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FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA
GRAO EN INGLÉS: ESTUDOS LINGÜÍSTICOS E LITERARIOS

Hysteria, Witches, and Women:
A Feminist Reading of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*

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Year 2020-2021

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Abstract

The object of study of this end-of-degree project is Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, written in 1952. My main goals are three: to analyze the depiction of women and female sexuality in the play through the figure of the witch, to explore the representation of hysteria and its relation to women, and to demonstrate that it is possible to make a feminist reading of *The Crucible*. Throughout my analyses, I will also uncover the connections between what it means to be a woman, a hysteric, and a witch, three concepts that have been of interest to Gender and Feminist Studies.

The methodology required the close reading of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the consultation of dictionaries—e.g. *Cambridge English Dictionary*, *Thesaurus.com*—, and the study of academic works that would support my hypothesis—feminist readings of Miller's play (e.g. Tunc), studies about hysteria and women's mental health (e.g. Showalter), etc. Some of the key concepts addressed in this project belong to the field of Gender Studies, such as patriarchy, binary oppositions, and patriarchal and female subjectivities. The latter is particularly relevant due to the possibility it offers to radically change the perception of literature. Therefore, the study of the play from the subjectivity of the female characters—allows the reader to understand the way patriarchy uses binary oppositions to place women under the categories of either good or evil.

The classification of women into one of the above-mentioned domains is problematic if analyzed from a feminist perspective because it results in either their idealization or their demonization according to patriarchal, capitalistic, and religious values. This undergraduate thesis elucidates that the stereotypes of the witch and the hysteric in literature are examples of how rooted misogyny is in our culture.

The structure of this project consists of two parts. The first one focuses on a theoretical introduction of witches and hysteria, and their relation to women in patriarchy. The second part entails a close reading of the play by Arthur Miller. This section is likewise divided into three epigraphs where the notions introduced in Part One are exemplified and analyzed further. The paper ends with a conclusion, which summarizes the main ideas and ratifies my aims. In the following pages, the traditional patriarchal reading of *The Crucible* is challenged through a Gender Studies perspective; therein, Miller's apparent male-chauvinistic values are questioned by a feminist reading of the play.

Key words: woman, witch, hysteria, female subjectivity, feminism, Arthur Miller.

Introduction

In our society and, therefore, in literature, there is a connection between what it means to be a woman, a hysteric and a witch. These three concepts have been intertwined throughout time and the sole mention of one carries the others. Feminist and Gender Studies have been studying the notions of women, hysteria and witches for decades, and many scholars have written about them with the intention to expose the sexist problematic. However, a vast number of authors such as Arthur Miller have used these concepts, which lead to the perpetuation of misogyny and prejudices towards women. Next, I will provide a brief introduction of the playwright and explain the motivations, aims, methodology, and structure of this undergraduate thesis about *The Crucible* (1952).

Arthur Miller (1915-2005) is known for being a rather controversial figure in the twentieth-century American literary scene; his personal life might not be relevant in terms of literary value, but it does help understand his work and the ideas he projected onto it. He married three times and had four children; his second wife was the actress Marilyn Monroe, whose mental health deteriorated exponentially while being married to him (Meyers). As one might expect from a man born at the beginning of the 20th century, Miller was not precisely preoccupied with mental health or gender equality; he was, in turn, quite interested in political affairs being a member of the Communist Party. His affinity with anti-capitalistic theories led to his subpoena before the HUAC (House Un-American Actions Committee). This experience, along with the tense atmosphere caused by McCarthyism and its anti-communist policies and propaganda, inspired *The Crucible* (Abbotson 108-26). Miller also wrote *All My Sons* (1947) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949), among other works.

The writing of this project was mainly motivated by an intense fascination for the Gender Studies field that urged me to make a small and humble contribution to it. Besides, I have always been interested in creatures such as vampires, werewolves, mermaids and witches, due to the possibilities they offer as objects of study from a gender perspective. In the case of this project, witches were the chosen topic since they have been re-appropriated by modern Feminism because of their powerful potential as social outcasts.

The main aim of this piece of writing is to examine one of the most controversial dramatic texts of American literature, such as Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1952)—for the plot summary, see Appendix 1. In so doing, I also aim to analyze the depiction of women and female sexuality in the play through the figure of the witch, to explore the representation of hysteria and its relation to women, and to demonstrate that it is possible to engage in a feminist reading of *The Crucible*.

The methodology required the main text to be subjected to exploration through close reading to thus prove it can be approached from a feminist perspective. Hence, the methodology includes the reading of the works by scholars such as Elaine Showalter, Manuel Barbeito, John Putnam Demos, and Lynn Botelho, among others. The consultation of dictionaries (e.g. *Cambridge English Dictionary*, *Thesaurus.com*) has also been of great help to understand some methodological concepts, most of which are common to the different subfields that make up the Gender Studies area; such concepts are, namely, patriarchy, binary opposition, patriarchal subjectivity, and female subjectivity. Perhaps the latter is the most relevant in this analysis due to its power to radically change the way literary works are perceived. Thanks to considering female subjectivity, I will be able to show how patriarchy uses binary oppositions to categorize women in either of its two main groups: good and evil. The former implies the idealization

of women according to patriarchal, capitalistic, and religious values; the latter connotes the antithesis of those values and, thus, the association of women with the devil.

The categories of good and evil are equally problematic from a feminist stance because both dehumanize women either by presenting them as holy or sacred, which sets unrealistic standards for them, or by downgrading them to evil creatures unworthy of respect. As I will prove hereunder, the rewriting of the stereotypes of the witch and the hysteric defies patriarchal categorization. Together with this, the study of these two figures from female subjectivity will test patriarchy's main pillars and challenge its order.

The structure of this project is divided into two parts. The first offers a theoretical explanation of the basic concepts; that is, the introduction of witches and hysteria and their relation to women in patriarchy. The second part is focalized on the study of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. It is likewise divided into three sections with the epigraphs "Hysteria," "Witches," and "Female Subjectivity"; in them, the notions introduced in Part One are analyzed further providing arguments and examples from Miller's text. The paper ends with a conclusion, where I summarize the main ideas and prove that the aims have been met.

Part One: Hysteria, Witches, and Women

Patriarchal societies are ruled by binary oppositions, such as the opposition man/women (or male/female). It is not difficult to notice that our culture is hierarchical and androcentric, which means that not only men are at its center, but they are, in fact, in a higher position than women in terms of privilege. This is what many feminist theorists and literary authors have been writing about for centuries. A text that exemplifies this is *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir, which has become one of the most important pieces of work for Feminist and Gender Studies. At the same time, patriarchal and misogynistic views and conceptions are deep rooted in our minds and tend to be projected onto literature, religion and mythology, among other fields. Numerous examples of how women have been regarded and portrayed as second-class citizens, sometimes hypersexualized and others demonized, can be encountered.

As I will explain hereunder, the hierarchies within the group of women are established according to patriarchal law; that is, women that comply with patriarchal rules are regarded as good, and women who defy the norm are deemed bad. In Maggie Rosen's words, "the treatment of ... women ... is rooted in biblical times ... The story of Eve, the original sinner, was projected onto women ... [who] were 'worthy of honor' for being wives but deemed witches if they disrupted their functionality in society" (23). Therefore, the witch is an instance of the demonization of women. Witches have become common to many different cultures and literatures and even a trope in arts. The depiction of this figure has changed throughout time and space although in this essay I will analyze a few qualities that have remained intact.

According to John Putnam Demos there are several traits that conform the idea of the "typical witch" (93). It must be borne in mind that this author wrote these

characteristics in relation to the women accused during the Salem trials; nevertheless, these traits—related to gender, age, social status, breeding ability, profession, social position, character, and even background—are nonetheless part of the general portrayal of witches in literature and media.

Gender plays an important role in the portrayal of the witch as a literary figure since she tends to be a female. However, the representation of witches as male exists as well, although in this case they are usually referred to as wizards, sorcerers, or even warlocks, which are terms that escape the bad connotations of the word “witch.” On this matter, Ann Kibbey indicates that “the Old English *wicca*, the etymological root of ‘witch,’ simply meant a man who practiced magic and divination. The Old French equivalent was *sorcier*. Not all harm-doing was ascribed to magic ... The Middle English *wicche* was used for both men and women and so, initially, was the modern English ‘witch’” (129-30). Notwithstanding, the term “witch” has grown more and more connected with women and it has been used against them for centuries.

Since Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* (1952) is the main text analyzed in this essay, the historical episode of the Salem witch trials might be illustrative. Alan Anderson and Raymond Gordon explain that “the scapegoating of women as witches was possible and became effective only because ... [of an existing] powerful framework of denigrating beliefs relating to women” (174). Therefore, it is easy to note how deeply rooted in misogyny the figure of the witch is. Additionally, Rossell Hope Robbins points out that the concept of witches as women “took hold in words and illustrations, coming down to modern times in the creations of Walt Disney” that perpetuated the misogynistic connotations of the witch (qtd. in Anderson and Gordon 172).

Furthermore, the age factor is key in the characterization of the witch. Age is strictly linked to the gender factor since, in the collective imagination, witches are generally presented as either middle-aged or elderly women. At first, it might seem that this is not problematic; however, I have mentioned above that, in a patriarchal world, women tend to be demonized and/or hypersexualized. The fact that witches are presented as middle-aged women must be addressed because this age group, between forty and sixty years old, is illustrative of the transition from adulthood to old age, known as menopause. Menopause is problematic for the patriarchal order because menopausal women can no longer serve it. That is, they are regarded as not “useful” because they can no longer bear children, although they still might be sexually active. When women’s sexuality detaches itself from procreation, it raises a lot of problems for a society that has always made women believe that their value comes solely from their ability to (re)produce, which is a rather capitalistic conception.

Consequently, social status is another characteristic trait of the witch. It seems that witches—both the ones hunted in the 17th century and the ones depicted in literature and media—are not likely to be married, and if they were, they would have few or no children. I will explain the relation between witches and children later on, but the fact that witches are portrayed as single middle-aged, or old¹, women is crucial for this study. I have been pointing out that women, portrayed as witches, are demonized by patriarchy because they threaten the stability of the pillars on which it stands. The existence of women without men is problematic simply because women have been taught to recognize their value

¹ Old single women were, and sometimes still are, referred to as “spinsters.” *Thesaurus.com* labels this term as “disparaging and offensive,” and defines it as “a woman still unmarried beyond the usual age of marrying.”

through male attention. Therefore, unmarried women, as well as sapphic² ones, suppose a threat to androcentric values because they prove that it is possible to live without a male.

Social class plays an important role in the depiction of witches, too. Witches are generally represented as women from the lower social strata; an example from *The Crucible* is Sarah Good, a character that I will discuss in the following pages. Additionally, another central trait of Putnam Demos' prototypical witch is profession. According to him, the women accused during the Salem trials were more likely to "have professed and practiced a medical vocation" (93) and/or had been working as midwives. The stereotype of the witch as a midwife or a healer is embodied by Rebecca Nurse in *The Crucible* (see Appendix 2 for the character list), who is accused of having killed Mrs. Putnam's babies after helping her during labor. Such trope has become quite persistent because it completes the negative profile of witches, often portrayed as menopausal women with no children. Patriarchy sees in this an opportunity to criticize "unproductive" women and presents them as envious midwives, which ensures the perpetuation of sexist stereotypes whilst encouraging confrontation between females.

Finally, Putnam Demos states that not only women with a harsh personality were more likely to be accused of witchcraft back in the 17th century, but witches' depiction in literature and media also fosters this stereotype. Earlier in this paper, I have introduced the etymology of the word "witch" and how it has been associated with women throughout history. Hence, after knowing the negative connotations it carries, it might be

² I used "sapphic" as an umbrella term in order to avoid using the word "lesbian" since it does not represent the whole women-loving-women spectrum. Sapphic includes other women's sexual orientations as bisexuality.

of help to reflect on how the word “witch” is still used today to discredit women who are unpleasant or mean in the eyes of patriarchy.

Putnam Demos provides a complete and accurate profile of the witch. His contribution allows the reader to understand that every trait attributed to the witch is based on not only sexist, but also capitalistic and classist, prejudices that are still up to date. These common characteristics are present in very well-known tales in our culture, such as “Snow White.” In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) the witch embodies every trait that John Putnam Demos’ attributes to his “typical witch.” Snow White’s stepmother is an adult female, initially portrayed as beautiful and sensual; nonetheless, she becomes old, ugly and poor once she transforms into a witch, thus exemplifying patriarchy’s sexualization of young women and its demonization of elder ones. She is also a widow who has no biological children and who tries to kill other women’s children (in *Snow White* she wants to kill her stepdaughter) out of envy. Also, the witch has a harsh personality, she is evil and ruthless, and possesses medical or chemical skills: she knows how to use poison on Snow White.

Finally, what seems to be clear is that both the witch and the hysterical woman are tools of female control based on misogynistic values and stereotypes that aim to maintain the hierarchical and androcentric system in which we live. Moreover, in order to keep women under the yoke of patriarchy, the system turns them into their own oppressors.

Regarding Miller’s play, another central theme is hysteria. *Cambridge Dictionary* defines “hysteria” as “extreme fear, excitement, anger, etc. that cannot be controlled”; however, the etymology of this word must be addressed before the continuation of this paper. In ancient Greek, *hystera* (ὕστέρα) meant womb or uterus (Tunc 266); hence, medical terminology related to the uterus share the same etymological root. With the

passing of time, this relation of the word with femininity provoked that many mental issues, often experienced by women, such as anxiety or depression, were addressed as hysteria and linked to women throughout history. As I will prove in the following pages, there are two types of hysteria in *The Crucible*: on the one hand, the phenomenon of mass hysteria caused by the extended fear of witchcraft of the Salem Puritan population that resulted into the witch hunt; on the other, the hysteria related to women's mental health condition.

In relation to the latter type of hysteria, Elaine Showalter explains that this “nervous disorder” was “the most ... identified with the feminist movement” (145). According to Frederic Carpenter Skey, *fin-de-siècle* doctors used to link hysteria with rebelliousness since “hysterical patients were likely to be *more* independent and assertive than ‘normal’ women” (qtd. in Showalter 145). The feminist defiance of gender roles was identified with the madwoman because women who transgress social boundaries are silenced and/or demonized by patriarchy. The witch and the hysteric are two different interpretations of the same idea—in literature, they both can be read as the feminist fight against the patriarchal order. In Showalter's words, “hysteria is tolerated because in fact it has no power to effect cultural change; it is much safer for the patriarchal order to encourage and allow discontented women to express their wrongs through ... illness than to have them agitating for economic and legal rights” (161). Patriarchy prefers to deal with female mental health issues rather than undergo a true reform of the system. Also, the use of the madwoman as a recurring trope is nothing but a strategy of control since mental instability is connected to unreliability. The madwoman is a great tool for patriarchal manipulation that ensures control over women, who do not want to be stigmatized and, thus, stay within patriarchy's feminine roles.

Part Two: A Feminist Approach to *The Crucible*

As I have discussed in the previous pages, the figure of the witch as we know it nowadays is the result of many stereotypes formed over the years. These stereotypes are rooted in prejudices about women and what womanhood means in the eyes of a patriarchal system. This system is, additionally, so interrelated with capitalism, that women have been, and still are, valued only by their ability to produce offspring. When women step out of their role as mothers and carers, they raise a lot of anxieties for patriarchy. The transgression of patriarchal norms is the cause of women's demonization. Defying women are not only identified with the devil, sometimes they are even mocked, such as those with mental health issues who are diminished by being regarded as hysterics. Thus, the witch and the hysteric have become caricatures heavily charged with negative connotations. In this section, I will employ John Putnam Demos' traits of the "typical witch" to prove that Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* displays a negative depiction of women.

2.1. Hysteria

I would like to start by restating the idea that there are two different types of hysteria in Miller's text, which I will refer to as collective and individual hysteria; the former is related to a large group of people, whereas the latter focuses on the mental health issues of one person in particular. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English have explained that "two of the most common theories of the witch hunt are ... medical interpretations, attributing the witch craze to unexplainable outbreaks of mass hysteria. One version has it that the peasantry went mad ... Another psychiatric interpretation holds that the witches themselves were insane" (8-9). Thus, corroborating the existence of these two dimensions of hysteria.

In *The Crucible*, the hysterical climate provokes, and is as well provoked by, the witch hunt; that is, they feed on one another. The tense atmosphere serves as a perfect and fertile breeding ground for the expression of long-held resentments and disagreements, mostly related to fights for land and power between neighbors. These conflicts would result in the bursting of hysteria and the desperate search for a scapegoat. Anderson and Gordon ask “why were women the main objects of witch persecution, and why was the scapegoating of women-as-witches so successful?” (172). Historically, scapegoats tend to be a group of the population that face an abnormal amount of hatred and/or exclusion: note how the Jewish community was treated during World War II, or how communists were treated during McCarthy's period³. The latter event is particularly relevant in relation to *The Crucible* since Miller wrote the play as an allegory for this period of American history.

Therefore, it seems reasonable that after centuries of hatred towards women, they would become the scapegoat the Salem population so desperately needed⁴. For instance, Abigail Williams and Betty Parris are accused of dancing in the woods with the other girls; the issue is that dancing, and particularly dancing naked, is not allowed by Reverend Parris in his congregation. Betty, as the daughter of the Salem's religious authority, is aware of this and, thus, pretends to be afflicted. Note, for example, how she starts acting normal (Miller 48) once she knows herself saved. Abigail, Betty, Mercy Lewis, Mary Warren and the rest of the girls know that they cannot save themselves by accusing men, who are above them in the social scale, and so they use “those who do not conform to

³ The political climate in which Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* was very tense. The use of a historical event as an allegory for the crisis of the present has always been one of the most recurring solutions in Literature to avoid censorship.

⁴ It must be noted how the first woman accused in the play is Tituba, the character who faces oppression on a higher level. Tituba is an enslaved foreign black woman, who professes a different religion.

socially constructed gender roles ... or ... who hold social power” (Tunc 267), such as Tituba or Sarah Good, as scapegoats.

Anderson and Gordon argue that “the fact that most witches were women was no accident,” in fact, they believe that “any campaign against witches implicitly entailed elements which were directed against women” (174). On this matter, Ehrenreich and English also put forward the sexism behind the craze of witch hunts:

Three central accusations emerge repeatedly in the history of witchcraft ... First, witches are accused of every conceivable sexual crime against men. Quite simply, they are ‘accused’ of female sexuality ... Third, they are accused of having magical powers affecting health—of harming, but also of healing. They were often charged specifically with possessing medical and obstetrical skills. (10)

In Miller’s play, an example of the first accusation is Abigail Williams. Her character is heavily charged with sexual meaning: how she acts and speaks, and the way she is described suggest that she is very sexual. On the other hand, Rebecca Nurse is the epitome of the third central accusation: she is known for having obstetrical knowledge; since she had been a midwife for most women in Salem and had been accused of killing Mrs. Putnam’s newborn babies. Mass hysteria is one of the main themes of *The Crucible*. This “extreme fear” (*Cambridge Dictionary*) is expressed through the demonization of whatever minority is most prone to being the scapegoat in that particular historical moment due to the anxieties society is facing. In Miller’s play, women are made to adopt this role.

So far, I have provided the causes of hysteria as a collective phenomenon; however, “hysteria” is a word that is strongly linked to women and insanity. I have earlier

exposed the relation made by patriarchy between “madness” and the feminine reproductive system (see page 10). In the words of Elaine Showalter:

Victorian psychiatrists ... [thought] that women were more vulnerable to insanity than men because the instability of their reproductive systems interfered with their sexual, emotional, and rational control ... Theories of female insanity were specifically and confidently linked to the biological crises of the female life-cycle—puberty, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause—during which the mind would be weakened and the symptoms of insanity might emerge. (55)

It is very possible that Miller was aware of this relation between hysteria and the female life cycle mainly because most of the accused in the play fall under the category of menopausal women: Tituba, Rebecca Nurse, Martha Corey, etc.

In relation to this, Lynn Botelho discusses the relevancy of the “triad of fertility” (Botelho 189) used to “describe the female life course (Maid, Mother, and Widow).” Botelho argues that “this view tied woman to the institution of marriage, and her social and legal identity to her relationship with men” even after the passing of her husband. Curiously enough, this triad of fertility has its predecessor in the Greek goddess Hecate⁵, who is often represented with the tree faces (Maiden, Mother and Crone) that correspond to the triad.

The Widow, or the Crone, illustrates the menopausal woman who is unuseful for society in the eyes of patriarchy because, if she is a widow, she is not under male surveillance and her sexuality is no longer tied to maternity. The menopausal woman is regarded as a hysteric as well mainly because she undergoes many physical and

⁵ Hecate is also related to magic and sorcery, as well as fertility, etc.

psychological changes in this transition. Infertile women become the image of anti-femininity, and thus, they are either mocked or demonized; note how Rebecca Nurse or Sarah Good, two of the oldest women, are easily charged for witchcraft.

Hans Baldung's painting *The Ages of Woman and Death* (see Appendix 3) illustrates the "association of post-menopausal women with witches and, in turn, their association with anti-fertility" (Botelho 193). Notice how Elizabeth Proctor is saved from being executed in Act Four because she is pregnant and has not reached menopause yet; she might be a widow from now on, but at least her capability of bearing children is still intact. Nevertheless, neither Tituba nor Rebecca Nurse would have the same luck: they are older and not pregnant. In fact, "*Tituba is in her forties*" (Miller 8) and "*Rebecca Nurse, seventy-two ... white-haired, leaning upon her walking-stick*" (25). From a patriarchal perspective, they are regarded as useless individuals: Rebecca is not "useful" because of her age, and Tituba is a "Negro slave" (8), which situates her at a very low position in the social hierarchy.

Showalter explains that "in this age group, expressions of sexual desire were considered ludicrous or tragic, and husbands of menopausal women were advised [by Victorian physicians] to withhold the desired 'sexual stimulus'" (75). Of course, neither the historical facts *The Crucible* narrates take place in the Victorian period nor the play was written in that moment. Nevertheless, literature uses history and culture as backgrounds and is also influenced by them, which is why these ideas are present in Miller's work. If we put this in relation with Baldung's painting mentioned above, we would agree with Botelho's words "at its most essential, the image proclaims a deep-seated fear of sexual activity in old women" (193). This fear of the old sexual woman causes an anxious response in patriarchy, which reacts by creating a negative image around this type of woman that results in the stereotypical witch.

Furthermore, madness is also linked with poverty because some diseases caused by scarcity of means could lead to many mental health issues that were referred to, as we already know, under the name hysteria (Showalter 54). Actually, according to Showalter, women have always suffered from poverty more often than men, which is why mental health issues affect them on a bigger scale. This is key to understand why some characters from *The Crucible* are condemned: “poor” women as Sarah Good and lower class women as Rebecca Nurse or Elizabeth Proctor could be placed by the author within the hysteric spectrum (related to witchcraft) more easily than wealthier women such as Ann Putnam.

Therefore, keeping all this in mind, an important question emerges: should feminism use the witch and the hysterical woman as symbols for the movement? Elin Diamond “has suggested that hysteria is dangerous for patriarchy, since a self that is unstable cannot be pinned down to any fixed definition, thus offering ... a ‘disruption of categories and systems of meaning’” (qtd. in Núñez-Puente 15). Nonetheless, feminists debate on whether maintaining hysteria as a trope in literary works is beneficial or detrimental to women. For her part, Núñez-Puente explains that “diagnosing [women] as mentally ill is rewarding for patriarchy because it reinforces the sane man/insane woman gender hierarchy” (15). Both theories are interesting in terms of literary analysis. I am of the opinion that the use of hysteria as a typical trait of female characters might be harmful because it would help perpetuate the idea that women are irrational and emotionally feeble. This is particularly problematic when it is done by patriarchal authors who write from a privileged position or have experienced oppression on the basis of gender. Despite

this, the use of hysterical women as characters is liberating when they are reappropriated by feminist authors whose intention is to criticize an oppressive system⁶.

2.2. Witches

In Part One, I used John Putnam Demos' idea of the "typical witch" to identify the main aspects that characterize this figure and how they were formed. In this section, I will put these aspects in relation to *The Crucible* and, especially, its female characters. I have expressed the fact that the traits of the witch as a stereotype in literature revolve around gender, age, marital status, maternity, social class, and personality. Thus, I will analyze how the women in Miller's play embody these characteristics by dividing the characters into two groups: the accusers and the accused.

The group of the accusers is formed by younger women; they are Betty Parris, Abigail Williams, Susanna Walcott, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Warren. The second group is formed by Rebecca Nurse, Elizabeth Proctor, Sarah Good, and Tituba. The former is led by Abigail followed only by Mercy Lewis, whose name was ironically chosen by Miller because it means "clemency" (Espejo Romero 83). The group of young women, the afflicted girls, is caught by Reverend Parris dancing naked and drinking blood in the woods allegedly performing some type of ritual in the company of Tituba in order to kill Elizabeth Proctor. This event led to Betty Parris' "affliction" and the accusation of Tituba for having "enlisted these children for the Devil" (Miller 43). Notwithstanding, Tituba confesses and accuses Sarah Good since this seems the only way to be acquitted. Sarah Good is the perfect scapegoat, because she is only a little higher than Tituba in the social

⁶ Two good examples of this reappropriation of the hysterical woman as a character, also known as the "madwoman in the attic" trope, are Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) and Jean Rhys' novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966).

scale due to her age and her social class as an impoverished woman. This scene marks the beginning of the mass hysteria.

It must be explained how relevant the drinking of blood is. In literature, blood “may signify ... notions of family, race, religion, and gender ... [as well as] sexual means” (Hughes 241); this is due to the identification of blood with other bodily fluids such as the ones interchanged in sexual intercourse. Besides, “witches were supposed to have gotten pleasure from copulation with the devil” (Ehrenreich and English 11). In the play, the only girl who drinks blood is Abigail, the one who had slept with John Proctor. Ehrenreich and English also explain that “the Church associated women with sex, and all pleasure in sex was condemned, because it could only come from the devil,” which turns Abigail into a potential witch, not only for her participation in witch-like rituals, but also for the enjoyment of her sexuality. Miller’s reactionary views on gender cause the punishment of Abigail’s character at the end of the play: she leaves Salem, becomes a prostitute, and her supposed immorality is displayed before her neighbors and the reader.

As stated earlier, Rebecca Nurse is accused of witchcraft for possessing obstetrical skills and for allegedly having killed Mrs. Putnam’s babies. According to Ehrenreich and English “witches were accused ... of giving contraceptive aid and of performing abortions” (11), skills that regulate fertility and reproductive health. This was, and still is nowadays, problematic for patriarchy, since in some cultures it still uses religion as a tool to control women by shaming them for having “sacrilegious [or pleasure-focused] sex” (Botelho 197). Therefore, Rebecca Nurse is extremely dangerous in the eyes of Puritan society because she represents the opposite of a housewife, “witches destroyed; they did not create ... They caused pregnancies to terminate [and] infants to die suddenly” (Botelho 194).

Additionally, Rebecca's character is key to analyze the connection between witches and children because, supposedly, "children [were] thought to have been made ill, or murdered, by witchcraft; mothers apparently [were] bewitched while bearing or nursing children...[and] witches [were] observed to take a special ... interest in other people's children" (Putnam Demos 73). According to Lynn Botelho, as witches were supposed to be old or menopausal women, they grew jealous of "the fecundity of others" (195), which resulted in vengeful acts such as infanticides. Hence, Rebecca Nurse's sentence "for the marvelous and supernatural murder of Goody Putnam's babies" (Miller 71) is related to this image of the witch as a child-murderer.

Therefore, who are the actual "witches" in *The Crucible*? Are they the women accused in the trials or the accusing girls who were caught naked in the woods performing a pagan ritual? The hysteric atmosphere of the play produces a feeling of confusion in the reader, who is no longer able to recognize any witch. The accused women are in fact the main victims of patriarchy; the accusers serve as patriarchal agents, and in so doing, become victims too. The reader might wonder why women turn on women and perpetuate misogyny. The answer is easy: "patriarchal women may become other women's enemies" (Núñez-Puente 16) because "they have been indoctrinated with patriarchal beliefs" (Rosen 24). Arthur Miller uses these "patriarchal beliefs" as an excuse to depict women as their own oppressors in *The Crucible*; that is, the hysteria is caused by women and women also suffer its consequences. Men, such as Deputy Governor Danforth, Reverend John Hale or Judge John Hathorne, are exempted from responsibility, being depicted as mere guardians of the law.

Miller even presents to the reader a male protagonist, John Proctor, who is depicted as a tragic hero. He is the ultimate victim of this hysteria apparently caused by madwomen. Proctor is almost a Jesus-like figure who sacrifices himself for the sins of

others. He has committed adultery in the past with Abigail Williams but is nevertheless described as a noble and honest man. Miller, as an author in the 1950s, is influenced by the traditional double standard on sexuality that is used to categorize sexually active women as “bad,” whereas sexually active men are socially rewarded.

In this play, so influenced by the Christian religious tradition, Abigail and John entail some metaphoric reference to Adam and Eve. On the one hand, John Proctor, as Adam, is virtuous and a hero who suffers the consequences of those around him. On the other, Abigail’s character is parallel to Eve’s: she is the tempter, she drinks blood and, thus, confabulates with the Devil in the same way that Eve did when eating the apple, since both acts can be codified references for sex. Although it is superficially mentioned in the play, Abigail and John’s affair is the event that leads to the downfall of Salem, which in this scenario would signify the Garden of Eden.

Finally, Ehrenreich and English state that “lust in either man or wife ... was blamed on the female” (11). John is never blamed for committing adultery, although Abigail is, since she is presented to the reader as a dangerous and evil young girl. Even John’s wife, Elizabeth Proctor, is blamed for her husband’s sin. She is accused of being cold and frigid with her husband, which “justifies” John’s infidelity in the eyes of the reader. This is another example of how female sexuality is blamed and how women who step out of their role as mothers and carers are seen as being either unfit or evil.

2.3. Female Subjectivity

So far, I have explored how the concept of hysteria is linked to the depiction of witches in Miller’s play. In this section, I will explore the concept of subjectivity in relation to the female characters and I will reflect on how their words can influence the reading of the text. *The Crucible* has proven to be a rather complex literary piece due to

its versatility and high number of characters. The play allows a broad variety of interpretations and several conclusions can be reached from a gendered approach.

The concept of subjectivity is key for a feminist reading of the text. *Cambridge Dictionary* defines “subjectivity” as “the influence of personal beliefs or feelings, rather than facts.” Traditionally, women have been regarded as objects, whereas men have been regarded as subjects, which is exactly what Simone de Beauvoir criticized in her work: “he is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other” (qtd. in Hall 98). Therefore, because of our androcentric society, literary pieces tend to be written from and approached through a patriarchal point of view, which means that female characters are often merely created for the evolution and enjoyment of the male protagonist. Manuel Barbeito explains that “for feminism, the critique of the patriarchal subject and that of representation go together ... In a patriarchal society, men both define the meaning of woman and speak for women. Thus, the task of feminism has been to free women from male representation and to gain a voice for them” (Barbeito 10). This statement can be extrapolated to the literary field, where the male-chauvinistic point of view is still present.

Notwithstanding, the dramatic genre enables a freer access to the action due to the lack of a (unreliable) narrator who may work as a filter. The readers’ more direct access to the information empowers our analysis of the actions and words of each character. Because of this, *The Crucible* has proven to be an intricate piece of writing, because it perfectly encapsulates the reality of interpersonal relationships between neighbors, lovers, married couples, etc. Nevertheless, the author’s principles are key in the building process of a character, as I will prove below; therefore, there are two different dimensions: what the author intended the uninformed reader to see, and what the feminist reader sees.

Nowadays, *The Crucible* has reached a level of autonomy in which it is no longer dependent on the author; that is, the play has almost completely detached itself from its creator. This independence is significant because Miller, as a man in the 1950s, is not precisely known for being particularly interested in gender equality issues; in fact, Miller was more interested in anti-capitalist and communist theories. A superficial reading might suggest that *The Crucible* is a sexist text altogether, and it is interesting to reflect on how Miller did not consider capitalism and patriarchy as two faces of the same oppressive system. Nonetheless, the play offers a wide variety of interpretations and can definitely be approached from the point of view of Feminist criticism. To prove this, I will analyze the words and actions of the most relevant female characters so that I can compare them to what the author wanted to project.

One of these female characters is Elizabeth Proctor, John Proctor's wife. She first appears at the beginning of Act Two (Miller 49-51) and, for what is shown, she seems to have a servile and feeble personality. She is presented attending her husband's needs and barely speaking, although "it is as though she would speak but cannot" (Miller 51) which is perhaps Miller's way of implying that Elizabeth's character hides more than it shows. In this first scene, a feeling of containment hangs in the air and the reader might believe that Elizabeth is somehow scared of her husband, the authority figure in the family in a patriarchal society. Elizabeth Proctor is the example of how patriarchy influences not only the oppressors, but also the oppressed: she acts as a patriarchal agent. Her words are charged with internalized misogyny and the way she acts, particularly as a wife, matches sexist conventions. Elizabeth is not to blame for her own alienation since patriarchy leaves women with very few options to survive. That is, they either adapt themselves and help perpetuate the system, as Elizabeth Proctor, or they resist and run the risk of being socially condemned, as Abigail Williams.

Nevertheless, the conflict between Elizabeth and her husband becomes obvious eventually. From that moment onwards, feminist readers should question everything they see and hear. Miller portrays Elizabeth as a loving, submissive, and virtuous wife, although some traces of manipulative behavior can be found if enough attention is paid to her words. In the first scene of Act Two Elizabeth Proctor's character changes radically, from submissive to manipulative, which raises the question: is she really how Miller presents her? Notice how she uses John's affair against him, all the times she blames the affair strictly on Abigail and how constantly she accuses her. Furthermore, Elizabeth calls Abigail a "whore" (Miller 62) multiple times; that is, she uses Abigail's sexual life to discredit her, which is the epitome of patriarchal behavior.

It is interesting to consider the fact that, despite the examples above, manipulation is a trait that the play clearly associates with Abigail and not with Elizabeth. This association is most likely due to Abigail's supposed sexual nature:

Traditional culture created ... images ... of the seducing woman. And it also created mythical characters that ... use their qualities to manipulate and even destroy people of the opposite sex. In these characters ... women evolve from sweet seducers to merciless tricksters. Women become dangerous when they use their power of seduction to control men. (Mariño Ferro 684, my translation)

The equation between sensuality and manipulation is present in our culture; Miller takes advantage of it and uses it in his benefit to demonize Abigail and idealize Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Proctor is depicted as being perhaps too virtuous; in fact, in Act Four she says that "it needs a cold wife to prompt lechery" (Miller 137), which means that she is blaming John's affair on herself. On the same page, Elizabeth tells John that he is taking her sins upon himself, which is problematic because in the play she, unlike her husband,

never breaks any of the Ten Commandments. This is another example of how patriarchy influences women, who tend to take responsibility for the mistakes of men; the mistake being in this case adultery.

I am of the opinion that Mrs. Proctor projects an image that is quite different from her true self and that her entire personality is an act that she plays for the purpose of surviving in a patriarchal and religious context. I can thus assert that the true manipulative character of the play is not Abigail, but Elizabeth. Such an assertion becomes plausible if the last scene of the play is thoroughly discussed. Apparently, Miller presents to us the following situation: a good wife does not interfere with her husband's decision. However, as I suggested earlier, everything must be questioned if the intention is to escape the patriarchal reading of the text; hence, a slightly different outcome can be drawn from this scene. There is a possibility that Elizabeth wants her husband to be executed and uses his righteous values against him. For instance, after Hale and Danforth ask her to convince John to confess, she deliberately tells him that neither Rebecca Nurse nor Giles Corey, two of the Salem citizens most respected by John, have confessed (Miller 134-35). Elizabeth knows how much John values having a clean name and, in fact, the need to maintain his honor verges on obsession. She delivers that information about Giles Corey consciously, knowing that it would be enough to send John to die willingly. It seems clear that Elizabeth's character is richer than what Miller intended to show; she is more complex than how she first appears and cannot be analyzed without paying attention to her antagonist: Abigail Williams.

From my point of view, the depiction of Abigail seems so biased that the reader must doubt everything about her character. She is the proclaimed antagonist of the play mainly because she personifies patriarchy's deepest anxieties and, thus, she is pictured as evil when her character is read from a patriarchal optic. In the following paragraphs, I

will prove that she is not the villain Miller presents to us. Firstly, it must be kept in mind that her character is constantly transgressing social boundaries and challenging the patriarchal law: she enjoys her sexuality and has premarital sex, shows a harsh personality when women are required to behave gently and submissively, and lives her life as freely as she can.

Abigail is thought to be the starter of the hysteria that leads to the execution of many Salem neighbors. Again, this belief is the result of the demonization of Abigail's character. I have expressed in the previous chapters that sex and demonic activity are intrinsically related in the popular imagination; thus, in a Christian culture ruled by the binary opposition of good/evil, positive traits are embodied by God and negative ones are identified with the devil. This identification influences the way the reader perceives Abigail: a sensual young woman is, or must be according to public belief, evil and manipulative. From a feminist reading of the play, the hysteria is not triggered by Abigail's actions although she takes advantage of it. I have suggested that patriarchy leaves women with very few options, and I think that Abigail sees an opportunity in the mass hysteria to save herself from being accused of witchcraft. She is so corrupted by the patriarchal order that the only chance she has to avoid being hanged is to blame those who are lower than her on the social scale, such as Tituba and Sarah Good. Hence, the women versus women⁷ trope is nothing but the result of patriarchal alienation.

The second scene of Act Two (Miller 148-52) reveals a crucial fact that allows a shift in the understanding of the play. Said scene appears as an appendix in the

⁷ Patriarchy's ways of subjecting women are not only limited to vertical oppression (men oppressing women); in fact, horizontal oppression (between equals) is also key for patriarchal order. Competition among the oppressed reinforces the survival of the system. Simone de Beauvoir's famous quote "the oppressor would not be so strong if he did not have accomplices among the oppressed themselves" summarizes this issue.

unexpurgated editions, which has helped me to detach it from the entirety of the text and study it separately. Abigail and John meet in the woods at night after Elizabeth's arrest and before Mary Warren accuses John of witchcraft. The scene is short, but it is very rich in meaning, particularly when closely analyzing Abigail's words. She claims to be purging the town from hypocrites; she mentions double sexual standards and how Rebecca Nurse shamed her by calling her "loose" (Miller 150). In this scene Abigail is in the company of John, a man she loves and trusts, which means that she is in a distended atmosphere and that is the reason why her words seem more trustworthy. She does not need to pretend or hide, and her true self is revealed here.

In this very scene, John's true self is revealed in the same way as Abigail's. He appears to be an honest man who takes honor very seriously and who does not want to damage his name; however, this scene gives away information that causes the understanding of the play's meaning to shift radically, especially because the attention is drawn to the female character. John reveals his true self and proves to be one of the hypocrites Abigail despises. He threatens Abigail to make her sex life public after she refuses to help him save Elizabeth: "I will tell it! ... You will tell the court you are blind to spirits ... or I will make you famous for the whore you are!" (Miller 152). John slut-shames Abigail for doing what he did: having sex. He becomes a moralist whose hypocrisy and sexist ideas prevent him from seeing that the only questionable behavior is that of himself, who has committed adultery. Therefore, as John Proctor can be regarded as a fraud in the eyes of the reader, his death by capital punishment makes more sense since he is purged for being a hypocrite. Nonetheless, his death along with Abigail's belief that he is being influenced by the hypocrisy of those around him reinforce the above-mentioned idea that John Proctor is a Jesus-like character, because he dies for the sins of the people.

The last piece of information about Abigail is given in the excerpt titled “Echoes Down the Corridor.” On that page, Miller’s words “the legend has it that Abigail turned up as a prostitute in Boston” (Miller 146) are extremely patriarchal because he does not hesitate to brand Abigail as a *whore although there is no actual evidence of it. As I said above, the intention of this section of my undergraduate project is to question everything that is displayed in the play to disengage with patriarchal subjectivity; therein, the alleged evolution of Abigail from “loose” (Miller 46) girl to actual prostitute must be put in doubt as well. Abigail’s fate is problematic if analyzed from a feminist perspective because it implies that sexually active women should be punished, at least in the eyes of society, which is a projection of the author’s patriarchal values. Abigail’s presumed final destiny as a prostitute does nothing but support the idea that patriarchal cultures see women’s sexuality as a means for male enjoyment. The author punishes Abigail’s sexual freedom by turning her into a prostitute, representing patriarchy’s double standards: prostitutes are exploited for male pleasure whilst being one of the most demonized group of women (see table below).

Notwithstanding, Abigail’s goal is met at the end because the hysterical atmosphere allows the hypocrites to reveal themselves. That is, people confess to crimes they did not commit; John Proctor confesses to lechery and shows that he is willing to die if it means to keep his name clean in the eyes of others; Elizabeth Proctor proves to be manipulative; etc. Many of the Ten Commandments are broken and almost all seven Capital Sins are committed by the Salem people, and they are punished for it.

The Crucible seems to be a complex piece of writing; nonetheless, when the play is analyzed from a feminist perspective, the good/evil division is easy to observe because patriarchy stands on binary oppositions, as this table shows:

GOOD	EVIL
Wife	Lover
Mother	Childless
Virtuous	Indecent
Pure	*Whore
ELIZABETH	ABIGAIL

Hence, female subjectivity is an excellent tool to confront the widespread tendency of using a patriarchal mindset while reading literature. The exclusive use of patriarchal subjectivity causes the uninformed reader to stay only on the surface of the work's true potential.

As the action takes place in a Puritan society, the Judeo-Christian context cannot be forgotten. A non-feminist reading of *The Crucible* would suggest that John Proctor is the ultimate victim, and he could even be compared to religious figures such as Jesus or Adam (see page 21). A conclusion about the female protagonists could be made along the same lines; Elizabeth, as shown in the graphic above, would represent every positive trait that is associated with women in Judeo-Christian culture. She is, thus, identified with Mary, a virgin and a mother, two of the most valuable characteristics a woman can possess according to patriarchal values. On the contrary, Abigail would embody the figure of Eve, the opposite of what Mary represents: the ultimate tempter and the cause of the condemnation of Adam (John) and all humankind. In fact, Abigail's words "I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put *knowledge* in my heart!" (Miller 24) (my italics) help strengthen her identification with Eve (Tunc 269) due to the reference to the forbidden fruit of knowledge and its connection with sex. Then, the opposition Elizabeth/Abigail resembles the one Mary/Eve.

If female subjectivity were not considered, *The Crucible* would be regarded as a strongly patriarchal text. Nonetheless, once the approach is changed, very different conclusions are made, namely John Proctor's disclosure as a hypocrite, the duality of Elizabeth Proctor's character, and Abigail William's bold and defying stance. Abigail does not only transgress patriarchal boundaries by defying sexual morality, but she also revolts against her father figure, Reverend Parris, and her husband figure, John Proctor, both expressions of patriarchal control over women. Patriarchal values must not prevent the reader from fully understanding Abigail's character, who proves to be the true scapegoat of the play.

Conclusion

This end-of-degree project has examined what it means to be a woman in a patriarchal society ruled by binary oppositions, where men are at the top of the scale and women at its bottom. In this arrangement, the group of women is in turn hierarchized into the opposition of good/evil. This means that, in the eyes of patriarchy, “good” women are idealized and worthy of respect, whereas “evil” women are demonized. The figure of the witch and the hysterical woman are assigned to the evil group since, as I have stated in the previous pages, they represent some of patriarchy’s deepest anxieties. In the case of witches, they are demonized based on gender, age, social status, breeding ability, social position, profession, and even character. They symbolize patriarchy’s hatred towards women because they are discriminated against based on their (re)production value. Hence, witches are old women, often unmarried and/or childless, who are not useful for patriarchy as they do not produce offspring.

Hysteria is associated with women, especially since Victorian psychiatrists linked female insanity with their supposedly unstable bodies. This idea reinforces sexism and gender-based prejudices, although some feminist authors have achieved to rewrite the madwoman as a liberating trope in their works. The reinterpretation of hysteria, along with the consideration of female subjectivity, can be used against the patriarchal status quo. Witches and hysterical women are usually lumped together because both unsettle patriarchal gender conventions. Madwomen, as well as witches, become dangerous because they transgress patriarchal boundaries and gender roles. They cannot fit into the binary oppositions and their control becomes harder for the patriarchal system.

In addition, the shift in perspective, from male to female subjectivity, allows the discovery of hidden interpretations in literature. Miller deliberately uses a typical male

protagonist, John Proctor, whose patriarchal perspective urges the reader to envision the play from that point of view. In this paper, I have analyzed *The Crucible* from female subjectivity with the intention of providing a different reading. The study of the female characters' words suggest that everything is more complex than it first appears: John Proctor is not as honest as he pretends to be; Elizabeth Proctor proves that the idealization of women is not realistic; Abigail Williams' defiance of gender roles exemplifies that bold women are regarded as evil in the eyes of patriarchy. Therefore, the aims of this project have been met. That is, I have analyzed the depiction of women and female sexuality in Miller's play through the figure of the witch; I have explored the representation of hysteria and its relation to women; finally, I have demonstrated that it is possible to read *The Crucible* from a feminist perspective.

The worth of Arthur Miller as a playwright will always be recognized and valued, and his texts will always be considered reference works in the American literature scene; however, those texts will also exemplify the author's patriarchal standpoint. Miller's sexism becomes noticeable in *The Crucible* when he targets women, especially the old, poor, and mentally unstable ones. His work does not entirely match his anti-capitalist mindset: he treats unproductive women in the same way that capitalism treats unproductive workers. *The Crucible* reproduces extremely patriarchal codes that, despite the possibility of their reversion, perpetuate the subjugation of women in the system. Capitalism and patriarchy depend on each other's forms of alienation and subordination; hence, anti-capitalism lacks any actual worth if it does not work together with feminism towards the emancipation of oppressed groups like women and the working class.

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Appendix 1: Plot summary of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*

ACT ONE:

Betty Parris, Reverend Parris' daughter, is lying unconscious in bed after being caught by her father dancing naked in the woods in the company of other girls. She is suspected to be bewitched. Abigail, her cousin, denies the involvement of witchcraft. John Proctor and some neighbors visit Betty. John speaks with Abigail about their past relationship. Reverend Hale, an expert on witchcraft, arrives and Tituba is accused by Abigail. Hale forces a confession out of Tituba and Betty wakes up and starts accusing women along with Abigail.

ACT TWO:

At their own home, Elizabeth and John Proctor argue about his past affair with Abigail. Mary Warren, their servant, has been in Salem's courtroom all day. When Mary arrives, she informs the couple that Elizabeth's name had been mentioned in court and gives her a puppet. Later, Reverend Hale comes to the Proctor's house to question the couple. Giles Corey and Francis Nurse inform John about the arrest of their wives. Finally, the Marshall comes to arrest Elizabeth, accused of using witchcraft to stab Abigail.

ACT THREE:

Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey are convicted. Giles Corey reveals that the accusations are the result of resentments between neighbors derived from conflicts about the land. Mary Warren, encouraged by John Proctor, tries to confess that the accusations of witchcraft are false. Abigail and the girls pretend that Mary Warren is sending her spirit out against them. John confesses his affair with Abigail to discredit her and Elizabeth Proctor is called to testify against her husband. She conceals the truth about the adultery and is incarcerated again while John is arrested. Hale manifests that he no longer agrees with the proceeding.

ACT FOUR:

In jail, Hale is trying to convince the prisoners to confess they are witches in order to save their lives. Abigail has left Salem. Parris fears the people's reaction because they would not be happy with John and Rebecca Nurse's executions, and he asks Danforth to postpone them in case Hale can make the prisoners confess. Elizabeth is asked to persuade her husband, and John confesses orally. Danforth asks him for proof and makes him sign his confession. John rips it off and is sent to hang. Elizabeth does not try to stop it.

Appendix 2: Character identification in alphabetical order

Abigail Williams: Reverend Parris' niece, who used to work for the Proctor's until Elizabeth Proctor fired her for having an affair with her husband, John Proctor.

Ann Putnam: Elder woman who birthed eight children, of which only Ruth Putnam survived. She accuses Rebecca Nurse of having murdered her babies. The Putnams are one of the wealthiest families of Salem.

Betty Parris: Reverend Parris' ten-year-old daughter, who is allegedly under the Devil's influence at the beginning of the play.

Deputy Governor Danforth: Massachusetts' deputy governor and judge at the witch trials.

Elizabeth Proctor: John's Proctor wife accused of witchcraft by Abigail Williams.

Giles Corey: An old Salem farmer whose wife, Martha, is accused of witchcraft for reading books. He is eventually executed.

John Proctor: Elizabeth Proctor's husband, who has an affair with Abigail Williams while she was working for the Proctor family.

Judge John Hathorne: Another judge involved in the witch hunt.

Martha Corey: Giles Corey's third wife whose reading habit causes her charging for witchcraft.

Mary Warren: The new servant in the Proctor's house and one of the girls in Abigail's group.

Mercy Lewis: The girl who, after Abigail, leads the group of young girls.

Rebecca Nurse: One of the most respected Salem citizens. She is an old woman who is known for having helped many Salem women during labor. She is accused of witchcraft by the Putnams, who in the past had conflicts over land with her husband, Francis Nurse.

Reverend John Hale: An expert on witchcraft called in to Salem to examine Betty Parris. He fights against witchcraft, although towards the end of the play he tries to save the lives of the accused.

Reverend Samuel Parris: Salem's reverend. Most of the Salem neighbors do not like him, especially John Proctor, due to his thirst for power.

Sarah Good: A sixty-year-old impoverished woman accused of witchcraft by Tituba.

Susanna Walcott: One of the girls in Abigail's group.

Tituba: Reverend Parris' enslaved servant from Barbados. She is the first woman accused of witchcraft.

Appendix 3: Hans Baldung's *The Ages of Woman and Death* (1541-1544).

