

death. He couldn't imagine the man his ex-wife had married doing such a thing, or Mrs Matara's husband, or the dandruffy man who now stood by the door of the flat. Such men would have been frightened out of their wits.

"Good-bye," she said.

"Good-bye," the man said, smiling at the door.

ATTRIDGE WANTED to say something. He wanted to linger for a moment longer and to mention his ex-wife. He wanted to tell them what he had never told another soul, that his ex-wife had done terrible things to him. He disliked all Jewish people, he wanted to say, because of his ex-wife and her lack of understanding. Marriage repelled him because of her. It was she who had made him vicious-tongued. It was she who had embittered him.

He looked from one face to the other. They would not understand and they would not be capable of making an effort, as he had when faced with the woman's predicament. He had always been a little on the cold side, he knew that well. But his ex-wife might have drawn on the other aspects of his nature and dispelled the coldness. Instead of displaying all that impatience, she might have cosseted him and accepted his complications. The love she sought would have come in its own good time, as sympathy and compassion had eventually come that afternoon. Warmth was buried deep in some people, he wanted to say to the two faces in the hall but he knew that, like his ex-wife, the faces would not understand.

As he went he heard the click of the door behind him and imagined a hushed giggling in the hall. He would be feeling like a prince if the man had really died.

Leicester Square : May 1974

Will Shakespeare leans at ease,
 his right arm on a pillar topped with books,
 his stone cloak unruffled in the breeze,
 as constantly across the square he looks,
 where letters five feet high,
 announce Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*
 and what we take to be
 the eyes of Dr Eckleburg.
 But these are brown not blue?
 We look again
 to find they are the two
 enormous boobs of Jenny,
 "a ride like you never had before",
 the *Swinging Stewardess*
 of the film that's shown next door;
 and, as if to stress
 the confusion of fantasies and themes,
 and, still, a good wine needs no bush,
 while *Gatsby* seems
 to have no more than lettering,
 Jenny's full-frontal dreams
 are cut short at the hips.
 Though Shakespeare always had it sorted in his head:
 for the one a tragedy, for the other
 the second-best bed.

John Cotton

Three Forgeries

Myths & Hoaxes of European Demonology (II)

MOST HISTORIANS who were not persuaded that a sect of witches really existed have accepted that the stereotype came into being during, and as a result of, the Inquisition's campaign against Catharism in southern France and northern Italy. They have also been in agreement about the immediate consequences. In France, the execution of the first living example of the stereotype, a woman burned at Toulouse in 1275; the first mass trial and execution of witches, carried out in 1335, also at Toulouse; other similar trials, resulting by 1350 in the execution of some 400 persons at Toulouse and a further 200 at Carcassonne; in Italy, a woman of Orta, in the diocese of Novara, tried and presumed burned some time between 1341 and 1352; further trials and executions around 1360, in the neighbouring diocese of Como.

These particulars are to be found already in the earliest scholarly history devoted to the witch-trials, that by Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, published in German in 1843.¹ They are given very fully in Joseph Hansen's great history, published in German in 1900;² and they are still to be found in the most recent histories by the most reputable scholars. They are nevertheless false from start to finish. None of these things really happened. The entire story can be shown to rest on three fabrications, dating respectively from the 15th, 16th and 19th centuries. As what is involved amounts to a major revision of the history of the witch-hunt, the matter calls for detailed exposition—and if detailed expositions

can sometimes be tedious, this one has at least the attractions of the bizarre.

A Spurious Source

HANSEN'S INFLUENCE on 20th-century historians has been so great that it is reasonable to start with him. He mentions the earliest case in three separate passages, the most striking of which can be translated as follows:

(In the year 1275) the Dominican Hugues de Beniols (or de Bajol), who was at that time inquisitor at Toulouse, carried out in the town a persecution of heretics and sorcerers, in the course of which a widely respected woman, Angela de la Barthe, was denounced by her neighbours as suspect of having dealings with the Devil. The 56-year-old woman confessed to the judge that for many years a demon had visited her and had intercourse with her every night. From this intercourse was born a monster, wolf above, serpent below, and human in between. She fed the monster on small children, making nocturnal excursions to catch these. After two years the monster vanished. The woman, who was obviously mentally deranged, was handed over by the inquisitor to the secular arm. On the orders of the seneschal she was burned in the square of St Stephen at Toulouse, along with several other individuals who had confessed to being magicians, necromancers and diviners. . . .³

As his sole source for this story Hansen gives the *Histoire de l'Inquisition en France*, by the Baron de Lamothe-Langon, published in Paris in 1829. The relevant passage in Lamothe-Langon, however, turns out to contain no primary source but merely another summary of the story, accompanied by references to two earlier works: the *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la ville et diocèse de Carcassonne*, by the Augustinian monk T. Bouges (Paris, 1741); and the chronicle of Bardin. On examination these two sources melt into one. Bouges has simply translated the story of Angela de la Barthe from a chronicle written around 1455 by a councillor of the *parlement* of

¹ W. G. Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1843), pp. 180, 186–7, 189.

² J. Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter und die Entstehung der grossen Hexenverfolgung* (Munich and Leipzig, 1900), pp. 309, 315–17, 326, 335, 337.

³ Hansen, pp. 309–10. The other references to Angela de la Barthe are on pp. 188, 234.