



DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

““They are the witches!”:
Fatal female relationships in Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* and
Ann Petry’s *Tituba of Salem Village*”

verfasst von / submitted by

Claudia Stefanie Illmeyer

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)

Wien, 2017 / Vienna, 2017

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 190 344 299

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Lehramtsstudium UF Englisch
UF Psychologie und Philosophie

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Alexandra Ganser-Blumenau

*Witchcraft was hung in history;
But history and I
Find all the witchcraft that we need
Around us every day.*

(Emily Dickinson 290)

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Historical Background.....	4
2.1. Female Life in Puritan New England	4
2.2. Puritan beliefs in witchcraft and female witches	11
2.3. The historical Salem witchcraft trials	17
2.4. Female agency in the trials	21
3. <i>The Crucible</i> (1953)	26
3.1. Historical context: McCarthyism or the Second Red Scare	26
3.2. Plot.....	28
3.3. The female characters and their actions	30
3.3.1. Abigail Williams	30
3.3.2. Elizabeth Proctor.....	34
3.3.3. Mary Warren	36
3.3.4. Tituba	38
3.4. Women's fatal relationships	41
3.4.1. Seeking revenge: Abigail Williams and Elizabeth Proctor.....	41
3.4.2. The adolescent girls: Abigail Williams and Mary Warren	47
3.4.3. Scapegoating 'the other': Abigail Williams and Tituba	53
4. <i>Tituba of Salem Village</i> (1964)	59
4.1. The Author in her historical context: The Civil Rights Movement.....	59
4.2. Plot.....	61
4.3. The female characters and their actions	64
4.3.1. Tituba Indian	64
4.3.2. Abigail Williams	67
4.3.3. Mercy Lewis	69
4.3.4. Mary Warren	71
4.3.5. Goody Good.....	72
4.3.6. Gammar Osburne	73
4.4. Women's fatal relationships	74
4.4.1. The orphan and the slave: Abigail Williams and Tituba Indian	74
4.4.2. The bound girl and the slave: Mercy Lewis and Tituba Indian	79

4.4.3. Women on the margins: Goody Good, Gammar Osburne, and the girls	83
5. Comparative Conclusion	88
6. References	93
7. English abstract	97
8. German abstract.....	97

1. Introduction

Witch-hunting often took on a dramatic scale in seventeenth-century New England: innocent people were conspired against and discredited; their accusers, though, escaped any form of punishment. Those accused of witchcraft-related activities fell under suspicion for a variety of different behaviors ranging from speech acts to voodoo practices. As affirmed by many historians such as Carol F. Karlsen, John Demos, and Marilyn J. Westerkamp, women were the main targets of witchcraft allegations, prosecutions, and executions. Yet their accusers were not, as might be assumed when thinking of witch-hunts in the light of misogyny, men but most often women. Hence, open to question is why women turned against members of their own sex, and whether women's fatal relationships are to blame for the commencement of the Salem witchcraft trials in seventeenth-century New England. Although the epitome of New World's witch-hunting history has been subject to myriad studies from both a historical and a literary viewpoint, the proposed questions have only received little attention. Women's ill-fated relationships, as Lucienne Roubin proposes, can be located in the so-called "feminine space" (qtd. in Garrett 465), an area where women operate on their own – apart from male control. In this particular space, women practice activities that are stereotypically linked with their sex. Quarrels and disputes between the women emerge from the specific problems they encounter within *their* area. In seventeenth-century New England, and most likely elsewhere where alleged witches were prosecuted, women's ill-fated relationships promoted some women to turn against members of their own sex: they fed gossip, officially leveled witchcraft charges, blamed their accuser, and/or attended executions. However, accusing other females of having succumbed to the Devil's temptations presented by far the worst of these actions. The allegations followed a clear pattern in most of the cases: the women got to know each other; a certain incident triggered their conflict, and prompted one of the parties to press charges. Leveling these accusations provided a relatively safe method to ruin one's enemy since the presumed witch's malicious actions were usually given credence in the court proceedings. Furthermore, Puritan theology reinforced the believers' faith in the existence of Satan and his minions, the witches. Women's readiness to speak out against members of their own sex stems from the belief system they lived in: oppressed by Puritans' strict, all-male hierarchies, they faced a life of subordination from their births onwards. Hence, witchcraft allegations, as proven during the Salem witchcraft trials, aided women in rising

to temporary status and power in a society that reproved them for their weakness, and thus they greatly supported the tradition of witch-hunting. However, decisions about the defendants' verdicts were reached by those yielding the power in Puritan New England's theocratic societies – men. Therefore, the misogynist viewpoint to the hanging of witches is valid. Nevertheless, women's involvement in leading members of their own sex to the gallows, as proposed by Carol F. Karlsen, Elizabeth Reis, or Wendy Schissel, is equally important.

In the literary works chosen for this thesis – Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953) and Ann Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village* (1964) – women are found to accuse other women of satanic conspiracy and thus trigger their prosecutions. At the core of both texts lie the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692, yet Miller's and Petry's writings differ considerably since they were each influenced by their time's present events – McCarthyism and the Civil Rights Movement. Hence, the female characters and the women's relationships were constructed in the light of both historical contexts.

In detail, the analyses of both the play and the novel pursue to provide answers to the succeeding research questions: How do the literary texts construct the different female characters? How do both historical contexts – McCarthyism and the Civil Rights Movement – add to the characters' depictions? What triggers the women's failed relationships and thus provides the basis for witchcraft accusations, prosecutions and at worst executions? With regard to the first two research questions, it will become apparent that Miller and Petry offer diverse characterizations of the female figures and that they are greatly influenced by their personal involvement in the events that took place simultaneously to their writing processes. In terms of the women's failed relationships, I assume that their interpersonal mischief and dispute, which arose from their everyday lives, prompted many to level witchcraft accusations against other women.

In detail, the first part of the thesis, the historical background, aims to arrive at an understanding of female Puritan life in the decades surrounding the infamous events of 1692. Therefore, women's positions in Puritan theology, in daily life and in connection with New England's deep-seated misogynist witchcraft beliefs are examined. After giving an insight in the historical accounts of the infamous Salem witchcraft trials, I focus on the theory about female agency and women's various roles in the trials.

The historical background serves as a starting point to carefully analyze and understand both literary texts which, although based on the Salem episode, provide distinct depictions of the female characters, their relationships, and the events in general. While Miller's *The Crucible* centers mainly on Abigail and her malicious actions against her former lover's wife and other women in the community, Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village*, as the title suggests, focuses on Tituba, a black slave, and her supposed witchcraft involvement.

At the end of my thesis, I present a comparative conclusion which summarizes and contrasts the main arguments developed in the analysis part. The thesis' underlying aim is to emphasize women's overwhelming involvement in the prosecution of alleged witches and its depiction in twentieth-century American literature.

2. Historical Background

2.1. Female Life in Puritan New England

Puritanism – The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy. (Mencken 624)

English Puritans, who crossed the Atlantic to settle in the New World at the beginning of the seventeenth century, laid the foundation for early New England. Those who took the hazardous journey to an unknown continent did not form a homogenous group: “New England brought together men and women of different temperaments from different parts of England who [...] made sense of the puritan tradition in [their] own way” (Bremer, *Founders* 5-6). People’s diversity was further promoted by the fact that Puritanism was, unlike many other religious subgroups of that time, characterized by a lack of formal rules, for instance regarding church admission (see Bremer, *Founders* 3). Yet many Puritans seemed united in the belief of being more divine than others and thus pursued the aim of “raising [their] church to a higher level of holiness [...] by rejecting the remnants of Roman Catholic teachings and practice to be found in post-Reformation England” (Bremer, *Founders* 3). When by the 1630s English Puritans came to the New World, they faced tasks such as defining what was permissible within the boundaries of their newly sought order (see Bremer, *Founders* 5).

Puritan world views shaped men’s and women’s lives alike, yet it seems as if Puritan women were, far more than men, confronted with principles and ideals that affected their religious, domestic and public lives. Although – as mentioned before – “there was no institutional identity that defined puritanism” (Bremer, *Founders* 3), those who emigrated to the New World united in the hope of creating, as John Winthrop coined it, “a City upon a Hill” (Bremer, *Founders* 1) with a newly ordered society that centered on God. In this society everyone knew his or her social place; “people [...] avowed principles, sought to live by them and die by them” (A. Miller, *Introduction* 44). Ill-behaved women, in contrast to their male counterparts, presented a more serious challenge to the system because the connection between men and women formed the basis for the Puritan social order, and, furthermore, because men needed women to occupy inferior positions in order to secure their superiority (see Karlsen 181).

Central to Puritan theology was the belief in God, “the proof being found in the evidence of creation, the scripture, and in the apprehension of his presence in their [i.e. Puritans] own lives” (Bremer, *Puritanism* 34). Due to illiteracy, most Puritans did not have the ability to read the Bible themselves. Therefore, they had to rely on educated clergymen and magistrates. Despite most people’s poor education, Puritan theology put emphasis on the fact that “every person was able to interpret God’s word [...] and each was capable of forming a relationship with God independently” (Westerkamp 18). Thus, Puritan men and women were their own masters when approaching the Almighty. God did not only truly exist; he stood above everyone and everything. Besides his omnipotence, the Creator was assumed to make a decision in favor or against an individual’s destiny at birth: some were elected for salvation while others faced divine retribution in hell. During lifetime, Puritans were awaiting “the gracious experience of conversion [that] came to be recognized as the key sign of election” (Westerkamp 22). Conversion meant encountering God’s grace, which, according to the religious belief, was given to all men and women by Christ himself (see Westerkamp 21). Once people made the experience, their belief in being among God’s chosen ones flourished. Puritans thought that, although all believers are destined to suffer in hell owing to their inherent sinfulness, the Almighty, kind by nature, made the decision to protect some from eternal punishment (see Bremer, *Experiment* 17-18). However, men and women could never be sure if they were among those destined for heaven or hell because “God need not have saved anyone” (Bremer, *Puritanism* 39). In accordance, some believers started to look for evidence that would point to their individual fate, namely being rewarded or punished by God, which was also closely associated with the Devil’s malevolent workings (see Reis, *Women* 1).

God’s opponent, the Devil¹, was feared alike among Puritan men and women because his existence was especially believable within New England’s hostile environment. He was thought to take action under God’s observation and was “allowed [...] to afflict individuals [,] possess an unwary soul [,] and live within that person to control his every word and action” (Bremer, *Puritanism* 47). In turn, those who approved of Satan’s contract possibly gained wealth, physical well-being, high positions, or influence and succumbed to his strongest temptation that is the use of magic (see Westerkamp 64). The Devil’s agents were called witches and were most likely of the female sex.

¹ In Puritan theology, the Devil, synonymously with Satan, was considered God’s impressive and omnipresent adversary who was given godly permission to use his evil forces (see Weisman 25).

Puritan ideology considered “the soul as feminine and characterized it as insatiable, as consonant with the supposedly unappeasable nature of women” (Reis, *Devil* 15). In order to reach the soul the Devil had to damage the body, most often a female one, because a woman’s body was perceived not as strong as a male one and therefore was preferred by the Devil (see Reis, *Devil* 15). A strong body provided protection for the believer’s soul and could defend it against the Devil’s seduction. Besides, Puritans associated the feminine soul with its longing for Satan and with women’s readiness for the Devil’s workings (see Reis, *Devil* 25). For those reasons, women thought of themselves as weak and close to evil. Paradoxically, “a weak body and a vulnerable soul [...] might also encourage one’s faith in God” (Reis, *Devil* 35): women, for instance, who deeply internalized the state of being naturally depraved, started to greatly praise and worship the Almighty. Hence, in a world, “in which Satan and God vied for souls in a literal and metaphorical sense” (Reis, *Women* 3), women were perceived to be closer to both God and the Devil.

The topic of women’s inferiority was reinforced by Puritan clergymen, who, in their sermons, pointed to the Devil’s real existence and “made it perfectly clear that intimacy with [him] annihilated any chance of attaining saving grace and damned a person to an eternity in hell” (Reis, *Women* 4). The authorities’ preaching appeared to confirm women in their state of natural depravity and their probability of entering into a pact with the Devil. In fact, they “seemed to heed their ministers’ words [and] fashioned their identities and subjectivities in accordance with the most pessimistic clerical perspective” (Reis, *Women* 12). Concerning believers’ view on sin and redemption, women rather than men proceeded on the assumption that each and every sin, regardless of its extent, mirrored one’s contract with the Devil (see Reis, *Confess* 12). While some females became fixated on their inherent sinfulness, a fact that made them especially vulnerable to witchcraft accusations, New England’s populace began to directly link womanhood with evil.

Puritans first and foremost tried to spend their lives according to the Bible in order to please God and to increase the likelihood of salvation. Next to the Almighty, the immediate family functioned as the most important institution within Puritanism, and it attributed certain positions and duties to all of its members (see Bremer, *Puritanism* 61). Women and especially wives and mothers occupied a very specific place in the ‘ideal’ Puritan family. In general, Puritan society understood women to be inferior to men (see Bremer, *Experiment* 115) and thereby gave rise to male supremacy not only in its communities but also in its families. In order to obey “God’s law [it was essential] to be

inculcated primarily within the family, under the guidance and watchful eye of the head of the household, who conducted family prayer and instilled moral values in his dependents” (Karlsen 163). Hence, women and the other family members were said to need the guidance of fathers or husbands, “who became God’s representatives in the family” (Saxton 19), to sincerely serve the Creator. Male guidance was not only limited to religion, it was also needed in terms of culture, law, social and economic policies; the latter became especially important when women exchanged their father’s with their husband’s home (see Westerkamp 15). Before young women did so, they were educated in Puritan values and morals to achieve the ultimate goal of “become[ing] docile women” (30). For that reason, their upbringing involved the training in skills which were needed to manage a family and a household (see Saxton 26). Girls, however, did not receive the training from their own parents, they instead were educated in other private households. The duration of the training differed according to a girl’s family status: while those of a high economic background only stayed for a short duration, those from rather destitute families were usually bound by a contract to take positions as maids (see Saxton 26). Accordingly, most young girls were not only confronted to adapt to a completely new environment, they were also constrained to, as anticipated by the female sex, subordinate to their masters. In general, as Bigsby puts it, “[t]o be a young girl in [New England] was to have no role but obedience, no function but unquestioning faith, no freedom except a willingness to submit to those with power over their lives” (151). In sum, women’s submission in patriarchal Puritan societies was reinforced in any stage of life.

Later on, female subordination “was partially realized in the concept of coverture, through which the legal personhood of a woman was completely subsumed under her husband’s identity, her property under his ownership” (Westerkamp 15). Wives therefore belonged to their husbands. The act of marriage was seen as mandatory: “[a] young Puritan man had two major decisions in his life, selections of calling and a wife. A female, however, had one major life decision, and it was not entirely her own. She waited to be approached” (Saxton 47). Yet some of these young women had difficulties choosing the right future spouse because of the moral tenet they grew up with which encouraged them to behave in a humble, shy and uncertain way (see Saxton 48). In general, they were compelled to adhere to their male guardian, i.e. either father or husband, and to accept their subordinated role which usually did not involve the making of choices. Therefore, deciding who to spend the future was considered a major decision for most Puritan female adolescents. Especially because as an adult a “woman’s status was everywhere determined by her marital state.

[...] Her social standing depended on her husband's position in the colonial hierarchy" (Norton, *Evolution* 600). In sum, Marriage served several prime aims: firstly, sexual reproduction to prevent men and women from extramarital affairs; secondly, fellowship with one's spouse and thirdly, a way of demonstrating social order beyond that of family life (see Saxton 45). Although wives were perceived inferior to their husbands, the "Puritan emphasis on companionship as a purpose of marriage was both a reflection of an improving status for women and a cause for further equalization" (Bremer, *Experiment* 115) and meant that both spouses were in charge of their marriage's outcome. Yet those transgressing the norms and order of marriage by engaging into sexual intercourse with a married man or woman were found guilty of adultery. By definition, adultery and other sexual sins "were all driven by the innate corruption of fallen humanity, and all embodied disobedience to God's will" (Godbeer, *Revolution* 64-65). Those found guilty of adulterous misdeeds were punished differently in the New World's colonies, in Massachusetts, for instance, the defendants were put to death until the beginning of the eighteenth century (see Godbeer, *Revolution* 362). In line with the sexes' inequality in Puritan New England, "a wife's unfaithfulness was [regarded] more abominable than her husband's" (Karlsen 168). The reason, as Karlsen outlines, is that "adultery expressed a woman's insubordination to her husband and therefore a challenge to the husband's right of property *in his wife*" (168). Hence, while adulterous women proved especially challenging to their husbands and their reputation in society, adulterous husbands, on the contrary, did not.

In Puritanism "it is important to recognize that the patriarchal belief system [...] depended for its survival on women's support" (Porterfield 80). Although marriages were, like society as such, organized in a hierarchical way, with husbands assuming absolute authority and power over their families, wives were not entirely compelled to keep their voices down, as they occupied essential positions in Puritan families. In fact, wives were those behind the scenes, those who independently worked and operated in the privacy of their homes. "A wife's duties in the household were encompassed under the rubric of 'ordering things with doors', by which was meant the day-to-day maintenance of the family and the supervision of young children, older daughters, and female servants" (Karlsen 169). Further work involved taking care of the family-owned property where animals were kept, vegetables were grown, and fruit trees were harvested (see Bremer, *Experiment* 117). In accordance, "women in this frontier environment often found themselves in positions demanding effective, independent action. The housewives' duties [...] set burdensome demands upon women" (Westerkamp 15). A situation that became

intensified when men, who primarily worked in the agricultural industry, left for trading in other parts of New England, accepted employments on ships, or got into fights with indigenous people or other settlers (see Westerkamp 16). Owing to these responsibilities, women were granted to exercise direct authority over their children and servants within a family's home. Although the education of children was arranged as a joint endeavor that involved both parents (see Bremer, *Puritanism* 63), mothers "did shape the emotional lives of their children through breastfeeding, weaning, [and] had [the] primary responsibility for shaping religious experience and for implementing the domestic discipline [...] that lay at the heart of Puritan strategies for world renewal" (Porterfield 93-94). Therefore, mothers became the prime caregivers for their offspring.

Inside Puritan homes, wives were not only able to wield direct influence over their children but, in fact, assumed indirect authority over their husbands as well. It is not to say that Puritanism reinforced female power as such but, since men "relied on their wives for comfort, emotional security, and peace of mind" (Porterfield 88), married women were, to some extent, in control. Wives "provided men with the intimacy, companionship, and solace they needed in their lives [and] might not find elsewhere" (Karlsen 166-67). Puritan marriages were mostly formed on the basis of economic relations: while the wife was commonly in charge of parenting and the household, the man of the house had to fulfill duties within and outside the family's home. Female support was essential in order to manage daily life and furthermore to strengthen male supremacy in both family and society. Puritan wives, however, had no choice; they had to serve their husbands' needs and "acknowledge this service as their calling and *believe* they were created for this purpose" (Karlsen 166). In turn, husbands, "whom God had placed over [their wives, were responsible] to guide their spirits and intellects and protect them from their numerous physical and moral infirmities" (Saxton 52). Puritan marriage could be seen as a symbiosis, but one that was not equally beneficial to both spouses: women were in greater demand to meet Puritan ideals because "[those] who failed to serve men failed to serve God" (Karlsen 166).

In addition, women were also compelled to serve men sexually. Although little is known about the sexual life of New England's Puritans, sexual intercourse as such was reserved for the purpose of procreation only, those practicing it on a common basis, or out of pure lust, exhibited morally bad behavior (see Bremer, *Puritanism* 52). Puritanism regarded "[t]emptation [to be] inhered in the female, but active sexuality [as] male" (Saxton 47).

Accordingly, married men were those who determined sexual intercourse within marriage: they, for instance, “officially discouraged females from acting on their sexual preferences [or] believed to control their wives through sexuality” (Saxton 48, 56). Therefore, wives were bound by their husbands to act according to their will. While most married women accepted men’s sexual dominance within their marriages, some young girls rose up against their sexual oppression. In fact, “[a]dolescent female disobedience usually took the form of sexual rebellion [or the] possession by the devil” (Saxton 30). In accordance, Martin draws a synthesis of sexual oppression and witchcraft, he argues that “[i]n a time when marriage and motherhood were not uncommon at the age of fourteen, the hypothesis of repressed sexuality emerging disguised into the emotionally charged atmosphere of witchcraft [...] does not seem unlikely” (*Background*, 284). If young, adolescent girls dared to express their anger, as they did, for instance, during the Salem witchcraft trials, they could do so under the pretext of being possessed by the most fearsome creature in Puritan theology. On that account, Schissel points out:

The ‘girls’ are the inheritors of Eve’s sin, and their bodies are their reminders. Though, like all young people, they find ways to rebel – just because adolescence did not exist in Puritan society does not mean that the hormones did not flow – they are seriously repressed. And the most insidious aspect of that repression, in a society in which girls are not considered women until they marry (as young as fourteen, or significantly, with the onset of menses), is the turning of the young women’s frustrations upon members of their own gender. (464)

This quotation provides a reasonable answer to the question why many adolescent girls turned against women and not men, their real oppressors, in their afflictions. They feel envy for the community women’s lives, for their marriages, and their reputation as mothers and *women*. Hence, driven by jealousies, they plot to perform evil deeds. Nevertheless, most juvenile girls acted in accordance with what was expected of them, especially since “[authorities] started [...] instilling in girls a disproportionate sense of responsibility for the control and repression of their own and men’s sexuality” (Saxton 35). Hence, women’s role as the sexually suppressed was reinforced from an early age onwards.

In sum, the ‘ideal’ Puritan woman was one who dedicated her whole life to working hard as well as caring for her family. Being a respected woman meant acting independently within one’s home, while, at the same time, pledging absolute obedience to the head of the household, i.e., father or husband. Hence, women helped provide men with ultimate power and authority.

2.2. Puritan beliefs in witchcraft and female witches

Those old hypocrites. They talk about killing witches but the Good Book's full of magic. Turning the Nile to blood and parting the Red Sea. What's that if it's not good old-fashioned magic? Want a little water into wine? No trouble! How about raising the dead man Lazarus? Just say the word! (Barker)

New England Puritans genuinely believed in sorcery as well as in the existence of witches. Those migrating across the Atlantic to seek a newly ordered society in the New World brought their witchcraft beliefs and practices, which they had experienced in their native England and elsewhere in Europe long before, with them. Beliefs about witchcraft therefore were part of people's common knowledge and everyday life. By definition, witchcraft encompassed two varying practices in sixteenth and seventeenth-century colonial America: firstly, witchcraft "involved the making of a pact or covenant with Satan or a familiar spirit by the suspected witch [and secondly,] that pact enabled the witch to cause harm to people, animals, and goods" (Gibson 13). At the core of the malicious deal lay the signing of the Devil's book. Since the alliance with the Devil was not visible to others, witches were first and foremost recognized by the malign effects they exerted upon their victims.

In Europe, "the crime of witchcraft was invented by the Inquisition in the late fifteenth century [, while] the practice of sorcery by the various European tribes was probably a relic of the Stone Age" (Nelson 335). In the fifteenth century, the Inquisition spread, for instance, knowledge of broom-riding witches who gathered for sexual orgies with the Devil at night (see Nelson 335). By that time already, the female sex was the main target of witchcraft accusations, prosecutions and executions. This sex-favoring position was largely composed and spread by the 1486 published *Malleus Maleficarum*², also known as *The Hammer of Witches*, a clerical treatise on the topic of witch-hunting, which came especially into use since it appeared in a printed version (see Nelson 339) and was translated into various languages. The handbook "contained little that was new [, yet] an important section was added to explain why witches were women, or rather, why women were witches. The *Malleus* was thereby transformed into a classical statement of

² The well-known handbook was composed by Heinrich Institoris together with Jakob Sprenger in Germany and powerfully advocated, next to Fray Martín de Castañega's *Tratado de las Supersticiones y Hechizarias* (1529), the ecclesiastical belief of women's likelihood of entering into a covenant with the Devil (see Karlson 155).

misogyny” (Nelson 339). Its authors thought of the female sex as weak and thus especially vulnerable to be at the Devil’s service. Karlsen summarizes women’s subordinate position from the European point of view as following:

[T]hese three clergymen [i.e. Institoris, Sprenger and de Castañega] agreed, [that] women were by nature more evil than men: in their wickedness, they imitated the first woman, Eve. Created intellectually, morally, and physically weaker than men, the argument continued, women were subject to deeper affections and passions, harbored more uncontrollable appetites, and were more susceptible to deception. Unwilling to accept their deficiencies and unable to satisfy their inordinate desires, they more readily turned to Satan to fulfill their needs and to provide them with power to avenge themselves on those in more fortunate positions. Women were never satisfied, these authors added, were more given to anger, jealousy, and did not hesitate to seek demonic power to deceive others, to entice them to evil, and to destroy their souls, their bodies, and their possessions. [...] [W]omen became witches because they were born female, not male. (155-56)

It is not to say that men were completely spared from demonic afflictions, those accused and/or found guilty of practicing witchcraft were, in the majority of cases, in close relationships with presumed witches. This view was also held by “Puritans [who] thought that witches passed their craft on to the people closest to them” (Karlsen 3). For that reason, the offspring of presumed witches could also be under natural suspicion. Nevertheless, the female sex was, owing to its vile nature, thought to be most likely to turn away from God and worship Satan.

Witch-hunting in colonial America bore considerable similarities with its counterpart in England. Although it is an undeniable fact that the colonists brought Europe’s infamous witch-hunting tradition with them when they sailed across the Atlantic, they followed their own laws and peculiarities. In general, acts of witchcraft were taken very seriously and were mostly taken to court: “So when someone was accused of witchcraft in one of the American colonies, his or her path to court, the verdict, and the sentence depended to a great extent on where he or she lived [because] [e]ach colony had its own legal code” (Gibson 15). Witchcraft-related crimes in early America were punished differently than in England or elsewhere in Europe: the laws obeyed in New England seemed less precise on the crime of witchcraft and its ultimate outcome. In 1642 the colony of Connecticut, for instance, announced witchcraft “as a capital crime – defined in part by the Bible, but proscribed and prosecuted as a secular, criminal offense, punishable by death” (Dennis and Reis 66). In that way witchcraft was comparable to other serious crimes such as murder, infanticide, or adultery. The statutes of 1692 declared that witches “should not be suffered to live” (Gibson 15), which led many convicts to lose their lives at the gallows or the stake.

Furthermore, instead of focusing attention on the various harmful effects that witches supposedly brought about upon those they tormented, judicial authorities emphasized the witches' misdeeds that opposed God (see Gibson 15). "[T]he witch-figure was a symbol of the struggle between God and Satan for human souls [and] that all actions associated with witches were ultimately offenses against God and the order of Creation" (Karlsen 119-20). Hence, the relationship between Puritan theology and beliefs in witchcraft was one of mutual interaction and impact.

In terms of a presumed witch's sex, the statutes of Connecticut and related European ones officially referred to the fact that a witch was not bound to a specific sex, yet in practice more women than men faced prosecutions for witchcraft-related acts (see Dennis and Reis 66). In numbers³, Westerkamp notes that "[d]uring the first century of New England settlement, 1620-1725, 344 persons were accused of witchcraft; 78 percent (or 267) were women. Of the 103 accused witches brought to trial, 89 (or 86 percent) were female" (62). Accordingly, colonial women were, like their counterparts in England or elsewhere in Europe, at high risk to be found witches. Yet the reasons for the woman-as-witch stereotype are considered to have differed slightly between the continents. Although Karlsen proposes that witch-hunting in New England and England were possibly connected due to their mutual belief in witchcraft and women's active involvement, the special link was never stated directly in Puritanism (see 3). In fact, "[t]he fundamental tenet of European witchcraft – that women were innately more evil than men – did not fit with other ideas Puritans brought with them to their new world [, such as] the importance of marriage and family relations, and [...] women's status within" (Karlsen 160). New England Puritans did not consider the female sex to be the very embodiment of evil, however, females themselves – affirmed by all-male authorities – believed in both their pure sinfulness and their bodily weakness, which were believed to open the doors for Satan. Besides, Puritan rule was very strict on its social hierarchy: men and women needed to adhere to their given position; if not, they were viewed as the Devil's minions (see Karlsen 181). Among "[t]hose suspected of being witches were often 'strong' women with knowledge of magic [i.e. curing illnesses] who struggled in times of crisis for their physical and social well-being" (Opitz-Belakhall 90). In turn, females who accepted their subordinated role in society and kept their assigned place at home were usually spared

³ Due to incomplete records the numbers of those prosecuted, convicted and/or executed vary considerably from source to source, e.g. Demos, *Entertaining*; Karlsen; Westerkamp, yet they approve women's overwhelming involvement.

from witchcraft charges. Nevertheless, the female sex was under natural suspicion and over time Puritans “continued to assume the complex ideas about women-as-witches as self-evident truths” (Karlsen 155).

What was it that made women, besides their belonging to the female sex, suspicious of practicing the supernatural in New England? The following characteristics were perceived as indicators for women’s (and, in some cases, presumably men’s) adherence to evil. Witches received their supposedly supernatural powers that enabled them to perform *maleficium*, using magic to cause anguish, by entering a pact with the Devil. “Although the witch’s power could bring harm to anyone, her victims tended to be her close neighbors or other people who knew her well enough to anger her” (Karlsen 6). Besides, witches were found throughout the community: those living at the edge of society were stereotypically associated with witchcraft; women of the affluent society, however, instead of practicing witchcraft acts on their own, commonly assigned them to these outsiders (see Dennis and Reis 70).

In terms of a witch’s stereotypical character, the following traits were believed to be shared among the Devil’s minions: “disagreeable [...], at best aggressive and abrasive, at worst ill-tempered, quarrelsome, and spiteful. [Witches were] disorderly women who failed to, or refused to, abide by the behavioral norms of their society” (Karlsen 118). According to Karlsen, witches may not have obviously differed from their fellows: while some exhibited the character traits of disagreement and pugnacity, others did not (see 118). Nonetheless, New Englanders pictured socially deviating females to be perfect witches. The colonists did not so much fear the undesirable traits that some witches displayed, but rather the ever-present danger that they would inflict damage on them, their livestock or goods. In detail, witches were able to perform a bewildering array of harmful acts: witches were said to make their victims, especially husbands, newborns or children, fall ill or die (see Karlsen 6). Likewise, witchcraft could pose serious danger to animals and in particular to farmer’s livestock. Moreover, “[s]torms, especially, at sea, fires, and crop damage were also attributed to malefic witchcraft” (Karlsen 6-7). Besides witches’ misdeed of causing natural disasters, they were “commonly accused of preventing conceptions or by causing miscarriages, childbirth fatalities, or ‘monstrous’ (deformed) births” (Winthrop qtd. in Karlsen 7). For that reason, women skilled in midwifery were often faced with witchcraft allegations. “[T]heir demonization was [also] due to their medical skills threatening the emergence of a male-dominated medical profession” (Gibson 124). In addition, men

repeatedly lodged complaints against alleged witches by saying that their specters had visited and seduced them during nighttime. Witches were also found guilty for ruining groceries and other failed housekeeping activities. They were therefore used as convenient scapegoats throughout the community.

The malevolent practices of witches were found to be expressed in a variety of different ways. In detail, “[s]ometimes the affliction came through a look or a touch; at other times the damage was attributed to a curse. A witch’s grumbling words or thinly veiled threats following an argument [, for instance,] were taken as evidence [for] initiating some harm” (Karlsen 7). In order to level witchcraft allegations at someone, the accuser did not have to observe the malicious action per se, the mere fact of harm done to someone or something was sufficient enough to help the accuser evoke memories later on and to give a specific date when the affliction took place (see Karlsen 7-8). Witches were said to have their own agents, namely animals, which served them in the same way than witches served their master, the Devil. Those “animal familiars, or imps, who nourished themselves on the [witch’s] body, performed evil acts at her command, and were themselves supernatural beings” (Karlsen 8). “It is also significant that witches often assumed the shape of animals in order to carry out their attacks” (Demos, *Witchcraft* 1321). For those reasons, witches were thought to be able to hide their malice. Additionally, the possession of ‘poppets’, rag dolls, or things that could be used for evil purposes left women especially vulnerable to witchcraft allegations since witches were supposed to use those for injuring others (see Karlsen 8), for instance, by stabbing the dolls with needles. Likewise, the act of telling fortunes could give grounds for suspicions.

The victim’s alleged possession could take on a variety of different forms, for example, some “afflicted were [...] visited with strange Fits, during which they were sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing, sometimes roaring hideously. At times their violent motions ceased, and they fell into trances; parts of their bodies were paralyzed and they were unable to see, hear or speak” (Mather qtd. in Karlsen 11). Enduring for days, endlessly, or providing limited times of relief, the affliction with assumingly supernatural forces usually coincided with the victims’ incapacity to bear the Lord’s name or with violent behavior towards the clergy (see Karlsen 11). Witch-like activities differed from case to case and so did the sufferers’ behavior.

In sum, Karlsen suggests that “[w]hat made witches unusual was not how they behaved but how their behavior was understood in New England’s hierarchical society [, which]

required a convergence of belief on the part of both the townspeople and the religious and secular authorities” (119). Thus, it is not to say that the display of the aforementioned witchcraft characteristics obligatorily led to a woman’s downfall since the potential prosecution of witchcraft depended extremely on the diverse interpretations of the responsible communities and authorities.

In order to establish alleged witches’ guilt of affliction, different types of evidence were presented and allowed within New England’s court proceedings. First and foremost, spectral evidence was *the* way of denouncing and thus proving witches’ misdeeds in front of judicial authorities. By definition, spectral evidence referred to a “testimony by the afflicted of being tormented by apparitions that only they could see” (Reed 228). Owing to the pact with the Devil, the assumed witch acquired the ability to torment her victims taking on a variety of different physical shapes. From the beginning of the Salem episode, spectral evidence was given crucial importance since authorities decided to interpret it as an unmistakable sign of witchcraft. In turn, incidents of an accuser’s seemingly possession by invisible images or creatures provided enough proof of the accused’s guilt and mostly eventuated in condemnation (see Bremer, *Experiment* 183). Spectral evidence was primarily based on “the efficacy of the invisible world on the visible [, which] had to be assured by a transcendent male authority figure – for upstanding patriarchs, God, for nefarious witches, the Devil” (Reed 228). In contrast, incidents of non-spectral acts of affliction, i.e. the absence of specters, involved “individuals, [who] through the devil’s arts, could obtain magical powers by which to cast spells, pronounce curses, and cause accident, storms, sickness and death” (Craker 332). Thus, non-spectral acts of witchcraft equated with maleficium – witches’ use of magic to cause harm. In addition, the admitting of one’s guilt presented another kind of evidence in seventeenth-century New England’s courtrooms. Confessing to witchcraft meant conforming one’s pact with the Devil and the harmful effects produced upon the victim(s). Reputed witches’ avowals were highly rewarded because “very early in the Salem episode, the court decided not to hang those who confessed, hoping that they could be persuaded to name others involved in this wicked affair” (Reis, *Confess* 12). Those admitting to practicing the supernatural, mostly women, did so in order to save their own lives and to seek repentance for their perceived sinful natures, which were generally considered to draw them to Satan: “[a] confessing woman was the model of Puritan womanhood, even though she was admitting to the worst of sins” (Reis, *Confess* 12). Some of the confessions were made by the defendants

themselves, others were unlawfully obtained through enforcement during the interrogations in court and yet others brought new witchcraft charges against other females.

In order to identify the victim's tormentor(s), New England's populace employed somewhat unusual methods such as the baking of a witch cake. According to folk belief, the cake, which would need to contain the sufferer's urine, would make the responsible witch take shape in front of her victim (see Weisman 40). Another example presents the touch test which involved the presumed tormentor and its victim. When the former touched the latter and his or her suffering stopped, the accused was identified as a witch. Yet those practicing these kinds of counter-magic, "magic [that was] done to counteract the harmful witchcraft of others" (Nenonen 80), were at high risk to acquire unenviable reputations as witches themselves.

2.3. The historical Salem witchcraft trials

Salem has become this... [...] It was a bunch of bored Puritans who thought killing their neighbors at the behest of teenage girls was a fine, Christian form of entertainment and land acquisition. (Quackenbush)

Following their homeland's witchcraft beliefs and traditions, "few New Englanders would have been surprised to see a woman prosecuted – or even executed – for witchcraft" (Karlsen 1) before its grand climax, the Salem witchcraft trials. Witch-hunts were part of the settler's past and thus part of their present days. In order to explain this urge of New Englanders to prosecute witches from a historical viewpoint, the events that preceded and gave rise to the infamous crisis of 1692 need to be examined.

Prior to the events in Hartford, Massachusetts, Bay Colony in the 1640s, which marked the beginning of the first series of widespread witchcraft accusations, prosecutions and resulting executions, no colonists were officially confronted with witchcraft charges. In numbers the Hartford outbreak reads as following: approximately 79 people were under witchcraft suspicion, while 33 of those were denounced as witches in court and 15 were executed – that is unlike the English procedure of burning witches alive, death by hanging (see Karlsen 20). Concerning the witch-hunt's reasons, Karlsen suggests that Hartford, similar to Salem later on, "was a community that had suffered years of internal dissension

[and that] [t]he outbreak allowed their expression, in attacks against neighbors and people nearby towns, but it may also have united clergy and townspeople, in their struggle against the Devil and his local supporters” (26). The years following New England’s first witch craze, 1663 to 1687, registered a sharp decline of official prosecutions against alleged witches (see Karlsen 30). The deep-seated beliefs in witchcraft, however, remained present in people’s minds. The reasons for this development seemed manifold: firstly, England’s transformation from Puritan reign to Stuart monarchy brought about criticism against England’s and likewise New England’s witchcraft tradition; secondly, the clergy’s interest in witchcraft charges appeared to diminish since they struggled to believe in accusers’ statements which did not adhere to their stereotypical ideas about witches (see Karlsen 30-31). Yet “it was apparently not until the 1680s that clergymen mounted a campaign against magic” (Godbeer, *Magic* 73). As referred to in previous chapters, the clergy confirmed and also reinforced the congregations’ core beliefs in witchcraft during their sermons. Godbeer states, “[t]here were, in fact, good reasons for New England ministers to become more sensitive to magical practice during those years [because] clergymen perceived a decline in the quality of spiritual life and in their own status within New England society” (*Magic*, 74). By addressing Puritan New Englanders’ deepest fear, namely straying from God’s right path of salvation to form a pact with the Devil, the clergy returned to their enormous power. Accordingly, “the ministers argued that recent misfortunes (the devastating war with the Indians in 1675-6, a smallpox epidemic, two major fires in Boston, deteriorating relations with the Stuart government [about the new charter]) betokened ‘holy displeasure’” (Godbeer, *Magic* 75) and thus stressed the fundamental necessity of each believer to repent and worship God. In the following decade, New Englanders were dogged by misfortune: “[s]ocial turmoil especially marked Massachusetts [, when] England’s Lord of Trade had succeeded in annulling the Massachusetts Bay Colony charter [and left] both ministry and populace felt tossed by doubt about the continued existence and direction of their personal and collective enterprise” (Karlsen 35). Then, by the end of the 1680s, the ministers’ warnings about evil spirits seemed to have become reality because four children of a rich Boston-based family showed strange behavior of affliction (see Karlsen 33). This presumed act of evil possession posed a real threat to New Englanders who feared the outburst of a mass hysteria.

The core of what most historians confirm to have happened during the Salem episode summarizes as following⁴: early in 1692, Samuel Parris, the Reverend of Salem Village⁵, observed strange fits and trances in his daughter Elizabeth and his niece Abigail. Unsure about the behavior's cause, Parris ordered his slaves to bake a witch cake to relieve the girls from their pain. However, more village girls between the age of eleven and twenty started to suffer from violent, physical fits. Thus, the rumor of the girls' possession by evil spirits quickly spread across the congregation. The authorities began to hold inquiries in February 1692 which led to the suspects' immediate imprisonment. In the course of the events, more people, among them the married couple John and Elizabeth Proctor, Giles Corey, and the Puritan minister George Burroughs were found guilty of practicing witchcraft and were subsequently put in prison. In order to put the arrested on trial, the Special Court of Oyer and Terminer⁶ was created. It was in June 1692 when Bridget Bishop was the first to be executed and when five more were punished to death by hanging. Meanwhile, Sarah Osborne, one of the first indicted for witchcraft, passed away while she served her sentence in jail. During the next three months Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Good, John Proctor, and eight more people were hanged, whereas, Giles Corey, was put to death by stones. By October that year, Governor William Phips announced the prohibition of arresting further suspects and annulated the court. Eventually, the hunting of witches began to spread to neighboring villages where trials were held. In May 1693 the Governor finally commanded that each and every prisoner should be discharged as soon as they their ransom was paid. Five years later, in 1697, Samuel Sewall, one of the presiding judges during the trails, offered an apology in public, and so did Ann Putnam, one of the bewitched girls, in 1706. In 1711 the General Court brought forward a new law saying that disgrace should be taken from the convicts and that compensation in money should be offered to their families.

In numbers the Salem witchcraft trials read as following: the first process going to court took place on February 29, 1692, and the last in May 1693. During that time, the records show 180 formal charges; as many as 144 legal cases that were brought to court – most of

⁴ The summary presents an extended version of the event's timeline found in *Understanding The Crucible: A student casebook to issues, sources, and historical documents* by Johnson and Johnson (63-64).

⁵ Salem Village equates with Danvers, Massachusetts, today.

⁶ The special Court was called into existence „[b]ecause Massachusetts had no Royal Charter during the period of the early accusations, and was in judicial limbo even once the new charter arrived, [and therefore] those accused of witchcraft were tried by a Special Court of Oyer and Terminer based at Salem itself” (Gibson 22-23).

the convicts were then sent to prison; 54 people who confessed to practicing the ‘black arts’; 19 hangings (14 females and 5 males), one death occurred during interrogation and 6 more deaths while the convicts awaited their trials (see Norton, *Devil* B4).

What made the subsequent crisis of 1692 so exceptional was “on one hand the first epidemic of accusations and on the other the first time that a court joined eagerly in the hunt” (Bremer, *Experiment* 182). Besides, Reis notes that “the Salem episode was distinguished from earlier witchcraft accusations not by the intensity of belief but rather by the official response to the accusations” (*Women*, 8) that is authorities’ eagerness to get rid of the Devil’s minions, who were considered to destroy communal life. Another reason for the infamous outbreak is that while the pre-Salem witch-hunts focused on individuals who deviated from community-established norms; in Salem, whole groups, mostly women, became the main target of the community’s witchcraft charges (see Weisman 19).

By the end of the Salem witchcraft trials, witch-hunts did not entirely cease to exist in New England. Fairfield, Connecticut, experienced a relatively small outbreak with most of the defendants being proved innocent or released without legal actions, an outcome that was certainly influenced by Salem’s authorities who finally put an end to the tragic incidents in 1693 (see Karlsen 43). In the years following the witch-hunts in Salem and Fairfield, 1694 to 1725, as little as two people were condemned for acts of witchcraft in trial proceedings (see Karlsen 43-44). New England’s collective and deeply held belief in witchcraft had shattered. Although depicted as fearsome and hateful, women were no longer believed to pose menace to society for their assumingly adherence to external, evil forces, and the witchcraft acts, previously thought to characterize a devilish pact, were now determined as misdeeds against God or the state, or as activities not suitable for women (see Karlsen 44). What seems especially notable concerning the various colonial witch-hunts is “that within a very brief period of time most New Englanders stopped believing that their personal and collective misfortunes could be attributed to the malice of witches” (Karlsen 44-45). On that account, Martin locates the end of New England’s witch-hunts in the legal sphere: “It was largely through the determinations of Increase Mather and fourteen other Boston ministers that such testimony [i.e. spectral evidence] was declared insufficient for conviction and therefore became inadmissible as evidence” (Martin, *Background* 289). In short, witchcraft accusations lost its appeal because the validity of spectral evidence, *the* way of denouncing others, was not approved by court any longer. Notwithstanding New

England's transition, "[f]or the next 300 years and more, people were left wondering what had happened" (Goodheart).

2.4. Female agency in the trials

There's a conflict of dominant personalities. There's a group of ringleaders without a ring. There's the basic unwritten rule of witchcraft, which is 'Don't do what you will, do what I say.'
(Pratchett 27)

Women were inevitably the main targets of witchcraft allegations, yet it seems to be surprising that they actively took part in New England's witch-hunting policy – a policy that pursued the aim of taking action especially against the female sex. Women, like men, actively accused and prosecuted other females, and passively witnessed executions of members of their own sex and hence reinforced Puritan New England's male-centered hegemony. Reis suggests that since women "were more likely than men to be convinced of their own complicity with the devil, [...] they could more easily imagine that other women were equally damned" (*Women*, 122). The belief in women-as-witches was shared among most females in colonial America and thus supported their active and passive involvement in the processes leading up to actual trials of 1692:

[W]omen were often found among the accusers and denouncers – needless to say – against other women. It has also been emphasized that the role of women in accusing someone of witchcraft has probably been much more important than the numbers of women as accusers show. Even if women did not act that often as official denouncers at the courts, their role in guiding rumors and accusations informally, as well as directing men's thinking about their adversaries, was often crucial for the process. (Purkiss qtd. in Nenonen 73)

In order to elaborate on Purkiss' quote, women's roles as accusers, victims, and bystanders in the course of the Salem witchcraft trials shall be examined in the following section.

Witchcraft allegations usually did not appear out of nowhere: the parties involved – accuser and accused – mostly knew each other personally and were said to have a troubled relationship. Demos, for instance, argues that dispute often erupted because juvenile girls were monitored by female adults, e.g. mothers, servants, or mistresses, a fact which is underlined by the myriad witchcraft charges that young girls leveled against women in their middle ages (see *Witchcraft*, 1318-19, 1324). According to Demos, "[i]t seems

plausible [...] that this pattern masked deep problems stemming ultimately from the relationship of mother and daughter. Perhaps, then, the afflicted girls were both projecting their aggression and diverting or ‘displacing’ it from its real target” (*Witchcraft*, 1324-25). The thesis adopts an interesting standpoint since many of the juvenile accusers in the Salem witchcraft trials were either orphaned or living apart from their mothers with their employers, and this may have added to women’s fatal relationships and their resulting arguments. Interpersonal conflicts also occurred between neighbors and provided the basis for subsequent witchcraft accusations in the British colonies. In fact, “[I]f life could be very difficult for men or women who had poor relationships with their neighbors [because] disruption of local harmony could surface as witchcraft accusations – the seventeenth-century verbal equivalents of nuclear power” (Norton, *Founding* 248). Hence, a vast number of witchcraft allegations were ascribed to women’s ill-fated relationships. Arguments between female neighbors or acquaintances developed especially from rivalries over household-related activities, for instance, parenting or children’s diets (see Willis qtd. in Chaudhuri 1220). Since females were in charge of the family household duties, problems and quarrels of varying degrees with neighboring women were likely to break out on a regular basis. Wilson notes that “[e]ach of [women’s domestic] tasks may be performed adequately by culturally absolute standards, [and established] therefore a certain possibility of competitiveness among women in a community” (373). In turn, women, motivated by feelings such as vengeance, anger, or envy, did not recoil from condemning their female neighbors or acquaintances as witches in public.

Women accusing other women can therefore be situated in the context of domesticity, more specifically, a place that “Lucienne Roubin called feminine space, [and] Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo calls ‘domestic authority’” (Garrett 465). In contrast to male or public spheres, where women’s existence was mostly ignored the feminine space has been almost entirely owned by women (see Garrett 465). Since an array of witchcraft accusations arose from women’s fatal relationships, two possible reasons were probable: female accusers must have felt secure and powerful within their space in order to prompt witchcraft allegations against other women. On the contrary, though, women’s vulnerability to witchcraft accusations seemed to increase especially within this kind of space. Thus, women’s domestic sphere gave rise to both personal power and damage: the former in terms of exerting authority and leveling accusations, the latter in terms of suffering from the allegations’ repercussions. Yet, according to Barstow, witchcraft accusations can also be explained in the context of male or public spheres: “[I]f a woman displeased or

threatened the men of her community, she would also be seen as dangerous by the women who depended on or identified with those men” (17-18). Barstow’s claim about women’s accusations against other women to protect their families seems probable since Puritan women were dependent on men in every aspect of life.

Prior to denouncing women as witches in public, “rumor and gossip tend[ed] to feed on and contribute to patterns of uncertainty in human communication that [were] intertwined with the probability of misunderstanding and conflict” (Stewart and Strathern 4). Gossip and rumor spread especially in times of social instability and served as valuable indication as to people’s alleged involvement in witchcraft in court (see Stewart and Strathern 7, 166). Norton notes that “gossip, for all its negative connotations, was a crucial mechanism of social control – one used by ordinary people themselves, and especially by women, who lacked men’s easy access to courtrooms and other forms of the formal public” (*Founding* 253). Hence, community gossip, both powerful and dangerous, presented women’s most important tool to make their voices heard not only within *their* space, but also within the all-male Puritan society. If gossip then turned into rumor and circulated throughout the community, scapegoating processes, where societies put their blame on non-conforming individuals or, like in Salem, on whole groups, were likely to follow. In the course of the Salem witchcraft trials, scapegoating processes usually preceded and gave rise to accusations against alleged witches. According to Demos, expressing one’s individuality in society could lead to severe consequences: “Any individual who contemplates actions which the community disapproves knows that if he [or she] performs such acts, he [or she] will become more vulnerable either to a direct attack by witches or to the charge that he [or she] is himself [or herself] a witch” (*Witchcraft*, 1319). Although deviating behavior could give rise to witchcraft allegations, many accusers usually put blame on the presumed witch after a personal dispute or a curious incident.

Myriad witchcraft charges were officially supported by females. In fact, they took on different roles ranging from accusers, to ‘active’ victims to simple bystanders during the Salem episode. Norton notes that “in no other event in American history until the 19th century, women took center stage [the way they did] at Salem: They were the major investigators and victims of a remarkable public spectacle” (*Devil* B4). Women were, in part, advocates of New England’s witch-hunting tradition and thus active participants in destroying the alleged Devil’s agents.

Witchcraft accusations leveled by women against women were usually triggered by interpersonal dispute and mischief. Besides, women's involvement in denouncing and scapegoating others were motivated by the desire to present and strengthen their belonging in society (see Demirkaya 127). Female accusers sought for male authorities' attention and appreciation in the theocratic community. By raising official witchcraft suspicions, females gained entry to the all-male juridical space and subsequently were given the chance to rise to considerable power. According to Lejri, "[t]he paradox lies in the fact that the very taboos that women, and unmarried ones in particular, could be condemned for in other circumstances, [were] now given free expression just because they operate[d] within the legal framework of the court of justice" (97-98). For that reason, women's accusations against other females can be regarded as strategic endeavors, in which the accusers tried to assume authority in the community and/or seek revenge for personal reasons by blackening the accused's name in public.

Looking at the conditions for proving witchcraft allegations, two distinct types of accusers need to be considered: non-possessed and possessed ones. In detail, the former "described themselves as targets of witches' malicious attacks on their own or their families' health and prosperity. [The later] described themselves [...] as special victims of witches' frustrated attempts to augment their own ranks by seducing other females to Satan's cause" (Karlsen 222-23). Both sexes were found among non-possessed accusers – while women confronted their reputed tormentors with inflicting their offspring, men referred to nightly seductions and injured livestock (see Karlsen 223). Therefore, Karlsen "suggest[s] that most female accusers experienced and responded to the demographic, economic, and sexual tensions of their society much as the male accusers in their communities did" (223). Accusations by non-possessed female accusers can thus only partly be located within women's space. Possessed accusers, however, seemed to have operated mostly within the "feminine space" (Roubin qtd. in Garrett 465) because "sixty-seven of New England's seventy-eight possessed accusers (86 percent) were female" (Karlsen 223). In contrast to non-possessed accusers, possessed female ones occupied rather socially-marginal ranks in Puritan communities (see Karlsen 223). New Englanders found women on the margins of society and who were akin to the witchcraft beliefs in their homeland England, naturally suspicious of worshipping the Devil. Concerning possessed accusers' demographic data, Karlsen records that their age could vary considerably, yet those leveling accusations most frequently were found to be in their early to late adolescence; possessed accusers were single and hardly acquainted with the women they indicted (see 223-25). During the Salem

witchcraft trials, a specific group of possessed accusers, namely a group of young pubescent girls, arose to considerable power by reproving other women for activities and feelings which did not considerably differ from their own (see Karlsen 225). Thus, “[t]he possessed by definition embodied the characteristics of their possessors – and were themselves, like the people they accused, in most cases female” (Karlsen 225-26). Possessed accusers, thus, played a crucial – if not the most fundamental – role in making the epitome of New England’s tragic witch-hunts happen.

Although women were inevitably the main targets of witchcraft charges, some defendants managed to actively reverse their own state of hopelessness by laying the blame for their maleficium on someone else, particularly, on other females. Thereby, formerly helpless victims took action and made others responsible for their witch-like activities in order to save their own lives. Lejri identifies a snowball effect in this development, in which those reproved for witchcraft, “now given entire credit by the court of law, [...] use victimization through demonic possession as a suitable stalking horse to grow in heroic and saintly stature and gain back admission, if not vengefully attain absolute power in the community that has hitherto oppressed them” (90). By identifying other women as the cause of their affliction, presumed witches built up their strengths, took revenge, and made their voices heard in front of New England’s judicial authorities. Besides women’s involvement as accusers and/or accused in the various stages of witch-hunting processes, many only participated as simple bystanders. They supported the trials by spreading local gossip and rumor about, for instance, socially-deviating women, witnessed court proceedings and its resulting executions. Female bystanders did not rise up against New England’s witchcraft policy; they confirmed male authorities and magistrates in their drastic actions against members of the female sex and ultimately in their total supremacy.

In conclusion, “[a]ccusations gain momentum because taking part in the accusation process means being, or remaining a loyal member of that community” (Demirkaya 127). Yet “having a reputation for witchcraft is seen as something which is done to women, not something they do. Anyone who participates in such labeling is seen as the mouthpiece of patriarchal ideology of submission” (Purkiss 145). Although men claimed exclusive jurisdiction over New England’s populace, women’s roles as accusers, victims, or bystanders in the witchcraft trials did not remain unnoticed – quite the contrary: they made men listen. In fact, responsible authorities based their court decisions – to a very large degree – on the stories and behaviors presented by women in the trial proceedings.

3. *The Crucible* (1953)

The blackest chapter in the history of Witchcraft lies not in the malevolence of Witches but in the deliberate, gloating cruelty of their prosecutors. (Kenyon)

3.1. Historical context: McCarthyism or the Second Red Scare

Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* is set during the Salem witchcraft trials, New England's most tragic witch-hunt episode in the seventeenth century, and simultaneously depicts America's era of political persecution during the 1950s in a symbolically significant way. The latter became known as McCarthyism or the Second Red Scare and was triggered by Senator Joe McCarthy⁷ who publicly announced his alleged possession of a list that exposed hundreds of State Department employees as communists (see Hooti 68). After his announcement, which triggered immense fear, people working in the public service were thoroughly scanned for un-American activities⁸ all over the country (see Hooti 68). Additionally, "those who may use the power of art to affect people and criticise the government, namely writers and film directors" (Demirkaya 126), like Miller, faced serious allegations. The accused were summoned before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) where they could clear their names by incriminating others of communist affiliation. In fact, "[t]he committee pushed people to name names [...] regardless of the fact that they were involved in anything related to communism" (Demirkaya 126). Before Miller himself was to appear before HUAC, "he [was] denied a passport by the State Department to go to Brussels to attend the Belgian premiere of *The Crucible* [and] [was] investigated by [the] New York City Youth Board for possible communist associations" (Martine xv). A year later, Miller resisted the committee's urge for further incriminations which resulted in a fine and a sentence in jail (see Hayman vii). He never served the sentence because he successfully appealed against his conviction (see Johnson and Johnson 140). The punishment's commutation was most likely fostered by the

⁷ The Republican Joseph R. McCarthy was a US senator.

⁸ Those scanned for un-American activities were "quizzed about who their friends were, what meetings they had attended, what causes they had supported, what books they had read, what associations their families and in-laws had, whom they criticized, whom they admired – every aspect of their personal lives" (Johnson and Johnson 133). In fact, HUAC aimed to disclose any form of treacherous behavior or thought.

fact that the playwright had married the actress Marilyn Monroe during the interrogations and thus had risen to further prominence.

Miller stated that he had been aware of the Salem witch craze – a topic that brought about a strong effect on him – prior to the political turmoil (see A. Miller, “Introduction” 41). Experiencing Senator McCarthy’s mass persecution first-hand, Miller “was in search of an allegory, which could dramatize [the] public menace. The [witchcraft] trials provided him with the raw material for his aesthetic and dramatic reaction to the modern terror let loose in the American society” (Hooti 69). The dramatist thoroughly investigated both historical events and drew obvious parallels between the (witch)-hunts that took place in New England in 1692 and in America in the 1950s. Miller’s rewriting of the infamous Salem episode was shaped by Puritan authorities’ consensus on deviating and society-threatening behavior which was analogous to the practices he experienced during America’s anticommunist paranoia. What seemed most striking for Miller himself was that “[a]bove all, above all horrors, [he] saw accepted the notion that conscience was no longer a private matter but one of state administration (“Introduction” 40-41). People’s ideas and principles of morality became the concern of those in authority during McCarthyism and therefore of politics in general. In the 1950s those who openly held left-wing beliefs were thoroughly scanned for possible communist affiliations. The interrogations were imposed by “the main anti-Communist group [which] consisted of Republican men [e.g. McCarthy], who furthered their political careers by manipulating the national environment of popular myths and stereotypes according to their own partisan concerns” (Aziz 172) and who claimed to offer protection to all American citizens. Similarly, the authorities in Salem implemented “witchcraft as a form of control in the social ordering of New England communities” (Demos, *Witchcraft* 1319) because they held the belief that Satan’s minions, the witches, presented a threat to the well-ordered system, and therefore they started to prosecute them. In both historical events “[t]he notion of the state as God indicates how opaque its force had become, and how small individuals in front of its committee, which, in turn, led to attempts to save one’s life by accusing others” (Aziz 173).

In addition, Miller himself once wrote on the subject:

It was not only the rise of ‘McCarthyism’ that moved me, but something which seemed much more weird and mysterious. It was the fact that a political, objective, knowledgeable campaign from the far Right was capable of creating not only terror, but a new subjective reality, a veritable mystique which was gradually assuming even a holy resonance. [...] It was as though the whole country had been born

anew, without a memory even of certain elemental decencies which a year or two earlier no one would have imagined could be altered [...] [T]he terror in these people was knowingly planned and consciously engineered, and yet that all they knew was terror. That so interior and subjective an emotion could have been so manifestly created from without was a marvel to me. (“Introduction” 39-40)

The quote alludes to the impression that Miller himself was deeply surprised by the emergence of this radical anti-communist movement that gained considerable strength in the 1950s. It seems that the playwright wrote *The Crucible* not only to process his own involvement in the ‘trials’ but rather to emphasize the events’ irrationality and its resulting repercussions that is people’s damaged reputations or dismissals. Yet the play did not achieve success from the very beginning. When it first premiered on Broadway in 1953 its director came under heavy criticism, but only “a year later, a new production, played with the required fervor, became a hit” (A. Miller “Why I Wrote *The Crucible*” 160). The play, Miller’s most often performed on stage, was even made into a film featuring Daniel Day Lewis, Miller’s son-in-law, and Winona Ryder (see Adler 90) and by 2002, “the drama ha[d] also sold in excess of six million paperback books” (Otten 62).

In 1969, Miller himself concluded in an interview with Robert Martin that “if [he] hadn’t written *The Crucible* that period would be unregistered in our literature on any popular level. That is, on a level outside of scholars writing about it or articles. But as far as literature concerned, it didn’t exist” (*Experience*, 179). Yet it was Miller’s interviewer who refuted the argument in his own article and proved the contrary to be true, namely that the Salem witchcraft trials were addressed in literature before the playwright published his drama. For instance, “a novel, *Peace, My Daughter* by Shirley Baker had appeared as recently as 1949, and in the same year Marion L. Starkey had combined an interest in history and psychology to produce *The Devil in Massachusetts*” (Martin, *Background* 280). Hence, Miller clearly overstated the significance of his play in terms of being the only literary work by that time which dealt with New England’s pandemic witch-hunt. Nevertheless, *The Crucible* is presumably today’s most well-known and popular piece of writing on the topic of witchcraft.

3.2. Plot

The Crucible, a drama in four acts, presents both Miller’s re-writing of the witch-hunt in ancient Salem and an allegory for America’s social and political climate during the 1950s.

Concerning the former, the printed version of the play includes the author's remark on its historical accuracy. In addition, he provides detailed information on Puritan life in colonial America and the belief in witchcraft prior to the play's first dialogue between Reverend Parris and his slave Tituba. He too gives background information on the characters involved in the stage directions. The appendix titled "Echoes down the corridor" offers a brief insight into the characters' further development and the witchcraft trial's reappraisal.

The story is set in Salem Village, Massachusetts, in 1692 and opens within the home of Samuel Parris, the local Reverend, whose daughter Betty is taken ill after she was discovered dancing in the forest at night with her cousin Abigail, her family's house slave Tituba and other young adolescents. Parris, who observed the gathering, believes that they conjured evil spirits. Owing to Betty's unaltered condition and Parris' pressure, Abigail admits to dancing to Tituba's songs that night. Accordingly, the slave becomes the first to be suspected of practicing witchcraft. While Parris begins to pray with his congregation, Abigail threatens her cohorts not to say a word of what really happened in the woods, namely her casting a spell to kill her former mistress Elizabeth Proctor who dismissed her because of her affair with her husband John. Abigail, still in love with him, is afraid that Elizabeth will slander her reputation in the community due to the adulterous behavior. Shortly after, a doctor examines Betty and draws the conclusion that she must be under the Devil's command. On that outcome, Abigail reproves Tituba for calling Satan and making all of the girls drink chickens' blood. Although the slave admits to being in contact with the Devil, she labels other women as witches. In addition, Abigail and also Betty drop further witchcraft charges.

In the second act Mary, one of the gathering's participants and thus a witness in court, reports to her mistress Elizabeth that that the defendants are brought in front of the afflicted girls who then identify them as witches by screaming, howling or falling to the floor. Elizabeth tries to convince her husband to tell the authorities that there had never been any witchcraft involved as Abigail admitted to him earlier on. Proctor refuses to put the blame on Abigail because he is afraid that in doing so their former affair will go public. When Mary comes back from court, she gives Elizabeth a doll as a present and informs her employers about the new developments: the number of women arrested increased, some confessed, and some are condemned to be hanged. When Elizabeth's mentioning in the court proceedings is revealed, she is chained and brought to prison as Abigail officially charges her. In addition, a marshal searches the house for dolls, finds the one that Mary

gave to Elizabeth and confiscates it as evidence for Abigail's affliction. Afterwards, John threatens Mary to tell the authorities that the doll was her own and not Elizabeth's. Mary admits to him that Abigail sat beside her in court and witnessed her sewing the poppet, and if she revealed that in court, Abigail would kill her.

Act three is set in Salem's meeting house which functions as a propositional court room. Mary Warren admits that her own and her peer group's behavior was only delusion. When confronted with the proposition, Abigail and her cohorts act as if Mary bewitched them. In order to reveal Abigail's misdeed Proctor confesses to adultery. Elizabeth, however, unaware of her husband's disclosure, denies his sexual relationship in court to protect him. Proctor violently tries to convince Mary to tell the truth about the doll to save his wife's life. Thereupon, she indicts him for being the Devil's man. Therefore, Proctor is arrested and taken to jail.

The last act takes place in Salem's prison which is packed with convicts such as Tituba. Elizabeth, who is pregnant and thus spared from execution, pays her husband a visit to persuade him to admit his guilt. He consents to confess to witchcraft but when the judges demand him to denounce others, he rips the confession to shreds. Thereupon, his immediate execution, which is heralded by a series of drumbeats, is announced.

3.3. The female characters and their actions

3.3.1. Abigail Williams

Abigail Williams, the play's female protagonist, appears as a round, dynamic character. Miller depicts her as a "strikingly beautiful girl [...] with an endless capacity for dissembling" (18) and as *the* most vicious key figure in the Salem witchcraft trials.

The seventeen-year-old⁹ one is the niece of Reverend Parris, whom she lives with, after her parents were cruelly slaughtered during conflicts with Native Americans, an atrocity she actually observed as an eyewitness. According to D. Miller, it is that act of killing that "create[s] in her a cool, exacting brutality [and thus] enables her to lie in court, to threaten her friends, and her lover, and to send dozens of accused witches to the gallows" (452). While Abigail's malice can be assumed to be based on the violent act, the charges she

⁹ In fact, "Miller controvert[ed] [historical] facts and creat[ed] a promiscuous she-devil out of an eleven year-old girl" (Caruso 37) in order to make Abigail and Proctor's adultery more believable.

brings forward against certain woman in the community are mainly motivated by her desire for vengeance: she levels her first unofficial accusation against her former mistress Elizabeth who had dismissed her from her position as a house servant. When Abigail's uncle demands to know about the reason for her sudden termination of employment, which resulted from her extramarital affair with John Proctor, she lies and accuses Elizabeth of inhumane treatment and working conditions:

PARRIS. [*to the point*]: Abigail, is there any other cause than you have told me, for your being discharged from Goody Proctor's service? I have heard it said, and I tell you as I heard it, that she comes so rarely to the church this year for she will not sit so close to something soiled. What signified that remark?

ABIGAIL. She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It's a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, I will not work for such a woman! (20)

Abigail conceals the sexual relationship in the conversation because she may be certain that her uncle and likewise the strict community would punish her for her immoral behavior which links sexuality with pleasure. She reproves Elizabeth for her own wrongdoings and thus attempts to build up her reputation as the innocent. Aware of the Puritans' view on adultery, i.e. women's almost exclusive blame for the extramarital intercourse (see Karlsen 201), Abigail, "knowing she would be scapegoated as a whore [...] assumes the role of a saint that enables her to scapegoat others with perfect impunity" (Lejri 101). By accusing others under the pretext of being possessed by evil spirits, Abigail demonstrates her remarkable intelligence and her superiority in the community. Yet the reader and some characters like Elizabeth and John Proctor realize Abigail's malicious actions, namely her initiating of the nightly ceremony in the woods and the resulting witchcraft accusations. Abigail, who falsely reassures her uncle "that what reputed to be witchcraft 'were sport'" (Adler 95), was the one who convinced the house slave Tituba to perform voodoo in order to, as Betty puts it, "[drink] a charm to kill John Proctor's wife!" (26). While the adolescent lies to her uncle to comfort him, Betty, her cousin and one of the ritual's participants, seems knowledgeable about Abigail's desire to dispose of Elizabeth to take her place on Proctor's side. Abigail threatens the other underage girls in order to keep her violent action a secret. The girls fear their leader which is especially believable since none of her girlfriends speaks the truth about the secret's gathering in the course of the events. Hence, Abigail's actions add to her being constructed as the embodiment of malice and thus make her the most powerful character in *The Crucible*.

Besides Abigail's mischievous action to cast a spell on Elizabeth, the girls' nightly "dancing naked and drinking magic potions made of chicken, serve", according to Lejri, "as an outlet for [their] inchoate sexuality" (97). Since sexuality was not overtly discussed in Puritan society and only "to be enjoyed [...] within its proper context – marriage" (Robinson qtd. in Karlsen 168), these young women needed to find a safe space, i.e. the woods, for their personal, juvenile explorations. Abigail stands out from her group because she is the only one who, although unmarried, came into sexual contact with a man, a fact that adds to her perception as a sexually precocious girl. Following the secret gathering, Abigail starts to experience "hysterical attack[s] [which present] a dramatization of her sexual frustration and a bodily reaction to her emotional distress after a secret short-lived relationship with Proctor in a society that condemns sex and pleasure" (Lejri 98). Likewise, her peers begin to suffer from violent, physical fits which are publicly believed to be caused by witchcraft and which offer them opportunities to voice their (sexual) desires (see Lejri 99). Abigail, motivated by her longing for Proctor, plots her vengeance against Elizabeth, her most initial target, and other women of the community under the pretext of being possessed by evil spirits. On that account, Martin points out that "[i]n a time when marriage and motherhood were not uncommon at the age of fourteen, the hypothesis of repressed sexuality emerging disguised into the emotionally charged atmosphere of witchcraft [...] does not seem unlikely, it seems, on the contrary, an inevitably supposition" (284). This quotation perfectly fits Abigail's case who seeks a way to vent her hurt feelings over the affair's ending: the pubescent girl holds Elizabeth responsible and thus indicts her for witchcraft-related activities under the pretext of being possessed. In addition, the other seemingly afflicted girls launch a rebellion which brings them special attention by Salem Village's Devil-fearing populace. In addition, clerical and judicial authorities give credence to the village girls' fits and trances from the very beginning and thus grant positions of power, which were nonexistent for young women prior to the Salem episode, to Abigail and her girlfriends. In fact, these young women are "[e]xcluded from their society [, and thus] find in their presumed possession a culturally sanctioned physical and emotional response to their social anxieties, their hampered feminine growth and their sensual blooming" (Lejri 97). In addition, the girls' mysterious behavior presents a cry for attention, praise and respect –values that were lacking within the life of adolescents in Puritan New England. Paradoxically, the all-male authorities do not call the girls, their possessions, or their witchcraft allegations into question, they simply believe in them and their stories although "women were normally excluded from

discourse in any public form [and] subject to masculine authority in every gendered social relationship [such as] civil relations of courts and parties to court proceedings” (Booth 40). Thus, the impression is obtained that Salem’s elite indirectly supports the girls’ personally motivated witch-hunts and enables Abigail, who directs the group in order to become visible and to make their voices heard, to file the most charges as the trials’ chief accuser. The authorities’ belief in the girls’ stories might be explained in the light of Puritan theology and its deep-seated fear of Satan, yet it might also draw to the elite’s need to dispose of certain women who challenged community-established norms and thus provided a threat to its stability.

Shortly before the last verdicts are reached, Abigail mysteriously disappears together with Mercy Lewis, one of her girlfriends. Her uncle, Reverend Parris, reports her missing to one of the judges with the following words: “My niece, sir, my niece – I believe she has vanished. [...] This be the third night [of her absence and] I think they be aboard a ship” (110-11). Abigail’s abrupt disappearance towards the end of the trials may be interpreted as an attempt to escape the blame for initiating Salem’s witch-hunt and the extramarital affair. When Proctor officially admits to his adultery with Abigail, her reputation changes and the faith in her assertions slowly start to shake. Thus, Abigail retreats from the scene she formerly called *her* own; she escapes from a village that gave credence to her accusations and who now may question them. Upon her departure, gossip about Abigail earning her living as a call girl in Boston spreads through the community (see 127), which, according to Demirkaya, “underpins the argument that she is the seductive witch and guilty scapegoat to be banished into the wilderness [without being able] to explain her real motives behind her [past] actions” (129). For me Demirkaya reads Abigail in the same way as Miller suggests it to his readers, namely as a whore. The young adolescent is insulted on several occasions: Elizabeth forces her husband “to go and tell her she’s a whore” (60), and in court Proctor, after announcing the secret affair, calls her a “Whore! Whore!” (97). The impression is obtained that the young, beautiful adolescent is the only one to blame for the adultery in the play. Likewise, Schissel, who through her feminist lens, states that Abigail “is the consummate seductress; the witchcraft hysteria in the play originates from *her* carnal lust for Proctor” (462). Her lover, however, is not found guilty by many critics although he, the adult man, is married with children and therefore bears certain responsibility for his family. In the end Proctor is found guilty of witchcraft, yet he is unlike Abigail not reproved for his immoral misbehavior. In addition, Schissel addresses the question of “how a seventeen-year-old girl, raised in the household of a Puritan

minister, can have the knowledge of how to seduce a man. [...] The omission on Miller's and his critics' parts implies that Abigail's sexual knowledge must be inherent in her gender" (463). In raising the fundamental question, Schissel demonstrates that misogyny is a deep-seated belief in Miller's interpretation of the Salem witchcraft trials. DeRosa, however, depicts Abigail's sexist depiction as a dramatic tool which was deliberately employed by the playwright himself: "[B]ecause Abigail, the sexually precocious teen fabulist, does not exist in the historical record, the dramatist Miller was compelled to make her up so that her actions might configure the dark play of moral hypocrisy animating his ostensibly historical drama" (qtd. in Herrera 343). Likewise, Martin states that Miller most likely invented the sexual affair between Proctor and Abigail in order to bring about the play's action (see *Background*, 282). In the end, Miller assigns Abigail a questionable fate in the play's appendix "Echoes down the corridor": she is believed to live up to her reputation as a prostitute in Boston.

3.3.2. Elizabeth Proctor

Elizabeth Proctor, middle-aged, is the wife of John Proctor and mother to their three children. She is depicted as a round and static character in the play and takes the role of Abigail's antagonist.

Next to childcare, she runs the family household with the help of the house servant Mary Warren. Although holding a superior position, Elizabeth is not assertive enough to ban Mary from leaving for Salem Village where she appears as a witness in the court proceedings. When Proctor learns about the incident, he reproves his wife for being weak and coward by uttering: "It's a fault, it is a fault, Elizabeth – you're the mistress here, not Mary Warren" (53). Proctor's wife is, unlike many others in the play, depicted as a rather restrained and simultaneously helpless character. She, for instance, shoulders the responsibility for her husband's extramarital affair with their former maid Abigail by establishing: "I have sins of my own to count. It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery" (119) and thereby, according to Hooti, "undergoes a self-realization of guilt" (72). Yet Schissel notes that "[n]o critic [...] questions Miller's insistence that Elizabeth is at least partly to blame for John's infidelity" (468). Why is it that a wife is made responsible for her spouse's adulterous misbehavior? The answer is to be found within Puritanism: wives

were not only compelled to subordinate to their husbands, they were also obliged to “provide men with [sexual] intimacy” (Karlsen 166). Elizabeth, who believes to be the affair’s trigger due to the “cold house [she] kept” (119) and thus unable to live up to her husband’s (sexual) expectations, burdens herself with guilt. Schissel notes that Miller presumably reads Elizabeth’s decision to give a false testimony concerning her husband’s sexual relationship as “fit[ting] the stereotype – woman as liar, woman as schemer, woman as witch sealing the fate of man the would-be hero” (468). Miller does not question the underlying motives behind Elizabeth’s concealment; he immediately makes her an accomplice of Proctor’s and Abigail’s adultery. Schissel, however, argues that the reason for her action is obvious: “Elizabeth can in good conscience respond in the negative for she knows the affair to be over. She has no desire to condemn the man who has betrayed her, for she believes John to be nothing but a ‘good man [...] – only somewhat bewildered’ (55)” (468). Elizabeth truly loves her husband, and thus lacks cruelty to denounce him in front of Salem’s officials. She truly believes in the good in men, however, when confronted with Abigail and Proctor’s secret conversation, it seems difficult for her to forget about her husband’s misconduct: she behaves “hurt, and coldly [and] quietly [as if] she had lost all faith in him” (54). Although Elizabeth speaks of forgiveness, her behavior towards her husband indirectly exhibits her ambivalent feelings. On that account, Adler adds that “it perhaps will always remain true that she can never totally forget John’s adultery [because] she knows that judgment, like forgiveness, must come from the self” (97). Hence, Elizabeth’s thoughts show her self-reflection; she is, according to Otten, the one “who provides the moral focus in the play” (71) and thus might be held responsible for Proctor’s decision to give his life when uttering that “[t]he magistrate sits in [his] heart” (55).

When Elizabeth learns that Abigail accused her of satanic conspiracy, she refers to those who, according to Puritan belief, stereotypically fit the image of a witch: “I am no Goody Good that sleeps in ditches, nor Osburn, drunk and half-witted” (60). By contrasting herself with the accused women who live on the margins of society, Elizabeth draws to her superior position and confirms not only the accusations against them but also New England’s belief that some women succumbed to Satan’s temptations. Hence, it seems surprising when she declares otherwise to the astonished Mr. Hale: “I cannot think the Devil may own a woman’s soul, Mr Hale, when she keeps an upright way, as I have. I am a good woman, I know it; and if you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it” (66). She disavows

her own involvement in witchcraft activities and “insists on the priority of her knowledge of her own moral character rather than others’ reading of it” (Adler 97). Elizabeth is confident about her innocence because she knows that she embodies the Puritan ideal of a good woman: she is a devout Christian, devoted to her children as well as her unfaithful husband and supportive to male hegemony. Although Elizabeth issues a denial in front of Salem court officials, she is found guilty and condemned as a witch. Nevertheless, Elizabeth is not hanged since, as the reader learns in the play’s appendix “Echoes down the corridor”, her pregnancy spared her from execution during the trials. She enters into marriage again four years after her husband’s execution. Wives who lost their husbands in seventeenth-century New England felt the urge to remarry in order to secure their own and their children’s future because “the widow’s right to inherit property outright did not become custom in Salem or in New England as whole [and therefore] most were economically dependent on the male members of their families throughout their lives” (Karlsen 189; 77).

3.3.3. Mary Warren

Miller introduces Mary Warren with the following words to the readership: “She is seventeen [and] a subservient, naïve, lonely girl” (25). Mary, who works as a servant at the Proctors’ farm, is involved in the secret gathering in the forest and assumes, unlike the majority of her peers who remain in the background, a pivotal role in the trials.

The first words she utters in the play refer to the girls’ mysterious session at night: “What’ll we do? The village is out! I just come from the farm; the whole country’s talkin’ witchcraft! They’ll be callin’ us witches, Abby!” (25). Afraid of the severe consequences that will most likely follow, Mary pleads Abigail, her friend and the meeting’s initiator, to admit the truth in order to avert “a hangin’ [as witches] like they done in Boston two years ago” (26). Abigail opposes Mary’s suggestion by threatening and silencing her, which leaves Mary with anxiety and growing anger. It is not until after their conversation that Mary starts to develop her potential for causing mischief, i.e. accusing Abigail and the other village girls of deception in the trials’ proceedings.

Before Mary does so, she publicly indicts the old beggar Goody¹⁰ Osburn for cursing her after she once rejected her empty-handed. She reports and justifies her accusation to the Proctors with the following words:

When she [Goody Good] come [sic] into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleep in ditches, and so very old and poor. But then – then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin’ up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and then – [*entranced*] – I hear a voice, a screamin’ voice, and it were my voice – and all at once I remembered everything she done to me! (57)

Mary’s charges appear somewhat ambiguous since she is only able to bring back her memory in the trial proceedings when she faces her alleged tormentor. Yet possible explanations for Mary’s accusation might be that she was either forced to reprove someone for witchcraft during the judicial interrogation or pressed by Abigail, the group’s leader. Nonetheless, Mary reports that “[she] thought [her] guts would burst for two days after” (57) Good’s presumed affliction. Schissel reads Mary’s physical pain as a symptom of the premenstrual syndrome and further concludes that the girls’ collective hysteria is triggered by their embarrassment over their bodies (see 463-64). In order to analyze the girls’ strange, physical fits their stage of life needs to be taken into account: they experience puberty and thus use their bodies as instruments to show their oppressed (sexual) feelings. In accordance, the Salem Village community did not construe the mysterious behavior as a necessary stage in every girl’s development to become a woman. Quite the contrary, Mary receives judicial praise for fulfilling her role as ‘active’ victim, yet her behavior does not receive endorsement by her employers. Proctor expresses his opinion by uttering: “It’s strange work for a Christian girl to hang old women” (58) and thus questions Mary’s and likewise the girls’ decisive actions to denounce certain women as witches. When Proctor turns to violence to punish Mary for leaving the farm without Elizabeth’s permission, Mary, strengthened by the “weighty work” (58) she does in court, rises up against him with the following words: “I’ll not stand whipping any more [sic]! [And] I’ll not be ordered to bed no more, Mr Proctor! I am eighteen and a woman, how-ever single!” (59). In this statement Mary admits that Proctor has turned to violence before, a fact that seems true since masters were commonly in charge of administering punishment which sometimes even degenerated into sexual exploitation (see Saxton 26-27). In fact, Mary emancipates herself from society’s beliefs that confirm women’s and especially unmarried adolescents’

¹⁰ According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, Goody refers to “a shortened form of goodwife, a term of civility applied to a married woman in humble life”.

inferior positions and shows courage to seek independence. The strained relationship reaches its climax when Mary, instead of revealing the adultery, accuses her master of adhering to evil forces. She uses her recognition in the trial proceedings to exact vengeance on him with the following words:

[*hysterically, indicating Proctor, fearful of him*]: My name, he want my name. ‘I’ll murder you’, he says, ‘if my wife hangs! We must go and overthrow the court,’ he says! [...] He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his fingers claw my neck, and I sign, I sign, ... (104)

Lejri suggests that Mary’s accusation, “in which she projects Proctor as a lustful man tempting her with a sexual invitation [during his nocturnal visits,] unconsciously attributes her own desires to Proctor while *she* is the one who longs for him, or for any other male for whom he stands” (99-100). It might be that Mary, like Abigail, uses her alleged affliction as a means of voicing her sexual longing¹¹, yet the more plausible explanation for her action against Proctor is that she rebels against the unequal master-servant relationship and his pressing of turning against her friend Abigail.

Mary repeatedly redefines the roles she plays in the events before and during the trials. At first, she acts together with the others as if possessed by Satan and serves her role as an ‘active’ victim by denouncing others in court. In doing so, Mary soon stands accused of adhering to evil spirits and hence finds herself among the group of those blamed for Salem’s witch craze. Although she shows courage to challenge her opponents at times, Mary remains a weak and impressionable character throughout the play. Her fate is uncertain since the consequences of her actions remain unwritten in *The Crucible*.

3.3.4. Tituba

Tituba is introduced as Reverend Parris’ slave who he “brought [...] with him from Barbados¹²” (17) years before the witch craze began. The slave “is in her forties” (17), of African-American origin and thus unlike the majority in Salem Village black. Tituba’s origin becomes also evident in her actions: Abigail, for instance, states that “she spoke

¹¹ Martin believes that “[i]f an adulterous affair was probable, it would more likely have occurred between Marry Warren and Proctor than between Abigail Williams and Proctor” (*Background*, 283) because the former lived and worked together under the same roof.

¹² “Most enslaved Africans in New England originated in Barbados and other English colonies in the Caribbean” (Tucker 629).

Barbados”(45), “a Creole that stands in marked contrast to the clunky, solid Puritan speech” (D. Miller 442), or the nightly rituals that, according to Bovard, demonstrate “knowledge of voodoo¹³” (83) which she brought to New England. Yet these practices, which are sought by the young Abigail to cast a spell on her former mistress, are completely misunderstood among Salem Village’s populace and authorities. It is Reverend Parris’ coincidental observation of the secret gathering in the woods that makes Salem Village’s populace believe that Tituba and the girls practiced witchcraft. On that account, D. Miller argues that “[t]he easiest way for Miller to substantiate his belief in Tituba’s guilt is to evoke voodoo in place of witchcraft” (441). The playwright makes use of both the slave’s foreign practices and the community’s lack of knowledge to construct the slave as the very embodiment of evil from the beginning of the play. Abigail is granted a pivotal role because she, pressed to reveal the truth about the nightly gathering, communicates Tituba’s alleged witchcraft practices to the community: she concedes that “[the slave] spoke Barbados” (45) and “plays on the cultural misunderstanding of Tituba, converting ‘Barbados’ from Tituba’s country of origin to a language that enables her to communicate with an evil spirit” (D. Miller 442). In this situation, the slave, however, lacks the opportunity to explain herself and her voodoo practices because she is not present.

At the core of this misunderstanding are two distinct epistemologies: firstly, the Puritans’ religious belief in the Devil and witchcraft and secondly, African-Americans’ cultural and religious practices of worshipping the Devil. Puritan theology asserted a firm belief in the existence of Satan and the ever-present danger to be recruited into his service as one of his minions, also known as witches. In addition, these beliefs seemed especially plausible within New England’s environment: Miller states that “the Salem folk [thought] that the virgin forest was the Devil’s last preserve, his home base and the citadel of his final stand” (15). The Salem Village community fears the supernatural; they immediately associated the mysterious events in the forest with witchcraft and Satan who is imagined to have instructed Tituba in her malevolent activities. In fact, the Devil whom Tituba admires and repeatedly calls to help her return to Barbados, “Take me home, Devil! Take me home!” (108), is not to equate with the Puritan interpretation of the Devil. In detail, Tituba believes in a different Devil; she, according to D. Miller, “asserts that [his] home is where she comes from, and that he is regarded differently there: he is not evil. Yet this mistranslation

¹³ Unlike European witchcraft, “voodoo (and all its variations) has its roots in the Caribbean” and relates to “an invisible force, terrible and mysterious, which can meddle in human affairs at any time” (D. Miller 444-46).

doesn't obscure the fact that Tituba worships the Devil as a life-force and sees the Devil as her salvation" (449). In short, Tituba admires *her* Satan while the Puritans fear *their* Satan. The unknown practices of the slave's home country make her, when witchcraft rumors start to circulate through the community, the first and most convenient scapegoat for the girls' abnormal behavior. On that account, Tituba immediately realizes, "because her slave sense has warned her [...], as always, trouble in this house eventually lands on her back" (17). She is aware of her slave status which increases the likelihood that blame is easily laid on outcasts like her.

In turn, when questioned about her supernatural conspiracy by Parris, Tituba, who is described as "rocking on her knees, sobbing in terror" (47), confesses to witchcraft. On that account, Brown argues that "Tituba falls back on the slave's last resort for self-preservation [and] gives the master what he wants" (120). The slave admits to her connection with the invisible world in order to save her life since judicial authorities decided to spare those who confessed to witchcraft from execution (see Reis, *Confess* 12). In her confession she professes to be in alliance with the Devil, yet she gives the impression of adhering to the Puritan concept of the Devil. The slave provides the community with conformation that evil forces are at work and therefore is granted an important position:

HALE. We will protect you. The Devil can never overcome a minister. [...] You have confessed yourself to witchcraft, and that speaks a wish to come to Heaven's side. And we will bless you, Tituba. [...] You are selected, Tituba, turn your back on [the Devil] and face God – face God, Tituba, and God will protect you. (48)

In the focus of attention, Tituba starts to control her own fate by accusing other women of witchcraft, a (strategic) move that makes her appear in a new, different light: the formerly accused witch now assumes the role of an accuser and "feeds her audience's hunger for victims by blurting out the very names of those they suggest to her [, namely women who] too present marginality in the community" (Lejri 94). Tituba takes action, assumes some power and inevitably acts as an advocate of the Puritans' witch-hunting policy. By leveling witchcraft accusations against other women, she embodies the 'active' victim par excellence and opposes her role as the community's most convenient scapegoat.

During the interrogation, Tituba senses her chance of speaking out against a community that renders her as a passive, voiceless being. She, according to Bredella, "makes subversive and liberating use of public confession [and] tell[s] with impunity what she

thinks of Mr. Parris” (493). In fact, she mentions that the Devil wanted to make her dispatch her master, a plan she did not adhere to:

TITUBA. He say Mr Parris must be kill! Mr Parris no goodly man, Mr Parris mean man and no gentle man, and he bid me rise out of my bed and cut your throat! [*They gasp.*] But I tell him ‘No! I don’t hate that man. I don’t want kill that man.’ [...] And then he come one stormy night to me, and he say, ‘Look! I have white people belong to me.’ (48)

By naming Parris in connection with the most evil spirit, she rebels against her slave status and makes her voice heard. In accordance, Brown argues that “Tituba not only caters to her masters’ concept of the Devil for the sake of self-preservation. She also uses [Parris’ mentioning] as a kind of slave’s revenge” (120). Therefore, Tituba’s statement leaves Salem Village’s populace wondering who else possibly entered into a pact with Satan, especially since she states that “white” people are under his command. However, the slave’s recognition in the first act does not last for very long: she is taken to prison and reappears in the very last act. Although she confessed to the Puritan idea of witchcraft, she ends up imprisoned because “her testimony remained essential to the trials of other accused witches [and thus] the magistrate postponed her execution” (Westerkamp 69). Her last wish is “to leave the United States, to repatriate to the place where she can practise her voodoo in plain sight” (D. Miller 452). In the end, Miller makes it impossible for Tituba to escape her fate as a slave; she most likely passes away during her imprisonment in jail.

3.4. Women’s fatal relationships

3.4.1. Seeking revenge: Abigail Williams and Elizabeth Proctor

The women’s relationship, which initially begins when Abigail Williams enters into John and Elizabeth Proctor’s service as their housemaid, proves to be fragile from its beginning and deteriorates further due to its special circumstances, i.e. Abigail and Proctor’s affair. Elizabeth dismisses the young woman from her job on the grounds of the misconduct prior to the play’s action. Therefore, the women’s one-to-one (work) relationship is not part of the storyline; yet both females provide insights into its problematic nature in various conversations.

It is Abigail who initiates a voodoo ceremony with the help of the house slave Tituba to dispatch her former lover’s wife. Afterwards, Betty puts blame on Abigail by recalling:

“You [drank] a charm to kill Goody Proctor” (26). The mysterious incident in the woods presents Abigail’s first attempt to go against Elizabeth. In addition, she, when questioned by her uncle about the reason for her dismissal from the Proctors’ service seven months ago, holds Elizabeth responsible for her termination, depicts her as a cruel mistress who exploited her like a “slave” (21) in order to free herself from any guilt. Although Abigail reproves Elizabeth for being a liar, it is her who paradoxically lies to protect her reputation and to conceal the real cause for her dismissal in front of her uncle. According to Herrera, Abigail is one of “the ‘teen fabulists’ [...] who make stuff up about themselves and others – function[ing] dramatically as fascinating yet socially dangerous creatures” (333). Thus, her lying in front of her guardian, Reverend Parris, foreshadows her potential for plotting mischief against Elizabeth. If by any chance, as Abigail states, Elizabeth treated her inhumanely, the mistress’ disruptive behavior would arise as a logical consequence of the extramarital relationship which threatens her marriage. Nevertheless, the young woman is the first to speak out against her former mistress – not vice versa – to avenge herself for her dismissal and to pursue her underlying aim of living side by side with Proctor. The extramarital affair provides the first and foremost turn in the females’ relationship and establishes them as bitter rivals. On that account, Booth attributes blame to Abigail and establishes her as “the female whose desire circumvents every ordered structure [, for instance,] [w]hen she tempts Proctor, she transgresses the order of marriage” (42-43). It is Abigail’s juvenile urge for Proctor’s love that makes her disregard Elizabeth’s marriage and family, which she is about to destroy. The young woman does not care about Elizabeth; she only cares for herself.

Proctor inevitably plays a crucial role in Abigail and Elizabeth’s connection: being the object of desire for both women, he is depicted as “the kind of man – [who is] powerful of body, even-tempered, and not easily led [as well as] respected and even feared in Salem” (27). Although it is him who turns away from his wife, commits infidelity, and thus serves a central role in the upcoming events, I argue that the women themselves largely determine the nature of their relationship by their decisive actions. One of these actions is that Elizabeth dismisses Abigail from her employment as soon as she learns about the adulterous misbehavior. Questioned in court about the incident later on, Elizabeth, too weak to denounce her husband as an adulterer, confirms Abigail’s dismissal, yet she lies in order to protect his reputation:

ELIZABETH. Your Honour, I – in that time I were sick. And I- My husband is a good and righteous man. He is never drunk as some are, nor wastin' his time at the shovelboard but always at work. But in my sickness – you see, sir, I were a long time sick after my last baby, and I thought I saw my husband somewhat turning from me. And this girl – [*She turns to Abigail.*] [...] I came to think he fancied her. And so one night I lost my wits, I think, and put her out on the highroad. (99-100)

This quotation emphasizes that Elizabeth's denial in front of Salem's authorities is issued in favor of her husband. Nevertheless, she too defends her greatest rival, the young, beautiful Abigail by uttering this statement. Elizabeth does not seem to have a choice here because admitting the truth in the courtroom would burden her husband with guilt – an action she deliberately tries to avoid since she does not feel to be in the position to adjudicate him. Her decision might also stem from her own selfish desire to 'keep' him at her side. Although Elizabeth remains silent in this situation, it is her who took action in the past when she turned against Abigail and made her leave the homestead. Even Proctor admits during the interrogation: "My wife, my dear good wife, took this girl soon after, sir, and put her out" (98). Elizabeth's action, which is essential for the secret affair's ending, makes her appear as the most reasonable character in the love triangle. Abigail, however, recalls her dismissal in a very different manner as she reveals in a conversation with Proctor: "It's she put me out, you cannot pretend it were you. I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do now!" (29). She interprets Elizabeth's agency as the revenge of a furious, jealous wife and Proctor's reaction as a sign of his feelings and love for her. Abigail most likely speaks the truth since Proctor confesses his feelings with the following words: "Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time!" (29). Interestingly, Elizabeth seems to agree with her young opponent when she reproves her husband for his inability to take action against Abigail: "[*with a smile, to keep her dignity*]: John, if it were not Abigail that you must go to hurt, would you falter now? I think not" (55). Both women believe that Proctor harbors true feelings for Abigail, a fact that makes them fellow sufferers. In order to win Proctor's heart Schissel argues that "Miller makes each woman in John's life claim herself as his rightful spouse" (464): while Elizabeth issues an ultimatum "I will be your only wife, or no wife at all!" (61), Abigail claims to know Proctor's feelings: "You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is, you love me yet!" (30). The underlying messages of the statements differ considerably: Abigail wishes that Proctor concedes his love for her, Elizabeth, however, threatens her husband in order to make him testify against his lover in court. In doing so, both women attempt to thwart each other.

Miller establishes the women's rivalry also on the grounds of sexuality. Yet it is Proctor and not the women themselves who determine their sexual roles: when Proctor addresses Abigail as a "child" (29) in a conversation, the reader realizes that he degrades his former sexual partner to a non-sexual being. Although it is him who got involved with the young Abigail, took her virginity by, as she states, "put[ting] knowledge in [her] hear" (30), and thus made her a woman, he refuses her the status of being one and simultaneously denies their sexual relationship. In turn, Abigail, deeply affronted by his remark, answers: "How do you call me child!" (29). She feels betrayed and consequently reminds him of their time together: "I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I come near!" (29). Thus, the adolescent girl depicts Proctor as the more active part in their sexual relationship while she remains in a somewhat passive role for the time being. By calling Abigail a "child" Proctor additionally achieves the effect of contrasting her with Elizabeth, his wife and a *woman*. In Puritan New England marriage and motherhood were the determining factors of being a woman. Therefore, Elizabeth is depicted as a proper woman: she entered into marriage and gave birth to three children. Abigail, the young adolescent, however, did not. It is Abigail's tempting physical appearance which made Proctor start an adulterous affair with her. On the subject, Schissel notes that both "Abigail and Elizabeth also represent the extremes of female sexuality – sultriness and frigidity" (464). This observation underlines the argument that Proctor surely felt tempted by Abigail's sexual attractiveness and thus cheated on his wife. Miller's portrayal of the two women as complete opposites does not only facilitate Proctor's misconduct, it furthermore adds to the women's rivalry. Nonetheless, both women's realities must be considered when comparing them according to their sexual attraction: Abigail, the seventeen-year-old and "strikingly beautiful girl" (18), uses her attractive appearance to seek, like presumably any other pubescent female in Puritan New England, love and marriage. Elizabeth's life, however, is oriented towards living up the Puritan ideal of womanhood that is "to perform [female domestic] tasks, loving God, loving their families, and maintaining a becoming deference to their husbands" (Saxton 21). Accordingly, in constructing the two contrasting (sexual) characters, Miller fosters the females' fatal relationship.

Abigail and Elizabeth's relationship reaches its dramatic climax when Abigail officially denounces her former mistress as a witch in front of Salem's judicial authorities. The accusation can be located within the women's work place, i.e. a feminine place, where they worked closely together when Abigail and Proctor's affair began. She is bitterly jealous of

Elizabeth who is able to live the life she dreams of and believes that accusing Elizabeth of witchcraft will pave the way for her life with her former lover. After the message of Elizabeth's involvement in the trials is delivered to the Proctors, she admits that she intuitively sensed Abigail's denouncing prior to the notification and thereby the impression is created that Elizabeth has lived in constant dread of her former maid ever since she dismissed her from her service as the following dialogue exhibits:

ELIZABETH. [*quietly*]: Oh, the noose, the noose is up!

PROCTOR. There'll be no noose.

ELIZABETH. She wants me dead. I knew it all week it would come to this!

PROCTOR. [*without conviction*]: They dismissed it. You heard her say –

ELIZABETH. And what of tomorrow? She will cry me out until they take me! [...] She wants me dead, John you know it. [...] John – grant me this. You have a faulty understanding of young girls. There is a promise made in any bed –

PROCTOR. [*striving against his anger*]: What promise?

ELIZABETH. Spoke or silent, a promise is surely made. And she may dote on it now – I am sure she does – and thinks to kill me, then to take my place. (59-60)

In this conversation Elizabeth, who voices her greatest fears, identifies her husband's extramarital affair as the cause for her denouncing in the court proceedings. In order to persuade Proctor of Abigail's malice, Elizabeth puts herself in her rival's position and starts to explain female thinking to him: Elizabeth is certain that although her husband assured her that he "[has] forgot[ten] Abigail" (55), the affair has aroused deep feelings in the young woman. Elizabeth holds the belief that Abigail's feelings are based on a 'promise' that Proctor has given to her and that the young woman tries to make him fulfill it by naming her as a witch in public. It is owing to her female perspective that she, as Bovard, states "understands Abigail sooner and better than does Proctor" (83). In addition, Adler stresses that, "[a]lthough John claims that any 'promise' made to Abigail was purely an animal act, that they 'touched' momentarily in a physical way without deeper commitment, Abigail insists that he desires her still and is hypocritical in continuing to 'bend' to Elizabeth and act out of duty to her" (96). In fact, Elizabeth knows that her only hope lies in her husband's testimony against Abigail. Proctor, however, afraid that his secret affair might go public, hesitates to bust Abigail's pretense in court. On that account, Otten argues that "[Proctor] fears standing alone as accuser and, perhaps more than he

realizes wants to protect Abby” (72). It might be true that Proctor’s weakness points to his real feelings for Abigail; his temporary refusal to go to court protects his former lover and not his wife.

In this situation it seems especially striking that Elizabeth, instead of acting on her own and charging her husband with adultery, angrily asks him to rectify it by uttering: “Then go and tell her she’s a whore. Whatever promise she may sense – break it, John, break it” (60). Her labeling of Abigail as a slut displays Elizabeth’s feelings over the infidelity, yet she avoids to directly blame her husband. On that account, it seems obvious that Elizabeth holds onto her Puritan values, namely “once married, a couple was to stay together” (Saxton 49). While Elizabeth desperately tries to save their marriage, Proctor is now in the position to decide between both women, a fact that manifests Abigail and Elizabeth’s rivalry.

When an arrest warrant is issued against Elizabeth, Abigail is unsurprisingly revealed as her accuser and the females’ relationship reaches its dramatic climax. In detail, the teenager indicts her former mistress for a spectral act of affliction: she claims that Elizabeth hurt her by stabbing a needle in a doll which was designed to resemble her. On that account, Elizabeth, filled with suppressed rage, vents her wrath with the following words: “[*her breath knocked out*]: Why –? The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!” (71). This quotation shows Elizabeth’s anger in public for the first time, yet, as Schissel argues, “Miller and the critics seem unwilling to acknowledge [...] the hurt that Elizabeth feels over John’s betrayal; instead, her anger [...] is evident that she is no good woman” (468). In accordance with Schissel, I argue that Elizabeth is blamed for articulating her negative feelings; she is not allowed to rebel against the serious, untrue witchcraft allegations. Her public statement, which is treated like a confession, establishes her as Abigail’s tormentor as Cheever’s reaction shows: “[*pointing at Elizabeth*]: You’ve heard that, sir! Ripped out of the world! Herrick, you heard it!” (71). Subsequently, Elizabeth, who is not given any chance to explain herself or her repressed feelings of anger, is taken to court. Schissel believes that Elizabeth is right in venting her rage and longing for her opponent’s death because “[s]he is about to lose her husband, her children are without parents, [and who] is sure to be condemned to death as well” (469). Therefore, she is, next to Mary Warren, the only one in the play who tries to rise up against the fearful Abigail. In the end, though, it is Elizabeth’s pregnancy that protects her from being executed as a witch. On that account, Schissel notes that “Miller’s play about the life and

death struggle for a *man's* soul, cannot be threatened by a woman's struggle. In order to control his character *Miller* impregnates her. The court will not sentence an unborn child, so Elizabeth does not have to make a choice" (469). Notwithstanding the pregnancy, Elizabeth would surely have lost her life at the gallows since the (spectral) evidence brought against her was sufficient enough to be hanged as a witch in seventeenth-century New England. In addition, Elizabeth, being the moral person she is, would never have confessed to a crime she did not commit.

Eventually, Abigail and Elizabeth's relationship finds a tragic ending: while Abigail goes aboard a ship to escape punishment for her evil deeds, Elizabeth is spared from execution due to her pregnancy. However, the man they both desire is hanged during the trials. The question of guilt, however, prevails. Hooti, for instance, claims that Elizabeth, "the image of a 'cold wife' [,] is responsible for provoking her husband to indulge in adultery, which eventually leads him to the gallows" (71). Apparently, Hooti, in accordance with Miller, reproves Elizabeth for her inability to forgive Proctor and likewise her failure to make him confess his misdeeds. However, Abigail's role in the death of Proctor is not open to question for both authors. As I see it neither Elizabeth nor Abigail are to blame for the male protagonist's death because it is Salem's judicial elite who condemns Proctor to hanging in the end. Abigail and Elizabeth's relationship is truly a fatal one since the females' rivalry results in grave witchcraft charges and personal losses on both sides: while Elizabeth loses her husband and the father to her children, Abigail is without her lover and home.

3.4.2. The adolescent girls: Abigail Williams and Mary Warren

Abigail Williams and Mary Warren's relationship is largely based on their mutual experience of the nocturnal events in the forest prior to the play's action; it profoundly shapes the girlfriends' connection and the future events.

In the beginning the pubescent girls, who are roughly the same age, are considered real friends. Their closeness manifests in the following observations: for one thing, Mary would not have taken part in the socially-deviating ritual if Abigail, its initiator, had not invited her to join. For another thing, Mary calls Abigail by her nickname "Abby" (25), an obvious sign of their intimate ties. Furthermore, Mary reveals in a conversation with her master

Proctor that she has knowledge of his adultery with Abigail. Here the impression is made that Abigail let her friend in on her secret sexual relation. Yet Mary's response in the conversation, "I have known it, sir" (74), might also allude to the fact that Mary herself inferred the misconduct from the parties' behavior and attitudes. Notwithstanding their closeness, their relationship is severely affected when they are to handle the repercussions of the nightly incident in the wood which has caused Betty to suffer from mysterious behavior. The following discussion between the adolescents and Mercy Lewis, one of the meeting's participants, clearly shows their divergent views on how to proceed further on the subject:

MARY WARREN. What'll we do? The village is out! I just come from the farm; the whole country's talking' witchcraft! They'll be callin' us witches, Abby!

MERCY. [*pointing and looking at Mary Warren*]: She means to tell, I know it.

MARY WARREN. Abby, we've got to tell. Witchery's a hangin' error, a hangin' like they done in Boston two year ago! We must tell the truth, Abby! You'll only be whipped for *dancin'*, and the other things!

ABIGAIL. Oh, *we'll* be whipped!

MARY WARREN. I never done none of it, Abby. I only looked! [...]

ABIGAIL. Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. And that is all. And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it; I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down! [*She goes to Betty and roughly sits her up.*] Now, you – sit up and stop this! (25-26)

This quote alludes to the fact that the peer group came under enormous pressure to reveal the night's events, yet it is Abigail who instills a fear of violence in them to suppress the truth. She makes use of her parents' brutal murder firstly to strengthen her position as the group's fearsome leader and secondly, to ensure the girls' secrecy about the ritual's real purpose. Moreover, the confrontation establishes the girls' distinct positions: while Mary pleads Abigail to uncover the true events of that night, Abigail immediately threatens that she will harm anyone who does so because she fears that the girls might reveal the secret in public. In the conversation the impression is conveyed that Abigail and Mary's relationship is no longer based on equality; they now occupy different ranks of different influence. Mary is compelled to take on an inferior position because Abigail, who occupies the self-

chosen leading role, forced her to. The unequal relationship is strengthened when Mary, who is terrified not only by the upcoming societal punishment that might await them but also by Abigail's dire threat of violence, gives in and complies with her friend's plan of keeping the ritual a secret. In doing so, Miller constructs Mary as a weak and simultaneously powerless character. She, instead of controlling her own fate by confessing, supports Abigail in her superiority. In the conversation Mary tries to distance herself from Abigail, who, unlike her, danced and drank blood during the ceremony. Hence, the reader realizes that Mary, who strengthens her own passive role, believes in Abigail's evil. She makes an attempt and tries to convince her friend of confessing the truth: therefore she points out that the retribution for the nightly gathering will be nothing compared to what is done to alleged witches who get executed. She does not wish to harm Abigail; she wants to make her aware of the fatal consequences.

Her endeavors, however, are not completely unselfish: like Abigail, she tries to survive by keeping the true incidents a secret. Although she states that she never actively participated in any of the voodoo rituals, her peers put blame on her for her observations and curiosity in the course of that night (see 26). Mary might be certain that if the true events are revealed one day, she too will be named as an accomplice by Abigail and her cohorts. Consequently, she abides by Abigail's rules and assumes the role of a possessed accuser to escape societal punishment. The young girls know that punishment, which "[signifies] that the recipient [is] insufficiently submissive and [has] failed to comport herself with a Puritan conscience" (Saxton 27-28), will await them for their nightly ritual.

United in their roles of 'active' victims, Abigail, Mary and their peers give the appearance of being controlled by evil spirits in front of Salem's elite and subsequently indict other women as their tormentors. Abigail is the first to level charges; Mary obediently follows and denounces Goody Osburn, an old beggar, as a witch. Abigail and Mary are now in the same boat: once started to put blame on others for being bewitched, they are compelled to stick to their stories and their roles as 'active' victims. Although the girls depend on each other in a similar way, Abigail is still the one in control, a fact that becomes especially apparent when the adolescent vengefully cries out her former lover's wife in order to annihilate her and to take her place on Proctor's side. Yet this very accusation also affects Mary who is forced by her master to reveal the truth about the doll:

PROCTOR. You're coming to the court with me, Mary. You will tell it in the court.

MARY WARREN. I cannot charge murder on Abigail.

PROCTOR. [*moving menacingly toward her*]: You will tell the court how that poppet come here and who stuck the needle in.

MARY WARREN. She'll kill me for sayin' that! [...]

PROCTOR. We will slide together into our pit; you will tell the court what you know.

MARY WARREN. [*in terror*]: I cannot, they'll turn on me –

PROCTOR. [*grasping her by the throat as though he would strangle her*] [...] [*He throws her to the floor, where she sobs, 'I cannot, I cannot ...'*] (74)

This quotation clearly draws to gender-specific use of force: while Proctor commits physical violence, the girls issue subtle forms of threat throughout the action when ruining women's reputations and lives by witchcraft accusations. Besides Proctor's violent outburst, the conversation clearly demonstrates that Mary is utterly terrified of her friend Abigail. She is sure that if she revealed the doll story in the court proceedings, Abigail would dispatch her. However, it is not only Abigail that would oppose her, as Mary voices, the other seemingly possessed would go against her as well. In other words, the girls are in alliance with Abigail; they act according to her order and rules because they are submissive to her, as Bovard stresses, "natural leadership ability" (82). Mary knows that turning against the leader will break off the alliance and leave her without the group's protection in the trials. Consequently, Mary's repeated negations, "I cannot, I cannot, I cannot" (75) towards the end of the conversation display that she fears Abigail's potential reaction more than Proctor's threats and violence. Thus, Abigail's sublime power becomes evident, especially when considering the context of the Puritan male dominated society. Mary's pleading for reprieve is not granted: Proctor drags her in front of Salem's judicial authorities where she is forced to explain the doll story and declare that her own and the girls' seemingly possession is only pretense. Owing to her master's pressure, Mary officially turns against Abigail and her cohorts and therefore is no longer a valuable member of the group. This fateful decision describes the second major turn in the Mary and Abigail's relationship. In detail, Mary accuses Abigail of crafting a doll which she later gave to her mistress as a present and which was presented as a piece of evidence for Abigail's suffering because "[w]itches were [...] suspected of causing injuries with the assistance of 'Poppets,' [or] rag dolls (Karlsen 8). When confronted with the charges in court, Abigail, trying to maintain the high position that was granted to her from the beginning in court, negates her own involvement in the particular events and additionally

taxes Mary with telling lies. In turn, the question arises if Mary only complies with Proctor's order or if her charges are also motivated by revenge. Although the real motives behind Mary's behavior remain unknown to the reader, her behavior suggests that she might not solely act according to Proctor's pressing as she concedes in court. Mary might also inflict vengeance on Abigail because it was her who determined the course of the trials by suppressing the truth about the nightly ceremony against her will.

In addition, Mary denounces Abigail and her peers' as frauds. Deputy-Governor Danforth communicates Mary's allegations with the following words to her peers: "Your friend Mary Warren, has given us a deposition. In which she swears that she never saw familiar spirits, apparitions, nor any manifest of the Devil. She claims as well that none of you have seen these things either" (92). In accusing them, Mary casts doubt on the genuineness of the girls' suffering, their associated tormentors, and on those in authority who eventually decide on the fate of the accused witches. Concerning the judges' belief in the girls' possessions, Bredella argues that "Danforth cannot believe that the girls are only pretending to be afflicted. Many times he has seen with his own eyes how the girls have turned cold" (496) and interprets it as an unmistakable sign of the girls' suffering. In accordance, Karlsen points to "the very real power of witchcraft belief and the difficulty of separating false accusations from actual lying" (148). In Mary's case, her official statement is not given credence in court. Nevertheless, she is ordered to faint in order to prove her allegations, Mary claims: "I – cannot faint now, sir. [...] I – I used to faint because I – I thought I saw spirits" (95) and "desperately attempts a psychological explanation of why it worked before and does not work now" (Bredella 497). On that account, the evil-minded Abigail sets out to destroy Mary for her grave charges and also to underline the authenticity of her own and her cohorts' afflictions: "I have been hurt, Mr Danforth; I have seen my blood runnin' out! I have been near to murdered every day because I done [sic] my duty pointing out the Devil's people – and this is my reward? To be mistrusted, denied, questioned like a –" (96). In uttering her anger over the doubt she faces, Bredella argues that, "Abigail puts an end to further questioning" (497) and is given approval by the authorities. In turn, the group's leader wields all her power and influence over her peers, and together they rise to Mary's most fearsome opponents. Abigail and her followers fight fire with fire as the following court scene shows:

[Suddenly, from an accusatory attitude, [Abigail's] face turns, looking into the air above – it is truly frightened.]

ABIGAIL. Why - ? [*She gulps.*] Why do you come, yellow bird? [...] [*to the ceiling, in a genuine conversation with the 'bird', as though trying to talk it out of attacking her*]: But God made my face; you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin, Mary.

MARY WARREN. [*on her feet with a spring, and horrified, pleading*]: Abby!

ABIGAIL. [*unperturbed, continuing to the 'bird'*]: Oh, Mary, this is a black art to change your shape. No, I cannot, I cannot stop my mouth; it's God's work I do. [...]

MARY WARREN. She sees nothin'!

ABIGAIL. [*now starting full front as though hypnotized, and mimicking the exact tone of Mary Warren's cry*]: She sees nothin'!

MARY WARREN. [*pleading*]: Abby, you mustn't!

ABIGAIL AND ALL THE GIRLS. [*all transfixed*]: Abby, you mustn't! [...]

MARY WARREN. [*screaming it out at the top of her lungs, and raising her fists*]: Stop it!!

GIRLS. [*raising their fists*]: Stop it!! (96-102)

Accused of pretense, the group opposes Mary's charges by acting in the most furious and frightening way ever experienced in Salem's courtrooms. The girls' leader Abigail revengefully denounces Mary for assuming the shape of a bird, a spectral act of witchcraft that can only be performed by those who adhere to evil forces. The girls now make Mary change her position from accuser to accused. In addition, they challenge Mary's inferiority by repeating her exact words, an act that makes her behave even more fearsome and thus heightens the impression of her being a witch. Mary's proceeding against the group she formerly belonged to ends in acts of retaliation and subsequent recrimination.

The girls' troubled relationship, however, reaches a peaceable ending when Mary, who after denouncing her master for being responsible for her evil wrongdoings, turns to God and apologizes for causing Abigail's suffering. Like her historical model, Mary and so many others "when under pressure to maintain the community's truth, [...] fell back into possessed states or confessed themselves witches" (Karlsen 148). Interestingly, the court now believes in Mary's avowal although she, as Westerkamp states, "might be expected to lack credibility, especially when accusing her master" (68). In addition, she publicly praises God in order to underline her break with Satan and announces: "No, I love God; I go your [i.e. Proctor's] way no more. I love God, I bless God." (104). As I see it Mary, who as "[a] confessing woman [creates] a model of perfect redemption" (Reis, *Confess* 12), makes references to God to strengthen her position as a believer; she claims to have

returned to an upright way to escape punishment. In turn, Abigail attempts a gesture of reconciliation when “[she], out of her infinite charity, reaches out and draws the sobbing Mary to her” (104-05). Nevertheless, the actual motives behind the girls’ reconciliation might be distinct ones: Mary, aware of her hopeless situation, bows to Abigail’s superiority in order to save her life. Abigail, however, does not act out of pure benevolence; she rather makes use of Mary’s failure to display her cunning in establishing her innocence in course of the trials and thus demonstrates her ultimate power over Mary, her supporters, and Salem’s elite once more.

3.4.3. Scapegoating ‘the other’: Abigail Williams and Tituba

What unites Reverend Parris’ juvenile niece and his house slave is the secret gathering in the forest that took place prior to the play’s action. The event unfolds a series of widespread witchcraft allegations which prove especially fatal for Tituba. In detail, Betty’s initial suffering from mysterious fits and trances after the nocturnal event brings the secret action into the spotlight and likewise its participants – Abigail and Tituba in particular. In consequence Parris, who observed parts of the mysterious ritual by chance and thus triggered its abrupt ending, thoroughly questions Abigail about it:

PARRIS. Abigail, if you know something that may help the doctor, for God’s sake tell it to me. [*She is silent.*] I saw Tituba waving her arm over the fire when I came on you. Why was she doing that? And I heard a screeching and gibberish coming from her mouth. She were [*sic*] swaying like a dumb beast over that fire!

ABIGAIL. She always sings her Barbados songs, and we dance.

PARRIS. I saw a dress lying on the grass. [...] And I thought I saw – someone naked running through the trees!

ABIGAIL. [*in terror*]: No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle! [...] There is nothin’ more. I swear it, uncle! (19-20)

In the conversation Abigail confesses to dancing, yet she does not confirm Parris’ observations which already establish Tituba as the evil and guilty one. The impression is obtained that by voicing his assumptions about Tituba’s presumed guilt, Parris might have shown Abigail a possible way to escape punishment for the forbidden gathering in the woods. Abigail, however, sticks to her version of the events for the time being and does not incriminate the slave. In fact, Tituba was of particular importance to her when she

sought a way to dispatch her former mistress prior to the drama's action. Abigail persuaded Tituba to carry out a voodoo ritual because, as D. Miller argues, "the Devil cannot be summoned directly by [Abigail and her] girls, in English. The force of evil can only be conjured by a slave of African descent" (442). Hence, Abigail harnesses Tituba's voodoo knowledge for her own purpose: she takes an advantage of the slave's otherness and serves as an advocate of Tituba's prowess by making the black arts accessible to her girlfriends at that particular night.

When the Salem community is informed by Ann Putnam that Tituba has "knowledge of conjuring" (42), Abigail is thoroughly questioned about the nightly meeting and hints at Tituba's guilt. The young woman falsely claims that her employment at the Proctors' homestead ended due to inhumane working conditions: "They want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them!" (21). In this statement Abigail makes a clear reference to Tituba, most likely the only slave from Barbados she knows, and in comparison positions herself higher on New England's well-ordered social ladder. Abigail's thinking is partly shaped by the women's difference in skin color: Tituba's black skin adds next to her status as a slave to her inferior position in the community because, as D. Miller observes, "evil is associated with blackness and good with whiteness throughout the play" (443). The black slave Tituba who is accused of evil misdeeds stands in contrast to the white girls, and especially Abigail, who are believed to be innocent victims. The adolescent makes use of the society's established link between white and black and takes action against the slave. According to Moss, Tituba, like her historical model, "became the Dark eve, instigator of the witchcraze, perpetrator of the original sin that forced Puritans to recognize that their idyllic vision of a New World was flawed" (10).

The females' relationship takes a sharp turn when the teenager officially levels the first-ever witchcraft accusation against the slave in the Salem witchcraft trials. Under interrogation Abigail reveals Tituba's presumed adherence to evil:

HALE. [*grasping* Abigail]: Abigail, it may be your cousin is dying. Did you call the Devil last night?

ABIGAIL. I never called him! Tituba, Tituba ... [...]

HALE. Have you sold yourself to Lucifer?

ABIGAIL. I never sold myself! I'm a good girl! I'm a proper girl!

[Mrs. Putnam *enters with Tituba, and instantly Abigail points at Tituba.*]

ABIGAIL. She made me do it! She made Betty do it!

TITUBA. [*shocked and angry*]: Abby! [...] No, no, sir, I don't truck with no Devil! [...]

ABIGAIL. She sends her spirits on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer! [...] She comes to me every night to go and drink blood!

TITUBA. You beg *me* to conjure! She beg *me* make charm –

ABIGAIL. Don't lie. [*To Hale*]. She comes to me while I sleep; she's always making me dream corruptions!

TITUBA. Why you say that, Abby?

ABIGAIL. Sometimes I wake and find myself standing in the open doorway and not a stitch on my body! I always hear her laughing in my sleep. I hear her singing her Barbados songs and tempting me with –

TITUBA. Mister Reverend, I never – (45-46)

In this key scene Abigail claims that Tituba made her carry out several crimes that are considered illegal in Puritan New England. By providing detailed information on the effects that the slave's witchcraft causes, Abigail depicts herself as the suffering and helpless victim; she does not display any sense of her own guilt in the present scene. Although Tituba knows that "because her slave sense has warned her [...], trouble in this house eventually lands on her back" (17), she is surprised by the adolescent's action against her. She tries to explain the true nature of the nightly gathering by naming Abigail as its initiator, yet her clarifications as well as her questions addressed to her accuser remain unnoticed and thus unanswered. In addition, when she tries to direct her statement of innocence towards her master, she does not receive any response and, more prominently, is interrupted. The impression is obtained that Abigail has a voice in the interrogations while Tituba has no voice at all. Tituba is deprived of any right to declare herself and thus appears as the most obvious culprit in the scene. The slave is denied any chance of speaking out against her oppressor and hence is, as D. Miller argues, "robbed of any power she had, not only by the legal system, but by a young white girl" (440). Again, the opposition between the innocent white and the evil black is established.

Tituba regains attention when she, threatened by her master, confesses to being possessed by the most evil creature in Puritan theology, the Devil. Her avowal is unlawfully obtained by Parris who threatens her with the following words: "You will confess yourself or I will take you out and whip you to your death, Tituba!" (46). The slave's false testimony is

triggered by her determination to live because “during the Salem witchcraft trials (though not elsewhere) [a confessing woman] was rewarded with her life (Reis, *Confess* 12). Gripped by fear of her master’s threat, she suddenly changes her strategy in the interrogation: she does not only confess to witchcraft-related activities, she also denounces other women as culprits and therefore redefines her role in the trials – from accused to accuser:

TITUBA. [*frightened by the coming process*]: Mister Reverend, I do believe somebody else be witchin’ these children.

HALE. Who?

TITUBA. I don’t know, sir, but the Devil got him numerous witches. [...]

HALE. Open yourself Tituba – open yourself and let God’s holy light shine on you. [...] When the Devil comes to you does he ever come – with another person? [...]

TITUBA. There was four. There was four.

PARRIS. [*pressing on her*]: Who? Who? Their names, their names! [...]

TITUBA. – and there was Goody Good.

PARRIS. Sarah Good!

TITUBA. [*rocking and weeping*]: Aye, sir, and Goody Osburn. (47-49)

Unlike many others in the play, Tituba partly defines her own role: she is no longer pilloried for her presumed acts of witchcraft; she now gains status in the repressive community by naming those responsible for her evil doings and therefore sympathizes with the trials’ procedures and authorities. In accusing other women as the Devil’s agents, Tituba may have modeled Abigail who also distracted judicial authorities’ attention from her own self in order to save her life. The slave now employs a method which was previously used against her; she assumes the role of an ‘active’ victim. For that reason, Tituba is, among many others, responsible for the trials’ further proceedings that trigger the death of nineteen. Both Tituba and Abigail are granted positions of power in Salem Village, positions which they never thought they would be able to acquire. In accordance, Bigsby points out that “[t]hose whose opinions and perceptions carried neither personal nor political weight suddenly acquire an authority so absolute that they come to feel they can challenge even the representatives of the state” (150). At first sight, they do not seem to have much in common, yet both are women and hold low ranks in society and thus they are naturally demanded submission in Puritan New England. Nevertheless, their knowledge

about Salem Village's presumed witches allows them to assist the community in fighting the evil forces and therefore to rise to considerable power.

The females' formerly fragile relationship changes for the better when the adolescent and "[t]he presumably afflicted girls displace guilt from Tituba to other people, crying out at the same time, in a chaotic confusion, the names of different servants of the Devil" (Lejri 95). The following scene immediately follows Tituba's witchcraft accusations against Good and Osburn:

[Abigail rises, starting as though inspired, and cries out.]

ABIGAIL. I want to open myself!

[They turn to her, startled. She is enraptured, as though in a pearly light.]

ABIGAIL. I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!

[As she is speaking, Betty is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant.] (49)

The girls file more charges in the course of the scene and therefore take Tituba's blame and attribute it to other women in the village. In fact, it is Abigail herself who confirms the slave's allegations by reproving the same two women for witchcraft and thus positions the slave as a victim and not an agent of witchcraft. Thus, the question remains why Abigail now supports a woman she formerly denounced as a witch. For one reason or another, the slave's unexpected action of pressing charges against other women might have left a strong impression on Abigail and consequently fuelled her fears. In accordance, D. Miller points out that "Tituba has the potential to be the most powerful character in the play, largely because her difference causes other characters as well as the audience to believe that her spiritual belief system represents a discernible threat to the stability of the community" (440). Paradoxically, Abigail, who made use of Tituba's voodoo skills prior to the play's action, now fears that the slave might employ her (real) knowledge in the 'black arts' to turn against her.

In the end, though, Abigail defeats Tituba. While the former starts to realize her full potential as the trials' most fearsome accuser, the latter is, although acknowledged as a self-confessed witch, taken into custody. The relationship with Abigail is, although suggesting otherwise in some brief moments, not based on equality. The adolescent has

been the one in control from the very beginning; she exploits Tituba in order to follow her own interests and when questions about the nightly gathering arise, she indicts the slave for witchcraft-related activities to secure her dominant position. According to D. Miller, “Abigail is powerful precisely because she controls Tituba’s power; she co-opts voodoo and converts it to witchcraft in a public setting that gains its legitimacy through legal and religious authority. Abigail in essence translates Tituba’s culture, using it to her advantage while keeping it and Tituba out of sight” (441). Although the adolescent girl is aware of the difference between the voodoo practices from Barbados and the witchcraft beliefs that are inherent in Puritan theology, she does not correct the community’s misunderstanding. Therefore, she substantially contributes to Tituba’s perception as society’s most convenient scapegoat, and while the slave serves a sentence in Salem’s prison, the young woman is never held accountable for her misdeeds (see D. Miller 452). The women’s relationship is thus indeed a fatal one.

4. *Tituba of Salem Village* (1964)

Everyone loves a witch hunt as long as it's someone else's witch being hunted. (Kim)

4.1. The Author in her historical context: The Civil Rights Movement

Ann Lane Petry was presumably born on October 12, 1908¹⁴, in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. Part of the black bourgeoisie, her family was able to live in an advantaged and relatively careless way (see McKenzie 615). However, “[growing] up in a predominately white environment” (Bell 106), she soon became confronted with instances of racial stereotyping. After she graduated from high school, Petry studied pharmacy to work in the family business, a drugstore run by her father (see Bell 106). After some years of employment, she married and left Saybrook for Harlem, New York, “to work and pursue her childhood interests in writing” (Bell 107). There she started working as a journalist for two Harlem-based newspapers. A series of short stories, which were printed in *Crisis*, among them her first “Marie of the Cabin Club”, appeared under the name of Arnold Petri (see Page 465). According to McKenzie, Petry’s “strategy of using a male name for her excursion into popular fiction not only concealed her identity but also signaled her desire to have authorial control over what Louis Renza calls the ‘area of public literary evaluation’” (618). Thus, the impression is made that the author created a new identity to obtain first feedback on her early pieces of writing before she, as McKenzie puts it, “wrote ‘serious’ fiction” (618). Upon a journalist’s recommendation, she submitted the first chapters of *The Street* for the Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship and received the award (see Page 465). Back in Old Saybrook she finished her most well-known work *The Street* (1946) and wrote the novels *Country Place* (1947) and *The Narrows* (1953). Moreover, short stories, children’s books, and historical novels, including the 1964 published *Tituba of Salem Village*, can be found among her works. Although widely known for *The Street*, which “established Ann Petry as a major figure in American naturalistic fiction”, McDowell argues that the novelist “has not received full critical attention. Nor have critics been generally aware of her achievements with short stories or her two historical novels with female protagonists” (135). Like *Tituba of Salem Village*,

¹⁴ Her exact year of birth varies between 1908 and 1912 in different sources: while Reynolds and Page quote 1908 as Petry’s year of birth, Bell opts for 1911 and McKenzie for 1912.

most of her works center on black protagonists who find themselves confronted with racial tensions. Petry's writing in the tradition of African-American literature has its roots in "the cultural and historical circumstances of growing up as a black female in a white community [in which] manifestations of racial oppression that she experienced and observed evoked a sense of outrage that remained with her for years" (McKenzie 616). Thus, her literary achievements are presumably inseparable from her own life and her own experiences as a black female. In detail, "Petry brought a unique double perspective to the craft of writing" (McKenzie 615): firstly, her being part of a black family in mainly white small-town America, and secondly, her experiences in Harlem, New York, where African-Americans mostly lived in impoverished circumstances (see McKenzie 615). Above all, the Civil Rights Movement, African-Americans' struggle for recognition and equality in the 1960s, presumably shaped Petry's creativity and displayed her willingness to stand up for full rights. She became actively engaged in associations which promoted black women and children's day care after school (see Reynolds 80). Yet when asked about her own and her family's identity as New Englanders she once replied in an interview:

And though we take on all of the - what shall I say? - the speech patterns, we accept the kind of food, the cooking, the houses, and so forth, nevertheless truly we're not New Englanders - and never will be, as far as I can see. When you stop and think, for instance, that here we were, these little girls going to school, and were *stoned!* Why? Because we're the wrong color, in the wrong place, at the wrong time. [...] When my father opened his store, for example, they told him they were going to run him out of town because they did not want a black druggist in this town. That does not a New Englander make. (Wilson and Petry 81-82)

This quote emphasizes that the novelist had been a victim of racism in small-town America from her childhood onwards. She positioned herself by using the personal pronoun "we" to refer to her own black community and "they" to relate to her white fellow citizens. By doing so, Petry did not practice racial discrimination herself, but she fought stereotyping to achieve equality. Next to her social commitment, she used her words to draw to the emancipation of African-Americans at that time, and therefore "many critics consider [her] a visionary and one of the early black feminists" (Reynolds 79). However, her texts, which present "brave and truthful characters [confronted with] racism" (Reynolds 79), did not receive careful attention from the beginning. Reynolds explains the critics' omission to study her texts by referring to "the decades that followed the Harlem Renaissance, [where] many black women writers were not as recognized on the literary scene as their male counterparts" (79). Petry's literature became only fully recognized in the last two decades of the nineteenth century (see eNotes). Her historical novel *Tituba of Salem Village* which

portrays the life of the black slave Tituba during the Salem witchcraft trials, has only been reviewed by a handful of critics and is not even in print anymore these days. In contrast, Miller's *The Crucible*, which, according to Booth, "has come to occupy an important place among sources of American 'knowledge' about [its] history" (32), is still famous worldwide. It might be that Petry's lack of recognition is in itself a form of racism (and sexism): her identity as a black female writer stands in stark contrast to Miller, a white male author. Hence, I find it particularly interesting to juxtapose these two literary works in this thesis.

Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village*, a novel for children and adolescents, is of paramount importance since it is the first work on the subject of the Salem episode written in the African-American literary tradition which puts a black slave in the center of attention. According to Morsberger, Petry's decision to focus on the black slave presents "[t]he next logical step in historical revisionism [that is] for Blacks to adopt Tituba and turn her into a heroine of their race" (456). The author presumably aims to establish Tituba as a model of racial discrimination whose endurance and belief helped her to survive Salem's witchcraft ordeal. Petry's writing "reflect[s] her belief in using African-American history and folklore to teach and inspire black youth to learn from black women and men who struggled to survive against various forms of oppression" (McKenzie 624). The author's obligation to make black lives visible may have stemmed from her own background as a black female writer confronted with racial prejudice. Today Petry, who died in 1997 in Old Saybrook, is recognized for her literary achievements in a time of struggle in Black America.

4.2. Plot

Petry's historical novel is divided into eighteen chapters. The narration, which covers the time span of four to five years, is set in Barbados, Boston, and primarily in Salem Village. It is Tituba, "the Barbadian slave [and] the novelist's main protagonist, [...] through whom we observe most of the events" (Brown 118).

It is on an ordinary November morning in Barbados when Mistress Endicott announces to her slaves John and Tituba that she sold them to a new owner due to severe financial problems. The slaves, who have been married for ten years, lead a relatively good life under the mistress' rule. Together with their new master, Reverend Parris and his family

they now leave Barbados for Boston by ship. The journey to their new home proves to be difficult and tortuous. While Tituba cares for Parris' sick wife, his daughter Betsey, and his niece Abigail, John is compelled to work hard side by side with the sailors. After their arrival in Boston, they settle in a small house and wait until the Reverend is called into service. Tituba's everyday life is shaped by arduous work and her master's harsh and strict regime. She gets acquainted with Judah White¹⁵, a presumed witch, who assists her in finding roots and herbs to heal the sick mistress. In addition, she is taught how to weave. In spring Parris is offered a position as the local minister in Salem Village, which he agrees to after several months of negotiations. The family and their slaves move to Salem Village. There Goody Good, a poor lady, and her daughter beg for food at the minister's house. Tituba feeds them and learns from her master that they must be taken care of since Goody Good is believed to work mischief against those who do not look after her.

During the following months, Tituba gets to know many neighboring bound girls and boys¹⁶, who the farmers send to provide the minister with goods. Whenever those kids visit, Abigail and Betsey beg Tituba to tell them stories about her native land Barbados. When Betsey starts to experience states of mental absence, her cousin Abigail spreads the news among her friends. Abigail, deeply fascinated by Betsey's fits, even begins to experiment with her in order to invoke the strange behavior. One day, the bound girl Mercy Lewis visits and brings playing cards along. While the others believe that having cards in the minister's house presents sinful behavior, Abigail assures them that there is nothing to worry about and asks Tituba to tell their fortunes. Although the slave hesitates for a moment, she decides to obey the girl's will. Meanwhile, Mary Warren, the Proctors' servant, enters, recognizes the sinful activity, and threatens to tell about it at home. In order to silence her, Abigail offers Mary the opportunity of being told her fortunes which she agrees to. Instead of telling Mary the truth, namely that she will be responsible for hangings in the future, Tituba announces that she will spend a very happy life. The next day, Goody Good once again seeks provisions at the minister's house. While Tituba prepares food in the kitchen, the beggar spots the fortune-telling cards, which Abigail borrowed from Mercy. In order to prevent Good from revealing the secret to Parris,

¹⁵ Judah White is a telling name: 'Judah' refers to a "masc[uline] proper name, biblical son of Jacob [and] literally 'praised'" as the word's entry in the Online Etymology Dictionary shows. Her last name 'White' is oxymoronic: she is believed to be in alliance with the Devil (associated with black), yet her name implies innocence (associated with white).

¹⁶ "Bound out to masters, these children were raised to adulthood in a legal condition of servitude. Most of these children were poor, without resources and often without advocates. [...] They lived and worked in the master's household until they reached adulthood" (Herndon and Murray 1).

Abigail gives her a little gold chain. In addition, the beggar keeps the cards until her fortunes will be read. After her departure, Abigail calls Good a witch. A few days later, she returns with her daughter and Tituba agrees to foretell her future. When the beggar is told that she needs to leave the village because death is in the cards, she grows angry and curses everyone in the house. After this experience, many of the village girls, especially Abigail and Betsey, start to display unusual behavior that involves, for instance, screaming, crying or falling to the ground. While being in trance, they speak of signing the Devil's book. Abigail experiences her fits and trances so frequently that Parris consults a doctor who examines both girls and concludes that they are possessed by Satan. Immediately afterwards people's talk of witchcraft spreads through the community. Tituba, who witnesses the adolescents' behavior first-hand, however, is convinced that Abigail plays the innocent. Mary Sibley, a woman of the community, bakes a witch cake, a method of counter magic which is employed to identify those who enchanted the girls. The endeavor is carried out in the minister's home with Tituba, John and the village girls present. Mary bakes the cake and tells the girls that whoever walks through the door bewitched them. By coincidence, Tituba, Goody Good, and Gammar Osburne enter the house and are instantly identified as the girls' tormentors.

When Abigail experiences fits during prayer, Tituba is commanded to perform the touch test: as soon as she touches Abigail, she recovers from her fits. In the course of the events, the young girl reports about the witch cake and names the witches' names. Parris, furious about the new insights, makes Tituba confess to witchcraft. The slave is uncertain about the role she plays in the girls' affliction. For that reason, she sees her mistress, who assures her that she does not believe in Abigail's behavior either. A few days later, Tituba is arrested for bewitching the girls. When her confession is read in court, she denies the charges pressed against her. After several days of interrogations, the judges reach a verdict: Tituba is a self-confessed witch based on the confession to her master. Other women, however, are found guilty of practicing witchcraft. The slave spends more than a year in prison until a former employer, the weaver Conklin, pays her ransom. He reunites her with her spouse and together they lead a good life in Boston.

4.3. The female characters and their actions

4.3.1. Tituba Indian

Tituba Indian, the protagonist in Petry's novel, is the one who narrates the story. Like Condé in *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, Petry "seems to let her subject talk and create herself through her words" (Moss 5) which offers the readers direct insights into her inner life. Tituba is a round, complex character who, according to Ervin, displays the following character traits: "perceptive yet sometimes naïve; courageous yet a victim; an outsider yet a survivor; a slave yet a heroine" (395). Petry's Tituba is fundamentally different from Miller's as it will become apparent in the following characterization.

Her whole life Tituba has been a slave: she had been bound to work on a plantation before she was sold into slavery from Barbados to New England to serve her new master, Reverend Parris. When she learns about the new situation, she is gripped by fear what the future will hold in an unknown country and thus wishes to escape slavery with her husband (see 4). When bidding goodbye, her former mistress addresses both slaves as "jewels [and] [her] friends – [her] dearest friends" (5), a statement that alludes to the impression that their master-slave relationship was extraordinary. In fact, though, Tituba is part of "a world where very few people can call themselves free – enslaved people, indentured servants, orphaned children, and beggar-women are all at the mercy of white men" (Duane 155). The slave faces a life of subordination and dependence when she is bought by Parris and brought to the New England. Upon their arrival, Parris establishes parts of the slaves' identities when he attributes a surname to her and her husband: "You have to have a last name. You're from Barbados, and it's part of the West Indies – so – well – your last name will be Indian" (7). In doing so, it seems as if he deliberately chooses the name to underline the slaves' otherness, their originating from a different – and according to his understanding – inferior part of the world. Yet Tituba holds firm to *her* beloved Barbados which is of particular importance to her since its memories provide a safe haven during her life in Salem Village. The slave draws a clear picture of both her past in Barbados and her present in New England. In contrast to her current home, Tituba frequently refers to her origin with a great sense for details, e.g. "how the water felt warm, [...] how delicious the fruit was, picked right off the trees; [...] how the kitchen faced the bay, so that even during a storm it was like having a picture in front of you" (48-49). These myriad thoughts and

stories about the past, which she also shares with the group of young village girls, intend to “keep Barbados alive” (15) and turn into daydreams as the following scene exhibits:

When [Tituba] awakened in the morning, she was certain that she was in Bridgetown, in Barbados, and that it was a beautiful warm morning. [...] Then she shook her head a feeling of sadness came over her. [...] [Parris] was laughing at her. “Where were you going? Looked as though you were going to run off somewhere in your sleep.” “I was in Bridgetown,” she said. [...] and she didn’t add that she had been dreaming. He looked at her curiously. (72)

The daydreams help her to accept her life in New England, a life she did not chose herself. Rahming argues that the daydreams or “psychic impulses [...] allow her precious moments of escape from the cold bleakness of her American physical and social terrain” (30) and even play a pivotal role in the witchcraft accusations leveled against her. Parris, for instance, who experienced Tituba’s daydreaming first-hand, publicly announces that “she could be in two places at the one time. She could be asleep in the ministry house and at the same time be in Barbados” (245). The slave is incapable of declaring that her dreams are only a reaction to her homesickness and that, as Çakırtaş argues, “Barbados is a place that symbolizes the position the Blacks want to reach: instead of real inferiority, a utopian equality” (18). It might be argued that Tituba fails to make herself understood, her slave status does not allow her to speak up against those who suppress her. In fact, it is rather society’s inability to comprehend foreign cultures which adds to the slave’s disadvantages standing in the community and more prominently, in the trials later on.

In addition, Tituba’s ethnicity as a black African-American¹⁷ woman provides a stark contrast to Salem Village’s mainly white populace and affects the perception of her as ‘the other’. When witchcraft suspicions arose due to the girls’ strange behavior, the slave is, according to Brown, one of those who fulfills the accusers’ and the authorities’ needs: “[B]lack is evil, witchcraft is a sin, thus to be a black woman is, *ipso facto*, to be a prime suspect as a witch” (123). Part of an ethnic minority in New England, Tituba is made an easy scapegoat in Salem Village. Rahming points out that “these villagers operate from a worldview best described as phenomenological. It is a myopic worldview that reduces the universe to black and white popularity [,] in short, [everything] [has] a black or white, good or evil, essence” (27). In accordance, the most vital distinction is the one between God, the good, and Satan, the evil. Tituba’s accusers, a group of adolescent girls, make use

¹⁷ Tituba’s real ethnic origin is still of concern to many historians today. According to Hansen, she “has been changed from Indian, to half-Indian and half-Negro, to Negro” (3) in various sources. With regard to the literary works examined in this thesis, Tucker points out that Miller presents Tituba as a Negro and Petry too makes her an African-American descendent (see 629).

of this dualism when they define the black slave as the villain in a primarily white society. In contrast to the community's restricted point of view, Rahming argues, that "the thoughts and behavior of Tituba [...] demonstrate a larger, more inclusive and more dynamic worldview, one which allows not only for ambiguity, paradox and irony but also for resilience and mystery" (28). The slave is not bound to the categories of good and evil or black and white, she, "in her nostalgic memories of Barbados, [refers to] white (the beaches) and darkness (the colour of fish-baskets) [...] as positive images of life and creativity" (Brown 124). Hence, she is surprised when she learns about her alleged involvement in the girls' afflictions and is haunted by guilt, as her thoughts reveal: "Perhaps I am a witch [...] and I did not know it. Perhaps what they said was true [...] Then her spine stiffened. This is nonsense. I am no more a witch than the master is a wizard" (191). When blame is laid on her, it becomes apparent that she is easily influenced by others. On that account, McDowell stresses that, like in *The Narrows*, "Petry emphasizes the sense of inferiority which hangs over certain Blacks and makes them experience a general and irrational guilt for something that they cannot define" (137). Hence, Tituba can be perceived in the light of discrimination: the Puritan community makes her a scapegoat which, in turn, prompts her to question herself in connection with the charges. After a moment of thought, however, she realizes the absurdity of being blamed for witchcraft, yet she does not publicly rebel against the allegations and therefore remains a tentative and rather weak character in the situation. When Parris turns to violence, Tituba gives in and confesses to witchcraft; "'Yes, master, yes, I am a witch,' and thought, Now I am one with the broken-spirited horse and the beaten dog. [...] Now I am that hard-used slave" (194-95). In this scene, Parris, determined to identify his slave as the girls' tormentor, is assumed to live up to his position as Salem Village's minister and presents a convenient scapegoat for the mysterious happenings to his community. The slave, however, knowing that her life is at stake, admits her guilt in order to protect herself. Brown argues that "[she] is aware that, in her own case too, the politics of witch-hunt are inseparable from the conditions of oppression and subordination" (125). Additionally, Tituba, who has never been beaten up before by her owners, feels one with all the other harshly treated slaves. It is in this very situation that she realizes that if she wants to survive she must obey her master's will and confess to witchcraft.

Tituba is described as skillful in a variety of different domains. She, for instance, is knowledgeable about herbalism, the art of weaving, or reading someone's future. While her prowess is welcomed by "Parris and other whites [who] depend on [the slaves] for

survival” (Morsberger 457), it is simultaneously feared especially by women and thus employed to fuel grounds for witchcraft suspicions:

Some of [the witnesses] testified to the abundance of fruit and vegetables in the minister’s garden and his orchard; [...] There were women who said that Tituba could spin so great a quantity of fine linen yarn as they did never know nor hear of any mortal woman could spin so much or weave so much fine cloth. (241-42)

These charges can be situated in the so-called “feminine space” (Roubin qtd. in Garrett 465): Tituba’s prowess arouses intense household-related jealousies. The women’s extreme envy for the slave’s harvesting and spinning skills prompts them to arrive at the conclusion that magic is involved, and therefore they cast witchcraft suspicions against her, which add to the slave’s conviction and her ensuing imprisonment.

Yet Tituba is not executed. The ending Petry chose for her heroine seems quite surprising in the light of New England’s witch-hunting tradition and thus needs to be examined with regard to Petry’s own African-American origin. After Parris’ refusal to pay the slave’s jail fees, she spends a year in prison until Samuel Conklin pays her free: “As Conklin left the jail with her he said, ‘You have good hands, Tituba. That’s why I am buying you. You have the good strong hands of a weaver’” (253). The slave’s skills in weaving save her life, as she is bought by her former employer who reunites her with her husband John. On that account, Moss argues that “the sugarcoated treatment [...] presents Tituba as innocent and rewards her forbearance with a happily-ever-after ending” (15). Unlike many other authors, including Miller, who chose to assign her a tragic fate, Petry decides differently: she presumably wants her protagonist to be remembered for her strength and her perennial joy in life; she does not want her to be the guilty, black slave who lost her life during the Salem witchcraft trials. In addition, Petry makes use of the novel’s ending to spread an important message: it is a white man who pays the black slave’s ransom. In doing so, she breaks with existing racist ideas and allows Tituba to escape a slave’s common fate.

4.3.2. Abigail Williams

Abigail Williams, a powerful character, is an eight-year-old, by the time of the trials eleven-year-old orphan who lives with her uncle’s family and assumes a key role in the Salem witchcraft trials. She is brought up together with her younger cousin Betsey, though the two are not treated equally: “[Parris] reminded Abigail of her position in the family by

saying, ‘You must work hard at your tasks so that you do not become a burden to us, Abigail.’ Sometimes he said, ‘You must practice being grateful, Abigail. Remember you are an orphan’” (10). Like Tituba, Abigail is dependent on her guardian’s benevolence and acceptance and occupies a low rank in Salem’s social system. It is only apparent that she must feel the urge to rebel as she is forced to accept her subordinate role. Her instigation of the Salem witchcraft trials mirrors by far her greatest act of rebellion. In the beginning of the narration she is described as a lively girl who enjoys working mischief against Betsey, her cousin; yet her malice, which makes her denounce others as witches, only develops in the course of the events: starting off with activities to evoke strange, mental states of absence, she soon shows a fascinating interest in the supernatural. In order to rise to power, Abigail seeks for allies¹⁸. She draws the visiting several others girls’ attention to her prohibited activities with Betsey and they soon join in as the following scene exhibits:

The same day [Tituba] discovered that Abigail had been placing bowls of water in front of Betsey, had been persuading her to stare into them. Tituba had started to enter the house from the lean-to in the back. She heard voices, and she paused, listening [...] She recognized the voices belonging to Abigail, Anne Putnam, Jr., and Mercy Lewis. [...] Anne Putnam said quietly, “Do you think Betsey will have a fit today?” [...] Abigail’s voice was equally quite. “I don’t know. [...] She’s coming downstairs. Everybody sit down at the table. Leave the place for Betsey – right there – in front of the bowl – “(110)

Abigail, who allows her peers to participate in the experiment under her command, establishes herself as the group’s leader. She is the one in charge, the one who gives the orders. Her holding a superior position among her friends fits her character, as she is described as self-assured, “quick-witted [and] quick-speeched” (121). The juvenile Abigail, who is highly interested in witchcraft, soon starts to show mysterious behavior of affliction herself. She levels her first unofficial accusation against Goody Good, a poor beggar from the village. In the course of the events the orphan presses further charges against Tituba Indian and Gammar Osburne. According to Abigail’s aunt, however, the cause for her mysterious bearing is not to be found in the supernatural:

“Whenever Abigail is at the ordinary, she is taken in a fit, growling and barking like a dog or screaming that she can fly. It is better for all if an end is made to this ungodliness.” “I don’t believe that Abigail is bewitched.” “If you had seen her as I have – [...] “I do not believe it,” the mistress repeated. “Abigail is a strange child. She may want more love and attraction than we have given her. And perhaps she

¹⁸ The girls are Abigail Williams, Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Booth, Sarah Churchill, Susanna Sheldon, Elizabeth Hubbard, Anne Putnam and Mary Warren. The close-knit group proves as the trials’ chief accusers.

should have more to do.” “We’ve treated her like our own child.” The mistress said sadly, “That is never possible. There is always a difference.” (198-99)

Abigail’s misdeeds against other women in the community might stem, as the mistress suggests, from her dissatisfaction about the position she occupies in her uncle’s family. Suffering from the lack of attention and love, she is driven by envy; she insists that her cousin’s mental absences are results of the supernatural.

In fact, Abigail expresses her discontent by denouncing some of the weakest members in society as witches and hence assumes considerable power. In general, “the poor attacked those even poorer; and poor women attacked those women even further out power than they” (Barstow 18). By indicting those especially vulnerable to witchcraft accusations, the orphaned Abigail tries to ascend society’s social ladder. Her endeavors prove successful during the trials since she is the prime investigator and thus given recognition in court.

Although only twelve years old, Abigail is a highly evil-minded and cunning character, as she mounts a campaign against women in the community which results in official indictments, convictions, and, at worst, in executions. It is an interaction of her juvenile attention-seeking, her leading the girls, and her presumed possession that trigger the inception of the events in 1692.

4.3.3. Mercy Lewis

Mercy Lewis, a minor character, is the Putnams’ seventeen-year-old bound girl. In that position she is frequently sent to Reverend Parris’ home to supply him and his family with goods: “[w]hen there was a knock at the door, late in the afternoon, [Tituba] knew it would be [one of the] slaves who belonged on nearby farms. Or it might be one of the bound girls” (93). It is owing to her common visits that she makes friends with Abigail and the other village girls. Mercy, who is described as “lively and rosy-cheeked” (91), takes part in Abigail’s secret experiments with Betsey and introduces the playing cards to her peers. She takes great care of the cards since she borrowed them from someone else:

Mercy Lewis reached inside the bodice of the long gown. She had a package tucked inside. She put it down on the table and unwrapped it. Tituba watched her, wondering what it was that was so precious that she carried it tucked inside her bodice. It was a pack of playing cards. Mercy spread them out on the trestle. “They are playing cards. I got them from Pim, the redheaded boy at Deacon Ingersoll’s. [...] He said – well, he said, maybe I could find someone to teach me how to tell

fortunes. Then I could tell his fortune.” There was a silence in the room, [...] [t]hey all looked at Tituba. (118-19)

Mercy is especially excited about the playing cards since they provide a distraction to her strict, day-to-day routine at the Putnams’ homestead. By introducing the cards to the other girls, she too is responsible for the related incidents that are to follow, namely Good’s discovery of the cards, her cursing, and Abigail’s subsequent accusation. Another incident which is indirectly triggered by the playing cards is Mercy’s made-up story about her fight with the Devil. After Pim, a bound boy, had his future read by Tituba, he decides to run off and take his love Mercy with him. First, she he agrees to flee with him and even cuts her hair in order to be able to disguise as a boy. Then she suddenly changes her mind, rejects his plan, and invents a fictional story to survive in front of her master:

She moaned, and then she screamed. When he touched her on the shoulder, she jumped up, away from him, crying out, “You devil – you devil,” sobbing and covering her face with her hands. “What else do you want? I’ll not sign. You can cut the rest of my hair straight back to my scalp, and I’ll not sign your book –” Deacon Putnam said, “There are no devils here, Mercy. It is I, your master, Deacon Putnam.” (159-60)

This quotation creates the impression that Mercy is aware of how the Devil is supposed to persuade people to turn against God and to become his minions; she applies her knowledge in this very situation in order to explain her short hair. She knows that admitting the truth will not only cause trouble for herself but also for Pim, and she therefore fuels the Puritans’ deep-seated witchcraft fears.

Yet her lying might also be a form of rebellion against her employers. As soon as her mistress learns about the allegedly evil act, she assures special protection to Mercy by offering her to share the bed with her daughter: “‘Come, Mercy’ – and her voice was kind and compassionate – ‘you sleep with Anne for the rest of the winter. Tomorrow we will make some shifts for you, so you have proper clothes for a bed’” (162). On that account, Brown argues that “Mercy quickly discovers that her conditions of employment improve dramatically once her claims about being bewitched are accepted by the Putnams” (125). Mercy arrives at the conclusion that “this deep, soft, warm bed was better than life with the bound boy would have been” (163). In the end, Mercy’s spontaneous decision to blame Satan proves extremely advantageous to her: she receives attention, changes way of living, and takes pleasure from the fact that her employers and the community attached credence to her story. She recognizes the power of witchcraft and therefore gains an advantage over those in authority. Strengthened in her position – “[f]ormerly a mere ‘serving wench,’ she

is now addressed and treated as [the Putnams'] 'child'" (Brown 125) – she fulfills her role as an 'active' accuser and officially brings charges against Tituba in the court proceedings. The adolescent Mercy develops her power and malice only in the course of the events and thus inevitably adds to the trials' tragic outcomes.

4.3.4. Mary Warren

Mary Warren, a minor and weak character, is another bound girl who serves at the Proctors' homestead. Although twenty years of age and thus considerably older than Abigail and her cohorts, she engages in the accusation processes and assumes under Abigail's command the role of an 'active' victim in the trials.

She too gets acquainted with the girls during her frequent visits to Reverend Parris' home whom she supplies with her master's food. However, Mary and the girls are not on friendly terms from the very beginning of their first encounter. It is Mary who threatens them to blow their cover after she detects their secret playing cards:

[Mary] stopped laughing, and there was a gloating sound in her voice. "They're cards to tell fortunes with. And they're right here in the minister's house. Wait till I tell Master. Wait till Master Proctor hears that Deacon Putnam's daughter was here, and the minister's daughter and the minister's niece was here." She started laughing again. "Ha, ha, ha! They'll switch you, and they'll put you in the stocks, and the bound boys will throw mud and filth on you. Ha, ha, ha!" (124)

The bound girl seems to be an honest, yet frightened character who does not wish to hide anything from her master. This might be true since Tituba describes John Proctor as "a hard taskmaster [who] [has] a reputation for thrashing the girls who [work] there" (121). Although affirmed to speak the truth at home in order to escape anticipated punishment, she changes her mind when Abigail addresses her deepest desires: "'Wouldn't you like to have your fortune told? [...] Wouldn't you like to know who you're going to marry? And if you're going to have a farm or live in a fine house in Boston?'" (125). The bound girl, who suffers under Proctor's rule, most likely wishes to improve her way of living in the future and therefore is willing to keep the girls' secret a secret. Although the cards foretell that Mary will be responsible for hangings one day, Tituba lies and announces that a bright future will be ahead of her and that "'[she] will lose something of value on the way home'" (Perry 126). This very sentence, however, causes Mary to denounce the slave as a witch later on in the court proceedings because she believes the slave's skill to foretell the future

to be a sign of her covenant with the Devil. She too accuses her aunt Gammar Osburne and Goody Good of affliction. Moreover, she speaks of a tall black man who most closely resembles John Indian. Under the pretext of being possessed, Mary gives her testimony in court and promotes the girls' credibility as well as their stories about those who are tormenting them.

Although Mary's age would most likely suggest otherwise, she is not a confident, young woman. It is Abigail, nearly half her age, who persuades her to keep her secret by using a trick: she makes Mary part of the group, directs all the attention to her, and gives her the opportunity to have her fortunes told. The bound girl naively accepts the offer and thus subordinates herself to Abigail's command. Likewise, she does by assuming the role of an 'active' victim, a role which has not only been suggested to her but which she adopts due to peer pressure. In confirming Abigail's witchcraft charges by telling her own stories she also reinforces the girl's leadership.

4.3.5. Goody Good

Sarah Good, mostly referred to as Goody Good, is known as a poor beggar¹⁹ in Salem Village and is assigned a tragic fate in the novel. Judged by her appearance, Good is considered to be an old woman, yet Tituba's observation reveals that "she wasn't an old woman [and that] [a]lmost everybody thought she was a witch. She looked like one with that matted gray hair over face, ragged clothes, and an ugly-smelling pipe." (74, 145). Good is first introduced when she seeks provisions at the minister's house together with her little daughter. It is her hopeless situation of living in extreme poverty that makes her dependent on people's welfare. The community, however, does not feed her and her offspring out of sheer benevolence, but they rather give in to her demands out of dread. After Parris dismisses her unknowingly, he and Tituba learn about the case:

Deacon Ingersoll said, "That was Goody Good. If she comes again, feed her. It's better to feed her. "Why?" the master asked. "Because no one knows what it is she mutters when she goes away. Just now when she went down the path she was muttering to herself. She might work mischief against you. [...] If she comes again – feed her. We all feed her and her children. It is better that way, believe me." (75)

¹⁹ According to Karlsen, "[t]he familiar stereotype of the witch as an indigent woman who resorted to begging for her survival is hardly an inaccurate picture of some of New England's accused" (79).

Good instills fear and trepidation in the Puritan community; it is her way of securing her own and her children's survival. In addition to begging, she is believed to destroy farmers' barns by smoking, to spread diseases such as pox, and to rustle poultry (see 129). These complaints do not only add to her low standing in society but also to her being accused as a witch in the course of the trials. Abigail and her cohorts press charges against Good for afflicting them. Even Tituba, who occupies a low position in the community herself, pictures the beggar as a possible witch:

[Good] laughed. It was a cackle, high in pitch, like the laughter of a crone, of a witch. Tituba though, Why did I think that? Why that word? Because she looks like the way John said the Witch Glover looked when she was hanged in Boston. Black eyes, malicious expression, matted hair. (131)

Her behavior, her actions, and her appearance make Good the very embodiment of evil and thus the stereotypical witch according to Puritan beliefs. When her husband is questioned about his wife's possible alliance with the Devil, he first denies any signs of conspiracy and then discloses "with tears that she is an enemy to all good" (225). Good is condemned to die as a witch and publicly executed. She disavows any conspiracy with Satan from the first interrogation onwards until her death: "[S]he stood in the hangman's cart and looked straight at one of the judges and said calmly and with great dignity, 'I am no more a witch than you are a wizard'" (251). This quotation provides a cross reference to Tituba whose thoughts are almost identical with Good's statement: "This is nonsense. I am no more a witch than the master is a wizard" (191). Both women do not believe their own presumed involvement in the girls' possessions and thus hold those in authority equally responsible for the witch craze's outcomes. In addition, Good's last words convey a lot of meaning and make her a powerful woman who, instead of assuming an identity as a witch, decides to lose her life at the gallows.

4.3.6. Gammar Osburne

Gammar Osburne, full name Sarah Osburne, is described as an "old woman" (181) and although only a minor figure in the novel; she presents one of the main suspects in the witchcraft trials. She lives on the margins of society and is, according to Good, "[...] no Gospel woman [because she] [h]asn't set foot in meeting for three years" (181). People who refused going to church in theocratic societies were under spotlight for deviating from

community-established norms, which could give rise to witchcraft charges. Indeed, Osburne is later on indicted for being responsible for the village girls' suffering. Although she denies her involvement in the afflictions and tries to transfer the authorities' attention to John Indian by pressing charges against him, she is not accorded credibility. Osburne is found guilty by the court and subsequently imprisoned. In accordance, Reis points out:

The denials are as telling as the confessions; [...] [those denying] were unable to convince the court and their peers that their souls had not entered into a covenant with the devil; they could not wholeheartedly deny a pact with Satan when an implicit bond with him through common sin was undeniable. (*Confess*, 12)

Osburne, like her fellow Good, disavows the claim of witchcraft, but is, owing to her sex, age, and way of living, regarded as the 'perfect' witch. In the end, she passes away in custody on May 10, 1692 (see 253).

4.4. Women's fatal relationships

4.4.1. The orphan and the slave: Abigail Williams and Tituba Indian

Abigail William's and Tituba Indian's relationship is a difficult one from their very first encounter and gradually deteriorates in the course of the events. Abigail gets first acquainted with Tituba when her uncle buys the slave in Barbados. On their journey to the Bay Colony, Tituba realizes Abigail's initial misdeeds against her: the young girl examines the slave's possessions in secret and lies to her (see 14, 19). Although she lacks proper evidence for Abigail's actions, both females grow increasingly suspicious about one another and consequently everyday conflicts occur. When Tituba turns to violence to discipline Abigail for calling her a witch, she finally earns the girl's enmity:

[Tituba has] made an enemy of the nine-year-old Abigail. She could tell by the sullen expression on the child's face, by the bright blue eyes tried to stare her down. It was almost as though she could hear what went on in the child's mind – you boxed my ears, some day [sic] I'll box yours. You hurt me, some day [sic] I'll hurt you. She finally accepted the fact that Abigail was her enemy, and though young, a dangerous enemy. (35-36)

The slave's foreboding should be proven right soon after when Abigail presses witchcraft charges against her.

Although as a child Abigail is as powerless in Puritan society, she believes in her superior position. This impression is created by the following comments: "I thought you weren't

ever coming back. Where were you?’ [...] ‘Besides you should have done it’” (34). Owing to her uncle’s frequent absences, Abigail, the oldest child in the family, feels in charge to monitor the slave’s work closely. Yet, when one day Tituba punishes her for comparing her with a witch (see 34), the orphan makes her nonverbally understood that she will seek vengeance.

Notwithstanding the tense atmosphere, Abigail, when she secretly listens to a conversation between Tituba and John and therefore is informed about the slave’s prowess in fortune-telling, re-approaches the slave in order to make use of her special skill (see 45). Yet Abigail does not act in order to improve the relationship with Tituba, but in order to satisfy her own interest in the supernatural, a topic she explores with insatiable curiosity. Moreover, she demonstrates her comprehensive knowledge about the Goodwin children, who were identified to be afflicted by evil spirits, to the girls (see 61). Abigail seems deeply fascinated by the topic, while Tituba, however, is “angered at all this sudden talk of witchcraft and witches” (61-62). The slave might already sense that owing to her low position in society she could be charged with corresponding accusations.

Tituba frequently tells stories about her place of birth to Abigail, Betsey, and the visiting bound girls from the neighboring homesteads. The slave enjoys sharing memories of her beloved country with the girls who picture Barbados as a completely new world. The narrations add to Tituba being seen as the ‘other’, and her being perceived as totally different from Salem Village’s populace. Although the stories are heartily welcomed by the young villagers in order to break their day-to-day routines, Abigail and her cohorts make use of them, among other things, to turn against the slave in the trials later on. Although Tituba might be aware of Abigail’s potential to get up to mischief, she seems to be clueless about the involvement of the girls. When the girls engage in experiments with Betsey under Abigail’s command, the slave reproves them for their misdeeds (see 116). On that account, “Abigail would shrug and say, ‘Sometimes she has fits, Tituba. You know that. We don’t do anything –’” (116). Nonetheless, the slave grows especially angry because Abigail and her cohorts target their malicious actions against the weak Betsey: “Tituba made no effort to conceal that thin, frail, awkward Betsey was her favorite. She gave her the lightest tasks, quite often held her in her arms and crooned to her as though she were a baby.” (95). The slave’s personal preference certainly has a negative effect on the relationship with Abigail. When Abigail uses violence against Betsey, Tituba

subsequently punishes the young girl who, in turn, announces the hatred she feels for the slave:

Betsey cried out in fear. Abigail pinched her on the arm, twisting the soft flesh between her fingers. Tituba pinched Abigail's arm the same way, only her fingers were stronger than Abigail's and so it was a much more painful pinch. Abigail shrieked, "I hate you," and started to cry, too. (124)

Besides the young girl's subordinated position in the family, it is therefore probably her jealousy for Betsey's favorable treatment that makes her express her contempt for Tituba publicly in front of her girlfriends.

Soon Abigail starts pretending to suffer from fits and trances just like her cousin. Although this demeanor is medically conformed to stem from evil spirits, Tituba, however, who bears witness to Abigail's mysterious behavior, doubts the authenticity of the girl's possession and explores a difference in Betsey's and Abigail's fits:

'[Abigail] looks better after she's had a fit than she did before she had it. All these orphan nieces and bound girls come out of their fits, looking very lively. So does Anne Putnam, Jr. But not Betsey.' Betsey was growing thinner and paler and more frightened every day. On the other hand, Abigail flourished. [...] Sometimes Tituba thought it would have been better if the master hadn't owned slaves. [...] Then she decided he could have managed if he'd had a young, strong woman to help. Abigail would have been so busy she wouldn't have had time to become bewitched. (175-76)

The slave situates Abigail's presumed suffering in the context of early puberty: not yet a woman and thus not caring for an own family and husband, the child is bound to help with everyday maintenances, but neglects her duties and instead pursues her own matters that is experimenting with Betsey or plotting secret plans with her girlfriends. Tituba has been aware of the child's indolence from the beginning of their joint living: "Abigail had never learned to work steadily at something and finish it and do it well. She didn't want to help, and so did everything badly" (175). She believes that Abigail's misdeeds could be stopped by assigning her (more) work. Yet the slave is not in the position to decide so and therefore keeps the thoughts to herself, a fact that underlines her inferior position in her master's house.

When Abigail's and subsequently the other village girls' violent, physical fits continue, the parishioner Mary Sibley turns to counter magic – in that case the baking of a witch cake – to help them identify their tormentor(s). Paradoxically, Mary Sibley is not confronted with witchcraft allegations herself when making use of this mysterious method. The baking of a

witch cake is not equally welcomed by everyone. While Abigail insists on employing the method, Tituba is skeptical about its success and utters her concerns: “Sometimes these strange cold cures don’t run out right. I’m not sure we should do this” (179). Yet the method is used without the slave’s consent and Abigail identifies Tituba as one of the witches.

The accusation provides the dramatic climax in the females’ relationship; from this moment onward the already fragile relationship fails completely. The child justifies the accusation against the family slave by referring to the method’s rules, namely that anyone who enters the house after the baking procedure, is identified as the sufferer’s perpetrator (see 183). Although John and Betsey advocate the slave’s innocence, Abigail insists: “It’s Tituba. Tituba is the witch,’ and her breath came out in a long sigh” (182). Thus, the impression is conveyed that Abigail, who feels neglected, uses the counter magic method as a pretext for mounting her own revenge campaign against Tituba. Although the slave remains speechless after the untrue allegations, she gives thoughts to her greatest anxieties:

She looked at her hand in the candlelight. It was a work-worn hand, the dark brown skin grayed and roughened, the fingers just a little out of shape at the joints. Was this an evil hand, she wondered, a hand that wove and cooked and spun and cleaned and gardened, a hand that milked cows and nursed sick woman and cared for two children? [...] I’m not a witch. How could I be a witch and not know it? (172, 187)

Tituba does not defend herself and she does not press charges against Abigail for accusing her. The slave remains calm on the outside – her inside, however, suggests otherwise: she feels a sense of insecurity about her involvement in the afflictions. Still she concludes that this is impossible. Her serene reaction to the accusation in public is most likely triggered by her status, as she is aware of the low position she holds in the Puritan community and knows that if she turned against Abigail, she would be automatically presumed guilty for a crime she did not commit. Therefore, she remains quiet for the time being.

Slaves like Tituba do not have a voice; they are not allowed to speak up against their owner or their owner’s family. She knows that, as her husband John puts it, “their [i.e. the slaves] lives are not their own. The people who own them do not protect them. No one protects them. And so they have to protect themselves” (86). Tituba does not expect any support from her master and is proven right as it turns out in the course of the events. He commands the slave to touch Abigail as she experiences one of her fits to establish the slave’s guilt: “Tituba hesitated, not wanting to touch Abigail, thinking, If I do not touch her, she will stop screaming. She hasn’t the strength to go on like this. [...] She touched

Abigail, and it was like a miracle. The shrieking stopped. [...] She smiled shyly at Tituba” (193). This quotation alludes to the fact that the orphan clearly knows about the game she is playing. In order to identify the slave as her tormentor, she does as she has been told by those in authority, and calms down as soon as Tituba touches her. The Salem Village community interprets the positive touch test as an unmistakable sign of Tituba’s guilt and likewise as a sign of Abigail’s (and the other girls’) victimhood which has basically never been open to discussion. In accordance, Brown argues that “Tituba’s status as a slave endows her with special insights into the witch-hunt hysteria, insights which are lacked by Salem’s ruling class. Thus she is repeatedly impressed by the fact that the chief investigators of the witch-scare are indentured servants or orphan dependents” (125). However, as mentioned above, the slave is not in the position to voice her doubts openly in front of the theocratic elite. Although she denies her involvement in the girls’ affliction from the first accusation onwards, she confesses to adhering to evil forces under the tremendous pressure her master imposes on her. When her confession is read by one of the presiding judges in court, the slave seems indignant by its untruthful content: “According to what he read, Tituba had confessed to hurting the children because Good and Osburne forced her to. She had said that Good’s familiar was a yellow bird and Osburne’s was a yellow dog [...] and [that they] rode to witch meetings in sticks or poles” (229). Although Tituba disavows the claims at present, she is chained and brought to court where she faces her accusers – first and foremost Abigail. During the trials the young girl indicts her for frequently sending her specter and stabbing her, an action that results in aches and pains (see 230). The charges against the slave are thus based on spectral evidence, a type of evidence that is, although not verifiable, given credence in court:

“What say you to this, Tituba?” Judge Hathorne asked. She shook her head to indicate that it was not true. “Have you ever pinched Abigail?” When she hesitated, he said insistently, “Answer the question.” “Not in the way it sounds there.” “You have pinched her?” “Only as any person might pinch a child to –“ She faltered, and stopped speaking. She had sometimes pinched Abigail, but she couldn’t remember why. “To what?” “I don’t remember. I think it was because she had pinched her little cousin. I wanted her to know how hurtful it could be.” “Then you have pinched her. This is true.” (230-31)

Tituba’s disciplinary actions against Abigail are now disguised as acts of witchcraft and consequently put on trial. Although the slave speaks the truth and admits to turning to violent behavior at times, she finds herself in the more disadvantageous position. She vehemently denies that her actions against Abigail are related to witchcraft. In fact, Abigail revives her memory and adapts incidents of violence for the present context to press

charges against Tituba. Eventually, the child's evil plan succeeds and the slave is arrested as a self-confessed witch.

The nature of Abigail and Tituba's relationship can be described as fatal from their first meeting in Barbados until their last face-to-face confrontation in court. Although they share a similar, inferior status – Tituba as black slave from the West Indies and Abigail as an adopted orphan – the females do not support each other, but rather engage in dispute which proves particularly disastrous for Tituba.

4.4.2. The bound girl and the slave: Mercy Lewis and Tituba Indian

Mercy Lewis and Tituba Indian's relationship exhibits both positive and negative sides. When Mercy brings grave charges against Tituba in the trial proceedings, however, the relationship reaches its dramatic climax.

The bound girl's and the slave's relationship starts on friendly terms: they become acquainted with each other due to Mercy's frequent visits to Reverend Parris' home. There Mercy learns about Betsey's fits and consequently shares her knowledge of witchcraft with Abigail, Tituba and the present village girls: “That weren't a proper fit. With real fits they fall down. Sometimes they call it the falling sickness. Some places it's called French king's sickness. Sometimes their tongues come way out of their mouths” (99). Mercy's interest in this particular topic unites her with the girls, makes her a valuable part of the group, and helps her discover Tituba's unusual, intimate connection with the house cat:

[Tituba] pushed her long dark skirt over [the cat], covering him up to tease him, and then wished she hadn't. Mercy was watching her with a disapproving look that suggested she thought there was a suspicious intimacy between Tituba and the cat. She remembered what Goody Sibley had said about witches and the cats that were their familiars, “The Devil gives them the cats to serve them and do their bidding.” (111)

Aware of Mercy's glances, Tituba is afraid that the bound girl might link her relationship with the animal to witchcraft and report it to the group. In order to prevent Mercy from doing so, she transfers her attention and asks her to tell a story. Yet the slave's idea proves ineffective because the others demand to hear one of her Barbados stories. When the slave rejects the request, Mercy suggest turning to violence in order to make her speak:

“Then we all had this walk for nothing [...] They ought to put Tituba in the press yard, [...] That would make her talk.” “What’s the press yard?” Abigail asked. “It’s where they press the prisoners to death in great prison in London. They roll stones on them until they die – [...]” Abigail said, “How do you know about it?” “Pim, the bound boy at Ingersoll’s told me. He says the smell in the press yard is something dreadful.” (111-12)

In this scene Mercy, who is deeply disappointed because she made all the way to the Reverend’s house to listen to Tituba’s Barbados tales, shows her potential for directing malice towards the slave for the first time. Although the press yard²⁰ is not an option here, Mercy points to what could have happened to her in a different context. Besides, the adolescent girl speaks as if Tituba were not present, yet the slave experiences the situation first-hand. Thus, it seems that Mercy deliberately chooses to act that way; she draws to the slave’s inferiority by making her a vulnerable and helpless being. Tituba, however, remains silent.

In addition, Mercy launches another attack on the slave. The seventeen-year-old shares her strong presumption about the connection between the slave and the cat with the group:

The money cat left the shelter of Tituba’s long dark skirt and scratched at the outside door. “It’s cold out there,” Tituba said. “Are you sure you want to go out?” The cat mewed as though in answer. [...] As she closed the door behind him, she heard Mercy’s shocked whisper, “Ooo-ooo-h! The cat answered her. Did you hear him?” Tituba pretended she hadn’t heard this (112).

In commenting on the scene, Mercy draws the girls’ attention to the fact that “[a]nimals were frequently agents of malefic witchcraft. [They] performed evil acts at [the witch’s] command, and were themselves supernatural beings” (Karlsen 8). Mercy therefore hints at the slave’s presumed alliance with the house cat in order to cast suspicion. Thus, the women’s relationship is no longer based on equality: Mercy is inevitably in a superior and more secure position than Tituba. The females’ relationship deteriorates further when Mercy actively engages in Abigail’s experiments with Betsey, which provokes Tituba’s wrath. When the slave rebukes them for their careless behavior, Mercy, who seems extremely anxious, declares that they only did it out of fun (see 117). Tituba believes to be aware of the reason for Mercy’s sudden and increasing anxiety, an emotional state that does not fit her previously shown behavior and her lively nature:

²⁰ According to the Oxford Dictionary, it is described as “[a] yard at the former Newgate Prison, London, where the torture of *peine forte et dure* is believed to have originally been carried out, and from which, at a later period, condemned prisoners started for the place of execution.”

After all, she was a bound girl. Tituba thought, I will get her in trouble if I tell on her. She knows this. Anne Putnam is a deacon's daughter and Mary Walcott is the Sibley's niece – they're big landowners, and they contribute heavily to the church, so no one will do anything to Mary Walcott. But Mercy Lewis? She was lively, rosy-cheeked. She had bright yellow hair that was always tumbling down from under her cap. The people would say she was dabbling in the black arts, that she was trying to talk to the dead. They'd put her in the stocks, have her whipped at the whipping post – they might hang her. (117-18)

Like Tituba, Mercy holds a low rank as a bound girl in Salem Village's society. The quotation alludes to the impression that the slave believes to be in power and control over Mercy's fate. She is certain that if she pressed charges against her, the populace would join in, and consequently punish her. Mercy's inferiority makes her the 'perfect' target in the community. Tituba even pictures appropriate forms of punishment and refers to hanging, the most common way of killing alleged witches in the New World. Tituba takes into consideration to put blame on Mercy if the girls do not cease to undertake further experiments with Betsey. She believes to be in a more superior position and it seems as if the women take turns when assuming power over each other. The slave's reprimand produced a significant effect on Mercy, as she reflects on the experiment as her thoughts reveal: "What have we done? Have we raised some evil spirits from the dead? Anne had put that bright coin in the bottom of the bowl of the water, but we all kept telling Betsey to look in the water, look in the water. We knew she'd go off in trance" (151). The adolescent admits her involvement in triggering Betsey's fits on the one side and expresses her fear of the supernatural on the other side. Although she is concerned about the experiment's impact, she dispels her doubts, and remains passive. When she observes Tituba's working routine in the Reverend's house, however, she again grows instantly suspicious:

She watched Tituba pick up the cards, her dark-skinned hands moving swiftly that in no time at all they were neatly stacking in a pile on the table. She could spine a fine strong thread, linen or woolen, so fast it seemed as if it wasn't done by human hands. She could find herbs near the roots of a tree, hands feeling around the root, head on one side as though she were listening to some voice nobody else could hear. (148-49)

Mercy depicts the slave as an almost non-human; it is her extreme speed when accomplishing certain tasks or her great sense of sensitivity that makes her wonder whether the slave is skilled in the practice of 'black arts'. The women's relationship is thus based on mutual doubts as to the other one's real nature. On that account, the following appears somewhat surprising: after the news of Mercy's contrived fight with the Devil spreads through the community, she approaches Tituba, who doubts the story from the beginning,

to ease her conscience. Yet the adolescent's move seems especially astonishing since their relationship is not based on trust but primarily on suspicion. Nevertheless, Mercy makes her way to Reverend Parris' home to meet Tituba:

Late in the afternoon, Mercy Lewis came to see Tituba. She had a shawl over her head and refused to take it off. [...] Abigail snatched it off [...] It was a shocking sight. Mercy put the shawl over her head, in silence, and left. Tituba followed her outside and put her hand on the arm, detaining her. "It was Pim who cut your hair?" Mercy nodded, head down, eyes on the ground, refusing to look at Tituba. [...] "Was there an old woman with him?" "No. I just said that so folk would wonder which woman in Salem Village had sold her soul to the devil. It would give them something else to talk about. You'd probably 've done the same. [...] I should have gone with Pim. He's free to go where he wants, and I'm still bound even though the Putnams do let me sleep in the same bed with Anne, Jr." (167-68)

Mercy and Tituba's relationship takes an interesting turn when Mercy discloses what really happened that night. Yet the question remains why Mercy chose to admit the truth in front of Tituba and not someone else. One possibility might be that the bound girl trusts in the slave due to her equal standing in society; she may seek for someone who most likely would have acted in a similar way to save one's life. In doing so, Mercy adds positively to the females' relationship for the time being. They now share a secret, a fact that binds them together. The peaceful atmosphere, however, does not last for very long.

Mercy starts to experience fits and engages in the girls' collective possession. After Abigail's accusation against Tituba, John, her husband, warns her that she should stop communicating with the house cat, a behavior that makes her suspected of satanic conspiracy (see 186). The slave replies: "Everybody talks to animals. Mercy Lewis talks to that farmhouse at Master Putnam's – I've heard her" (186). Tituba compares herself with Mercy, yet the teenager is not, unlike her, under general suspicion. In the end, it is this kind of talk that Mercy brings forward to underline the slave's witchcraft practices in court:

Mercy stood up on the table, so everyone could see her. She said, "Tituba's cat is a money cat. A very strange-looking cat. It has shining yellow eyes with green in the centers. Very loving the cat is to Tituba. She covers the cat with her long skirts when she sits down [and] we hear her say to the cat, 'Puss, are you sure you want to go out into that terrible cold and that high drifted snow?' And the cat answered 'Yes, Tituba. I must be off about my business.'" (233)

Mercy retells the past events but she adds parts which feed the authorities' and the audience's urge to identify more women as witches. In doing so, the adolescent verifies

Abigail's former accusation against Tituba and thus assumes the role of an 'active' victim. Mercy's allegation against the slave is supported by the means of a touch test.

The females' relationship has now reached its dramatic climax: Mercy wields power over Tituba and she publicly contributes to the slave's ultimate downfall. In the end, the females' relationship fails completely. Although both share a similar, low position in society, Mercy, strengthened as one of Abigail's cohorts, takes full advantage of New England's witchcraft beliefs, i.e. animal familiars, and joins in in Salem Village's witch-hunt against Tituba.

4.4.3. Women on the margins: Goody Good, Gammar Osburne, and the girls

The girls' relationships with both Good and Osburne prove to be fatal over the course of the events and ultimately end in serious witchcraft accusations which bring death to both Salem-based women.

It is Goody Good whom the group's leader Abigail meets first when she turns up begging for food at the minister's house. In listening to Parris' conversation with the beggar, the girl learns about Good's severe economic situation. Yet Abigail has little sympathy for Good and rebukes her for her ungrateful behavior as the following dialogue shows:

Abigail said, "You don't have any manners, do you? You should be grateful." Tituba thought, Why did she say that? There's no need to anger the creature. Best feed her in silence and let her go quickly. "I should be grateful, eh, miss? Well, I'm not. Minister's fodder don't cost him. I haven't et [sic] for two days. Neither has this little child." [...] Abigail, who could never mind her own affairs, sat down at the table across from them, watching them eat, staring at them. (130)

The females' first brief conversation displays their mutual disdain for each other. While Abigail detests the beggar for her unthankful behavior when being supplied with her family's goods, Good grows angry due to the child's inference in her own affairs. With only Tituba present, Abigail tries to demonstrate her superiority and assumes her uncle's role that is the role of the head of the household. In doing so, Abigail wishes to demonstrate authority, a behavior that leaves Good rather unimpressed. The tense situation deteriorates further when Abigail unintentionally loses Mercy's playing cards in front of Good, a serious mishap which opens up unforeseen possibilities for the beggar and similarly places Abigail in an unfortunate position:

Good got up from the table, pled at the cards with a dirty finger, turned them over. “They be fortune-telling cards. Tee-hee-hee. And in the minister’s house. What be ye doing with a tarot pack, miss?” Abigail, usually quick-witted, quick-talking, said nothing. [...] Good said peremptorily, “Answer me. What be ye doing with these cards?” “They’re not mine. I was keeping them for a friend.” Good laughed again. “I’ll tell Minister. And, ah, but ye’ll whipped, miss. I’ll stay and watch. Minister” she said in a loud voice. [...] “No,” [Abigail] whispered. “No! What do you want? What’ll you take? I have a little gold chain. I’ll give it to you, but you mustn’t tell – I won’t let you tell –“ (131-32)

The incident enables Good to turn the tables on Abigail. As soon as she realizes the cards’ purpose, the beggar threatens to divulge the information to Reverend Parris, which would lead to severe consequences for the orphan. Abigail gives in to Good’s threat and offers her necklace so that she keeps the secret a secret. The beggar takes the necklace, and additionally demands to have her future told by Tituba on her next visit. Good now inevitably assumes power over Abigail as she keeps the child’s secret as long as she complies with her conditions.

Although Abigail is the only one affected by Good’s mischief, it is this very situation that makes the child and likewise her cohorts press charges against the beggar later on in the trials. So far, Good does not realize Abigail’s enormous power and the support she receives from her girlfriends. Abigail’s tendency, however, to seek vengeance on Good shows immediately after the beggar leaves the house with two of her most precious possessions:

[Good] kept looking back at them as she went out the door, her gaze malevolent, and she muttered to herself, “I’ll be back. I’ll be back.” [...] “This room smells good,” [Abigail] said. “But I can still smell that horrible old witch where her head leaned against my dress.” “Why do you call her a witch?” Betsey asked. “Because she put a spell on me. She made me drop those cards. Now she’s got my gold chain, and she’s got the cards, too.” To Tituba’s surprise, Abigail burst into tears. (136-37)

This is the first unofficial accusation that Abigail levels against Good. After the beggar learns about her deadly fortune by Tituba, she curses everyone present in the minister’s house: “‘Curse on you,’ Good shouted. She snatched Dorcas off the settle. ‘Curse on this house and all within –’ She left the door wide open behind her. As she went down the path she turned and bared her blackened teeth at them just like a wolf” (148). Abigail and her cohorts, who now experience Good’s cursing face-to-face for the first time, cast no doubt on her practicing the ‘black arts’. On that account, Kamensky argues that “[t]he threat of disorderly speech – particularly *female* speech – played a pivotal role in New England witchcraft beliefs [and] that the [presumed] witch announced herself and often damned herself through her disorderly tongue” (288; 292). By uttering the curse, Good receives

special attention and certainly adds to her reputation as a witch. After the incident, Mercy, for instance, “felt a shiver go down her spine. She couldn’t swallow her own spittle. It was a frightening thing to be curse like that” (148). The girls are certain that Good cast a spell on them, a non-spectral act of affliction. In turn, Abigail, the group’s leader, wants to avenge herself on Good for taking her valuable belongings and thus plots to ascribe the beggar’s malice to her evil, supernatural powers. It is shortly after this particular incident that most of the girls experience collective fits and trances.

The girls’ belief in Good’s involvement in their afflictions is soon confirmed by Mary Sibley who bakes a witch cake in order to identify the victims’ tormentor(s). Next to Good and Tituba, Osburne is named as one of the witches. In contrast to Good, who got into contact with the village girls during her visits to Parris’ home, Osburne seems to be relatively unknown to the afflicted group, except for Mary Warren, who is her niece. According to Karlsen this situation held true for many witchcraft charges: “Often the possessed barely knew the women they named as their tormentors or had had only minimal contact with them” (225). Yet it appears surprising why Abigail and her cohorts accuse Osburne as a witch, a woman they most likely did not know by name and have never met before. The most obvious reason for the accusation is the practice of the counter magic method: Osburne entered the house immediately after the baking, and is then identified as one of those responsible for the girls’ demonic possession. Besides, Osburne’s age might be considered a crucial factor for directing witchcraft charges against her. On that account, Karlsen points to the fact that “[d]uring the Salem outbreak, old women [...] were in noticeably greater danger than middle-aged suspects” (68).

Notwithstanding folk magic or demographic data, judicial authorities reached their verdicts by examining the evidence brought forward by the victims. In Good’s case the girls indict her for various witchcraft-related crimes: Elizabeth Hubbard, for instance, reproves the beggar for “following her around in the form of a great gray timber wolf” (207), a form of spectral evidence where the alleged witch assumes the shape of an animal to carry out her evil deeds. When confronted with the girls’ allegations in court, Good disclaims any knowledge of witchcraft as the interrogation displays:

Question: “Have you made no contract with the Devil?” Answer: “No.” Question: “Why do you hurt these children?” Answer: “I do not hurt them. I scorn it.” Goody Good indicated her contempt and hatred for the crowd that watched her, for the judge who questioned her, and for the girls who cowered away from her whenever she glanced in their direction [...] Judge Hathorne leaned forward and said sharply,

“Who was it then tormented these children?” “It was Osburne,” she said spitefully. (223-34)

In addition to her denial, Good holds deep contempt for the system and its agents, namely her accusers, the authorities, and the audience who all seem determined to adjudge her as one of Satan’s agents. Good attempts to protect her life by attributing blame on her fellow defendant, Gammar Osburne. Yet her change in position – from accused to accuser – does not establish her credibility but rather undermines it. On that account, Good is immediately reproved for her accusation by someone in the audience: ““That’s right – love thy neighbor”” (234). The statement can be read as an ironic remark which draws to the fact those accused of a crime often turned against people who were as or even more helpless and defenseless than they were. In doing so, Good underlines her malice and becomes the object of universal derision.

In court Mary Warren supports the accusation against Good by uttering “that the tall black man was whispering in [her] ear at that very moment” (225), a statement that is welcomed as another proof of guilt by the Devil-fearing Puritans. When questioned anew, Good incriminates her accusers for lying and additionally doubts the judicial authorities’ integrity: “She summoned enough strength to shake her finger at the judges and say, ‘It is a shameful thing that you should mind these folk who are out of their wits’” (238). She openly reproves those in authority for giving credence to a group of young, strangely-behaving females and their witchcraft stories. In doing so, the beggar proves as the first who dares to express her thoughts and simultaneously challenges her oppressors, the afflicted girls. “This caused a violent outbreak among the bewitched girls. They repeated her gesture, jumping up and down, shaking their fingers at the judges” (238). The group immediately senses danger and acts strangely to reinforce the impression of being controlled by evil forces. According to Karlson, “[t]here are patterns in the behavior of the possessed: the words and actions are learned, and they vary in only minor ways from one individual to another” (231). The girls act in alliance and thereby assume absolute power over their opponent and defeat her. The scene and the applied touch test confirm authorities’ belief in the defendant’s guilt.

Gammar Osburne’s case exhibits a similar procedure. The village girls unite in order to cause the old woman’s downfall. Yet, when they identify Osburne as one of their tormentors after the baking of the witch cake, the old woman seems especially outrageous because it is her niece Mary Warren who files the charges against her:

Goody Osburne turned away from them and spoke directly to her niece, Mary Warren. Her voice trembled. "You'll come to no good end, miss, with this dabbling in the black art. You know I'm no witch. You spread lies and gossip about me and have ever since you've had to work for your keep." (183)

The girls' proceeding suddenly reaches a personal level when they turn against Mary's aunt. Although Osburne predicts a gloomy future for her niece, Mary abides by the witchcraft charges. Besides being responsible for the girls' possessions, Osburne is reproved for paying them visits in the appearance of a wolf (see 208). In the interrogation, however, the old woman takes a turn to escape her predetermined fate as a witch:

Judge Hathorne began his examination of Goody Osburne by asking her, "What evil spirits have you familiarity with? Why do you hurt these children?" She denied that she hurt them, or that she had any familiarity with an evil spirit. He then said he had been informed that she had said she was more like to be bewitched than to be a witch. What did she mean by that? "I was frightened one time in my sleep, [...] and I saw or dreamed that I saw a thing like a tall Indian, all black, which did pinch me in my neck and pulled me by the black part of my head to the door of my house." (226)

She too denies any involvement in the girls' affliction and the supernatural in particular; her disavowal provides a stark contrast to the authorities' decision to award those confessing to witchcraft with their lives. Although Osburne rejects to obey this particular law, she tries to increase the likelihood of being spared from execution by directing the authorities' attention to the only black, tall Indian man in Salem Village, John Indian. In doing so, she makes use of Mary Warren's formerly uttered statement of a black man and employs her oppressor's method. However, the accused's allegation is not fruitful because John, terribly afraid of being mistaken for Satan himself, acts as if bewitched. In fact, it is, as Brown rightly acknowledges, "Tituba's foresight [which] protects John because on her advice, he pretends to be bewitched in order to avoid suspicion" (124). Good, however, is found guilty and tried for witchcraft in court.

In the end the females' relationships prove to be fatal ones as they result in death in both cases. While the girls gain considerable power and attention as Salem's chief investigators in court, Good and Osburne suffer the consequences of having made a nodding acquaintance with their young oppressors and especially their leader Abigail. The coincidental meeting(s) with Abigail are crucial for the relationships' further development and their consequent deterioration. Although the male authorities are the ones who pronounce the women's sentences in the end, the girls are entirely responsible for Good's final execution as a witch and Osburne's age-related death in prison.

5. Comparative Conclusion

Women's ill-fated interpersonal relationships lie at the core of the witchcraft charges brought forward in *The Crucible* and *Tituba of Salem Village*. Yet these two literary works, which both have the events of 1692 as their backdrop, differ considerably due to the authors' distinct personal backgrounds and the historical contexts that surrounded their writing processes. Hence, the dissimilar portrayals of the Salem witchcraft trials convey various depictions of the female characters and their fatal relationships.

Arthur Miller's writing of *The Crucible* was inspired by the anti-communist witch-hunt that took place under the command of the Republican senator Joseph R. McCarthy in America's 1950s. The playwright himself, like so many others, fell under suspicion concerning alleged communist ties. Inspired by the powerful urge to detect communist sympathizers, Miller drew a parallel between the time's current events and the witch craze in seventeenth-century Salem. Although Miller's successful play predominately deals with *his* rewriting of the historical events, it draws to his own experiences during McCarthyism under the surface. Ann Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village*, however, pursues a different aim: embedded in the tradition of African-American literature, the novelist's narration primarily focuses on the black slave Tituba and the allegations against her during the trials. Petry, whose writing is presumably influenced by her own African-American background and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, presents a black woman's struggle against all odds and advocates a feminist reading of New England's witch craze epitome.

Both historical contexts – McCarthyism and the Civil Rights Movement – play a vital role in constructing and understanding the literary texts. When compared to each other, Miller's text creates an atmosphere of scare, aggression, and mass hysteria; he achieves this effect, for instance, by initiating a mysterious event, the girls' nightly gathering in the woods, at the beginning of the action. He too presents the more dramatic plot and the more malicious characters. I argue that his fictional writing of the Salem witch-hunt aims to provide his readers with an idea what it felt like to be under suspicion for alleged crimes in the McCarthy era. In contrast, Petry does not seek to put emphasis on the witch craze because for her it is presumably more interesting to give a full view on the female protagonist and her life under slavery.

The construction of the characters reflects the authors' diverse approaches to the respective historical events. While Abigail Williams presents the main female character in Miller's

drama, Tituba Indian is, as the novel's title already suggests, Petry's protagonist. The literary texts feature the same or similar female characters. Abigail, being the most malicious character in both the drama and the novel, is described as a young adolescent who breaks with Puritan moral principles by engaging in an affair with the married John Proctor in *The Crucible*. She falls deeply in love and convinced that she will become his new partner, mounts a revenge campaign against his wife Elizabeth by accusing her of witchcraft. Abigail is the source of any evil; she is depicted as the harmful whore who is entirely to blame for initiating the witchcraft trials. The playwright has been reproved for his sexist characterization of Abigail by feminist writers such as Wendy Schissel, especially because Abigail does not model a historical figure, but she is presumed to be the utter product of Miller's imagination. In contrast, Petry's Abigail is a twelve-year-old orphan whose malice can be attributed to pubertal attention-seeking and her urge to avenge herself for disagreements with local women such as Tituba. She too commences Salem's witch-hunt and acts together with her girlfriends as the trials' most active accusers. While Miller's Abigail is portrayed as the ultimate evil who plots to murder Elizabeth by naming her as a witch, Petry's Abigail is represented as a young, yet powerful teenage rebellion. By reading both literary works, it can be stressed that the two authors constructed the character for similar purposes, yet for different texts.

However, the female character which displays the most profound difference in depiction is the black slave Tituba. In *The Crucible* she is only a minor character whose Caribbean voodoo rituals are falsely interpreted as witchcraft acts. She is therefore suspected of having succumbed to the Devil's temptation by Salem Village's fearful populace and especially, by its male authorities. It is her otherness in race, culture, and status that makes her the ultimate scapegoat for the girls' mysterious suffering. Likewise in *Tituba of Salem Village*, the black slave is held accountable for the village girls' afflictions, yet she is depicted, according to Morsberger, as a "heroine victim" (458). Petry's Tituba is an exceptional character: although she falls prey to the Puritan community and their belief system, her strength enables her to live through the witchcraft trials and escape death. In accordance, Rahming argues that "on a deeper level it is her ontology that is on trial [which] is inextricably allied to her Caribbean identity, her Caribbean perspective of life" (36). Petry constructs Tituba as a character who is both powerless and powerful at the same time – powerless in terms of her background which makes her especially vulnerable to witchcraft charges and powerful due to her strong personality. In addition, the author chose

the black slave as the story's main narrator, Tituba tells her own story of oppression and survival.

Brown draws the following conclusion about the authors' diverse depictions of the black slave:

Tituba is of special interest to American writers like Arthur Miller, a White liberal of the McCarthyite fifties, and Ann Petry, the Black civil rights advocate of the sixties. For Tituba is unique among the Salem principals. Like the others, her experience as an accused witch is a seventeenth-century paradigm of those twentieth-century crises with which Miller and Petry, respectively, are concerned. But unlike the other witch-hunt principals, Tituba is also an outsider, a Barbadian whose foreign presence is indispensable as a catalyst for the painful American self-evaluations in *The Crucible* and *Tituba of Salem Village*, just as indispensable, indeed, as she was in the original trials themselves. (118-19)

Tituba serves particular purposes in both works: the depiction of Miller's Tituba centers on her otherness in a very strict society that teaches subordination and suspicion and hence draws a link to McCarthyism. In Petry's novel *Tituba*, however, is rewarded for surviving in a hostile environment which is akin to Black America in 1960s.

The girls, who not only initiate the trials but also serve as its prime investigators, are portrayed differently in the literary works. In Miller's *The Crucible* the adolescent girls' strange fits and trances can be interpreted as reactions to their repressed statuses in the strictly ordered society. Oppressed by male hegemony, they rise up in rebellion against Puritan values. Thus, under the disguise of being possessed they experience forbidden premarital sexual explorations. Petry's group of girls, which counts considerably less members and is more heterogeneous in age, is described to perform experiments with magic which trigger strange states of absence in one of the members. Soon after, the others exhibit similar behaviors of affliction and they name women on the margins as their tormentors. What both groups have in common is that, although the pubertal girls are obliged to adapt to the patriarchal system, their suffering is validated by the all-male authorities. And more prominently, when an end is put to the trials, they never serve any sentences for their wrongdoings. Another similarity is that Abigail leads the groups in both texts: she holds all the power in the group and is assumed to direct the girls in their presumed possessions. Under her command, they file charges against those who stereotypically fit the image of witches, namely socially-deviating women such as beggars, slaves, or elderly women. With regard to the historical contexts, the alleged witches in the

texts metaphorically symbolize the victimization and oppression of those who, according to the powerful, presented a threat to the American society in the 1950s and 60s.

Women's fatal relationships are constructed in very similar ways in the literary texts. In *The Crucible* it becomes apparent that Abigail is involved in every single female relationship in which dispute and problems arise. Hence, the impression is obtained that Abigail is held accountable for the ill-fated relationships with some women of the community – an assumption which is supported by her malicious character. In the drama the women's relationships either fail from the beginning or deteriorate in the course of the events due to men-related jealousies, desires for revenge, and/or scapegoating processes. The disagreements as such are not considered remarkable in a society in which the female sex is utterly oppressed, yet some women, and especially Abigail, choose to handle their conflicts by leveling witchcraft accusations against their personal enemies. In doing so, the female accusers create grounds for suspicion, men, however, are the ones who decide to pay attention to their fearful claims, take the accused to court, and eventually hang them as presumed witches at the gallows. This shows that the women accusing others of satanic conspiracy wield subtle power in male-dominated cultures – Abigail is certainly one of them because she levels most of the accusations which, in turn, are confirmed by her cohorts and their seemingly afflictions. Hence, it might be argued that Salem's male authorities reinforce the witch-hunts against those women who deviate from society-established norms. From that point of view, women's failed relationships provide the basis for the tragic events in both *The Crucible* and *Tituba of Salem Village*. With regard to the latter, females' fatal relationships follow a very similar pattern. Yet the initial motives for the relationships' failures differ slightly: women's witchcraft accusations stem from quarrels over household-related activities, desires for vengeance, and/or certain sociocultural characteristics. Like in Miller's drama, Abigail drops the most charges in the court proceedings and thus can be assumed as the trial's initiator. The two literary texts provide the basis for analyzing the women's fatal relationships; they both establish a certain accusation pattern – those in power turn against presumed villains. This is also found in the events of the 1950s and 60s where alleged communists and African-Americans were targeted by those in power.

In sum, both authors give insights into the nature of women's troubled relations during the seventeenth-century Salem witchcraft trials. The failed relationships in the texts, which emerge in the "feminine space" (Roubin qtd. in Garrett 465), end in severe witchcraft

allegations, prosecutions, and, in some cases, in death by hanging. Hence, it can be concluded that witch-hunting was not only a powerful tool for men to dispose of mostly socially-deviating women; it was simultaneously welcomed by women as an opportunity to handle their conflicts which arose from their fatal relationships with other women.

6. References

Primary sources:

Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*. London: Penguin, 1953.

Petry, Ann. *Tituba of Salem Village*. New York: Harper Trophy, 1964.

Secondary sources:

Adler, Thomas P. "Conscience and Community in *An Enemy of the People* and *The Crucible*." *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*. Ed. Christopher W. E. Bigsby. Cambridge: CUP, 2000. 86-100.

"Ann Petry – Introduction." *eNotes*. Ed. Scott Darga, 2002. Web. 13 May 2017. <<http://www.enotes.com/topics/ann-petry/critical-essays/petry-ann#critical-essays-petry-ann-introduction>>.

Aziz, Aamir. "Using the Past to intervene in the Present: Spectacular Framing in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*." *New Theatre Quarterly* 32.2 (2016): 169-80.

Barker, Clive. *Days of Magic, Nights of War*. Glasgow: Harper Collins, 2006.

Barstow, Anne Llewellyn. "On Studying Witchcraft as Women's History: A Historiography of the European Witch Persecutions." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4.2 (1988): 7-19.

Bell, Bernard W. "Ann Petry's Demythologizing of American Culture and Afro-American Character." *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*. Ed. Marjorie Pryse, and Hortense J. Spillers. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985. 105–15.

Bigsby, Christopher W. E. *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study*. Cambridge: CUP, 2005.

Booth, David. "Dubious American Ideal: Gender and Historical Knowledge in *The Crucible*." *An Interdisciplinary Journal* 84.1/2 (2001): 31-49.

Bovard, Karen. "Witch-Hunting, Thwarted Desire, and Girl Power: Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*." *Women in Literature: Reading through the Lens of Gender*. Ed. Jerilyn Fisher, and Ellen S. Silber. Westport: Greenwood, 2003. 82-84.

Bredella, Lothar. "Understanding a Foreign Culture through Assimilation and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Its Dual Historical Context." *Text, Culture, Reception: Cross-Cultural Aspects of English Studies*. Ed. Rüdiger Ahrens, and Heinz Antor. Heidelberg: Winter, 1992. 475-521.

Bremer, Francis J. *The Puritan Experiment: New England society from Bradford to Edwards*. Hanover: UP of New England. 1995.

---. *Puritanism: A very short introduction*. New York: OUP. 2009.

---. *First Founders: American Puritanism in an Atlantic World*. Durham: UP of New Hampshire. 2012.

Brown, Lloyd W. "Tituba of Barbados and the American conscience. Historical perspectives in Arthur Miller and Ann Petry." *Caribbean Studies* 13.4 (1974): 118-26.

Çakırtaş, Önder. "Double Portrayed: Tituba, Racism and Politics." *International Journal of Language Academy* 1 (2013): 13-22.

Caruso, Christina C. "'One Finds What One Seeks': Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* as a Regeneration of the American Myth of Violence." *Journal of American Drama and Theatre* 7 (1995): 30-42.

Chaudhuri, Soma. "Women as Easy Scapegoats." *Violence Against Women* 18.10 (2012): 1213-34.

- Craker, Wendel D. "Spectral evidence, non-spectral acts of witchcraft, and confession at Salem in 1682." *The Historical Journal* 40.2 (1997): 331-58.
- Demirkaya, Yılmaz Neslihan. "Scapegoating Non-Conforming Identities: Witchcraft Hysteria in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Caryl Churchill's *Vinegar Tom*." *Journal of History Culture and Art Research* 4.2 (2015): 123-35.
- Demos, John. "Underlying Themes in the Witchcraft of Seventeenth-Century New England." *The American Historical Review* 75.5 (1970): 1311-26.
- . *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*. Oxford: OUP, 1982.
- Dennis, Matthew and Elizabeth Reis. "Women as Witches, Witches as Women: Witchcraft and Patriarchy in Colonial North America." *Women in Early America*. Ed. Thomas Foster. New York: NY UP, 2015. 66-94.
- DeRosa, Robin. *The Making of Salem: The Witch Trials in History, Fiction and Tourism*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2009.
- Dickinson, Emily. "Witchcraft was hung in history." *Bolts of Melody: New Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. Mabel Loomis Todd, and Millicent Todd Bingham. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945. 290.
- Duane, Anna Mae. Rev. of *Tituba of Salem Village*, by Ann Petry. *The Journal of History of Childhood and Youth* 5.1 (2012): 154-56.
- Ervin, Hazel Arnett. "Tituba of Salem Village." *The Concise Oxford Companion to African American Literature*. New York: OUP, 2001. 395.
- Garrett, Clarke. "Women and Witches: Patterns of Analysis." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 3.21 (1977): 461-70.
- Gibson, Marion. *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Godbeer, Richard. *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England*. Cambridge: CUP, 1994.
- . *Sexual Revolution in Early America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2002.
- Goodheart, Adam. Rev. of *The Witches: Salem, 1692*, by Stacy Schiff. *The Atlantic* (November 2015). Web. 24 April 2017. <<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/11/how-satan-came-to-salem/407866/>>.
- "Goody." *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Douglas Harper, 2001-2017. Web. 8 May 2017. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=Goody>.
- Hansen, Chadwick. "The Metamorphosis of Tituba, or Why American Intellectuals Can't Tell an Indian Witch from a Negro." *The New England Quarterly* 47.1 (1974): 3-12.
- Hayman, Ronald. *Contemporary Playwrights – Arthur Miller*. London: Heinemann, 1970.
- Herndon, Ruth Wallis, and John E. Murray. Overviews. *Children Bound to Labor: The Pauper Apprentice System in Early America*. By Ed. Herndon, and Murray. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2009. 1-2.
- Herrera, Brian Eugenio. "I was a Teenaged Fabulist: The *dark play* of Adolescent Sexuality in U.S. Drama." *Modern Drama* 53.3 (2010): 332-49.
- Hooti, Noorbakhsh. "The quest for identity in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*." *Journal of English and Literature* 2.3 (2011): 68-74.
- Johnson, Claudia Durst, and Vernon E. Johnson. *Understanding The Crucible: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and historical Documents*. Westport: Greenwood, 1998.
- "Judah." *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Douglas Harper, 2001-2017. Web. 13 May 2017. <<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Judah>>.

- Kamensky, Jane. "Words, Witches, and Woman Trouble: Witchcraft, Disorderly Speech and Gender Boundaries in Puritan New England." *Gender and Witchcraft*. Ed. Brian P. Levack. New York: Routledge, 2001. 196-305.
- Karlsen, Carol F. *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman – Witchcraft in Colonial New England*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1998.
- Kenyon, Theda. *Witches Still Live: A Study of the Black Art Today*. London: Rieder & Co, 1929.
- Kirn, Walter. *Twitter*. Twitter, 10 January 2011. 18 May 2017. <<https://twitter.com/walterkirn/status/24674585563631616>>.
- Lejri, Sélima. "Which Is Witch? Exit Women/ Enter Saints in Arthur Miller's *Crucible*." *American, British and Canadian Studies* 17 (2011): 90-103.
- Martin, Robert A. "Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*: Background and Sources." *Modern Drama* 20.3 (1977): 279-92.
- . "The Creative Experience of Arthur Miller: An Interview." 1969. *Conversations with Arthur Miller*. Ed. Matthew C. Roudané. Jackson, Miss.: Mississippi UP, 1987. 177-86.
- Martine, James J. *The Crucible: Politics, Property and Pretense*. New York: Twayne, 1993.
- Mather, Cotton. "Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions." *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706*. Ed. Charles Lincoln Burr. New York: Scribner, 1914. 1-38.
- Mencken, Henry Louis. *A Mencken Chrestomathy: His Own Selection Of His Choicest Writings*. New York: Knopf, 1949.
- McDowell, Margaret B. "The Narrows: A Fuller View of Ann Petry." *Black American Literature Forum* 14.4 (1980): 135-41.
- McKenzie, Marilyn Mobley. "Ann Petry (1908–1997)." *African American Writers*. New York: Scribner, 2001. 615-27.
- McMillan, Timothy J. "Black Magic: Witchcraft, Race and Resistance in Colonial New England." *Journal of Black Studies* 25.1 (1994): 99-117.
- Miller, Arthur. Introduction. *Collected Plays*. By Miller. London: Cresset, 1958. 3-55.
- . "Why I wrote *The Crucible*: An Artist's Answer to Politics." *The New Yorker* 21 (1996): 158-60.
- Miller, D. Quentin. "The Signifying Poppet: Unseen Voodoo and Arthur Miller's Tituba." *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 43.4 (2007): 438-53.
- Morsberger, Robert E. "The Further Transformation of Tituba." *The New England Quarterly* 47.3 (1974): 456-58.
- Moss, Jane. "Postmodernizing the Salem Witchcraze: Maryse Conde's *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*." *Colby Quarterly* 35.1 (1999): 5-17.
- Nelson, Mary. "Why Witches Were Women." *Women: A Feminist Perspective*. Ed. Jo Freeman. California: Mayfield, 1975. 335-50.
- Nenonen, Marko. "Who bears the guilt for the persecution of witches?" *Studia Neophilologica* 84.1 (2012): 70-87.
- Norton, Mary Beth. "Finding the Devil in the Details of the Salem Witchcraft Trials." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 46.20 (2000): B4-B5.
- . *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society*. New York: Knopf, 1996.
- . "The Evolution of White Women's Experience in Early America." *The American Historical Review* 89.3 (1984): 593-619.
- Opitz-Belakhal, Claudia. "Witchcraft Studies from the Perspective of Women's and Gender History: A Report on Recent Research." *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4.1 (2009): 90-99.

- Otten, Terry. *The Temptation of Innocence in the Dramas of Arthur Miller*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2002.
- Page, Yolanda Williams. "Ann Petry (1908-1997)." *Encyclopedia of African American women writers 2*. Westport: Greenwood, 2007.
- Porterfield, Amanda. *Female Piety in Puritan New England: The Emergence of Religious Humanism*. New York: OUP, 1992.
- Pratchett, Terry. *Witches Abroad*. London: Corgi Books, 1992.
- "Press-yard." *Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford UP, 2017. Web. 18 May 2017. <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/press-yard>>.
- Purkiss, Diane. *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Quackenbush, Thomm. *Pagan Standard Times: Essays on the Craft*. Hudson Valley: CreateSpace, 2015. Kindle AZW file.
- Reed, Isaac. "Why Salem Made Sense: Culture, Gender, and the Puritan Persecution of Witchcraft." *Cultural Sociology* 1.2 (2007): 209-34.
- Reis, Elizabeth. "Confess or deny? What's a "witch" to do?" *Magazine of History* 17.4 (2003): 11-15.
- . *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*. New York: Cornell UP, 1997.
- . "The Devil, the Body, and the Feminine Soul in Puritan New England." *The Journal of American History* 82.1 (1995): 15-36.
- Reynolds, Clarence V. "Ann Lane Petry." *Black Issues Book Review* 4.4 (2002): 79-80.
- Robinson, John. "Essays, or Observations of Divine and Moral." *The Works of John Robinson I*. Ed. Robert Ashton. London: John Snow, 1851. 1-260.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist. "Woman, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview." *Woman, Culture, and Society*, Ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, and Louise Lamphere. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1974.
- Roubin, Lucienne A. "Espace masculin, espace féminin en communautés provinciales," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 26.2 (1970): 537-60.
- Saxton, Martha. *Being good: Women's moral values in early America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003.
- Schissel, Wendy. "Re(dis)covering the Witches in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*: A Feminist Reading." *Modern Drama* 37.3 (1994): 461-73.
- Stewart, Pamela J., and Andrew Strathern. *Witchcraft, sorcery, rumors and gossip*. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.
- Tucker, Veta Smith. "Purloined Identity: The Racial Metamorphosis of Tituba of Salem Village." *Journal of Black Studies* 30.4 (2000): 624-34.
- Weisman, Richard. *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts*. Amherst: Massachusetts UP, 1984.
- Westerkamp, Marilyn J. *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600-1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Willis, Deborah. *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England*. New York: Cornell UP, 1995.
- Wilson, Mark K., and Ann Petry. "A MELUS Interview: Ann Petry. The New England Connection." *MELUS* 15.2 (1988): 71-84.
- Wilson, Peter J. "Status Ambiguity and Spirit Possession." *Man* 2.3 (1967): 366-78.
- Winthrop, John. *Winthrop's Journal: 'History of New England', 1630-1649*. Ed. James Kendall Hosmer. New York: Scribner, 1908.

7. English abstract

Witch-hunting in seventeenth-century Salem, New England, and most likely everywhere where alleged witches were prosecuted, is primarily believed to have been triggered by men since the overwhelmingly majority of victims were women. In fact, though, women were often overtly involved in the processes leading up to the trials; yet their roles as accusers, 'active' victims, and/or bystanders have not received much scholarly attention so far. This readiness to denounce other members of the female sex as witches developed from disputes and hostilities in their relationships. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Ann Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village*, two twentieth-century literary texts, lend themselves to a thorough analysis as they are set around the Salem witchcraft trials and portray diverse female relationships, which happen to be fatal. By analyzing the texts with regard to the historical background, it becomes apparent that the female characters' ill-fated relationships are held accountable for the accusations leveled against certain women and subsequently for their prosecutions and, at worst, hangings. The findings offer valuable insights into the nature of the women's troubled relationships and their repercussions in the witchcraft trials of 1692.

8. German abstract

Sowohl bei den Hexenprozesse von Salem, Neuengland, im siebzehnten Jahrhundert, als auch höchstwahrscheinlich bei anderen Verfolgungen von Hexen, wird angenommen, dass sie von Männern ausgelöst wurden, da die überwältigende Mehrheit der Opfer weiblichen Geschlechts waren. Tatsächlich aber waren Frauen in die Prozesse meist stark involviert: ihre Beteiligung als Anklägerinnen, 'aktive' Opfer und/oder Beobachterinnen fand bis jetzt jedoch kaum Aufmerksamkeit in der Wissenschaft. Die Bereitschaft andere Mitglieder des weiblichen Geschlechts als Hexen zu verurteilen entwickelte sich aus Streitigkeiten und Feindseligkeiten in ihren Beziehungen. Arthur Millers *The Crucible* und Ann Petrys *Tituba von Salem Village*, zwei literarische Texte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, eignen sich für eine gründliche Analyse, da sie vor dem Hintergrund der Hexenprozesse von Salem stattfinden und unterschiedliche weibliche Beziehungen darstellen, die sich als tödlich erweisen. Durch die Analyse der Werke in Verbindung mit dem historischen Hintergrund wird deutlich, dass die unglückseligen Beziehungen der Frauen für die Anschuldigungen,

spätere Strafverfolgungen und im schlimmsten Fall für Hinrichtungen verantwortlich sind. Die Erkenntnisse, die in der Arbeit gewonnen werden, bieten wertvolle Einblicke in diese verhängnisvollen Beziehungen von Frauen und deren Auswirkungen in den 1692 stattgefundenen Hexenprozessen.