CONNECTING WOMEN

National and International Networks during the Long Nineteenth Century

EDITED BY

Barton C. Hacker, Joanne Paisana, Margarida Esteves Pereira, Jaime Costa, and Margaret Vining

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of Margaret Simmons Vining (1933–2018), curator emerita of armed forces history at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. She was a woman of grace, character, and learning whose memory we treasure.

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THE SALEM WITCHES (RE)CREATED AS NINETEENTH-CENTURY ROMANTIC HEROINES

Inês Tadeu F. G.

Abstract. In the nineteenth century, women remained invalidated as authors, and their work was often reviewed as unremarkable. Despite being dismissed both as authors and historians, they engaged creatively in retrieving the archival narratives about the Salem witch hunt of 1692. They contributed, on the one hand, to the preservation of a transcultural memory of the women as witch from Salem and, on the other, to the construction and recreation of the countermemory of the Salem witch hunt as a significant cautionary tale in nineteenth-century America and beyond. This chapter discusses the relevance of nineteenth-century historical fiction as a medium for the portrayal of the countercultural memory of the woman as witch and her recreation as the romantic witch-heroine in the historical novels *Salem: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century* (1874) by D. R. Castleton, the pen name of Caroline Rosina Derby, about Rebecca Nurse and *Martha Corey: A Tale of the Salem Witchcraft* (1890) by Constance Goddard Du Bois. However, the appropriation of these Salem women as witches by Castleton and Du Bois goes beyond mere historical representations. Nurse and Corey are mimetically recreated and represented as either victims of discrimination or romantic woman-as-witch heroines. The work of Castleton and Du Bois further suggests that, like their counterparts, the authors were firmly present in the nineteenth-century network of American fictional "herstories" as both writers and vicarious characters. While endeavoring to counter the dismissal of the woman as witch from Salem's herstory, Castleton's and Du Bois's additional depictions of her as a romantic heroine

offered both themselves and their contemporary female audience a stirring solace to slacken the clasp of their own "corseted" standing in society. Indeed, Castleton and Du Bois, like several others, may have also made the nineteenth-century American woman more mindful of the likelihood of a shift in her own social and cultural status quo.

The Salem Witch "Delusion"

The term *delusion* was extensively used by Charles Wentworth Upham in connection with the episode of the Salem witch hunt. According to Sarah Ferber, in the original Dewey system, in the "major section entitled 'Philosophy' (100–199), the 130s subheading of 'Anthropology' leads to sub-subheadings of 'Mental physiology and hygiene' (131) and 'Mental derangements' (132) and then 'Delusions, witchcraft, magic' (133). Thus, beliefs in magic and witchcraft (and implicitly in demons) are directly aligned with delusion but are also proximate to mental illness."[1]

The Salem witch hunt began in the early winter months of 1692 when two girls in the household of the newly appointed Puritan minister Samuel Parris of Salem Village began to suffer strange convulsions. They were his 9-year-old daughter Elizabeth Parris and his 11-year-old niece, Abigail Williams. William Griggs, the resident physician, after examining the girls, concluded that they were exhibiting all the signs of possession begotten by witchcraft. For over a month, Parris prayed and fasted, but then he instructed his daughter and niece to name their tormentors, and so they did. A few weeks later, there were more afflicted girls. Their accusations increased in number and swiftness, spreading from Salem Village to neighboring communities, and before long the entire county of Essex in Massachusetts was affected.[2] Between January 1692 and May 1693, approximately 183 townsfolk and villagers in Massachusetts were charged with being witches, a crime punishable by death under the early modern English common law. The Witchcraft Act of 1604 came into effect within a year of James I's accession to the throne of England. Harsher than previous versions, it made causing harm while resorting to magic—*maleficium*—even if it did not result in or lead to death, a capital crime. It also decreed death for anyone found guilty of committing for a second time a punishable offense using magic. It also proscribed the use of dead bodies in magic or the keeping, as opposed to the conjuration, of spirits.

In effect, it made it much simpler to convict anyone suspected of witchcraft, as the burden of proof was much reduced.[3] Of the accused, 114 men, women, and children were arrested and imprisoned for months. Another 43 people were tried, of which 27 were convicted and sentenced to death. Nineteen people were hung by short drop. An elderly man, Giles Corey, was pressed to death with stones for refusing to enter a plea. Eight people died in prison, including two nursing infants of the jailed women and a little girl. Six of the condemned were reprieved, whereas 16 others who had the financial means and could count on the help of family relatives of good social standing managed to escape prison entirely. Confessed witches numbered 46. Confession released people from their punishment and restored them to "the body of God's people." For the Puritan magistrates, the purpose of the civil courts was fundamentally a religious one, and the execution of justice was carried out according to the righteous word of God, hinging on the ritual of confession. The people charged with crimes appeared before the magistrates and were expected to acknowledge their guilt, reveal the truth, and exhibit repentance.[4] For the Puritans, confessing to the sin and crime of witchcraft was important, as Elizabeth Reis explained:

> Confessions had to be accompanied by sincere contrition. . . . The Salem witch trials epitomize the kind of confession required of accused women. Because of the supernatural nature of the Devil's perceived powers, witchcraft was a special case, difficult to prove without a confession. But confession, whether voluntary or coerced, had to follow certain prescriptions [as i]t was the only way to avoid damnation.[5]

Two people who were found innocent were unable to pay their jail fees and were forced into indentured servitude. By early October 1692, the newly appointed governor, William Phips, halted the trials, and by 12 May 1693 he issued a general amnesty to all the accused and convicted that were still imprisoned.

(Re)creating Goody Nurse and Goodwife Corey

Among the executed women were Rebecca Towne Nurse and Martha Pennoyer Rich Corey. Although they were respectable Puritan matriarchs by all accounts, Ann Putnam Jr., a member of their church, named them both as her spectral torturers. Rebecca Nurse was the oldest child of William Towne and Joanna Blessing and was born in Great Yarmouth, a coastal town in Norfolk, on the east coast of England. She was baptized at St. Nicholas Minster on 21 February 1621 and lived in Great Yarmouth until she was 16. She emigrated to America with her parents

and her five siblings aboard the *Rose of Yarmouth* in 1637, arriving in Boston later that same year. Two more Towne children were born in New England, where the family settled on a farm in Salem Village. Around 1644, Rebecca Towne married Francis Nurse—"Old Francis"—an English yeoman. As "a member of the mother-church in Salem [Rebecca Towne] had never transferred her relations to the village church, with which, however, she had generally worshipped, and probably communed."[6] At the time of the witch hunt, the 71-year-old widowed matriarch of the prosperous God-fearing Nurse family was perceived by friends and neighbors alike as "the very essence of what a Puritan mother should be. . . . When [she] spoke it was as if one of the grand women of the Old Testament were speaking. . . . In her home life she had resembled the wise woman of Proverbs."[7]

Nurse was first arrested on 23 March "for having practiced certain detestable arts called witchcraft upon Ann Putnam, Mary Walcot, Elizabeth Hubbard, and Abigail Williams."[8] After being excommunicated, hers was one of the first cases tried by the court when it resumed its sittings later in June. A jury headed by Thomas Fisk heard the evidence and returned a verdict of not guilty. However, her initial acquittal was soon overturned largely because of spectral afflictions that had befallen Ann Putnam between 19 and 24 March 1692. On 19 July, after her incarceration, Nurse was one of five women sentenced to death for the crime of witchcraft and hung on Gallows Hill.[9] Charles Wentworth Upham, nineteenth-century New England historian, Salem mayor, congressman, and Unitarian pastor, in 1867 published the first substantial history of Salem to date, and it was the first history to organize the scattered records into a coherent and detailed reconstruction of the memory of the trials.[10] About Nurse, Upham stated,

> there is no more disgraceful record in the judicial annals of the country, than that which relates the trial of this excellent woman. . . . The case of Rebecca Nurse proves that a verdict could not have been obtained against a person of her character charged with witchcraft in this county, had not the most extraordinary efforts been made by the prosecuting officer, aided by the whole influence of the Court and provincial authorities. The odium of the proceedings at the trials and at the executions cannot fairly be laid upon Salem, or the people of this vicinity. But nothing can extenuate the infamy that must for ever rest upon the names of certain parties to the proceedings.[11]

In D. R. Castleton's *Salem: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century*,[12] Rebecca Nurse is portrayed as a far more outspoken woman than the trial records allow us to infer when she spontaneously utters,

> "Afflicted children! Indeed!—afflicted fiddlesticks, I say," quoth Goody Nurse; "I don't believe a word of it; I believe it's all shamming. If either of my little maids had trained on so at their age, I guess I would have afflicted them with the end of my broomstick. I would have whipped it out of them, I know."[13]

Indeed, in a whole chapter detailing Rebecca Nurse's ordeals as an accused witch, the narrator underlines, "Mrs. Nurse . . . was a free-spoken, active body. . . . No doubt Mrs. Nurse had been free in the expression of her sentiments upon these subjects—it was the nature of the woman to be so."[14] However, "Mrs. Nurse [is also] the purest, truest, humblest Christian, and blameless in character."[15]

Giles Corey and Martha Pennoyer Rich Corey lived in the southwestern corner of the village of Salem as prosperous farmers. In 1692, Giles Corey was nearly 80 years old. Pious but short-tempered, over the years he had been served with lawsuits, and worse. Born in 1612, in England, he went to New England some time before the 1660s. With his first wife, Margaret, he had four daughters. She died, and in 1664 he married Mary Britt, who also passed away in 1684. Already an old man, he took another wife a year later, Martha Rich, a widow.[16] Martha Rich was 25 years his junior—she is thought to have been in her sixties and the widow of Henry Rich when she married Giles. While still a young woman, she had borne a mixed-race son out of wedlock who still resided in the Corey household.[17] Nonetheless, she had long been a good standing member of the Salem Town Puritan church. In addition, by the time of the Salem trials it had been a year since she had also been welcomed into the Salem Village congregation.[18] She was a respected older woman of the Puritan faith because of her perfect attendance at meetings and her inflexible prayer habits. She was not well liked, however, known for being far too outspoken and opinionated.[19] As Upham details it,

> when the proceedings relating to witchcraft began, she did not approve of them, and expressed her want of faith in the "afflicted children." She discountenanced the whole affair, and would not follow the multitude to the examinations; but was said to have spoken freely of the course of the magistrates, saying that their eyes were blinded, and that she could open them. It seemed to her clear that they were violating common sense and the Word of God, and she was confident that she could convince them of their errors. Instead of falling into the delusion, she applied herself with renewed earnestness to keep her own mind under the influence of prayer, and spent more time in devotion than ever before.[20]

According to Marion Starkey, Martha Corey's scepticism about the whole course of the Salem witchcraft hunt bordered on heresy.[21] Upham states, "It is proved conclusively by the depositions adduced against her, that her mind was wholly disenthralled from the errors of that period. She utterly repudiated the doctrines of witchcraft, and expressed herself freely and fearlessly against them."[22] Ultimately, this outspokenness would lead to the accusations of witchcraft against her, resulting in her long imprisonment and excommunication and, similarly to Rebecca Nurse, hasten her demise. On 22 September, having been sentenced to death for the crime of witchcraft, she was also hanged on Gallows Hill.[23]

In Constance Goddard Du Bois's *Martha Corey: A Tale of the Salem Witchcraft*,[24] the protagonist is a younger woman who is characterized by her wit, her extensive knowledge of herbal medicine, and her trust in divine inspiration through prayer: "I went, therefore, to my closet, and prayed for guidance, and it came as it always does."[25] She is also portrayed as the sort of intrepid woman who "was dismayed by her arrest, but not cast down. She looked forward to a speedy vindication when she should be brought face to face with her accusers."[26]

Underlining the gross miscarriage of Puritan justice against both Nurse and Corey, Upham notices,

> there was this difference between Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey: The latter was an utter heretic on the point of the popular faith respecting witchcraft; she did not believe that there were any witches, and she looked upon the declarations and actions of the "afflicted children" as the ravings of "distracted persons." The former seems to have held the opinions of the day, and had no disbelief in witchcraft: she was willing to admit that the children were bewitched; but she knew her own innocence, and nothing could move her from the consciousness of it.[27]

The Woman as Witch from Salem

Witch-hunting was ever present in seventeenth-century New England. The mostly Puritan colonists remained rather close to the English Tudor and Stuart tradition as far as their beliefs about the woman as witch were concerned. The Salem clergy, congregation members, and villagers shared with their contemporaries in England the same transcultural memory about the woman as witch. In early modern demonological and strixological literature, a witch had the powers of metamorphization, transvection, spectral projection, keeping familiars–incubi and succubae or demons in the shape of animals—and causing harm—or *maleficia*. Also, "the witch was your spouse, your clergyman, your teacher, your doctor, your cousin the nun, or even your child."[28]

Suggesting disparagingly that the author is very much acquainted with the English woman as witch, the narrator in *Martha Corey* comments,

> It was not necessary at that time for anyone to discuss the premises in the theory of witchcraft, for it was as generally understood and believed in as is any accepted scientific theory to-day. Accepting the credibility of such cases, occurring by hundreds in Europe, and in scattered instances in America, the question was only, Is this a similar and well authenticated case?[29]

The crime of witchcraft in early modern New England was also primarily linked to women and womanhood. The suspected witches were perceived as either "weak-minded wenches, easily misled by the Great Deceiver, or ill-tempered hags who asked the Devil for assistance"[30] to perform their *maleficium*, that is, to cause harm to others by preternatural means. For sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century Christians, the term *supernatural* referred to the realm of God and denoted "the activity of his grace." Witchcraft, ghosts, and the power of the devil constituted the *preternatural*. This category related to what occurred beyond the normal bounds of nature and ranged from the activity of the devil himself and the demonic dealings of magical agents such as witches to the activities of all spiritual agents other than God and his immediate servants: the angels, the disembodied souls of the dead, and demons. However, since the nineteenth century, the use of the word *supernatural* relating to the divine has fallen into disuse, and most contemporary readers understand this term as signifying beings other than God.[31]

Besides inflicting harm on neighbors and their property, the woman as witch committed apostasy for she entered into a covenant with Satan. The Puritan ministers were thus particularly wary about the woman as witch being the Devil's agent who ensnared members away from their congregations. As a woman as witch, you were an enemy of both New England society and the Puritan faith.[32] Also in Du Bois's *Martha Corey*, Lady Phips, governor Phips's wife, laments how

> a terrible calamity has fallen upon this land [Salem]. Good and learned men believe that Satan has won many to sell their souls for the sake of possessing the power of a witch, and that dwellers in our villages, and members even of our churches have joined the evil covenant. It is a fact plain to me that terrible injustice has been done by the superstition which engulfs the innocent with the guilty, and I can hardly believe that any are guilty of this charge.[33]

Not Forgetting the Salem Witch Hunt

The transcultural memory of the Salem witch hunt of 1692 has notoriously commanded the attention and challenged the creativity of many American writers, men and women alike, in both fiction and nonfiction. Indeed, "popular impressions of the subject have been shaped more by fictional than factual accounts."[34] The fictional and nonfictional literary construction and recreation of American cultural memories has been ongoing since the European colonization.[35] This controlled and culturally contained construction of a site of American memory was pervasive in the nineteenth century, mainly between the War of 1812 and the Civil War.[36] The publication of a considerable number of historical novels was "central to the development of the American culture at that time."[37] These were the literary sites of memory that supported the architecture of a national American culture and identity as individuals responded to "the collective desire for fictional commemorations of earlier stages of colonial and national U.S. American History."[38] Post-Revolutionary Americans set out to inculcate a "unifying set of national values" and contributed to the "construction of a collective national memory" in the early United States.[39] Alternatively, in nineteenth-century America,

> memory was needed not simply to understand the past: it had to relate to who one was in the present. But the more a person felt the need to insist on memory and to construct his or her past, the more it seemed to be in danger. The wish to tell one's story was met by the anxiety of being unable to do so, even though there was a story to tell. Memory was celebrated but in constant crisis.[40]

The Salem witch hunt was an example of such a story, widely known not only regionally in New England but nationally as well. Reassembled mostly through memory and imagination, the "mythology that is going to constitute the history of the Salem Witchcraft trials"[41] became an inescapable portion of the cultural countermemory of the American colonial past. This was due not only to the existence of a large body of contemporary written materials, such as the trial transcripts and published commentary that recorded the events, but also to the later nineteenth-century historiographical and literary constructions and recreations. Thus, I agree with Marta Rodríguez that the nineteenth century should be "the starting point for any analysis of the mythology that has been created around the Salem witch hunt."[42]

The trials are very well documented. The records are uniquely detailed to the extent that there are three or four separate accounts of some of the pretrial examinations and the statements of the accusers and the accused. Marion Gibson suggests that the abundance of surviving records may be the result of the legal traits of the Salem court, namely, its central location in the small community where all the accusations arose and the contribution of many ministers and other godly and well-educated people from both within and outside that community. Also, Puritan religious beliefs held that not only did you often examine all visible manifestations of God's providence, but you also wrote about them, wrote to others about them, and reflected on and debated them.[43] So as well as court records, the notebooks and letters of magistrates, clergymen, and other literate people were also made readily available for historical research shortly after the events took place. Moreover, though the texts about the Court of Oyer and Terminer were lost, the bulk of the pretrial and open records was not.[44]

The original records of the Salem witchcraft trials are a unique medial source in that they provide modern scholars with a better insight—though perhaps not an accurate one[45]—into the early American Puritans' views on both the events that led to witchcraft accusations and also which criminal procedures applied to the crime of witchcraft.[46] Nineteenth-century historians thus emphasized the accusatorial tone of the early trial records with little care for their detailed content. As Gibson points out, they "preserved, too, an anxious concern with the inclusive and (as they saw it) worryingly democratic nature of American justice. . . . But they buried the actual texts under thick layers of myth that have proved almost impossible to remove."[47]

Indeed, according to Brian F. Le Beau, "by the third decade of the nineteenth century the Salem witchcraft hunt had become sufficiently embarrassing to some and marginalized to others to assume only a minor role in the nation's and region's history."[48] The belief that the Salem hunt had been the fault of the New England clergymen and interested public men was then articulated in the nineteenth century by Upham, who failed to make an unbiased argument, blaming almost exclusively certain accusers and judges to the detriment of others. To him, the men and women accused of witchcraft were innocent victims of "delusion," whereas their accusers—the girls, the ministers, the neighbors—were malicious liars. Upham also saw Cotton Mather as culpable, biased, and the source of inflammatory speeches, whereas Reverend Samuel Parris was said to have acted out of revenge or personal gain.[49] Upham's impact is quite noticeable, for example, in Du Bois's portrayal of Minister Parris as the villainous instigator of the Salem

witch hunt: "Opposition meant enmity in Mr Parris's opinion; and he returned the feeling with a malevolence that would have astonished his opponents. . . . He stood behind the scenes and pulled the wires."[50]

Nevertheless, Upham is seemingly the only nineteenth-century historian to have gone through all the Salem witchcraft sources, published or unpublished, and the first to systematize them.[51] Moreover, though in some cases Upham misread the records and in others he creatively sought to breach the gaps in the historical narrative, he was the favorite authority on the Salem witchcraft trials in the nineteenth century, and perhaps for many, he still is today. For Gibson, Upham's "view—a summation of liberal-Christian impulses expressed in the medium of witchcraft history—is dominant in liberal American culture."[52] Undeniably, about the events of the Salem witch hunt, Upham concludes,

> One of the most cruel features in the prosecution of the witchcraft trials, and which was practised in all countries where they took place, was the examination of the bodies of the prisoners by a jury of the same sex, under the direction and in the presence of a surgeon or physician. The person was wholly exposed, and every part subjected to the most searching scrutiny. The process was always an outrage upon human nature; and in the case of the victims on this occasion, many of them of venerable years and delicate feelings, it was shocking to every natural and instinctive sentiment. There is reason to fear that it was often conducted in a rough, coarse, and brutal manner.[53]

The pervasiveness of Upham's historical account of the Salem witch hunt, particularly that of the Salem woman as witch as the victim of a "delusion," is one of the most distinctive features in the historical novels here introduced of the witch heroines Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey. For example, in *Salem*, the narrator laments that "the terrible delusion of witchcraft upon this narrative is founded, had a sudden rise, but it had still a more sudden termination; the monstrous evil had sprung up and swelled until it burst by the innate force of its own virulence."[54]

The Woman as Witch in "Herstorical" Fiction

As previously discussed, in the early decades of the nineteenth century the interest in telling, interpreting, preserving, and commemorating U.S. national history heightened considerably. American women writers, having mainly been left out of the new American historiography, saw the popular genre of historical fiction as

a means of changing the prevailing patriarchal narratives of national origins and historical development. They wanted to reflect the many experiences and contributions of American, female, historical agents underrepresented in the nation's past.[55] Many women writers used historical fiction to write women back into the country's "herstory." Thus,

> when female historical novelists stepped in to provide their answers to this essentially theoretical question and to develop their models of historical process, they inevitably introduced the term of gender into the equation. Without challenging the essential principles of historical progress and the transmission of culture between generations of Americans, women writers made critical adjustments to it, questioning the patriarchal assumptions on which it rested. By imaginatively revisioning the American past, these writers sought to insert women into antebellum historiographies discourse, to revise, if not absolutely to reject, the theory of patriarchal historical transmission, and thereby to define an enduring role for women historical actors in the ongoing progress of the nation.[56]

Since historical fiction is mnemonic and mimetic, as a medial for presenting a reimagined past, it facilitates cultural memory not only by memorializing but also by acting as countermemory. As argued by Mitchell and Parsons, "in this way, the novel both offers itself as a witness to, or commemoration of, the [historical event] and its victims, including the survivors, and dramatizes the process by which memory is transmitted; the events are made memorable by the affective evocation of unrepresentable suffering and the numberless dead."[57]

Though mindful of the impact of historiography, some women writers like Castleton and Du Bois resorted to the fictional historical discourse to recreate the political life of the nation, to comment on it, and to rewrite the history of American women. The choice of historical fiction has frequently been used by women writers as a way of writing about subjects that would otherwise be off-limits or of offering a critique of the present through their treatment of the past. Perhaps even more important for female authors has been the way that the historical novel has allowed women to invent, or reimagine, the unrecorded lives of marginalized and subordinated people, in this case, women. The problems that arise from writing history—the lack of records, the inappropriateness of standard periodization and chronology, and the focus solely on public events—led some female historians, including H. F. M. Prescott, to opt for writing historical fiction.[58] Yet, as Castleton highlights, they undertook the correct use of the historical sources at hand:

> In all that is purely historical we claim to be strictly authentic: such portions being either copies from the court records, or carefully compiled from the most reliable historians. Our own feet have trodden the precincts of "Salem Village," of "Gallow's Hill," and "Prison Lane;" in our own hands we have held the veritable "witch-pins;" our own eyes have searched the records, and read one of the original death-warrants still in preservation—and therefore we claim to know something of that of which we have written.[59]

The high degree of fictionality of the female historians' work often led it to be labeled, however, as historically inaccurate and to be dismissed as inconsequential, particularly by the women's male peers. For instance, Nathaniel Hawthorne protests that "America is now given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no success while the public taste is occupied with their trash."[60] Unwaveringly, in their prefaces women writers often addressed this very issue. For example, Du Bois asks the gentle reader

> to overlook various anachronisms of speech which the author of these pages has allowed her characters,—believing that to reproduce with absolute fidelity a past phraseology, one must be more antiquarian and linguist than romancer, and that a faithful historical study can be made by an outline sketch as well as by a finished picture. . . . It seemed needful to draw a veil across this darker side of the subject, and to depend on the reader's historical consciousness for the appreciation of that which is left untold.[61]

For their works of historical fiction, women authors like Castleton and Du Bois were more harshly criticized for "failing to reproduce Scott's sense of the past."[62] However, their historical novels were intended for various audiences, and women writers of this genre published as prolifically as men. George Dekker asserts that "the nineteenth-century historical romance must be regarded as a predominantly masculine genre on two counts. First, . . . the most successful historical romancers were men [and] its heroic matter favoured the celebration of male feats and male relationships."[63] I agree with Nina Baym in rejecting this view. Besides not making clear his concept of "successful," Dekker completely disregards many other nineteenth-century women writers, such as the ones discussed in this study. He further ignores how many women writers at that time published under male pseudonyms.[64] More than 20 women's prose miscellanies included historical fiction at this time. A considerable number of uncollected historical stories were also published in the periodical press since "New England far exceeded other regions

in per capita production and consumption of literature."[65] Indeed, many famous American women of letters tried or dabbled in historical fiction, but only a few of them remained exclusive to the genre.[66] Others still abandoned historical fiction after only one, unsuccessful, attempt.[67] Most women writers of historical fiction were Anglo-Protestant and from New England, and almost half of the historical societies founded in America between 1790 and 1830 were New England based or devoted to the memorialization of the New England past. Unsurprisingly, as the cultural memory of the Salem witch hunt was well established in the nineteenth century, it became a frequent leitmotif, particularly in historical fiction.[68]

In addition to the recreation of the cultural countermemory of the Salem witch hunt, the work of female women authors informed readers about relevant contemporary themes and antiquarian interests, expressing a variety of protofeminist sentiments. Furthermore, though these women authors wrote mostly in a domestic context, I must agree with Jane Tompkins that their work is anything but domestic, in the sense of being limited to purely personal concerns. On the contrary, their work is "global and its interests identical with the interests of [gender and] race."[69] The resulting Salem herstories conveyed in novels such as Castleton's *Salem* and Du Bois's *Martha Corey* "provided Americans with a useful cultural boundary marker between the rational, independent present and the superstition-filled colonial past," being a "New England-based attempt to turn real British colonists into symbolic American settlers, [as the] memory of the 1692 Salem witchcraft trials emerged as a negative symbol."[70] In other words, a cautionary tale was constructed and recreated as a countermemory.

Often in nineteenth-century American novels, "the story of individuals [was] constructed within a larger historical setting and driven by the memory of past events." For example, both the witch-heroines in the novels here discussed, Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey, are brought back to life but within the context of the Salem witch hunt's countermemory. The transcultural memory of the woman as witch is in symbiosis with the countermemory of the Salem witch hunt. As Rodríguez argues, "the introduction of the general beliefs in witchcraft emphasizes the similarity of what happened in Salem to the previous executions in Europe. At the same time, we can see an apparent historiographical influence because some of the references included in the history books can also be found in the works of fiction."[71] In *Salem,* for instance, the narrator interrupts the narrative, for "it becomes necessary to the course of our narrative that we should turn back and learn what the pages of history and the voices of tradition have preserved of the commencement of the strange and terrible delusion which, under the name of the 'Salem Witchcraft.'"[72] During this plot hiatus, the reader is briefly lectured

about historical, geographical, economic, social, and theological aspects that led to and surrounded the Salem witch hunt. Though the reader may come across many evident historical deviations in these historical novels, Rodríguez concludes, "if only one accusation is presented, or if one fictional character is constructed out of several historical individuals, it should be considered a specific contribution of literature to the fictional representation of the SWT [Salem witch trials] and not a lack of accuracy or a desire to alter the historical reality."[73]

All in all, women authors like Castleton and Du Bois chose to add or to leave out or to make up many of the historical elements of the Salem witch hunt. However, to us, it is not only the "literary construction of this historical event" that matters. What is most pertinent is their contribution to the creation of the countermemory of the Salem witch hunt as "a warning against what can happen in any society that is drawn by delusion and hysteria."[74] In the words of the narrator in Castleton's *Salem*, "but the history of the Past is the warning of the Future."[75]

Last, we must also consider the nineteenth-century use of the transcultural Anglo-American memory of woman as witch in the Salem-plotted historical novels. Susan Elsey, in her doctoral dissertation, addresses the recurrent use of the image of the woman as witch in nineteenth-century literature. Still a sinister outcast, the nineteenth-century woman as witch nonetheless assumed the role of "spokescharacter" through which writers and artists could express what was often considered unspeakable in reputable Victorian society. The woman as witch thus became a figure of pity or scorn who predominantly evoked empathy and reminded the intended audiences of "the margins and the marginalised."[76] Likewise, as Elsey also argues, the nineteenth-century witch was portrayed "as both a woman erroneously labelled a witch through fear, hatred or delusion, (including self-delusion), and as a malign demon. The underlying message of nineteenth-century fiction is that witchery is in the eye of the beholder."[77] We find that Elsey's description resonates with the woman-as-witch heroines Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey since they are portrayed not as demonic hags, but as "innocent or deluded victim[s]."[78]

The Romantic Witch-Heroines from Salem

As already stated, the topic of witchcraft and, more specifically, the Salem witch hunt of 1692–1693 became one of the favorite aspects of colonial Puritan history explored by many American women writers of historical fiction during the nineteenth century. Several, like Castleton and Du Bois, chose to deal with this theme

in the form of a romantic historical novel.[79] Their partiality for this theme may have been aimed at giving more visibility to Puritan religious intolerance, fanaticism, superstition, bigotry, zeal, and misogyny or to better express the sectarian strife of colonial times. Philip Gould, however, offers us a more political point of view. He argues that the historical context of the Puritan epistemological interest about spectral evidence at Salem, and all the historical literature around it, was profoundly shaped by the legacy of classical republicanism and the natural fear of latent factions during the rise of the political parties between the 1790s and the 1830s.[80]

Ultimately, Castleton and Du Bois inscribed women—or more specifically the woman as witch—into the predominantly male cultural memory of the Salem witch hunt as romantic witch-heroines to "demonstrate the ways that patriarchy ignores, violently controls or represses the desires of women, be they aristocrats or beggars."[81] Accordingly, Castleton makes her intentions quite clear in *Salem*'s preface:

> We know, indeed, that the more practiced hand of an able and faithful historian has already put it upon record in a masterly way, and in so doing has made a rich and valuable contribution to our national literature. But these books, though deeply interesting, are too valuable and too weighty to be found in free circulation among general readers; and we have been surprised to find how very vague and incorrect was the knowledge of this subject in many cultivated persons who were well-informed on other matters of history.
>
> We have endeavored with careful hand to retouch the rapidly fading picture—to call up again to view the scenes and actors of those terrible times; and if in so doing we have ventured "to twine round history's legends dim the glowing roses of romance," it was only to heighten the effect of the picture.[82]

The subgenre of romantic historical fiction is more thoroughly historicized and, consequently, more meaningful when studied from a cultural point of view. Ernest E. Leisy argues that it "satisfies a desire for national homogeneity [and] is concerned with historical truth."[83] In romantic historical fiction, the love relationship is determined by the historical events and characters of the period in question, and the actual romantic interest focuses on a central fictional character or characters that, for the sake of historical verisimilitude, behave authentically in conformity with his or her place and time. For example, to further fill in the gaps concerning the underlying causes of the Salem witch hunt, in most Salem-plotted romantic historical novels one can find the "love triangle or love plot" as a

typical frame of reference. It replaces "the family feuds, the fights among neighbors because of land problems, and the misfortunes, such as the loss of cattle or the ruin of the crops, which have generally been used by scholars to explain the accusations."[84] As a result, often the main motive for the witchcraft accusations is to take revenge for unrequited love or love rebuffs.[85] In Du Bois's *Martha Corey*, Beatrice Desmond is engaged to be married to Charles Beverly and is very much in love with him. Her cousin, Capt. Percy Desmond, however, is determined to have her for his wife. To break the couple up, he reveals to her, on her wedding day, that Charles had been having an affair with a married woman. With a broken heart, instead of falling into Captain Desmond's arms, Beatrice runs away to New England, where she is taken in by the Coreys under an assumed name. Captain Desmond tracks her down and, failing to win her affection, out of revenge plots with Minister Parris her demise, as well as Martha Corey's, who had stoically stood by and had protected Beatrice from him. Both are accused of witchcraft, but while Martha Corey stays behind and embraces her fate, Beatrice is rescued by Charles Beverly: "Beverly richly rewarded the jailer . . . and Beverly hurried Beatrice away from the fatal spot."[86]

Conclusions

The transcultural memory of the woman as witch from Salem is present in the characters of Rebecca Nurse in Castleton's *Salem* and Martha Corey in Du Bois's *Martha Corey.* Romantic heroines are cultural constructs that do not necessarily derive from reality and facts but are mimetically constructed and recreated. Instead of presenting objective or comprehensive views of history based on the available records of the Salem witch hunt, these romantic historical novels offer personal, family, or fictional memories in order to provide subjective, selective, and individualistic reports. They further offer an alternative or countermemory to the more official versions of the nineteenth-century historians that were circulating at the time. The manner in which the women authors of romantic historical novels chose to write about witchcraft and the Salem witch hunt, "often [stressing] the importance of chance, irrational and inexplicable impulses, supernatural events, and the individual as the subjective center of his or her own mental world, [is] detached from wider social processes."[87] In doing so, women writers such as Castleton and Du Bois conceivably envisaged instilling in nineteenth-century American women's minds, at the very least, a willingness to entertain the possibility of a change in their own social and cultural status quo similar to that of the recreated romantic witch-heroines of Salem.

The exegesis of Salem-plotted romantic historical novels, however, cannot be reduced to a mere exploration of how the historical facts may have been perverted by the authors of historical fiction.[88] It must also be an examination of the process of cultural representation of the woman as witch. Their appropriation of the woman as witch connects Castleton and Du Bois, and they do go beyond the historical representations. They recreate and represent the witches Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey as romantic witch-heroines instead.

The women as witches, as they are crafted by these female authors, always initiate some form of subversion. As illustrated in Castleton's *Salem* and Du Bois's *Martha Corey*, in these romantic historical novels, witches and women form a covenant of subversion against the limits and violations imposed upon them by external stereotypes or cultural constructs. Like other female authors of their time, Castleton and Du Bois further interpret and reconfigure the woman as witch from Salem for their protofeminist agenda. They engaged creatively in retrieving and rediscovering the archival narratives of their time about the Salem witch hunt. They were resolutely present in the nineteenth-century network of American fictional herstories as both authors and characters. As Christine Palumbo-Desimone puts it, these authors achieved "the uncanny doubling between female protagonist and female reader who recognizes her own vulnerability, lack of agency, and powerlessness in society"[89] and endeavored to counter it. Their mnemonic reimaginations of the woman as witch from Salem as a discriminated victim and a romantic heroine seemingly contributed to the maintenance of the transcultural memory of the woman as witch and witchcraft, and the "victimization involved in witchcraft accusations or the social panics so often connected to them."[90] Finally, by challenging the subjugation of the women as witches by the colonial, Puritan, patriarchal status quo the Salem witch hunt had long come to epitomize, women authors such as Castleton and Du Bois also helped in the recreation of the cultural countermemory of the Salem witch hunt as a cathartic cautionary tale not forgotten in nineteenth-century America and beyond.

Notes

1. See Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft: With an Account of Salem Village and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects*, 2 vols. (Boston: Wiggin & Lunt, 1867; facsimile edition with foreword by Brian Le Beau, Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2000), 5, 33–38, 41–42, 52, 54, 65, 70, 90–100, 113, 117, 135, 156, 167, 171, 190, 207, 216, 236, 238, 246, 248, 259, 286, 288, 308, 310, 312, 335, 343, 346, 348, 358, 363, 364, 366–369, 377, 380, 383, 398, 411–412, 428–429, 433–435, 438–440, 447, 457, 461, 471, 489–490, 495, 503, 508, 510, 513, 520; citations refer to

the Dover edition. Sarah Ferber, Psychotic Reactions? Witchcraft, the Devil and Mental Illness, in *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft*, ed. Laura Kounine and Michael Ostling (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 231–245.

2. Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 179–181.

3. See C. L'Estrange Ewen, ed., *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials: The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of 1373 Assizes Held for the Home Circuit AD 1559–1736*, Routledge Library Editions: Witchcraft 3 (London: Routledge, 2011; first published, London: Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1929), 19–21.

4. See David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 175.

5. Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 131.

6. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 56.

7. Marion Lena Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Enquiry into the Salem Witch Trials* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949; repr., New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1989), 78–79. Citations refer to the Doubleday Anchor edition.

8. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 60.

9. For a detailed account of Rebecca Nurse's examinations and trials, see Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 78–79, 159–164, 175; Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 356–357, 360. For her full arrest warrant, examination, physical examination, evidence, summons, and death warrant, see Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28–32, 47, 61, 217, 244, 253–255, 259, 267, 271, 285–294, 340, 343, 357–373, 382, 417–418, 420.

10. See Marion Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture* (London: Routledge, 2007), 42, 56; Paul S. Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), x–xi.

11. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 509–511.

12. D. R. Castleton [Caroline Rosina Derby], *Salem: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1874).

13. Castleton, *Salem*, 45.

14. Castleton, *Salem*, 144–166 (quote at 147).

15. Castleton, *Salem*, 185.

16. See Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Salem Witchcraft Trials: A Legal History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 121.

17. Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 47.

18. Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 66–68.

19. On the social power of a witch's language in Puritan New England and how a woman's speech identified her as either virtuous or sinful, see Jane Kamensky, Female Speech and Other Demons: Witchcraft and Wordcraft in Early New England, in *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft*

in America, ed. Elizabeth Reis (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1998), 25–51. Also see Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 66–68, 70–71, 74–75.

20. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 38–39.

21. Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 66–68.

22. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 458.

23. For a detailed account of Martha Corey's examinations and trial see, for example, Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts*, 64, 66–68, 70–71, 74–75, 150, 203, 255; Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 341–345, 626–627. Also, to read in full her arrest warrant, examination, physical examination, evidence, summons and death warrant, see Rosenthal, *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, 15–21, 24, 30, 47, 61, 66, 164, 217, 239–240, 269, 384, 458, 476–477, 549.

24. Constance Goddard Du Bois, *Martha Corey: A Tale of the Salem Witchcraft* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1890).

25. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 109.

26. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 288.

27. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 361.

28. See Jane P. Davidson, *Early Modern Supernatural: The Dark Side of European Culture, 1400–1700* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2012), 58–60.

29. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 238.

30. Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 5.

31. See Francis Young, *English Catholics and the Supernatural, 1553–1829* (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2013), 23–26.

32. Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 2–3, 4–5.

33. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 302.

34. Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, xii.

35. Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. Sara B. Young (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 48.

36. See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

37. Harry Brinton Henderson, *Versions of the Past: The Historical Imagination in American Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), xviii.

38. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 48–49.

39. Gretchen A. Adams, *The Specter of Salem: Remembering the Witch Trials in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 4.

40. Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg, *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 10.

41. Marta Maria Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Historia y ficción: La representación de los procesos de Salem (1692) en la prosa de ficción angloamericana del siglo XIX (Ph.D. diss., Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain, 2009), 3.

42. Marta Maria Gutiérrez Rodríguez, The Salem Witchcraft Trials in the 19th Century Historical Fiction: The Literary Construction of Alternative Versions of History, *Grove: Working Papers on English Studies*, no. 19 (2012): 15.

43. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 30–34.

44. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 23.

45. For further discussion on early modern witchcraft trial records, see Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft* (Florence: Taylor & Francis, 1999).

46. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 30–34.

47. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 37–38.

48. Le Beau, Foreword, in Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, xv.

49. For a more detailed discussion about Upham's conclusions, see Le Beau, Foreword, i–liii.

50. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 129, 284.

51. Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed*, x–xi.

52. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 56.

53. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft*, 500.

54. Castleton, *Salem*, 331.

55. Juliette Guilbert, Rewriting the Republic: American Women's Historical Fiction 1824–1869 (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, New Haven, Conn., 1999), 9.

56. Guilbert, Rewriting the Republic, 16.

57. Kate Mitchell and Nicola Parsons, eds., *Reading Historical Fiction: The Revenant and Remembered Past* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10–11.

58. Quoted in Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1911), 2.

59. Castleton, *Salem*, v.

60. Nathaniel Hawthorne candidly shared his opinion about nineteenth-century American women writers in a letter to his friend and publisher William Davis Ticknor, dated 19 January 1855. See *The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, vol. 16, *The Letters, 1853–1856*, ed. Thomas Woodson, L. Neal Smith, and Norman Holmes Pearson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 304.

61. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 6.

62. Nina Baym, *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790–1860* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 265–279.

63. George Dekker, *The American Historical Romance* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 221.

64. Baym, *American Women Writers*, 5–8, 153–154.

65. Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 28.

66. See Baym's list of "Historical Works by American Women" in *American Women Writers*, 265–279.

67. Baym, *American Women Writers*, 152–156.

68. For more considerations on the use of Salem witchcraft as a plot device within American imaginary literature, see David Levin, *Forms of Uncertainty: Essays in Historical Criticism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); Buell, *New England Literary Culture*; Richard Slotkin,

Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

69. Jane P. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 146.

70. Adams, *Specter of Salem*, 43–44.

71. Rodríguez, Salem Witchcraft Trials, 23.

72. Derby, *Salem*, 52–68.

73. Rodríguez, Salem Witchcraft Trials, 23.

74. Rodríguez, Salem Witchcraft Trials, 27–28.

75. Castleton, *Salem*, 335.

76. Susan Jennifer Elsey, Images of the Witch in Nineteenth-Century Culture (Ph.D. diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, 2012), 1, 13.

77. Elsey, Images of the Witch, 48.

78. Elsey, Images of the Witch, 205.

79. See Eliza Buckminster Lee, *Delusion; or, The Witch of New England* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1840); M.B. [Eleanor Barstow Condit], *Philip English's Two Cups, 1692* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1869); E[lla] T. Disosway, *South Meadows: A Tale of Long Ago* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1874); Augusta Campbell Watson, *Dorothy the Puritan*: *The Story of a Strange Delusion* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1893); Pauline Bradford Mackie, *Ye Lyttle Salem Maide: A Story of Witchcraft* (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe, 1898).

80. Philip Gould, *Covenant and Republic: Historical Romance and the Politics of Puritanism* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

81. Jerome De Groot, *The Historical Novel* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 157.

82. Castleton, *Salem*, iv.

83. Ernest Erwin Leisy, *The American Historical Novel* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), 4.

84. Rodríguez, Salem Witchcraft Trials, 24.

85. Rodríguez, Salem Witchcraft Trials, 27–28.

86. Du Bois, *Martha Corey*, 310.

87. Gibson, *Witchcraft Myths in American Culture*, 108.

88. Robin DeRosa, *The Making of Salem: The Witch Trials in History, Fiction and Tourism* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2009), 98.

89. Christine Palumbo-Desimone, Conjuring Salem: Identity and Authority in Nineteenth-Century Women's Storytelling, *Women Studies* 47, no. 4 (April 2018): 393–414.

90. Tony Fels, *Switching Sides: How a Generation of Historians Lost Sympathy for the Victims of the Salem Witch Hunt* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 133.