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Witches across Time: The Image of the
Witch in Katherine Howe's *The Physick
Book of Deliverance Dane* (2012)

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*Just because you don't believe it, doesn't mean that it's not true (Howe, The Physick
Book 340)*

ABSTRACT

The Salem Witch Trials was an important event that took place in 1692. During the trials, although there were both men and women accused and executed, women were the most prosecuted. From the point of view of the accusers, these women gathered the main characteristics of witches. The present research tries to analyze how witches are represented in Katherine Howe's novel, *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*. The novel presents different generations of witches that range from the Salem witch hunt to 1991. To achieve this, the witches included in this novel are going to be analyzed in terms of the physical and personal characteristics typical of witches as well as the reasons why they were accused during the Salem witchcraft trials and the presence of magic.

Keywords: Salem, witch, women, Katherine Howe, Physick Book.

RESUMEN

Los procesos de Salem fueron un acontecimiento importante que tuvo lugar en 1692. Durante los procesos, aunque hubo tanto hombres como mujeres acusados y ejecutados, fueron las mujeres las más procesadas. Desde el punto de vista de los acusadores, estas mujeres reunían las principales características de las brujas. Este Trabajo de Fin de Grado trata de analizar como presenta a las brujas Katherine Howe en su novela *El libro de los hechizos* (2012). La novela presenta diferentes generaciones de brujas desde la caza de brujas de Salem hasta 1991. Para conseguir esto, las brujas de la novela van a ser analizadas de acuerdo con los rasgos físicos y de personalidad generalmente atribuidos a las brujas, así como las razones por las que se les acusaba durante estos procesos y la presencia de la magia.

Palabras clave: Salem, bruja, mujeres, Katherine Howe, Libro de Hechizos.

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INTRODUCTION

The Salem witch Trials took place in 1692 becoming an important event in North American history. During these trials, people from both sexes were accused of witchcraft although women were the most persecuted. They were branded witches because people thought that they worked with the Devil. Witches were mostly characterized as old, poor, bad-tempered women who could be widows or unmarried and they were weak because they could easily be seduced by the Devil.

The present dissertation deals with the representation of witches in Katherine Howe's novel, *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* (2012). The main objective of this research is to analyze the female witches included in the novel in order to determine if they follow the stereotypes of witches or they simply break with them. The characters that are going to be analyzed are descendants of a women accused of witchcraft during the Salem Witchcraft Trials, Deliverance Dane.

The work is going to be divided into three main sections. The first one is going to deal with the concept of witchcraft, the Salem witch trials and the interpretations that many experts have given to this event, and the stereotype of witches, with an emphasis in the connection between the persecutions and women. Then, the second part will provide information about the author, her studies as well as her work. Finally, the third part focuses on the analysis of the female characters of the novel. They are going to be analyzed in terms of their physical characteristics and personality traits; the reasons for being accused of witchcraft or referred to as witches; and the presence of magic showing the positive and the negative use of it. All this information will be useful to determine if Katherine Howe continued with the traditional representation of witches or not.

One of the reasons of the choice of this topic is my own interest in the witch hunt that took place all over the world as well as how the writers try to fictionally reproduce these persecutions. Besides, the family connection that this author had with these trials make me be more interested in her novel. Howe is the descendant of two accused witches from Salem.

1. WITCHCRAFT, WITCHES AND THE SALEM WITCH-HUNT

1.1 Historical context

The Great European witch-hunt, which lasted around 300 years, took place in many countries all around the world such as Germany, England or Italy. However, it also crossed the Atlantic Ocean and it took a special relevance in New England, especially in Salem, Massachusetts. Although the amount of prosecutions was quite insignificant in contrast to the prosecutions of Europe, it had an impact because of the number of accused people and the geographic limitation, finishing with 234 accused people and 36 deaths (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, *Historia y Ficción* 14).

The same happened in the rest of the countries all around the world where women were also persecuted and accused of witchcraft: “Thousands of women were executed as witches, and in some parts of Europe torture was used to extract a confession from them; certainly, their gender often had a great deal to do with it; certainly, their accusers and judges were sometimes misogynists” (Purkiss 7). Besides, it is significant to consider that these accused women of England and the Continent were hanged rather than burnt as most people believe.

Besides, we can consider that this witch hunt that appeared in North American had its origin in the British Colonization of North America in the 17th century. The British colonizers established their political, social and religious ideology as well as the fear of those women who followed Satan. Persecutions were more intense because the Bible was used to solve the conflicts that could appear in the society. The possible practice of diabolical magic and the sermons reinforced the idea of witchcraft (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, *Historia y Ficción* 15).

Together with this belief, it appeared the stereotype of witches. In Salem, there were mostly accused women because they were considered the weakest sex since they could be easily seduced by the Devil. Yet, they were mostly women who were unmarried or single old women with bad reputation. Mostly they were poor causing that many people believed that these women could curse their neighbors because they had no enough money to live (Levack, *The With-Hunt* 133–152).

All of these characteristics and thoughts were crucial to the development of the accusations because the fear of a possible collaboration with the Devil threatened the

stability of the society of that time. Besides, we can see that the prosecutions not only took place in Europe but it was spread to North America with the British colonization.

1.2 An overview of the Salem Witchcraft Trials

The Salem Witchcraft Trials started on February 1692 causing the prosecution and death of many men and women. From the point of view of some experts, there are three main reasons that could explain why this witch-hunt occurred. Firstly, we can highlight the strict religious milieu. Ann Kibbey (134-138) defends that Puritans felt under threat by those who did not practice puritanism encouraging the witchcraft persecutions. Besides, the ecclesiastical authorities who executed both political and religious power, “created a mood of anxiety in all segments of society that made men more aware of the danger of witchcraft in the world and the eager to counteract it” (Levack, “Witchcraft and Gender” 489). Secondly, the political and social instability. In just 20 years, there were at least four different ministers in Salem¹. And this situation generated a lot of conflicts among the villagers that will be reflected in the subsequent accusations of witchcraft. Thirdly, there was a witchcraft case in Boston in 1688 included by Cotton Mather in his work *Memorable Providence* (1690) that may have established a model for the resulting accusations in Salem. A woman known as Goody Glover was hanged because she was accused of afflicting the four Goodwin children. People believed that as there were such good-behaved children, it was nearly impossible than they could feign the affliction (Rosenthal 2). Besides, these children, at certain time in the night, ate and slept for all the night stopping the afflictions.

In very broad terms, what happened in Salem was that on February 1692, a group of girls started to show a strange behavior. This group was initially formed by Betty Parris (the daughter of Samuel Parris) and Abigail Williams (the niece of Samuel Parris). Very soon, other girls joined them. As their conditions did not improve, Samuel Parris called the doctor, William Gigg, to examine the girls and get a diagnosis. The doctor could not explain their behavior and his diagnosis was bewitchment. In order to discover the witches, Mary Sibley, a matron, made a witch cake. With the aid of Tituba and her husband John Indian – both servants at Parris’ house -, they mixed rye meal with the urine

¹ For more information on this topic see Boyer and Nissenbaum *Salem Possessed* (1974).

of the afflicted girls and gave it to a dog. Therefore, if the girls were bewitched the dog will suffer the same afflictions as the girls (Boyer and Nissenbaum 2-3) and the witches could be discovered. The result was that the girls accused three women of the community, Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba, of being the ones who were afflicting them.

On February 29, 1692, warrants began to be sent to the three women accused by the afflicted girls, and the next day Jonathan Corwin and John Hathorne came to Salem to examine them. During the trials, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne denied being witches. However, Tituba confessed. We must consider that those who defended their innocence were the ones who would be condemned whereas those who admitted their guiltiness would survive. Tituba confessed providing plenty of details about their witchcraft practices. Once they were examined, they were sent to Boston jail where Sarah Osborne died on May 10 of natural causes. With the other two women in prison, this episode should have finished but the girls continued with their strange behavior. Besides, Tituba declared that there were more witches in the village because she had seen the names in the Devil's book. As a consequence, more women such as Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey – both respected members of the community- were also accused.

Thus, on March 21, 1692, Martha Corey was arrested. She was not only accused by the afflicted girls but also by her husband. He declared against her because she hid his horse saddle and forbid him to assist to the witchcraft interrogatories. She was sent to jail with Sarah Good's five-year-old daughter, Dorcas (Dorothy) Good. The imprisonment of Martha Corey supposed the acceleration and increase of accusations. The next woman to be arrested was Rebecca Nurse accused by Ann Putnam Jr. who declared that she was afflicting her. Rebecca Nurse declared herself innocence (Rosenthal 90 -92).

Up to that moment, only women were the target of the accusations but soon men were also arrested under the same accusations. The first man accused was John Proctor. He was accused by Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam during one of their fits. He was soon followed by others as the ex-minister George Burroughs, John Willard and George Jacobs. They were executed on August 19, 1692.

Until June 10, 1692, there were no executions, just examinations and quests. However, the governor Sir William Phips decided on June 2, 1692, to create the Court of Oyer (hear) and Terminer (determine) headed by William Stoughton. The first person

sentenced to death was Bridget Bishop. After being in prison since April 18, she was hanged at Gallows Hill on June 10, 1692. Since that day until September 22, the date of the last executions, 19 people were hanged.

What really put an end to the executions and prosecutions was the accusation of Governor Phips' wife. In October of 1692, the families of the already executed and of those who were still in jail requested the immediate release of all accused. The bad condition of the prison threatened the health of the prisoners. On December 1692, *A Bill Against Conjurations, Witchcraft and Dealing with Evil and Wicked Spirits* was accepted by the Massachusetts Bay Colony Authority enacted by the Governor Council. The law, as Marta Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2009) summarized, consisted on the following ideas:

Una ley según la que queda prohibida la utilización de cualquier tipo de magia o a la brujería, pero en la que se establecía que solamente se castigarían con la pena de muerte aquellas acciones en las que se utilizaran de forma deliberada para hacer daño a alguien o para destruir alguna propiedad. En caso de que la magia o la brujería se utilizara de forma inofensiva, el castigo sería de un año de cárcel. (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, *Historia y Ficción* 29)

Eventually, Samuel Parris abandoned Salem because his problems with the villagers were not resolved and a new minister, Joseph Green, came to the city. He was the person in charge of healing Salem society.

1.2.1 Interpretations of the Salem Witch Trials

The Salem Witchcraft Trials are very famous in the history of the United States. This event has been examined and analyzed from different points of view with the result of several interpretations and explanations. The main ones that are going to be presented below use other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, medicine and feminism to analyze the causes of the accusations.

Throughout the centuries, historians have blamed different groups of people, among which, the afflicted girls and the authorities stand out. It is remarkable that the girls started to accuse people when the adults put pressure on them. Jonathan Hale blamed the girls of being responsible for the accusations and executions whereas Cotton Mather firmly believed in the existence of witches and the guiltiness of the girls. Nonetheless, Charles W. Upham (5) defends that the afflicted girls were the only guilty in this event. However, adults were worse than the girls because they manipulated the

girls to accuse their enemies. However, the accusations should have turned against the girls because they were the first in using the supernatural. Therefore, Upham as well as other experts determine that all of them, girls, adults and the judicial authorities, were responsible for the dissemination of the witchcraft accusations.

Medicine has also paid attention to this event, proposing three different diseases as the causes of the behavior of the girls: Ergotism, Encephalitis Lethargica, and Lyme disease. Firstly, Ergotism or Saint Anthony's Fire was caused by ergot poisoning. In 1976, Linda Caporael wrote *Ergotism: the Satan loosed in Salem*. Ergot is a substance present mainly in rye but also in wheat, oats and barley though in lesser degree. So Caporael believed that when the afflicted girls ate rye bread contaminated with ergot, they suffered hallucinations. However, this theory was criticized by Nicholas P. Spanos and Jack Gottlieb (1976) who defended that it could not be possible that only those girls suffered the hallucinations caused by ergot; more people should have experienced this behavior. Secondly, Lyme disease was presented by M. M Drymon as the explanation for the behavior of the girls. The symptoms of this disease were the apparition of red marks on the skin mixed with mental disorders. This disease appeared in a New Yorker group of girls in 2012 whose symptoms can be considered similar to the ones presented by the afflicted girls of Salem. Finally, another disease used to explain what happened in Salem was Encephalitis Lethargica. It was presented by Laurie W. Carlson in her book *A Fever in Salem: A New Interpretation of the New England Witch Trials* (1999) who claimed that this disease could have been spread by animals, especially birds. This can relate to the yellow birds that Ann Putnam and Abigail Williams saw during the examinations.

Another discipline that is used by historians is psychology. Marion Starkey in his book *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Inquiry into the Salem Witch Trials* (1989) set out that the witch-hunt was caused by hysteria. The origin of this mental disorder was the fantasies of the girls who imagined seeing witches maybe as a kind of rebellion against the adults' authority. Besides, Mary Beth Norton in her book *In the Devil's Snare* (2003) defended that King William's war against the Indians was the primary cause. Many people related somehow with this war were refugees in Salem. Consequently, the afflicted girls could suffer a post-traumatic episode caused by the experience of the Indian attack. Norton did not blame the government as being responsible for the prosecutions, but she

thought that they used the Devil to hide the disasters during the war. Therefore, the Devil was the originator of everything.

Finally, a feminist point of view has been given by the historians to explain the Salem Witch-hunts. Carol F. Karlsen, Elizabeth Reis, Mary Beth Norton and Marilynne K. Roach focused their attention on the role of the women. The Salem witchcraft trials could be seen as a gender issue because a huge majority of the accused were women. Carol F. Karlsen wrote *The Devil in the Shape of a woman* (1987) where she presents the role of women in the puritan society of Salem. The accused women were mostly over forty who had past childbearing and childbearing years. They did mostly household chores and took care of children; however, they also cured people or cattle (Kocié “Salem Witch Trials”). Therefore, it is easy to blame these women of witchcraft due to their medical knowledge. Besides, Elizabeth Reis questioned in her work *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan England* (1997) why there were more women accused than men, claiming, as Karlsen did, the persecution of women because they were not subordinated to men. Another relevant woman, Mary Beth Norton presents a socio-political image of the women in *In the Devil's Snare* (2003). She believed that these women had that behavior due to a trauma provoked by the death of their parents during the different conflicts that took place before the Salem trials. However, the judicial authorities reinforced the accusations instead of halting them. Finally, Marilynne K. Roach presents in her work *Six Women of Salem. The Untold story of the Accused and their Accusers in the Salem Witch Trials* (2013) the life of six women that played a role on it. The women are Tituba, Rebecca Nurse, Bridget Bishop, Ann Putnam (mother), Mary English and Mary Warren. Thus, she mixed stories of the accused and the accusers in order to show the situation of women.

1.3 The Figure of the witch and the role of women

We are all very familiar with the image of witches: however, they have changed throughout the centuries. From the very beginning, witches were not seen as an enemy until the witchcraft persecutions took place all around the world. In the ancient culture, witches were venerated as goddesses because they were connected to the Mother Earth (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, “Reescrituras de los procesos” 86). Therefore, these women were

trained in the sacred arts becoming wise women, which are one of the earliest manifestation of what we know nowadays as a witch. Besides, Danika McClure (2016) described the role of these wise women as positive in the society as they were very important during childbearing and in birth because without them, no baby could be born (McClure).

However, the view of women started to change and with it, the vision of witches. They were no longer seen as good women because they were demonized because people believed that these women venerated the Devil. Some historians believed that the origin could have come from the monotheistic religions such as the Hebrew one. This religion saw witchcraft as a pagan practice which disobeyed the laws of the Bible (McClure). King James Bible, for instance, confirmed that witches had existed “but most of the telltale details – the identifying characteristics that set a witch apart from a run-of-the-mill person, and the powers that a witch is supposed to have – do not appear” (Howe, *Penguin Book 3*). Besides, they appeared first in Exodus 22:18 but there were not many details about what or who a witch was and there was not any allusion to the gender, male or female. They appeared, secondly, in Deuteronomy where witches were described as “necromancers who attempt to practice magic, astrologers, and diviners who claim to see the future” (Howe, *Penguin Book 4*). In the present, according to the *OED* online, a ‘witch’ is “[A] woman thought to have magic powers, especially evil ones, popularly depicted as wearing a black cloak and pointed hat and flying on a broomstick.” However, during the witchcraft persecutions, a witch was a person who obtained maleficent magical powers through a pact with the Devil, that is, “witches threatened their neighbors’ well-being, and that they were Satan’s minions” (Karlsen 5).

Rosenthal (22-30) declared that, in New England, a witch was supposed to have supernatural powers and used them to perform *maleficium* into their victims. They were considered responsible for the death of their neighbor’s cattle, the weather changes, births or spectral visits; and they afflicted people with their sights, when they touched their victims or with curses. Besides, witches had associated “animal familiars”, for instance, birds, cats or dogs which acted in their name, or, they could also transform themselves into an animal to afflict their victims, for instance, a yellow bird. Witches could use objects to cause injures or they could predict the future. Therefore, these women had these magical powers due to a pact with Satan, who promised them to satisfy their worldly

desires. However, women did a positive use of their magical powers when they used them to help people. Finally, witches were well-seen in the ancient cultures because people were very superstitious.

1.3.1 Women and witchcraft

1.3.1.1 Why women?

The witch persecutions for witchcraft that took place all over the world can be considered as woman-hunting because if we calculate the number of death people, women occupied the highest position. Christina Lerner in her article “Was Witch-hunting Woman-hunting?” introduced this conception of witch-hunting as woman-hunting. She considered that the persecuted women were those who could threaten the male idea of how a proper woman should behave. In the seventeenth century, women were subordinated to men, either their father, their husband or their children. The fact that women worked as healers or midwives was a threat for men because in their opinion, women disregarded their household chores. However, as Levack (“Witchcraft and Gender” 452) claimed, these women could easily be accused of infanticide because only women were present during labor and if the baby died, people accused the midwife of practicing witchcraft.

Besides, some experts thought that “where men might use knives, women used words” (Oldridge 255) because women could curse people using words. This fact was seen as an equivalent of the physical violence of men. Since witches were described as people “who had renounced Christian baptism, given her soul to the Devil, and was in conspiracy with other witches to overthrow the social order” (Oldridge 255). These characteristics were considered a threat because they could break with the women position, that is, they not only did the household chores but they also worked. In addition, the prosecution of healers was shown as a vindication of men’s authority because, it is believed that doctors were the ones who could practice magic in a positively way due to the fact that, women could use it in a mysterious and harmful way. This happened because wizards were the right-handed men of many kings throughout the time. Besides, “long-standing popular beliefs that linked women with the world of spirits, night-flying, the mixing of poisons, and the casting of harmful spells” (Levack, “Witchcraft and Gender” 458). Finally, with this overview, we can determine that it is highly possible that these

with-hunting could be a woman- hunting because women were little by little occupying the medical profession that was led by men (Levack, “Witchcraft and Gender” 451).

1.3.1.2 The stereotype of a witch

1.3.1.2.1. Sex

The main characteristics were sex and age. In relation to sex, both men and women could practice witchcraft, but there were more women persecuted. It was considered that women were weaker than men. This weakness could cause women to succumb easily to the Devil because people believed that women had lust: “Boguet claimed that the Devil had sexual relations with all witches because he knew that ‘women love carnal pleasures’” (Levack, *The Witch-Hunt* 137).

1.3.1.2.2. Age

In relation to age, old-women over fifty formed the stereotype of accused women. The main reason was that these women manifested signs of anti-social behavior making their neighbors uncomfortable (Levack, *The Witch-Hunt* 142). Besides, they could easily use sorcery because they were physically less powerful than the younger women. We can clearly see this in Rebecca Nurse who, according to some documents had some hearing problems. Together with old accused women, we can find middle-aged women, who were accused of witchcraft because they had had problems with the justice in the past. Nonetheless, children as well as husbands were accused because of their family connection with accused witches, as it happened with Dorcas Good, Sarah Good’s daughter, who was jailed because people thought that this five-year-old girl could curse them and their families because of the loss of their parents.

1.3.1.2.3. Social and Economic situation

These women normally belonged to the lower class. It was supposed that these women could curse the townspeople because they did not help them. Besides, these women were weaker becoming the scapegoats of the society. They were vulnerable to make pacts with the Devil with the intention of improving their economic situation (Levack, *The Witch-Hunt* 149-152). Nonetheless, Tituba and Sarah Good were poor whereas Sarah Osborne was not. Even so, wealthy women were also accused, but they were accused by their neighbors due to political or social conflicts. Furthermore, as

Karlsen (77-84) showed, women who inherited or stood to inherit property were in the focal point because some of these women were single women without children or husband. In Salem, Martha Corey was a wealthy woman who changed the stereotype of accused women.

1.3.1.2.4. Marital Status

In relation to the marital status, widows and unmarried women represent a serious problem for the society of their time. These women threatened the patriarchal powers because they were not subordinated to men. Besides, unmarried women were especially menacing because they could be easily seduced by the Devil, who could be disguised as a man (Levack, *The Witch-Hunt* 145-149). Nonetheless, married women were also accused because of their husbands or children. On the one hand, women could be accused by their families because of internal conflicts in the family. On the other hand, they could be accused by their friends and neighbors in order to damage the status of their husbands.

1.3.1.2.5. Personality

The personality of these women was very rude, uppity and anti-social. “Witches were very often described as sharp-tongued, bad-tempered and quarrelsome” (Levack, *The Witch-Hunt* 152). In New England, women were accused due to their reputation. The parameters of this bad reputation were established by religion and morality, which were cursing, adultery, fornication, abortion and the participation in the Sabbath. Sarah Good, before her accusation in the Salem witch trials, was accused of fornication.

1.3.1.2.6 Work

Generally, during the witchcraft trials, women and men played different roles in society. In relation to work, women were cooks, healers and midwives, but they were mostly relegated to the household. It was considered that they could easily bewitch and kill people with their jobs because they were vulnerable to the practice of sorcery. Cooks gathered “herbs for magical purposes” (Levack, *The Witch Hunt* 138); that is why, sometimes, witches are represented around a cauldron. Healers, also known as wise women, worked with folk remedies, which were considered magical. They were very important in their communities because they were useful when someone was ill; however, at the same time, they were vulnerable to accusations. When someone died or contracted

a disease, healers were in the focal point. The *Malleus maleficarum* claimed that witches could cure and injure (Levack, *The Witch-Hunt* 139). Midwives were in charge during labor of the child birth, until the eighteenth century when male doctors assisted it and women were relegated. The main reason why midwives were accused of witchcraft was because of the death of an infant or the physical deformation of the child.

1.3.1.2.7 Reasons for accusations of witchcraft

In the previous sections, I have presented traits that make some people, specially some women, more vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft. Mostly old and poor women as well as unmarried ones represented that stereotype. Nonetheless, Sarah Osborne was not poor but she lived with her servant. However, in Salem, there were some wealthy, rich and married women who were accused. For instance, Martha Corey. She was married and accused not only of afflicting the girls but her own husband. Furthermore, people whose relatives were accused started to be persecuted. Thus, it happened to Dorcas Good or Rebecca Nurse and her sisters, Mary Easty and Sarah Cloyce, who were persecuted because their mothers were accused of witchcraft. (Rosenthal 176 -178).

Rosenthal (57-66) continued presenting some reasons as the followings: men as well as women were accused of having supernatural strength, causing the death of their neighbor's cattle or afflicting people in their home. Besides, some of the accused had had problems with the justice or their neighbors in the past. Sarah Good was neither old nor a widow, but she had been previously imprisoned due to fornication. As it was mentioned before, midwives were also on the spotlight of accusations, especially when the children were born with a physical deformation or dead. Besides, women knew everything about herbs which they used to cure people or predict the future (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, *Historia y Ficción* 2-3). Consequently, men could be jealous of the success and knowledge these women had and they used their legal power to limit and stop them.

1.3.2 Women and the Salem Witch Trials

The role of women was mainly linked to the domestic sphere, that is, they were subordinated to men. However, they also worked as healers curing people and cattle. Women that carried out these duties were mostly in the focal point. Yet, we can consider that the reason why women were accused was because of the hierarchical organization

that the Puritan society of Salem had (Karlsen 174, 181), that is, only men had the power not only at home but the social, the political and the religious one.

Nonetheless, women were divided into accused and accusers. Carol F. Karlsen (39) determined that “forty-four percent of possessed females were between sixteen and twenty, ‘single-women’ or ‘maids’ (...) another 38 percent were over twenty, while only 18 percent were under sixteen”. However, “nearly three- fourths of non-possessed accusers in the Salem outbreak, for whom *maleficium* was the central issue, were men” (40). In relation to the accused, as I have mentioned, from the very beginning, women that belonged to a lower social position were mostly persecuted, however, the thing changed with the accusation of Martha Corey, who was neither poor nor a widow. From that moment, the stereotype of the accused changed because prosperous women started being accused.

As it was mentioned, both sexes were accused, but, everything started in 1692 with Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne. Tituba and Sarah Good were poor whereas Osborne was not. The things could have ended with the imprisonment of these three women but the affliction continued and Martha Corey was the fourth accused followed by Rebecca Nurse and Elizabeth Proctor who came from “quite prosperous families” (Karlsen 36). However, the prosecutions started passing to the families of the accused, as I have said. Rebecca Nurse and Elizabeth Proctor were also descendants of accused witches. In addition, we can say that many husbands, sons and other relatives were accused due to their correlation with witches. For instance, John Proctor, Elizabeth Proctor’s husband, was a true defendant of his wife but he became the first man accused of witchcraft in Salem.

On the other hand, most of the accusers were girls and adolescents, but as Karlsen (39) said this affirmation can be misleading: “forty-four percent of possessed female were between sixteen and twenty, “single-women” or “maids” in seventeenth- century terms, another 38 percent were over twenty, while only 18 percent were under sixteen” (39). In addition, the afflicted girls did not know all the people that they accused so, we can say that someone suggested the names to them.

To conclude, the vision of witches has changed but the impact of the Salem witchcraft trials in the American history is a fact. Many people, especially women, died during the persecutions and many are the theories that try to give an answer to that event.

1.3.3 The presence of magic

With the terms witch, we can refer to both sexes, but it was considered that women could practice magic to harm people (Levack, "Witchcraft and Gender" 458). Male witches occupied a good position as the right-hand of the King because they were associated with the positive practice of witchcraft. Normally, women were associated with "the spirit world, night-flying, the mixing of poisons, and the casting of harmful spells" (Levack, "Witchcraft and Gender" 458) because people thought that, after a pact with the Devil, they were given magical powers that could be used to curse and threaten their neighbors. Rosenthal (67-68) showed Bridget Bishop, the first hanged woman, as an example of these magical practices. She was accused of consuming, tormenting and torturing her victims. She was mostly considered a witch because she used poppets to afflict her victims. When Bridget Bishop was sent to prison, people found poppets with pins there.

Finally, other sorts of magic had been explained in the previous sections, which are the use of spells and herbs as well as the ability that many witches had of predicting the future. The same happened with Tituba. She came from Barbados and people supposed that she had some knowledge of dark magic from that place. People supposed that magic existed, however, not all women are believed to have magical powers. The spectral evidence was also used in the testimonies of the accusers because they confessed that the accused in some occasions had made an apparition in their rooms while the accused were sleeping. Rosenthal (75-77, 99) presented that Bridget Bishop was also accused of doing spectral apparition and tormented their victims while they slept.

2. KATHERINE HOWE: LIFE AND WORK

Katherine Howe grew up in Houston, Texas. She graduated in Kinkaid School and in the University of Columbia. She started writing fiction during her PhD in American and New England History in the University of Boston. She has written four fictional novels and one non-fictional one. She and her husband, Louis Hyman, an important business historian, belong to a small group of academics and writers, the ‘Springfield Street Table’, which joins to play poker. One of the members of this small group, Matthew Pearl, also Katherine’s friend, has helped her in her career (Howe, “About Katherine Howe”).

Her first novel, *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*, was released on June 9, 2009. It was published in England under the title, *The Lost Book of Salem*. The book was written while Katherine Howe was preparing her PhD. It debuted as #2 on the New York bestseller list in the same year of its publication. The novel is about the witchcraft persecutions that took place in Salem in 1692. The ancestors of Katherine Howe established themselves in Essex County, Massachusetts in the 1620s and she is a direct descendant of two women accused of witchcraft: Elizabeth Proctor, who survived, and Elizabeth Howe, who was hanged (Howe, “About Katherine Howe”).

She continued writing and publishes more fictional works. Her novel, *Conversion*, was published in 2015 with which, in Massachusetts, she won the Massachusetts Book Award for Children Middle-Grade/Young Adult Literary prize awarded by the Massachusetts Center for Book. The novel is about a group of girls in their senior year who began to experience strange fits. The first affected girl is the queen bee, Clara Rutherford, who suffers a tic during a lesson. Then, many other classmates of the protagonist, Colleen, and Clara experience different problems. The situation provokes a chaos and appears in the TV News of the local channel of Danvers. Many doctors interested in the strange disease provide their own hypothesis, but, what is the real cause?

She has recently published her last book, *The Appearance of Annie Van Sinderen*. This novel stops paying attention to witches, as it has been the main topic of the two previous novels, and it focuses on ghosts and mediums. The story is settled in New York City. Finally, Howe has written a non-fictional book, *The Penguin Book of witches*

(2014), that includes the original warrants and documents of the witchcraft trials (Howe, “About Katherine Howe”).

2.1 The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane

This novel, as I have said, was published in 2009 by Katherine Howe. It was the first novel of this author. The story took place in two different settings, Cambridge, Massachusetts and Marblehead, Massachusetts, and dates, 1991 and during the Salem witch trials of 1692. The present time is set in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1991 where a girl, Constance (Connie) Goodwin, prepares her PhD thesis while, one day, her mother Grace Goodwin, calls her. After the call, Connie moves to Marblehead, Massachusetts, where her grandmother’s house is. Her role in this is to take care the house and try to put in order everything because Grace wants to sell it. Therefore, Connie should combine her studies with the care of her deceased grandmother’s, Sophia Goodwin, house. It is old, it lacks any modern technology, it was built with ancient medieval techniques from England. One day, while Connie is tidying up the house, she finds a bible with a key and inside the key, there is a piece of paper with a name written down on it. The name was Deliverance Dane. So, suddenly, she starts to have the need to know more about this woman.

Connie decides to show her discovery to her professor, Manning Chilton, who is a very important man in the history department of the University of Harvard. He persuades Connie to continue her research about this mysterious woman. Following the indications of Chilton, Connie goes to The First Church of Salem where she meets Samuel Hartley, the steeplejack of the church. He helps her to find the records that include something about Deliverance. After hours of looking in christening, marriage, death and annals of memberships records, Sam and Connie look for information in excommunicated records. Finally, the name appears there: Deliverance Dane was excommunicated because she was accused of witchcraft. Once Connie discovers the past of Deliverance Dane, she starts to look for the descendants of Deliverance.

On the other hand, the past time is set in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in between 1692 and 1700. The main character is Deliverance Dane. The novel starts with Deliverance Dane working as a healer in 1681. Unfortunately, the girl that she tried to cure died and Deliverance was accused of witchcraft by the father, Peter Petford.

However, she took advantage on this accusation and brought Petford to the justice in order to clean her name. Eventually, she won the trial. Deliverance married Nathaniel Dane and had a daughter, Mercy Dane. Nathaniel was a kind man who protected her wife and daughter, but, one day, Nathaniel died in a mysterious accident. This led Deliverance and Mercy to take care of each other. Therefore, Deliverance taught Mercy how to be a good healer and midwife. Besides, Deliverance had an almanac that she used in her job. However, Deliverance was not a simple healer or midwife; she had magical powers that she used to cure people.

Returning to the present, Connie discovers in the testamentary records that Deliverance gave a receipt book to her daughter. This book is going to be the key element in her research because it is going to be crucial for the main character. However, she is not the only one who wants to find the book, her professor, Manning Chilton, also wants it because he is trying to prove that the philosopher stone exists. While she is looking for it, she discovers that Mercy Dane, Deliverance's daughter, married a man, Jedediah Lamson, and had a child, Prudence, who also got married and had a child. Her husband was Josiah and her daughter was Patience. Both Jedediah and Josiah died because of a mysterious accident as Nathaniel Dane.

Connie discovers her magical powers accidentally while she was cleaning her grandmother's house. Some of the pieces of paper found in the metal box were recipes whereas the rest of them were magical spells written in Latin and used for plants and people. One day, Connie did magic pronouncing the following spell to a plant: "*Pater in caelo, te oro et obscure in benignitate tua, ut sinas hanc herbam, vel lignum, vel plantam, crescere et vigere catena temporis non vincam*²" (Howe *Physick Book* 267). After that, the plant which was withered, resuscitated. She tries to tell it to Sam and her mother but, the former does not believe her and the latter did not pay a lot of attention to her.

Unfortunately, Sam gets ill and the doctor diagnoses that he supposedly suffers epileptic fits. It is in that moment, when Connie discovers that she is the only one who can cure and save Sam. Therefore, she goes to Radcliffe Library where the book is and takes it to her home, she calls her mother and she confesses that they are descendants of

² Translation: "Father in heaven, we pray and obscurely in your goodness to allow this grass or a tree or a plant, grow and thrive chain is not bound by time"

Deliverance Dane. She uses her magical powers to save Sam, but the originator of everything was Chilton. His ambitious interests have led him to play with magic in the wrong way. At the end, Chilton gets ill and Sam recovers.

Finally, in the past story, Deliverance was accused and hanged but before her death, she had sold the house to the Bartlett's and ordered to build a new house in 3 Milk Street in Marblehead because she wanted the best to her daughter, Mercy. She moved there and worked as a healer and midwife, as her mother taught her. Her daughter, Prudence, continued her steps, but, she was the one who sold the family almanac to a man because she thought that it was the cause of the family catastrophe. The following women descendants, Patience, Temperance Hobbs, Sophia Goodwin and Grace Goodwin lost their husbands too. At the end of the story, Grace decides to move to Marblehead and lives there while Connie, who becomes an important researcher in Colonial history, stays together with Sam.

To conclude, the story mixed history and magic. The things that Connie discovers are useful elements to join both stories. Thanks to them, she discovers that she is the descendant of Deliverance Dane and that she has magical powers too.

3.ANALYSIS: WOMEN AS WITCHES

In this section of the dissertation, I will present how Katherine Howe represents witches in *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*. I am going to analyze the women in terms of physical characteristics and personality traits and the reasons why women could be accused of witchcraft. However, the latter can only be applied in the analysis of Deliverance Dane because she was the only one who suffered the Salem witchcraft persecutions. Besides, I will also analyze the presence of magic in order to show the positive and the negative use of it.

3.1 The stereotype of a witch

3.1.1 Sex

Women were considered weaker than men, that is, they could easily be seduced by the Devil. Women were depicted “trying to take too much power into their own hands; power that Puritan theologians thought should belong only to God” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 105). All the women of the novel were married and had an only child, except Connie, who only had a boyfriend. It is remarkable that all the children were girls, so the magical powers were transmitted to women from generation to generation. Since the husbands of the female witches included in the novel died in strange circumstances, it is possible that this is the price that those women had to pay due to their magical powers. The only man that survived was Samuel Bartley, Connie’s boyfriend. With the aid of magic, she put the water of Samuel in a bottle with nails inside it and threw it to the fire transmitting the illness or curse to the one who had caused the damage to Samuel, who was Manning Chilton.

Another important fact to consider is the weakness of women who followed and succumbed to the Devil. Deliverance in her first trial in 1682 testifies that “she [Susanna Cory] had heard the said Petford tell Goody Oliver that I [Deliverance] must surely have written my name in the Devil’s book” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 69). Signing in the Devil’s Book meant that the woman became a witch and the Devil gave demonic powers like magical powers or appearing in spectral form to her. Therefore, Petford claimed that Deliverance was a follower of the Devil and had succumbed to its seduction. However, Deliverance Dane did not succumb to it because her magical powers were transmitted from generation to generation.

3.1.2 Age

When Connie was looking for information about Deliverance Dane, she imagined her as “an older woman, possibly a widow and possibly with no children” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 117), but Deliverance was a middle- aged women who had an only child, Mercy. In 1682, Deliverance was depicted as “a young woman” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 67). The rest of the female witches in the novel were not old women, they are presented as adolescent or middle-aged women.

Besides, they were widows but the figure of the husband is present through the novel because their loss was a consequence of the magic. In addition, all of them had an only child who will follow the steps of their ancestors. These two ideas, which are going to be explained later, break with the initial hypothesis of the stereotype of a witch that most scholars had established throughout the time and followed Connie when she was looking for information about Deliverance.

3.1.3 Social and Economic situation

Before the arrest of Deliverance, the authorities of Salem arrested Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne.

Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne were two notorious beggars in the Village, forever roving from house to house demanding food or lodging. Grasping, suffering women, they both struck fear into the hearts of the sturdy Villagers; they were avoided, as if their crushing misfortune might be catching. Tituba was an Indian servant in the Parris house, brought up with them from the Barbadoes islands. (Howe, *The Physick Book* 324).

Although these women belonged to the low-class, Deliverance was not as poor as them because she earned money working as a midwife and using her magical abilities. The same happened with the rest of her descendants, they earned their money using their magical powers to save people. Mercy and Prudence followed the steps of Deliverance. Mercy was a wonderful midwife and healer. She had a fantastic ability with the herbs. Prudence was a midwife too; however, she thought that the family almanac brought terrible things to her family so, she decided to sell it. Their jobs permitted these women to live without any necessity. They were not rich but they had enough money to provide for their daughters after the death of their husbands, since all of them used their magical powers to cure people.

As it has been mentioned, there is no information about the female witches that go from Patience to Sophia Goodwin. There is not a lot of information about Sophia Goodwin, but what we know is that she was good with herbs. She had a wide variety of plants in her garden, some of them were poisoning. She had a house where she lived, so we can suppose that she was not poor. Grace, Connie's mother, used her power to cure the aura of people and, at the same time, earned money. Finally, Connie was the one who did not use her magical power as a way of earning a life. She only wanted to pass her PhD and became a teacher.

3.1.4 Marital status

All the women break with the unmarried stereotypes because all of them were married. However, Deliverance as well as the rest of the female witches became widows. In the past, women married very early because they could not work and they were relegated to the household chores. Deliverance Dane was executed after being accused of witchcraft. This fact directly affected Mercy Dane because, at first, she was repudiated by men so she could not get married until the age of 35.

After my mother's trial my neighbours and friends had forsaken my company (...). They would refuse to employ me in my stated trade, nor entertain me in their houses, nor suffer to repast with me, nor batter with me, neither even to converse with me. I did forbear the practice of my trade, being the very offscouring of my society, and do made to make my home in a new town whereupon I resumed my healing work to a much diminished degree. (Howe, *The Physick Book* 193)

Prudence married Josiah and had a child, Patience. There is a gap in between Patience and Sophia Goodwin, but the latter married Lemuel Goodwin. He "had been a plain man, unschooled past high school, not given to books. He spent his entire life in Marblehead, the son of shoe-factory workers" (Howe, *The physick Book* 134-135). No one knew how he died but "beyond that it had been sudden, accidental" (Howe, *The Physick Book* 135). Sophia Goodwin had a daughter, Connie, with her professor of the University. He also died in mysterious circumstances because he went to an expedition and he had never returned. As it has been mentioned, Samuel Bartley is the only 'husband' who survives.

3.1.5 Personality

The rest of women were neither old nor weak because all of them were courageous women who wanted to protect their family. Deliverance Dane accused Peter Petford for defamation. This fact is relevant because she took advantage of her situation. She was a witch, but nobody knew it. So, she confronted Petford and his defamation in a trial. This sort of accusations toward healers was very common because they worked with herbs and people did not properly see the use of these remedies when something bad happened. Petford assured that Deliverance Dane was a witch and she had done sorcery and killed his daughter. Deliverance Dane confessed that she went to Petford's house and attended Martha giving her "a tincture of physick" (Howe, *The Physick Book* 68). At the end of the trial, she was absolved, but she was accused again in 1692.

Mercy also breaks with the stereotype of a witch because she was as courageous as her mother because she took Salem Town to court in order to restore the good name of her mother, Deliverance. At the end of the trial, it was determined that "*Those unfortunates were innocent*" (Howe, *The Physick Book* 195), that is, they were not witches. Prudence, on her behalf, sold the almanac of the family because she thought that it was the originator of all her family misfortunes. She symbolized bravery because she was able to break with her family possession – the almanac- and continued living without any remorse.

Sophia Goodwin, Grace Goodwin and Connie Goodwin also break with the stereotype of witches. They were not troublesome, they lived happily helping their neighbors and trying to give a better future to their descendants.

3.1.6 Work

The female witches of the novel, especially Deliverance, Mercy and Prudence, were midwives and healers. Deliverance worked curing people and she was very well-known there, but she was accused of witchcraft by Peter Petford in 1681 because midwives and healers were vulnerable to these sort of accusations. Furthermore, Deliverance was the owner of an almanac, which had spells and which she consulted to elaborate mixtures to cure people or to predict the future. She was both midwife and fortune-teller. She used many elements as eggs that she put in a bowl to predict the future

and to determine if someone or something was bewitched. For instance, some women as Mary Sibley, the woman who prepared a rye cake for the afflicted girls of the Salem Witch Trials, went to Deliverance because she could predict her the future. Although Deliverance knew what the future was, she preferred to lie to Goody Sibley because nothing good was going to happen. She predicted that she will be accused of witchcraft during the witch trials that were taking place at that moment. Besides, she was ahead of her time because she worked and she was in demand by many neighbors who needed her help.

Mercy was instructed by her mother to be a wonderful healer and midwife. Mercy was seen as a cunning woman due to her talent with the herbs and she earned a living attending and curing people.

I am able with plants and herbs, to assemble tinctures for the sick, or for women in the childbed, and to perceive what ails them to a true extent, to give counsel and to soothe their sufferings as well as can be done. For this work I receive goods in trade, or sometimes currency. (Howe, *The Physick Book* 193)

Her talent and knowledge was transmitted to her daughter, Prudence, who followed the steps of her mother and grandmother.

The next woman in the family line, Sophia was also very good with plants because, in her garden, she had a wide variety of them as well as many spells for plants kept in a metal box. Her daughter, Grace, inherited that ability to manage with the plants because she cultivated them in her garden of Santa Fe, Mexico. However, at the same time, Grace was opposed to her mother because she was a very bohemian woman.

Grace had complicated ideas about the relationship between weather and consciousness, for plants as well as for people. She liked to claim that electromagnetic fields caused by changing weather patterns could directly impact the auras of people, even changing their personalities or their abilities. Connie usually met this idea with patience, if not agreement. Grace had complicated ideas about most things, actually. (Howe, *The Physick Book* 164)

In the case of Connie, the last of the witches, she was an investigator of the American History without any interest in plants or medicine, although she had little knowledge about plants. However, she discovered that she could predict the future with

the aid of a sieve and scissors while she was asking yes/no questions. This was very useful when Samuel fell ill.

3.1.7 Reasons for accusations of witchcraft

As we have seen, the two most relevant women that represent the Salem Witchcraft Trials and 1991 are Deliverance and Connie. Deliverance suffered the persecutions of her times. As we have already mentioned, in 1692, there were many reasons for accusing women of witchcraft. Deliverance Dane fulfilled the main reasons during her prosecution. The first reason was the sign in the Devil's book, which had already been presented. This reason showed the weakness of women to succumb to the seduction of the Devil. Besides, women that had had problems with the justice in the past as well as those women with problems with their neighbors started to be in the focal point again. Deliverance was one of these women. She was accused of witchcraft by Peter Petford and Sarah Oliver in 1682. She testified against her saying that Deliverance could know if cattle were bewitched and she also cured people using a book. Sarah Oliver said that,

One John Godfrey did tell me at this instant month that he had a calf which were wasted and afflicted and asked the said Goody Dane whether the animal was sick. She took water of the calf into a bottle and boiled it in a kettle upon the fire, whereupon she told the said Godfrey that his calf would be well though it was bewitched. And thus the calf was well. (Howe, *The Physick Book* 72)

During Tituba's interrogatory, Peter Petford "asked if Tituba ever walked with you [Deliverance]" (Howe, *The Physick Book* 325); so, she was arrested in 1692 and sent to prison.

Another reason was having the Devil's teat. On June 28, 1692, a group of women went to collect Deliverance because she was going to be examined. The group of women headed by the midwife Mary Josephs took her to Hubbard's house where Deliverance was going to be examined. She undressed herself and a group of women started to examine her in order to find the telltale mark, which confirmed that Deliverance was a witch. At the end, one of the women said, "you have the witches' teat, Livvy Dane, and at the very cusp of your accursed womanhood, too" (Howe, *The Physick Book* 377). In order to defend herself Deliverance said: "How many babes ha' you caught, yet you know not the God-made body of your women! I am made in God's image, and so are you! Hand

me a candle and I shall find this witches teat on the lot of you!” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 378).

The female witches between Deliverance and Connie were free to do magic as they want. Mercy and Prudence practiced magic without any problem. For instance, Prudence cured a boy who was bleeding in the street.

She placed her hand on the boy’s hot cheeks and looked him full in the face. (...) Under her fingertips the boy’s skin flushed deep crimson, and her let out a tiny whimper. She whispered a short string of words under her breath, and then released him. (...) The boy slowly reached up to touch his face where the bright red welts were already receding into nothingness, and he blinked, eyes clear. (Howe, *The Physick Book* 225)

After that, Prudence was never accused of witchcraft in contrast to her grandmother. Besides, Sophia and Grace also practiced magic without any problem. Grace, as it has been mentioned, worked curing the aura of her customers, and she has never been accused or marginalized for her power.

Connie could do magic without any repercussion because, as the novel shows, the inhabitants of Salem celebrate the Salem witch hunt dressing up and simulating doing magic: “[A] small child ran up on quick feet, an overlarge black witch hat covered in purple spangles balanced on its head. ‘Abracadabra!’” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 174). Wicca is presented in the novel as something that is part of Salem’s daily life. It is defined by the *OED* online as “[A] form of modern paganism, especially a tradition founded in England in the mid-20th century and claiming its origins in pre-Christian religions” (“Wicca”). In the novel, we can find a Wicca shop named *Lilith’s Garden: Herbs and Magickal Treasures* which was visited by Connie twice.

Besides, in the shop, there were withered herbs in bottles labelled by dates and names. Connie had most of these herbs at home because they had belonged to her grandmother, Sophia. She used them to cure her boyfriend, Samuel Bartley. However, when she did the spell, she was very careful because she did not want to be discovered. At the end, she was not discovered and continued doing magic without any worry.

Finally, what we could confirm is that all the women in the novel used magic with a positive purpose, that is, to help people. Besides, there is a clear contrast between the women from the past, who had to be careful when they used their magic powers, and the

women from the present and in-between generations who can do magic without any problem because the concept of magic is more natural nowadays due to the fact that people believe in fortune-telling or mediums.

3.2. The presence of magic

Deliverance and the rest of the women can be considered witches, but they did not use their powers to cause misfortunes to their neighbors and friends. Deliverance used magic to cure people, however, she was not able to cure bewitchment. She felt guilty of the death of Marta Petford, “for she *were* bewitched, you see. Of a sort. And the physic that I chose spoke to the wrong ailment” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 410). Mercy, on her behalf, used her magical powers with the intention of saving her mother from the sentence. However, her efforts were in vain because Deliverance preferred staying in the cell. Deliverance was not worried about the sentence or her worldly life but about her eternal soul as we can see in the novel when Mercy tried to persuade Deliverance to escape from her fatal destiny. “To ask her another to cast aside eternal life and the hope of divine salvation, that they might have a few paltry years together in this one?” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 413).

Grace, for instance, did a positive use of her magic because she casted a spell with the intention of protecting her daughter, Connie. One day, when Connie arrived at her grandmother’s house in Marblehead, she discovered in the front door a strange symbol on it. Next to the symbol, we can find the following message: “about two feet in the diameter, appeared a circle freshly burned into the wood. (...) the word *Alpha*, (...) *Meus*, (...) *Adjutor*, (...) *Omega*, (...) *Agla*, (...) *Dominus*” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 220-221). As I have said, it was drawn by Grace because she wanted to protect Connie in her discovery.

“Mother,” she said, “do you know who put that burned symbol on my door?”

(...)

“I’ll tell you this much,” Grace said. “No one—and I mean *no one*—wants to keep you safe more than I do.” (Howe, *The Physick Book* 366)

Yet, Connie also used her magical powers with a positive purpose, saving Samuel, as we have already seen.

As we have seen in the first part of this dissertation, there were also men accused of witchcraft. In the novel, Professor Manning Chilton used magic but not in the right way. Chilton was an ambitious man who wanted to find the philosopher stone and its components. He knew that Connie and her research would give him the key of his investigation so, he always required her more and more things.

Nonetheless, after the hospitalization of Samuel Hartley and the approach of the date when he had to present his discovery, Chilton followed Connie everywhere. She was looking for the almanac of Deliverance Dane, which was donated by Prudence in 1760. The day when Connie was doing the spell to cure Samuel she said: “Tetragrammaton! Adonai! Heavenly Father I beseech thee, bring the evildoer unto me! (Howe, *The Physick Book* 431), suddenly, Chilton appeared at Sophia Goodwin’s house. He was the wizard who caused the illness of Samuel because Chilton thought that Samuel was a distraction for Connie. Chilton only wanted the almanac. However, when Connie finished the spell the fits that tormented Samuel passed to Chilton. The professor was forced to abandon his position in Harvard University and he is a good example of the bad use of magic.

Finally, the ability of having magical powers and the subsequent positive use of them can have a disadvantage which can be the death of the husbands. However, these characteristics suppose a change in the representation of witches.

4. CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude this research by saying that the women presented by Katherine Howe in *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* (2012) completely break with the traditional view of witches as old, troublesome, weak, poor women. Of course, they were witches with magical powers, however, they did not fulfill the traditional stereotypes. They break with the stereotype because of their knowledge and their skills; they mostly worked as midwives or healers who took advantage of their knowledge in childbearing and herbs. Yet, they combined their knowledge and skill with the practice and use of magic to help their friends, neighbors, and especially their family, so they had nothing to do with the traditional view of witches. They were not old women, they normally were middle-aged women who had been married with a man and had an only child.

As it has been presented, Deliverance Dane was accused of witchcraft. She was a widow and had an only child. However, her economic and social status has nothing to do with the stereotype because she was neither poor nor rich, she had enough money to live. Besides, she took advantage of her knowledge dedicating her life to be a midwife, a healer and a fortune-teller. Nonetheless, the problem was that these professions were in the focal point when a tragedy happened, for instance, the death of a child.

All her descendants followed her steps because all of them continued using magic and teaching what they knew about herbs and childbearing, except Connie, who had lived away from her family origins. However, once she discovered her magical powers, she tried to do the best with them. As we have seen, her first step as a witch was to cure Samuel Bartley of his bewitchment, becoming the first women of her family stopping the curse that affected all the men somehow related to the Goodwin women.

In general, we have seen how Katherine Howe presents a different vision of the witches trying to change the figure of the witch. Besides, other elements that also break with the traditional vision of a witch are settled by Howe (2009). In the novel, she included witch hats, brooms and cats to characterize witches nowadays. Finally, female witches were, are and will be a very interesting issue of study because new theories are constantly appearing.

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