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MEDICINE AND MAGIC DURING THE ENGLISH WITCH-TRIALS: NEGOTIATING LEGALITY BETWEEN RELIGION AND PRACTICE

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Abstract: The years of the English witch-hunts (1542 to 1736) present a negotiation between state and citizenry. In discussing the relationship between magic and medicine we can see the negotiation between religious orthodoxy and practicality. Demonologists called for widespread prosecution of charming acts as a means of eliminating sin - desires put into law, but never truly implemented because of the reality of Early Modern English Life. The widespread availability of Cunning Folk, traditional charmers, represented the practicality of magic. In between the two poles Hermetic-Cabalists used charming but retained the language of piety.

The English witch-trials demonstrate the fraught process of defining what 'magic' is and is not permissible when faced with the reality of Early Modern Life.

Keywords: England, Medicine, Magic, Witch, Cunning Folk, Demonology, Statutory Law

INTRODUCTION

It is something of a cliché to depict the victims of the witch-hunts as wise-women persecuted by priests and judges for their healing crafts. The idea of women, healing through wisdom and love, silenced by the evil male authorities fits within an appealing mythos.[1] The women (and men and unknown persons) who died are therefore martyrs to a greater cause, vindicated through science and modernity. Making them a rallying point against their descendent institutions. "This is what *they* did to *us*!"

While it is tempting to characterise the place of healing in the witch-trials so simply it is the role of the historian to move beyond this and interrogate what the evidence shows. While finding empowerment through self-identification

with the idea of a 'witch' is understandable,[2] misrepresenting the real lives and deaths of women (predominately in the English case) for an ideological purpose betrays their autonomy and in many cases, the victim's wishes themselves.

While it most definitely true that 'witchcraft' was related to medical practices, it is worth considering how charming relates to accusation. Through the case study of medicine in the English witch-hunting period (1542 to 1736) we can see the complex relationship between authority and reality.

Charming was a common part of Early Modern English life and nothing demonstrates it better than the topic of medicine. What constituted charming, and witchcraft itself, was contentious and a matter of argument. The point at which activities became magic, as opposed to legitimate religion or science was fraught with tension. Demonologists[3] supported the widespread prosecution of all magic as diabolic, but this was met with resistance from communities that utilised charming, whether against 'witches' or for the gain of holy knowledge, and from the reality of Early Modern English life. Magic and medicine were intertwined in Early Modern England, so much so that efforts to limit magical practices through laws and preaching were always doomed to failure.

In order to understand the English witch-trials I propose that we view magic as a spectrum between an orthodox religious pole and a practical pole. This allows us to better understand charming within the context of Early Modern English society, both in terms of therapeutic practices and the wider society.

On the religious end of the spectrum were demonologists like Richard Bernard (1568–1641), who viewed any preternatural practices or abilities as diabolic in origin. Those who held these beliefs were the prevailing authority in Early Modern England. 'Magic', being a power outside of God's own, either came from demons or it was idolatry. As such it needed to be eliminated. This was supported by English Statutory law, which focused on *malificia*, 'bad magic', over continental ideas of a conspiracy of 'witches' (Davies 2003: 8). The aim of clerics and demonologists was to stop all other narratives around charming that framed 'magic' as beneficial and reinforce orthodox 'scientific' medical practices.

Traditional healers, known collectively as the Cunning Folk, offered charms and healing services as well as witch-finding and the lifting of bewitchment.[4] They used 'white witchcraft' against 'black witches' but were not limited to the 'beneficial' and could also offer charms for ill-intent or accuse others of *malificia*. They represented the most practical of all forms of magic but were outside of orthodox religion.

Hermetic-Cabalists attempted *ritual* or *natural magic,* as progressions of the explorations of wisdom and pursuit of scientific knowledge. [5] A melding of religious thought and practical application, through knowledge of the macrocosm and microcosm and the manipulation of *ritual* and *natural magic* they

could achieve both physical and spiritual effects, such as the summoning of angels and manipulations of physical bodies. What they practiced was not the power-hungry diabolic pacts feared by demonologists, but a further extension of efforts to understand God and 'use' faith. They sit between the two poles as practitioners of questionably orthodox but practical charming.

Ultimately, this paper argues that historians must move past understanding 'witches' in Early Modern England as just those accused of witchcraft and consider the accusations within a broader context. In doing so, the impossibility of attempts to eliminate all 'magical' practices, particularly those related to therapeutic benefits, within Early Modern English society and the compromises made to establish the limits of permissible and illegal forms of charming become more apparent. I will suggest that the witch-hunts were not about 'magic' at all, but about publicly enforcing the beliefs of powerful and influential demonologists when not at odds with practical considerations at a state level. We can see this particularly in the case of medicine, where the origins, morality and legality of practices was negotiated with practical considerations.

DEMONOLOGISTS

England never embraced the concept of the *Sabbath Witchcraft,* the meetings of witches to worship the devil or the use of judicial torture leading to few mass witch-hunts, unlike it is other European neighbours (Cohn 1993: 233).[6] The aim, instead of revealing a conspiracy of devil worshipers was to end common magic practices themselves. [7] The English Statutory law Acts created felonies out of not only 'witchcraft' but also 'enchantment' and 'conjuring', it was the act of magic that was targeted. The aim of the laws was to limit any and all potentially diabolic practices. Hence there was no active differentiation between 'witches' and other magic users in England at this time as William Perkins wrote:

> "A Witch is a Magician, who either by open or secret league, wittingly, and willingly, consenteth to use the aide and assistance of the Deuill, in the working of Wonders"
>
> (Perkins 1608: 636).

This is not a 'witch' in the nightmare-hag sense,[8] or that of the covens of continental Europe. For England, witchcraft was not in-of-itself considered heretical. As Major-General Boteler said of prosecution of members of the Society of Friends (Quakers)

> "The magistrate is to be a terror unto evil works. If we punish murder and witchcraft, and let greater offences go, as heresies and blasphemy, which is under the same enumeration; for my part, I could never reconcile myself nor others to leave out the latter and punish the former offences."
>
> (5th of December, 1656, in Thomas Burton 1828: 26).[9]

The potential to cause harm or lead the unsuspecting into demonic pacts or idolatry was what spurred on demonologists calls for prosecution. Protestant demonologists themselves were typically members of the clergy and based their writings upon their preaching (Clark 1990: 56). As a result, folk practices and the consulting of the Cunning Folk - activities of their parishioners - were warned against as gateways to sin. Often Puritans, they were primarily concerned with eliminating 'Catholic superstition' and associated fears around what was and was not acceptable religious behaviour. Preternatural intervention was seen as beyond the core beliefs of the newly formed Protestant church and too close to idolatry, a terrible sin. Traditional practices such as the blessing of church bells conflicted with the message of trusting solely in God's grace. James Calfhill wrote of the traditional blessings of the Catholic Church that it was

> "applied, I promise you, to as good a purpose as when the witch, by her Paternoster, made her pail go a milking. For why should I not compare the Priests, (that consecrate Crosses and ashes, water and salt, oil and cream, boughs and bones, stocks and stones; that christen bells that hang in the steeple; that conjure worms that creep in the field; that give S. John's Gospels to hang about men's necks;) to the vilest witches and sorcerers of the earth?"
>
> (Calfhill 1565: 17).

Yet, parishioners behaviour is often an imperfect mirror of religious doctrine.[10] Laws, when not enforced or that are unenforceable appear to the modern eye like popular condemnation while they are only representation of fringe positions.

THE CUNNING FOLK

Traditional charmers known as the Cunning Folk were a ubiquitous part of the English landscape.[11] As Alan Macfarlane noted in his ground-breaking study of the Essex witch trials, in Essex no village was more than ten miles from one of

the Cunning Folk (Macfarlane 2008: 120). These figures appear in both literature and entertainment. For example, Thomas Heywood's fictitious but familiar figure of the wise-woman of Hoxton, describes herself in the following terms:

> "First, I am a wise-woman, and a Fortune-teller, and under that I deale in Physicke and Fore-speaking, in Palmistry, and recovering of things lost. Next, I undertake to cure Madd folkes. Then I keepe Gentle-women lodgers, to furnish such Chambers as I let out by the night: Then I am provided for bringing young Wenches to bed; and for a need, you see I can play the Match-maker. Shee that is but one, and prosesseth so many, may well bae tearmed a wise-woman, if there bee any."
>
> (Thomas Heywood 1604, *The Wise-Woman of Hoxton*, Act 3, Scene 1)

While this particular wise-woman is a character, she represents a common figure in the everyday life of English men and women and she demonstrates the popular potential prosecutable services on offer by Cunning Folk. The recovery of things lost, a particularly lucrative business venture ranging from identifying who had stolen personal items, revealing hidden caches to the defeating of purposed guardian spirits of hoards had the potential to lead to magical and spiritual concerns (Davies 2003: 93–100). Prophesying, whether by astrology or palmistry, was on the fringes of legality as laws against prophesying focused on eliminating seditious and politically motivated prophesies.[12]

Positioning themselves as *counter-maleficum*, able to cure madness and assign blame, Cunning Folk could practice traditional charms and remedies without appearing as prosecutable 'witches' while engaging in activities outside of the law. 'Witchcraft' was defined in opposition to their practices, it is what others did, and what the Cunning Folk offered defence against. Those 'madd' with bewitchment may be cured by the appropriate remedy, magical or otherwise.

By positioning themselves as useful wise-women and cunning-men, like the wise-woman of Hoxton, they could continue practices that were not strictly legal under statutory law. Accusations of *maleficia* often came from neighbours but, because they held a position of trust within the community, there was little will to stamp out the Cunning Folk. Cunning Folk were 'useful', as Owen Davies argues, and so were seldom implicated in the witch-trials (Davies 2003: 13). Their position in society demonstrates the importance of the practical aspects or the appeal of magic in people's lives.

THE HERMETIC-CABALISTS

For the learned, another form of magic, both religious and practical was appealing. Hermetic-Cabalism, an Early Modern trend, sought to explain the world through the supposed mystical writing of the ancient pagan mystic Hermes Trismegistus and Jewish Cabalism, particularly the wisdom of Solomon. While its founders were not Christian their practices existed very much within a Christian framework. As Robert Turner, translator of many Hermetic-Cabalist works into English noted, 'the Art of Magick is the art of worshipping God' (Turner 1655: 1).[13] *Grimoires* (spell books) gave instruction on theory, religious purity and the practice of ritual magic authenticated by a famous author, either from antiquity, or an academic like Hebrew scholar and law expert Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa.[14]

The line between science and magic had yet to be set in Early Modern England, James I for one called magic a 'black and unlawfull science',[15] so intellectuals like Issac Newton could research and participate in the occult without a sense of contradiction. These scholars were defining themselves 'scientists'. Theoretically one could achieve amazing goals by knowing how the universe was constructed and experimenting with those results. Hermetic-Cabalism offered esoteric wisdom and an understanding of how the universe was constructed, gained from years of study and biblical reflection. By extension of understanding the divine organisation of the universe, one could use that wisdom to effect physical change. Prophesies could be made by understanding planetary relations, and charms could be activated by the successful melding of favourable planetary alignments and ritual. By the manipulations of these inherent properties the practitioner could perform actions beyond the scope of their own understanding; 'natural magic'.

While some of the practices advocated in *grimoires* could be prosecuted under the 'witchcraft' acts. These men were not prosecuted as witches but were active and influential members of Elizabethan and Jacobean society. Not truly part of the orthodox medical establishment they combined theological ideas with practical application. Their actions were understood within a 'scientific' and academic context that defended against accusations of devil worship by presenting a holy framework around the origin of their power and practical benefit for defining their behaviours not legal.

MEDICINE AND MAGIC

The difference between 'magic' and 'medicine' was one of degrees and negotiated constantly. Years before outlawing charming, Henry VIII (1491–1547) had attempted to restrict the 'socery and which crafte' practices of 'Smythes Wevers and Women' for the benefit of 'them that cannot descerne the uncūnyng from the cunnyng;' in *An Act concerning Phesicions & Surgeons* (1511–12, *Statutes of the Realm*, pp.31-2). While attempting to protect Englishmen and women the law would be challenged by the practicality of implementing such a policy.

The relationship between the practicing physician and the Cunning Folk was often one of direct opposition. The desire to believe in the powers of those who claimed to be able to heal with no evidence or formal training was a challenge to those who wished to eliminate superstition and advance scientific forms of knowledge. Any person could claim ability and knowledge of medical treatments, although they might lack the training and education of physicians. John Halle, a surgeon, recounted that he was introduced to a shoemaker who claimed to have the ability to cure diseases of the eyes. When questioned about his qualifications or knowledge of the eye he was unable to provide any sufficient answers (Halle 1565: 210). The Company and Fellowship of Surgeons of London used this Act to sue and limit therapeutic practices by those outside of its company, which led to a shortage of adequate medical care and undue suffering—the explicit reason the statute was overturned thirty years later. *An Acte that persones being no cōen Surgeones maie mynistre medicines owtwarde* (1542–3, *Statutes of the Realm*, p.906) stated that those with knowledge of herbs, roots and waters, both men and women, could safely offer medical treatments including baths, poultices, emplasters and brews as long as that knowledge, gained through speculation or practice, was held to have *originated from God.* This negotiation between what was permissible and what was illegal highlights the importance of practical considerations together with religious obligations. The issue of what constituted 'magic' and 'witchcraft' was a matter of life and death, not just for those accused but for all those who used or would use potentially 'magical' therapeutic services. Traditional 'magic' formed such a vital part of the Early Modern English medicine establishment that it was utilised by all sections of society, including the uppermost elite. When Fernando Stanley, Fifth Earl of Derby and potential successor to Elizabeth I fell ill in 1594 a wise-woman was called forth to minister to him before the physicians arrived.[16]

The sliding scale between orthodox medicine and magic was itself evident within the works of the physician. Robert Turner, along with his translations into English of key Hermetic-Cabalist texts, wrote two books on medicine, including *The Brittish Physician: or The Nature and Vertues of English Plants*

(1664). *Grimoires* like Pseudo-Paracelsus' *Of the Supreme Mysteries of Nature* (*c*. 1500) held that supernatural diseases required supernatural cures and, as such, an aspiring learned man should study magic (Pseudo-Paracelsus 1656: 44). As such men of the period might have a copy of the magical astrology book *Picatrix,* (also known as the *Ghāyat al-hakīm*, *c*. 1000) much like that which passed through the hands of physicians Simon Forman and Richard Napier and other notable intellectuals of the period.[17] Forman and Napier were two of the greatest astrological physicians of their time, serving clientele from across all strata of society at their London and Buckinghamshire practices.[18] Notes on their consultations between 1596 and 1634 have survived, allowing us to see in detail the practices of a group of Early Modern physicians. Whilst not denounced as 'witches' these physicians were occasionally railed against by the religious authorities for potentially illegal activities, such as the consulting of angels.[19] The writer and folklorist John Aubrey, relates a story told to him by Elias Ashmole of a woman who was given a magical angelic remedy for an ague from Napier, which her minister convinced her to burn to protect her immortal soul.[20] Former and Napier were popular physicians and yet their services were preached against as ungodly. What they did could be considered prosecutable offences yet the practical value of their skills protected against accusations.

They could in fact, be useful in creating those accusations themselves. As an extension of their services to ensure good health, uncovering of bewitchment and subsequent witch-finding were offered by both the conventional physician and the Cunning Folk. Forman and Napier record 837 cases of suspected bewitchment over the forty-two years of records (1.73 per cent of all cases).[21] Cunning Folk were often called on first to discover witches and cure bewitchment, as when the wise-woman of Hoxton cured 'Madd folkes'.[22] They were readily available and they offered preventative charms and to find the witch responsible (Davies 2003: 103). Detecting bewitchment through the use of magic challenged the way the laws worked, rendering both the 'victim' and 'guilty party' practitioners of illegal arts.

The officially sponsored demonological viewpoint, that all magic should be eliminated as a means to save souls and reduce heretical behaviour was met with challenges too great to overcome by the practical aspects of magic. Magic played such a vital part in Early Modern medicine that, no matter the laws or preaching of clergymen, charming could not be stopped. What was permissible became a contested ground that merged orthodox religion and practical concerns.

CONCLUSION

In 1627, Englishman Richard Bernard (1568–1641) cautioned in his *Guide to Grand Jurymen* that:

> "Bad Witches many prosecute with all eagernesse; but Magicians, Necromancers, ... and the Curing Witch, commonly called, The good Witch, all sorts can let alone"
>
> (Bernard 1627: 5)

'Richard Bernard goes on to argue that all those who practice 'magic' should be prosecuted, just as it was set out in law, even though many jurists were hesitant to convict. This encapsulates the difficulties that were inherent in defining 'magic' and 'witchcraft' during the English witch-trials and how what was acceptable and unacceptable was meditated through what was practical.

In investigating the way demonologists, Cunning Folk and Hermetic-Cabalists understood charming in different ways, it is possible to better ascertain the way charming was understood by the Early Modern English person. Instead of viewing 'witchcraft' as simply illegal, I position it on a spectrum between religious and practical understandings of the world and of bewitchment. Doing so better informs us about why accusations of witchcraft were made because it explains the complexity of magical practices and their deep-rooted nature in Early Modern England. Magic was central to the lives of those living in Early Modern England. Although demonologists, who believed that all charming was either Catholic superstition or diabolic shaped the law, this was challenged by the practical value the Cunning Folk placed on magic, and the 'godliness' of the Hermetic-Cabalist movement. As accusations of witchcraft often came from neighbours, acting on the conflicts of daily life there was little grass-root support for prosecuting 'useful' magic, it was not a practical action in the lives of those who relied on these services.[23] These discourses combine to allow us to better understand how charming was understood and practiced on an everyday basis beyond the law and outside demonological belief.

While the desire to eliminate all charming practices was apparent, we cannot think of the English witch-trials as reflecting only the demonological framework of repression of magic but as a result of the meeting between demonologists, Cunning Folk and aspiring 'scientists' in an environment that required magic to work.

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NOTES

[1] Exemplified in books like *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healer* (originally 1972, second edition 2010) by second wave feminists Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English. While mostly non-academic or of questionable standards of authority, these books have actively shaped how the public thinks about witch-trials.

[2] For an example of 'witch' as identity formation see K. Aune's *Feminist Spirtuality As Lived Religion: How UK Feminists Forge Religio-spiritual Lives* (2015).

[3] 'Demonologist' historically refers to those who study witches along with demons as they were typically thought to work together.

[4] The premier work on the Cunning Folk in England remains Owen Davies' 2003 study *Popular Magic: Cunning folk in English History.* Another, slightly more recent, study specifically on the topic of English Cunning Folk is Emma Wilby's *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft* (2005).

[5] Yates convincingly argues that Hermeticism and Cabalism should not be thought of as two separate movements (Yates 1979). For Hermetic-Cabalism, outside of Yates work, see the collected essays of Ingrid Merkel and Allen Debus' *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe* (1988), and Vaughan Hart *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (1994).

[6] Of the three types of witchcraft for the Early Modern witch trials that Larner found in her study of Scottish witch trials — "*maleficium*", "compact witchcraft" and "sabbath witchcraft"—only *maleficium* and compact witchcraft were common in England (Larner 1984: 80).

[7] Recently economics Leeson and Russ (2017) have proposed that the European witch trials were the result of competition for the faithful between the Catholic and Protes-

tant churches. While this is a novel (so much so that it was reported on in mainstream English language newspapers) economic approach, it is entirely 'top-down' with little consideration for the cultural contexts and the source of accusations in the diverse areas. Additionally, they fail to provide a clear explanation of the demise of the witch-trials, assuming that the end of the trials mark an end in the popular belief in witches, spurred on by the scientific revolution (30), but such a suggestion has been clearly disproved by the work of authors such as Davies, most recently in *Researching Reverse Witch Trials in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England* (2018) and in the continuing study of magic and witchcraft by folklorists.

[8] See the influential anthropological study *Witchcraft* by Lucy Mair (Mair 1961: 36–42).

[9] Two days later as part of the same debate, Judge-Advocate Whalley would bring in a book that Thomas Burton 'witchcraft and blasphemy and free-will, &c.' to be taken into consideration against the Society of Friends (Quakers) (Burton 1828: 80).

[10] John Selden's *Table-Talk* (1689), a list of pieces of wisdom attributed to the influential jurist and politician after his death, while highly critical of Catholicism, suggests that the routing out of traditional charming was not effective in stopping sin (Selden 1689, 1856 edition: 110).

[11] They went by a range of names but as George Gifford (1548–1620) in his treatise on witchcraft implies, the commonly used terms were "cunning men and wise-women" (Gifford 1593, *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraft,* p. iv). Nearly a century later these terms are still used according to Webster (1610–1682) as "…we, in the North of England, call such as take upon them to foretel where things are that have been stolen, or to take upon them to help Men or Goods, that the vain credulity of the common people have thought to be bewitched, we (I say) call them wise men, or wise women, without regard had to the way or means by which they undertook to perform these things" (Webster, 1677, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*, pg.131). John Bullokar's (1574–1627) dictionary *An English Expositor: teaching the interpretation of the hardest words used in our language, with sundry explications, descriptions and discourses* (1616) defines *Wisard* as "A Wise man, a Witch, a cunning man" (Bullokar 1616).

[12] Such as those that Lady Margaret Clifford, Countess of Derby mother of Fernando Stanley was caught using (Bonzol 2010: 79).

[13] His 'Preface to the Reader' of his translation of *Arbatel of Magick* (1655) articulates his views on ritual and natural magic as:

"Witchcraft and Sorcery, are works done merely by the devil, which with respect unto some covenant made with man, he acteth by men his instruments, to accomplish his evil ends: of these, the histories of all ages, people and countries, as also the holy Scriptures, afford us sundry examples.

But *Magus* is a Persian word primitively, whereby is expressed such a one as is altogether conversant in things divine; as Plato affirmeth, the Art of Magick is the art of worshipping God."

(Turner 1655: 1)

[14] Not only was Agrippa instrumental in the Hermetic-Cabalist movement but in 1528, Agrippa was one of the Hebrew scholars consulted on the topic of the theological legality of Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, possibly at her request. Also, in

1510 Agrippa is known to have visited London and been in contact with Renaissance humanist John Colet (1467–1519) and Erasmus (1466–1536) (Yates 1979: 38–41).

[15] King James I, 1597 Daemonologie, vol.1.III: 9.

[16] For more information on this case see Bonzel, 2010.

[17] One copy of the Picatrix went from the physician and occultist Simon Forman (1552–1611) to his student Richard Napier (1559–1634) and then passed to Sir Richard Napier 1st Baronet, of Luton Hoo (1607–1676), William Lilly (1602–1681) the highly successful almanac author, founder of the Royal Society Elias Ashmole (1617–1692), Henry Mordaunt, 2nd Earl of Petersborough (1623–1697), politician Sir Joseph Jekyll (1663–1738) and physician Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) from where it passed into the British Museum. Pingree 1986: xix–xx.

[18] For full biographies see Casebooks Project (About the astrologers).

[19] On the 5th of April 1611, Richard Napier notes that he summoned the Archangel Michael at the request of another member of the court, Elizabeth Cary, Lady Berkeley, goddaughter of Elizabeth I. Casebooks Project (CASE37819 [Normalised Version]).

[20] Once done, her ague returned and she repeated the proscription, again to burn it because of her minister. Finally, Napier told her she had slighted the angels and would die, as she went on to do (Aubrey 1721: 136).

[21] See Casebooks Project (Search results summary) for a further breakdown of the data.

[22] The connection between medicine and the witch-hunts has also been used to criticise the treatment of the mentally ill. Thomas Szasz evocatively compared the role of the psychiatrist to that of the witch-finder in *The Manufacture of Madness: A Comparative Study of the Inquisition and the Mental Health Movement* (1970).

"Like the witchmongers of bygone days, contemporary psychiatrists never tire of emphasizing the prevalence of mental illness and the dangers to society of the mentally ill. As a result, our ability to see signs of madness all around us now approaches – indeed, perhaps surpasses – that of the medieval inquistitor's ability to see signs of heresy all around him."

(Szasz 1970: 39)

[23] It is the opinion of the author that it should be unsurprising that accusations of witchcraft often came from neighbours and were based on issues relating to everyday life and conflicts. Ascribing negative traits and events to those we have tense relationships with is a logical response in a worldview that accommodates such a position. If you believe that witches *can* steal crops and inflict harm on others then it follows that a neighbour, who you dislike or distrust, *is* stealing crops and inflicting harm using witchcraft.