to Text](#)

117. Evans, *A Rule from Heaven*, sig. D1^r; Isaiah 52:14.

[Return to Text](#)

118. Thomas N. Corns, 'Evans, Arise [Rhys, Rice] (b. c. 1607, d. in or after 1660), prophet.' 2004 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed 10 May

2019. [https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8975.](https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8975)

[Return to Text](#)

119. Aubrey, *Miscellanies*, sig. H3^r, original emphasis.
[Return to Text](#)
120. Elias Ashmole, *Elias Ashmole (1617–1692). His Autobiographical and Historical Notes, his Correspondence, and Other Contemporary Sources Relating to his Life and Work*, ed. C.H. Josten, five volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), ii.641–642. <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780199670260.book.1>
[Return to Text](#)
121. Browne, *Adenochoiradelogia*, sig. Oo6^{r-v}, original emphases.
[Return to Text](#)
122. Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, sig. C3^r, original emphases.
[Return to Text](#)
123. Katherine Schaap Williams, "'Strange Virtue': Staging Acts of Cure", in Sujata Iyengar (ed.) *Disability, Health, and Happiness in the Shakespearean Body* (New York: Routledge, 2015): 93–108.
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124. Weber, *Paper Bullets*, 50.
[Return to Text](#)
125. 'Entry Book: January 1661.' *Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 1, 1660–1667*. Ed. William A Shaw (London: 1904), 181–195. *British History Online*. Accessed 26 May 2020. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-treasury-books/vol1/pp181-195>; *A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers; from 1640–1708 A.D.* vol 2 (1655–1675) (London: privately printed, 1913), 277.
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126. Capp, 'Healing', 507; 'Charles II - volume 95: March 21-31, 1664', in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles II, 1663–4*, ed.

Mary Anne Everett Green (London: 1862), 523–540. *British History Online*. Accessed 29 April 2020. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/chas2/1663-4/pp523-540>.

[Return to Text](#)

127. 'Charles II - volume 126: July 1-15, 1665' *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles II, 1664–5*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: 1863), 458-477. *British History Online*. Accessed 26 May 2020. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/chas2/1664-5/pp458-477>.

[Return to Text](#)

128. *Arise Evans the English Prophet; or His wondrous Prophecies and Revelations Revived and Revealed who in them foretold His Majesties happy Restauration without blood-shed* (London: Joseph Blacklock, 1672). This 1665 source adds an even later date to Capp's recent correction of Evans' estimated death date ('Healing', 508).

[Return to Text](#)

129. Hill, *Change*, 52, 58.

[Return to Text](#)

130. *Ibid.*, 76.

[Return to Text](#)

131. On the basis of Hill's account, Ezell assumes that Evans' meeting Charles was "apparently by accident", removing Evans' agency: 'Performance Texts', 68.

[Return to Text](#)

132. Capp, 'Healing', 507.

[Return to Text](#)

133. David Shuttleton, "When a disease it selfe doth Cromwel it': The rhetoric of smallpox at the Restoration", in *Social Histories of*

Disability and Deformity, ed. David M. Turner and Kevin Stagg
(London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 45.

[Return to Text](#)

134. Evans, *To the Most High and Mighty Prince*, sig. C2^v.

[Return to Text](#)

135. Hill, *Change*, 74.

[Return to Text](#)