

## Notes for *The Century of Deception*

### Epilogue, pp. 261-269.

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- Major hoaxes: Check out for instance <http://hoaxes.org/archive/display/category/1700s/> [accessed July, 2021] which lists eighteenth century hoaxes. Rather surprisingly they do not include the Cock Lane Ghost and Elizabeth Canning; nor, less surprisingly, the Stockwell Ghost and Chevalier de Moret. The other six are all listed.
- Literary Hoaxes: A couple of notable examples are Schoolmaster James Macpherson's claim he had discovered the text of an ancient epic poem written by a Scottish bard named Ossian: he almost certainly wrote it himself. And Thomas Chatterton producing a group of poems he claimed were the work of a 15th century priest named Thomas Rowley. See *Practice to Deceive*, Joseph Rosenblum, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2000; *The House of Forgery in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Paul Baines, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999; and *Deception and Detection in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Jack Lynch, Ashgate, 2008, all of which concentrate particularly on literary hoaxes.
- Detecting them. *The Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 30 May 1763: 'It may be asked, is the understanding of the public more opened now than when these stories gained such credit? I answer, no; it is owing to the distance of time, and those who once believed them, can now without danger of being *detected*, swear they never believed a syllable of either.'

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- 'a lady of an independent fortune': *Astonishing Transactions*, p. 6.

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- All four hoaxes: There is also an example in a newspaper of 'Elizabeth Canning', 'the rabbit breeder', 'scratching Fanny', 'bottle conjurer' & the 'Stockwell ghost' all linked together, *The Morning Chronicle, and London Advertiser*, 27 October 1780.
- 'the grossest credulity'; 'the rabbit-woman' and 'the adventure of the quart-bottle': *The Imposture Detected; or, The Mystery and Iniquity of Elizabeth Canning's Story, Displayed*, London, 1753, pp. 3-4. Another linkage that predates the Cock Lane Ghost is in *The St. James's Chronicle; Or The British Evening-Post*, 11-14 July 1761: 'We all remember to have seen the whole Nation, at such a Period, split into Parties concerning the Possibility of a Servant Girl's subsisting for a Month on a few Crusts of Bread and a Pitcher of Water... At such a Period a Rabbit-Woman, or a Fortuneteller, a Quack, or a Bottle Conjurer, engages the Attention and engrosses the Conversation of the whole Town.'

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- 'Mary Tofts, who conceived'; 'Elizabeth Canning, who lived a whole Month'; 'Pint Bottle'. *The St. James's Chronicle; Or The British Evening-Post*, 11-13 February 1762.
- 'the Scratching of the Cock-Lane Ghost is scarce out of our Ears'; 'Wonders' and 'will never cease': *The St. James's Chronicle; Or The British Evening-Post*, 6-8 September 1764.
- 'famous Bottle Conjurer'; 'the scratching Ghost of Cock-Lane' and 'the supernatural Power of being in two Places at once': *The St. James's Chronicle; Or The British Evening-Post*, 6-8 November 1766.
- 'famous Water Walker from Lyons': *The St. James's Chronicle; Or The British Evening-Post*, 2-4 October 1787.
- 'bottle-conjurer himself would not have calculated so grossly': *The Morning Chronicle*, 4 April 1796, 30349 - 67.
- 'Bet Canning', 'a Cock-lane ghost', 'bottle conjuror'; 'the rabbit woman' and 'the period is probably at hand, when we may expect such impositions': *The Town and Country Magazine; Or Universal Repository Of Knowledge, Instruction and Entertainment*, September, 1775, p. 484.
- 'ghosts are out of date, no Bet Cannings can arise; all the Bottle Conjuror's are flown, and not a rabbit woman to be met with': *Ibid*, July, 1776, p. 359.
- 'English Credulity': See the Prologue for plentiful examples of the use of this phrase.

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- Commentators were wrong: A comparable thesis is put forward in *The Secret History of Magic: The True Story of the Deceptive Art*, Peter Lamont and Jim Steinmeyer, New York: TarcherPerigee, 2018 when it comes to the eighteenth-century public, and earlier, understanding the difference between magicians performing tricks for entertainment, as opposed to those claiming to have supernatural powers.

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- 'Politics made a Halt, and Scandal held her Tongue, all to make Way for the Conversation of the Bottle': *A Letter to the Town Concerning The Man and The Bottle*, p. 18. 'For a Fortnight before-hand they were the Conversation of every public Place; Poetry, Physic, and Politics made a Halt, and Scandal held her Tongue, all to make Way for the Conversation of the Bottle.'
- 'now the Topic of every Conversation': *Much ado about Nothing; Or, a Plain Refutation Of All that has been Written or Said Concerning the Rabbit-Woman of Godalming*, pp. 5-6.
- 'minds are fertile in inventing' and 'confirm their credulity': *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 23 September 1769. The correspondent gave an example of someone boldly insisting the 'Rabbit Woman' was a fact by quoting 'a prophecy of Isaiah'.
- 'the Bottle Conjuror, Rabbit Woman, Cock-Lane Ghost'; 'some villainous Scheme' and 'the Government': *The Public Advertiser*, 4 January 1777.