BALTHASAR BEKKER AND THE DECLINE OF THE WITCH-CRAZE: THE OLD DEMONOLOGY AND THE NEW PHILOSOPHY (BY ROBIN ATTFIELD)

SUMMARY

The logical links between the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of creation and the practice of natural philosophy on the one hand and the rejection of belief in demonic agency on the other were made explicit in the seventeenth century by, among others, Balthasar Bekker (1634-1699), whose ideas I argue to have been not without influence. In Section 1 I present the accounts of three historians of the opposition to belief in witchcraft and of the decline of the witch-persecution, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Keith Thomas and Brian Easlea. In Section 2 I maintain that Bekker has been under-estimated both by Trevor-Roper and by Easlea. In Section 3 I investigate more generally some of the connections between the new natural philosophy and belief in supernatural interventions, cast doubt on the view that rejection of belief in witchcraft and the devil requires rejection of belief in creation, and thus supplement or qualify the accounts of Trevor-Roper, Thomas and Easlea of why belief in witchcraft faded away.

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Was the Judaeo-Christian belief in creation able to serve as a consistent defence of early modern science? And how adequate was the theistic cosmology of the Cartesians and of the Baconians of the Royal Society at contesting belief in supernatural interventions in nature by witches, demons or the devil? Ideas certainly have but a limited power to uphold or to subvert beliefs and practices until the social conditions are propitious, and are otherwise often powerless. But when social conditions are right, as plausibly they were in several Western European societies in the second half of the seventeenth century for the curtailment of the persecution of witches, revolutions of thought and belief can prove crucial. It is therefore worth investigating which ideas helped to curtail what Hugh Trevor-Roper has called "the European witch-craze",[1] and whether the theistic opponents of witch-beliefs and proponents of the new natural philosophy had a consistent and coherent case to present, as opposed to an ineffectual one or a case suitable only to give short-term support to the interests of the ruling classes, but otherwise lacking in merit. I shall claim that their case was consistent and coherent, and that its significance should not be underestimated.

In Section 1 I shall present the accounts of three historians of the opposition to belief in witchcraft and of the decline of the witch-persecution, Trevor-Roper, Keith Thomas[2] and Brian Easlea[3]. In Section 2 I shall maintain that at least one of the opponents of witch-beliefs, the Calvinist and Cartesian Balthasar Bekker, has been under-estimated both by Trevor-Roper and by Easlea. In Section 3 I shall investigate more generally some of the connections between the new natural philosophy and belief in supernatural interventions within nature, cast doubt on the view that rejection of belief in witchcraft and the devil requires rejection of belief in God and creation, and apply these various conclusions so as to supplement or qualify the accounts of Trevor-Roper, Thomas and Easlea of why witch-hunts lapsed and belief in witchcraft faded away.

1

Hugh Trevor-Roper, after remarking the collapse of the European witch-craze in the late seventeenth century, claims that its demise cannot be set down to the arguments of its critics, as the critics had no new arguments to put forward at this stage, and as the opposition case had remained unmodified ever since Johann Weyer's De Praestigiis Daemonum of 1563.[4] Moreover intellectual objections to peripheral elements in the cosmology of the day, such as belief in witchcraft, remained incapable of effecting change until the system as a whole was attacked at its centre; and even then the social conditions which nourished the witch-craze needed to change before new systems of belief could have a social impact (160f., 168-80,

190-92). Social factors such as religious conflict had continually fanned the flames of the witch-persecution since the intellectual framework of witch-beliefs was laid down in Malleus Maleficarum of 1486, and the intellectual case against the persecution of witches was powerless against it (130-61).

Thus the philosophical opposition of Neoplatonists, and of sceptics such as Montaigne, was unavailing against a socially entrenched orthodoxy and its theological champions (130-34); and writers such as the Platonist Weyer, "the boldest of them all" (159), and the Englishman Reginald Scot, contended not that witches did not exist or that compacts with Satan were impossible, but merely that judges failed to identify them correctly (146-49). But their advocacy of caution led only to accusations of softness on witches and of responsibility for spread of the witchcraft menace (148f., 159).

Likewise Balthasar Bekker, who attempted to challenge the whole idea of Satan's kingdom, effectively had no arguments to add to those of Weyer, Scot and Spee, and his influence has been much exaggerated (173-75); indeed there was nothing original either about the arguments of Thomasius of Halle in the early eighteenth century, despite the fact that they were effective (175f.). The change came about because of a change of social and intellectual climate; and the intellectual climate changed through attacks on the entire cosmology which supported witch-beliefs on the parts of people such as Bacon, Grotius, Selden and Descartes, despite their reticence, which amounted almost to silence, on the subject of witchcraft in particular (180-83, 192). The final intellectual victory thus belonged to Descartes, to the English deists and the German Pietists, and thus to the spiritual parents of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment (183).

Keith Thomas' account of the decline of witch-beliefs[5] concerns England rather than Europe, and deals with the special background of the impact of the Protestant Reformation there (469-501), popular clamour against witches which long outlasted the repeal in 1736 of the Witchcraft Act (582-83), and, on Thomas' account, a tendency for accusations to arise as a result of the curses of old women with genuine grievances such as a refusal of charity (502-69) Thomas is critical of Trevor-Roper's ascription of witch-persecution to the clash of different religious groups, at any rate where England is concerned (499), or of any ascription of it to the religious zeal of government or ecclesiastics there (501). Rather it was the educated classes in Britain who eventually put an end to prosecutions, first by effectively refusing to administer the witchcraft laws, and later by repealing them.

Thomas traces the decrease in convictions for witchcraft to an increasing awareness of the difficulty of establishing the case for the prosecution, particularly in the absence of the kind of torture routinely employed in such cases on the continent (570-76), and also to experiences of influential people of unjust accusations (576-77). And he explains the silent decay of witch-beliefs (570) by two new, self-confident, seventeenth-century attitudes, the assumption of a regular and orderly universe, unlikely to be upset by supernatural interventions (577-78), and the "conviction that it would one day be possible to uncover the natural causes of those events which still remained mysterious" (578). The assumption of

regularity was associated with the new mechanical philosophy and the related theology of an orderly providence; the conviction that causes as yet unknown would later be found was reinforced by scientific progress, and by psychological explanations of witches' delusions. Meanwhile the popular feeling against witches may have diminished with the abatement of the tensions over the relief of poverty, once a more regular system of provision for the poor was in force (581-8).

Before the achievements of the Royal Society came to prominence the assumption of a regular natural order was fostered by the Neoplatonic conception of universal occult influences (sympathies, antipathies, etc.), which made resort to supernatural or demonic explanations unnecessary; in particular the scepticism of Scot about witchcraft was facilitated by his Neoplatonism. Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft(1584) was widely influential in England among the magistracy and the clergy; and was much more radical than Trevor-Roper allows (573). Scot's admission that witches exist conveyed only that there were some maleficent self-styled witches who resorted to poison, and some impostors profiting from gullibility; but none had supernatural power, and indeed a compact with the devil was impossible. Scot was not merely disputing the adequacy of current identifications of witches, though it was over the logical difficulty of proving

accusations that his main influence in England took effect (572-73).

Brian Easlea, an historian whose feminist commitments are allied to scholarship and insight into early modern science and early modern witch-hunts, accepts (with Trevor-Roper) that the arguments of Weyer and Scot largely fell on deaf ears (18f., 42). But, unlike Trevor-Roper, he holds something which Thomas also implies, namely that Scot was considerably more radical than the reluctant Neoplatonist Weyer (18, 24, 96), and in more than one way. Where Weyer accepted the possibility of Satanic compacts, Scot rejected it; and where Weyer sought to excuse witches because of their stupidity as uneducated old women, Scot foregoes prejudice against females, the elderly or the humble, rejects demonic magic altogether, and pleads for forgiveness (except in cases of poisoning) where (as seldom) there was genuine evidence of actual maleficence (19-24). Easlea finds further cause for feminist praise in the sceptical case presented by Montaigne, with his rejection of conventional stereotypes both of witches and of women. More to the point, Easlea concludes that Thomas fails to do justice to Scot, and even to Weyer, when he claims that the mechanical philosophy of the Royal Society proved a more rational intellectual scaffolding for the belief that every event has a natural cause that the "credulous" beliefs of the Neoplatonists; indeed Easlea ably demonstrates that the mechanical philosophy was also beset

by fundamental problems (40-42, 142-95), and was not altogether deserving of the laurels awarded by Thomas.

In a later chapter[6] Easlea holds that the triumph of the mechanical philosophy over Neoplatonist natural magic was at least as much due to its upholding the religious and social establishment as to its suitability for justifying "the appropriation of nature" as to its intellectual merits. At the same time belief in Satanic magic and the powers of witches became dispensable and faded from sight (197-98), even though no rejection of these beliefs was required by Cartesianism (200f.). Indeed Easlea finds the case of Joseph Glanvill, that rejection of these beliefs implies the rejection of belief in God, more cogent than Thomas Sprat's confidence that the theistic and socially conformist experimental philosophy of the Royal Society was sufficient to undermine belief in supernatural interventions in nature (201-15). He also remarks that Henry More and, to some degree, Robert Boyle, supported Glanvill's witch-beliefs, and that therefore membership of the Royal Society was no guarantee of disbelief in witchcraft (206-07).

Easlea does not dispute that the mechanical philosophy may have accounted for the decline of witch-beliefs (5, 198); but, granted the evidence that some of the adherents of the new natural philosophy actually strengthened witch-beliefs, he finds an inconsistency in Sprat's claim that the new philosophy both convinces people of religious truths and overcomes belief in spirits and demons (212), and he is unimpressed by the confidence of the new philosophers at the

restoration of the human dominion over nature, whether Fontenelle (217f.), Newton (220) or Bekker (218f.). Consistency would have required a rejection of belief in God and in creation at the same time as the rejection of supernatural interventions in nature; but no such rejection was possible while religion was needed by so many vested interests and while it remained in general a prop of the established order of male ruling élites (220-222). Gerrard Winstanley was more consistent in rejecting simultaneously Satan, the God of traditional theism and private property too (222-231).

It is not yet time to assess the accounts outlined in this Section; but it is appropriate to grant to Easlea a point also made by Thomas, namely that Reginald Scot was able to reject belief in the devil's power before the scientific revolution had effectively come about, and that the decrease in witch-persecution in England through most of the seventeenth century was partly due to his influence. Thus Neoplatonism was capable of supplying a philosophical basis from which witch-beliefs could effectively be opposed.[7] This can be granted without allowing that it was as effective an antidote to witch-beliefs, or as rational a system, as the mechanical philosophy was to become.

2

Thomas produces strong evidence for the conclusion that Scot was more original and more radical than Trevor-Roper presents him, a conclusion which Easlea's evidence confirms.[8] It has also been granted to Easlea that Scot exercised a considerable influence in England, though it could hardly be said that his Neoplatonism supplied a strong enough platform for the overthrow of European witch-beliefs in general.

The possibility now emerges that Trevor-Roper also underestimates the influence and importance of another critic of the witch-craze who was explicitly indebted to Scot, and in some matters went no further than Scot[9], Balthasar Bekker (1634-98), and that Bekker's Calvinism and Cartesianism justified his confidence that nature is regular and that witchcraft is impossible better than Easlea allows. For if Bekker was no more radical than the underestimated Scot, he would himself have been more radical than Trevor-Roper suggests. In fact, however, I shall be claiming that he was much more radical, influential and significant than this; and, as Trevor-Roper may seem to have established that Bekker's influence was a mere flash in the pan, I consider the question of his influence first, and then turn to his arguments.

It is not disputed that within two months of the publication in 1690 of Bekker's de Betoverde Weereld ('The Enchanted World') four thousand copies of the first two volumes were sold in the United Provinces (i.e. The Netherlands), and also that translations soon appeared in French, Italian and German.[10] There seems also, in fact, on the say-so of one of Bekker's numerous detractors, to have been a translation at this stage into Spanish.[11] It is further agreed that a host of pamphlets was produced in reply.[12] Jacob Brunnemann was indeed mistaken to claim that Bekker was responsible for the cessation of witch-burnings in England, where witches had never been burned, and in Holland, where burnings had ceased longsince;[13] but this was the time at which the hanging of witches ceased in England - the last execution was in 1685[14] - and his work could have contributed to the climate of belief and of practice. There was, in any case, a massive controversy in Holland, as attested by the 131

contemporary Dutch works concerning Bekker listed in van der Linde's bibliography,[15] which resulted in Bekker's losing his job as a minister of the Calvinist church,[16] despite some earlier triumphs over opponents within it.

Trevor-Roper claims, however, that Bekker's foreign reputation may have been a myth. Thus the controversy was, he says, conducted almost entirely in Dutch: only one item in van der Linde's bibliography is in French, and the remaining two are in Latin. But this nineteenth century bibliography clearly failed to be comprehensive. Thus a monograph published in far-away Konigsberg and also at Leipzig in 1721 by G.H. Beckher[17] lists refutations of Bekker from all over Germany by writers at Wittenberg, Dresden, Hamburg, Danzig and Jena, and by several others of untraceable provenance. It mentions controversy at Halle, and support for Bekker from, among others, Winckler of Hamburg, Osiander of Tübingen and Stoschius of Brandenburg; and the author subsequently pleads that, despite the mass of argument and counter-argument which he has cited, he has been forced to omit a great many contributions to the great debate. As witches were still being burned in German-speaking areas, it is of great importance that Bekker's ideas helped to make it possible there to doubt the demonology which upheld the practice. So concerned were Bekker's opponents that he might win the day that in 1721 they even translated the English refutation of John Beaumont into German.[18]

This evidence also serves to confute Trevor-Roper 's claim that the controversy was soon over, despite Benjamin Binet's remarks of 1696 that Bekker's disciples were falling away, disappointed by his later volumes, and that there was little to add to the many refutations then current.[19]

Indeed in 1699 Binet felt it worth publishing anonymously in Amsterdam a further edition of his refutation of 1696.[20] Nor did the defects of the German translation, remarked by Eberhard Hauber,[21] prevent enough of Bekker's ideas being conveyed for the widespread German controversy attested above to take place; their transmission may have been helped by the corrected second edition.[22]

It was, however, the French translation[23] which conveyed Bekker's thought to Europe at large, and Bekker had the good sense to supervise its production. The first English rendering, The World Bewitched (1695), was based on the French text[24]: it contained Volume I and a synopsis of the other three volumes only, but this was enough to transmit the kernel of Bekker's thought. There followed a further English translation, this time of an abridgement made by Bekker himself, which appeared two years after his death, in 1700[25] - further evidence of a continuing interest; and soon Bekker's ideas were to be incorporated into John Toland's Adeisidaemon of 1709, which took on in its turn the role of butt for traditionalists.

As to the position in Holland itself, Bekker's critic Kettner declared that Bekker had caused more trouble in two months than all the priests could put a stop to in twenty years.[26] What then of Trevor-Roper's view that Bekker's work enjoyed a succès de scandale only (174)? He mentions that Beaumont sent to Holland for literature on Bekker just prior to his publication of 1705, and could only secure one small French volume (that of Binet, in fact). But this seems to show rather that Beaumont was poorly served and too easily satisfied; for by this stage many of the Dutch works listed by van der Linde had been published. Trevor-Roper also cites the remarks of a French officer who visited Holland in 1673 as evidence of how little Bekker had to do with

the destruction of witch-beliefs among the Dutch laity; most Dutchmen, the foreign observer claimed, regarded Hell as a "phantom" and Paradise as "an agreeable chimera" invented by the clergy to encourage virtue (175).[27] Yet some of the Dutch laity must have had a hand in depriving Bekker of his job; and, though scepticism about Hell had long been current in some quarters in England,[28] it is unlikely that it was universal in Holland by 1673, or that the contacts formed on a single military visit could supply strong enough evidence to support the Frenchman's claim. The scale of the controversy within Holland makes it likelier that Bekker touched a sensitive nerve and that his stance was initially an unpopular one; it may have been more than a straw in the wind that he was compared by Kettner with that other impostor, Benedictus Spinoza.

There followed the controversy about Bekker in Germany, where at Halle effective propaganda against belief in witchcraft was produced by P.J. Spener, Christian Thomasius and their associates.[29] Thomasius certainly distanced himself from Bekker, but only to avoid accusations of extremism.[30] The social and intellectual climate was now receptive to the arguments against witch-beliefs, and Bekker's arguments were available among them, and were often borrowed by Thomasius[31]

I am not claiming that Bekker turned the tide against witch-beliefs single-handed, or that his contribution to the sceptical case was vastly greater than those of e.g. Scot or Thomasius. Due allowance must in any case be made for social factors and trends which lay beyond the immediate influence of ideas. But, this said, it can reasonably be maintained that Bekker's influence both abroad and,

probably, in Holland was much greater than Trevor-Roper represents it, and great enough to cast fresh doubt on witch-beliefs in those large areas of Europe where doubt was already possible, both in places where prosecutions were already declining (as in France and England) and where they were still widespread (as in Germany).

But what, precisely, was Bekker's position? Earlier writers had argued that the evidence supposed to identify witches was inadequate, and Bekker's arguments in this regard were explicitly derived from Scot.[32] He also agreed with Scot about the impossibility of witchcraft, and was thus significantly more radical than Weyer; but his grounds were different from Weyer's or Scot's.

Bekker's original contribution lay in his application of Cartesian reason and of Cartesian premises to theology and demonology. Personal experience had taught him to mistrust opinion and conventional sentiments, and to rely on reason and Scripture alone;[33] and as it was to Scripture that the defenders of witch-beliefs appealed, a reasoned interpretation of the Bible was essential for the sceptical case. Bekker did not regard reason as the measure of Scripture, but he did hold that the study of Scripture presupposes reason, which is indispensable if Scripture is to be understood even in its own area of competence, that of salvation. Scripture is not, however, a textbook of natural philosophy, which is solely the department of reason. Besides, Scripture must not be approached in a biased way, and it is reason which is required if prejudice is to be avoided.[34] "If we consider the Scriptures with a perfectly open and unbiased mind, we shall certainly not attribute to the Devil those powers and activities which preconceived ideas led the commentators and

translators to ascribe to him."[35] Accordingly it is hardly appropriate to regard Bekker as a Biblical fundamentalist,[36] unless this just means someone willing to regard the Bible as an authority; and without such a willingness no headway was likely to be made by the sceptical case about witch-beliefs in the seventeenth or, come to that, the early eighteenth century.

Besides shaping his approach to Scripture, Bekker's Cartesianism proved capable of direct application to demonology. Thus it taught him that the devil is a spirit and that no spirit, not even the devil, can act on body without a body as its instrument; accordingly physical changes ascribed to the devil must be performed with matter and motion, in which case ordinary explanations apply to them, or else they are impossible.[37] Further "There is no argument so absurd as that of attributing an unusual effect to an occult or unknown cause, but above all to these sorts of (spiritual) intellects, as people want to do, in order to draw as a consequence that they have the power and the capacity to do such things. Why not rather investigate deeply into knowledge of Nature, in order to be able to unite things corporeal into things corporeal?"[38] Hence, unless there is reason to believe that the devil has a body, his alleged temptings, compacts and possessions are impossible; and the alleged facts which demonic agency is invoked to explain are either natural and subject to universal explanations, or else contrary to nature and thus no facts at all.

Moreover reason allows us to go back to the original Greek of the gospels, and
conclude that the tempter of Christ was either a wicked man or a vision;[39] it shows that witchcraft phenomena are exceptionlessly subject to doubt and the possibility of deception;[40] that belief in

a devil with any independence of his own amounts not to monotheism but to "Ditheism";[41] and that belief in demons and the devil is a relic of paganism.[42] Indeed Scripture and reason together show that the devil is bound in Hell, and thus cannot operate on Earth, and is thus not to be feared, and that "the Empire of the Devil is a Chimaera".[43]

Accordingly Bekker's case should not be dismissed as "purely theological".44 His positive interpretations of particular texts could, of course, be disputed, but his Cartesian premises, if accepted, set a firm limit to possible interpretations. Any claims about the world which exceeded these limits were impossible; and, as long as the Bible was treated as authoritative, interpretations had to be possibly true to be acceptable. Thus in effect Bekker's case was a direct application to current demonology of Cartesianism. Further, in pointing to the heretical Manichaean tendencies of current demonology he added to that case a substantial and weighty argument. For, quite apart from the points arising from Bekker's Cartesian metaphysics and methodology, if the devil is wholly an instrument of God, then he has no empire, and if he is held to have any power of his own, then belief in one God has been abandoned in favour of an heretical belief in two. If we consider also Bekker's interpretations of the Bible, his historical critique and the arguments borrowed from Scot about the identification of witchcraft and the psychology of witches, we find a formidable system. Moreover it was a system which Bekker was willing to test against experience: he gave the devil ample opportunities to prove his power in the

traditional domain of chaos, the sea, but Bekker's ship remained unscathed. Hence the taunt of Bekker's crusading preface: "If he (the devil) be a God, let him defend his Cause; let him assault, whilst I am pulling down his altars... In the name of the Lord of Hosts I meet that Goliah: lets see who will lend him a helping hand!"[45] These are not only words of self-identification with Gideon and David, but also of confidence in human autonomy and in a natural order established by a single providence.

APPENDIX

The witch-beliefs of cultures different from our own are often held to embody a rationality of their own which is unamenable to external criticism; and certainly in parts of the Continent in the Early Modern period once a woman had been accused of dealings with the devil nothing could happen which could constitute evidence of innocence, whatever anyone said. But as we have seen there were at all stages critics of witch-beliefs; and even those less radical than Bekker often remarked the inconsistency of trials which established guilt where nothing would count as evidence to the contrary. These were external criticisms, insofar as the critics wholly or partially rejected current demonology as a system of belief, though they were also made by members of the witch-hunting society, who were often made to suffer for their criticism or accused of witchcraft themselves. Witch-beliefs thus formed, at times, a watertight system, nothing counting as counter-evidence; but the remarks of the critics were not regarded as unintelligible, but as requiring rebuttal such as that meted out by Jean Bodin to Weyer or by Binet, Kettner and others to Bekker. It should further be noted that witch-beliefs did, in the end, succumb to factors including the rational criticisms of people such

as Scot and Bekker. Early Modern witch-beliefs, then, were not unamenable to external criticism; whether or not the same applies to the witch-beliefs of contemporary societies is a matter which cannot be further discussed here.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in Religion, The Reformation and Social Change (London and Basingstoke, 1967), 90-192; this essay was also published as a book in 1969. References here are to the 1967 work. Page-references are given in the text in parentheses.
2. Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, (London, 1971); the chapters on witchcraft occupy pp. 435-583. Page-references are given in the text in parentheses.
3. Brian Easlea, Witch-hunting, Magic and the New Philosophy: An Introduction to Debates of the Scientific Revolution 1450 - 1750 (Sussex, 1980). Page-references are given in the text in parentheses.
4. Trevor-Roper, pp. 168f., 146-48.
5. Thomas, chapters 14-18.
6. Easlea, chapter 5, 'The Appropriation of Nature', 196-252
7. This is contested by Stuart Clark in 'The Scientific Status of Demonology', in Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance, edited by B.W.Vickers (Cambridge, 1984), 351-74, but is attested by the case of John Webster, as set out in Thomas Harman Jobe, 'The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanvill-Webster Debate', Isis, 72, 1981, 343-56.
8. Thomas, p.573; Easlea, pp. 19-25. See further Sydney Anglo, 'Reginald Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft: Scepticism and Sadduceeism'. in The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft, edited by Sydney Anglo, (London, Henley and Boston, 1977), 106-39 (pp. 110-13 and note 8, p.136).

9. Trevor-Roper, p.174.

10. Trevor-Roper, p.173.

11. F.E.Kettner, De Duobus Impostoribus, Benedicto Spinoza et Balthasare Bekkero (Leipzig, 1694), section 2:3.

12. Trevor-Roper, p.173

13. Trevor-Roper, pp. 173f.

14. Thomas, p. 452.

15. A. van der Linde, Balthasar Bekker Bibliographie (The Hague, 1869).

16. Trevor-Roper, p. 210.

17. G.H.Beckher, Schediasma Critico-Litterarium de Controversiis Balthasari Bekkero motis, (Königsberg and Leipzig, 1721).

18. John Beaumont, Treatise of Spirits, ..., (London, 1705); translated into German in 1721.

19. Benjamin Binet, Traité Historique des dieux et des démons (Delft, 1696).

20. Idée générale de la théologie payenne ,.. servant de refutation au systeme de Mr. Bekker (Amsterdam, 1699).

21. Eberhard David Hauber, Bibliotheca Acta et Scripta Magica (Lemgo, 1739), cited by Trevor-Roper, p. 174.

22. National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints, (London, 1969), Vol. xliv, p.157.

23. Le monde enchanté (Amsterdam, 1694).

24. The World Bewitched (London, 1695).

25. The World Turn'd Upside Down (London, 1700).

26. De Duobus Impostoribus, section 8.

27. Trevor-Roper here cites G.B. Stoppa, La religion des Hollondois, (Paris, 1673), p.88.

28. Thomas, pp. 167-71.

29. Trevor-Roper, pp. 175, 183.

30. Trevor-Roper, p. 175.

31. Paul Hazard, The European Mind (1680-1715) (London, 1953), p. 175.

32. Trevor-Roper, p 174.

33. The World Bewitched (henceforth WB), preface to Book I, b5.

34. WB, preface to Books II to IV.

35. Cited by Hazard (footnote 31), p. 171.

36. Trevor-Roper, p. 181.

37. WB, preface to Books II to IV. Stuart Clark, in 'The Scientific Status of

Demonology' (see note 7), points out that the demonologists believed that demons

acted through the laws of nature, and in keeping with their own natures, rather than supernaturally. For this, however, they needed bodies and physical powers; but, as Bekker rightly implied, there was no room for them to have either in a mechanistic universe. Indeed if the new philosophers' belief in universal regularities was correct, then the acts of demons could no longer be understood as supernatural as Scot had maintained (without benefit of mechanism) a century earlier.

38. A.C.Kors and. E.Peters, Witchcraft in Europe, 1100-1700, pp. 373-5, cited by Easlea, p.219. Keith Hutchinson has argued that the Scientific Revolution was readier to credit occult qualities as causes ('What Happened to Occult Qualities in the Scientific Revolution?', Isis, 73 (1982), 233-53), and supernatural agency ('Supernaturalism and the Mechanical Philosophy', History of Science, 21, 1983, 297-333) than e.g. the Aristotelians had been. But this is only true as far as it relates to invisible but universal and regular causes, sometimes regarded as the direct expressions of laws of nature impressed by the Creator; it does not serve to show that belief in other occult qualities and other supernatural activity did not decline.

39. WB, Book II, sections 26-30.

40. WB, Book III

41. WB, preface to Book I, b8.

42. WB, Book I, sections 15-21.

43. WB, Book II, sections 32f.; the quoted words are cited by Easlea at p.218.

44. Trevor-Roper, RRSC, 174

45. WB, preface to Book I, b8.

46. WB, preface to Book I, b5f.

47. RRSC, 182; Trevor-Roper here accepts the verdict of Thomasius.

48. Thomas, pp. 577-81.

49. Trevor-Roper, RRSC, p. 183

50. WB, preface to Book I, b6f; preface to Books II to IV.

51. Robin Attfield, God and The Secular: A Philosophical Assessment of Secular Reasoning from Bacon to Kant (Cardiff, 1978), pp. 33-49.

52. Robin Attfield, The Ethics of Environmental Concern, (Oxford and New York: 1983), chapters 2 to 5, and 8.

53. Attfield, God and The Secular, pp. 15-33, 49-67.

54. See the passage from Sprat's History of the Royal Society (London, 1667), cited by Easlea at pp. 4 and 212.

55. Thomas, p. 579.

56. Thomas, p. 579.

57. Attfield, God and The Secular, pp. 68-69.

58. Thomas, pp. 476f. For a study of the way in which demonology sometimes served an inversionary role, clarifying thereby the nature of 'sound theology' and politics, see Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', Past and Present, 87 (1980), 98-127. I should not, however, endorse his view that world-views are beyond explanation and appraisal.

59. Easlea, pp. 130, 158, etc.

60. Galatians 3:28.

61. Trevor-Roper, RRSC, p. 181

62. Thomas, p. 663; cited by Easlea, p. 201.

63. I am grateful for the comments and criticisms of an earlier draft of this essay from Keith Thomas, Brian Easlea, Stuart Clark, and members of the Cardiff Philosophy Seminar. None of these people has any responsibility for its final form.