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**Pilgrims, Puritans, and Popular Culture: Performing Citizenship in the
20th Century National Imaginary**

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**Pilgrims, Puritans, and Popular Culture: Performing Citizenship in the
20th Century National Imaginary**

by

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Dedication

For my amazing family: Jim and Mary Guenther, Kim, Mark, and Kathryn Saunders, and especially for Kevin, who believed in my work and me even when I was unsure.

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Pilgrims, Puritans, and Popular Culture: Performing Citizenship in the 20th Century National Imaginary

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Pilgrims, Puritans, and Popular Culture argues that representations of the Puritans in the twentieth century were most often used to negotiate national identity in terms of hegemonic whiteness at moments when the idealized citizen as white, Protestant, heterosexual, and male was in crisis. Whether represented as proto-Americans or moralizing killjoys, they embodied the US's national origin story and helped to define what citizenship meant in the twentieth century. Using performance as both the object of study and methodological lens, I demonstrate how national identity and citizenship are performed through actual bodies on stage playing Puritans. I organize my analyses around three common Puritan narratives adapted into stage performances: the First Thanksgiving, the Salem witch trials, and *The Scarlet Letter*. My examination of these texts focuses on what I call Puritan formations, an extension of sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant's (2015) concept of racial formations. Using archival documents such as scripts, performance reviews, and programs, I theorize how a constructed historical memory can be embodied in and imposed upon present bodies.

The introduction provides a brief overview of how Puritan formations began to function in the nineteenth century. As I argue, the traits twentieth-century citizens often criticized the Puritans for harken back to a nineteenth-century search for a unified

national identity more so than the archive of the Puritans. Chapter one examines the early twentieth-century practice of using Thanksgiving plays in public schools to teach US history and assimilate Southern and Eastern European immigrant children into a unified (white) national identity. The next chapter continues through the mid-twentieth century with an analysis of Arthur Miller's racial and performative adaptation of Tituba in *The Crucible* (1953). The third chapter concludes the twentieth century with an analysis of Phyllis Nagy's 1994 feminist stage adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 novel *The Scarlet Letter*, comparing the play's production context to Hawthorne's. To conclude, I begin to consider what the use of a Puritan past might mean in the twenty-first century. Throughout, I suggest that tensions in Puritan formations reflect the tensions of remembering a national past steeped in settler colonialism, slavery, assimilation, and democracy.

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Introduction

As it turns out, I have never performed in a Thanksgiving play. When I began this project, I returned to childhood memories of black and white construction paper hats and collars, long black skirts, and seeing my fellow students playing Thanksgiving turkeys in big, stuffed black trash bags. In talking excessively about this project, my (white) partner even dug out photos of him at five-years-old with a construction paper “Indian” vest and headdress. “You got to choose if you wanted to be a Pilgrim or Indian,” he explained. But when I asked my mom for similar photos, she swore it never happened. I never performed in a Thanksgiving play. At most, she says, I brought home Thanksgiving crafts, but it was not something that stood out in her memories of my childhood.

My point is not to wax nostalgically about the innocence of Thanksgiving one might experience as a child in the US, especially a white, middle-class one. As a performance scholar and activist, I find the continued narrative of Pilgrims and generic “Indians,” like the one in my partner’s photo, extremely problematic and yet still overly prevalent in elementary school education.¹ Instead, I share this anecdote to demonstrate my internalization of a memory that may have never actually happened. Perhaps I just made crafts in the classroom. Perhaps I saw a play from the position of spectator. But so strong is the feeling of performing and doing, I must wonder if I simply constructed a memory out of an assemblage from my experiences and from the prevalence of Thanksgiving reenactments in popular culture. Moreover, the internalization of this

¹ For more information on the dismal status of teaching Native American history and culture in US public schools see Alysa Landry, “All Indians Are Dead? At Least That’s What Most Schools Teach Children,” *IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com*, May 2, 2016, <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/11/17/all-indians-are-dead-least-thats-what-most-schools-teach-children-157822>. Several parents and undergraduate students have also shared stories with me of how students of color are continually recruited to play “Indians” while all of the white children played “Pilgrims” in twenty-first century Thanksgiving plays.

memory was made even more possible from a position of middle-class and white privilege. That is, growing up, I almost always saw myself represented in representations of the Pilgrims. It did not matter that three-quarters of my family's lineage in the US traced mostly to German, Bohemian, and Irish immigrants in the twentieth century, not *The Mayflower*.² I never questioned that the Pilgrims immigrated to the US in search of religious freedom and that I could perform as one with some construction paper and a long black dress.

As this example demonstrates, most of what US citizens think they “know” about the Puritans comes from a combination of Puritan narratives encountered first in school and later elaborated upon and repeated in popular culture.³ *New York Times* bestselling author Sarah Vowell's 2008 *The Wordy Shipmates* brings to light a similar tension in the understanding of the Puritans in the US national imaginary: the archive versus popular culture. Throughout the book, Vowell humorously grapples with the stereotypes that popular culture taught her about the Puritans and the actual historical research she did to write the book. As Vowell sarcastically writes, the Puritans were early masters of the archive: “History is written by the writers. The quill-crazy New Englanders left behind libraries full of statements of purpose in the form of letters, sermons, court transcripts, and diaries.” Yet despite this vast archive, Vowell's knowledge of the Puritans (and

² According to the hobby genealogists in my family, the other quarter can be traced much further back through US history including distant relatives who fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War and eventually back to a distant relation with Martha Ball Washington through my paternal grandmother.

³ Examples include the frequently re-broadcast episode “The Mayflower Voyagers” from *This is America, Charlie Brown* (Columbia Broadcasting System, 1988); the critically acclaimed, small budget film *The Witch: A New England Folktale* (Parts and Labor, et al, 2015); the now-viral SNL sketch starring Lin-Manuel Miranda, “Crucible Cast Party,” SNL YouTube Channel, published Oct. 8, 2016, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkjjtX83-Cc>; two Puritan-themed commercials launched by Miracle Whip in 2012, “Witch Hunt,” YouTube, published Mar. 26, 2012, accessed May 5, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TbSQeNh0mE>; “Village,” YouTube, published Mar. 26, 2012, accessed May 5, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NR3BVN8ofk8>; and the comical Puritan-themed Valentine's Day Cards that tend to re-circulate every Valentine's Day on social media, Alex Z. Rogers, “Puritan Valentine's Day Cards,” CollegeHumor, published Feb. 12, 2003, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <http://www.collegehumor.com/post/6870031/puritan-valentines-day-cards>.

“American history”) prior to writing the book extended only to what she had learned “from watching television situation comedies.”⁴ She goes on to detail the many Thanksgiving-themed episodes of such popular sitcoms as *The Brady Bunch* and *Happy Days* where (predominantly white) sitcom families explore and sometimes reenact the mythical meal between Pilgrims and Indians.⁵

Since the early twentieth century, the Puritans have been featured in a variety of performance media.⁶ On stage, they have perhaps most famously been represented by Arthur Miller’s 1953 play *The Crucible*, but there are dozens of other plays, operas, and dance pieces that have represented the Puritans through the embodiment of live performers. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, multiple representations of the Puritans were published and performed including several dramatic and one operatic adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter*.⁷ Famous English-actor Richard Mansfield even performed twice as Arthur Dimmesdale in 1892 and 1906 Broadway productions of

⁴ Sarah Vowell, *The Wordy Shipmates* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 13, 17.

⁵ There was also a short-lived sitcom in the 1990s starring Cloris Leachman called *Thanks*, set in 17th century Plymouth, Massachusetts. Ibid., 17-21, 96; Also see, Luanne K. Roth, “Talking Turkey: Visual Media and the Unraveling of Thanksgiving” (Dissertation, The University of Missouri-Columbia, 2010), 23, 35-37. Some examples of Pilgrim Thanksgiving reenactments on TV episodes include: “The Underground Movie,” *The Brady Bunch*, season 2, episode 4, directed by Jack Arnold, aired Oct. 16, 1970; “The First Thanksgiving,” *Happy Days*, season 6, episode 12, directed by Jerry Paris, aired Nov. 21, 1978; “The Last Thursday in November,” *Roseanne*, season 8, episode 8, directed by Gail Mancuso, aired Nov. 21, 1995; “Ed the Pilgrim,” *Mr. Ed*, season 3, episode 9, directed by Arthur Lubin, aired Nov. 22, 1962; “A History Channel Thanksgiving,” *South Park*, season 15, episode 13, directed by Trey Parker, aired Nov. 9, 2011. Examples of Pilgrim Thanksgiving reenactments in feature films include: Barry Sonnenfeld, dir., *Addams Family Values* (Paramount Pictures, 1993); Gurinder Chadha, dir., *What’s Cooking?* (Because Entertainment et al, 2000); Chris Columbus, dir., *Stepmom* (TriStar Pictures and 1492 Pictures, 1998). sitcom in the 1990s starring Cloris Leachman called *Thanks*.

⁶ While the nineteenth century did have some plays featuring Puritans, the number of performed representations in popular culture grew exponentially in the twentieth century.

⁷ For published texts, see George H Andrews, *The Scarlet Letter: A Drama in Three Acts* (Boston: W.H. Baker, 1871); Gabriel Harrison, *A Romantic Drama in Four Acts Entitled, The Scarlet Letter* (Brooklyn: Harry M. Gardner, Jr., 1876); Joseph Hatton, *The Scarlet Letter, or, Hester Prynne: A Drama in Three Acts* (London: Lindley, 187?); Elizabeth Weller Peck, *Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Scarlet Letter, Dramatized: A Play in Five Acts* (Boston: Franklin Press: Rand, Avery, and Co., 1876); James Edgar Smith, *The Scarlet Stigma, A Drama in Four Acts* (Washington, D. C.: James J. Chapman, 1899); Walter Damrosch and George Parsons Lathrop, *The Scarlet Letter: Opera in Three Acts* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1896).

Joseph Hatton's stage adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* (1876).⁸ Belulah Marie Dix and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland's *A Rose o'Plymouth-Town*, an adaptation of events in the life of "Pilgrim" Miles Standish, also played on Broadway in October 1902 with a young Douglas Fairbanks in a supporting role. The reviewer for *The Washington Post* praised it as living up to its hype as "the first really bright, clever, interesting, and undoubtedly successful play that has ever been written about the joys and tribulations of the early settlers in New England."⁹ This review suggests that not many performances of the Puritans onstage in the nineteenth century were successful in making the Puritans seem "bright, clever, [and] interesting." Indeed, throughout this dissertation I highlight the seeming push-and-pull in representations of the Puritans as personifications of essential US values and two-dimensional killjoys.

The growing popularity of pageants in the early twentieth century tended to emphasize the former. Created by amateur performers in schools, churches, and communities, they most often incorporated narratives that celebrated and recreated events from the Pilgrims' lives.¹⁰ The US federal government even appropriated \$275,000 for the 1920 celebration of the Pilgrim Tercentenary in Plymouth, Massachusetts. This event included the performance of a pilgrim pageant in the summer of 1921 written by George

⁸ "Richard Mansfield in 'The Scarlet Letter': An Impressive Picture of Sorrow and Mental Anguish in a Crudely Made Play," Review of *The Scarlet Letter*, By Joseph Hatton, *New York Times*, Mar. 27, 1906, p.

9. "'The Scarlet Letter' on the Stage," Review of *The Scarlet Letter*, by Joseph Hatton, *The Critic: A Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts*, Sep. 17, 1892, p. 149.

⁹ "Minnie Dupree in 'A Rose o'Plymouth Town' at the Columbia," *The Washington Post*, Sep. 7, 1902.

¹⁰ Esther Willard Bates, *A Pageant of Pilgrims* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1920); Marion Kennedy and Katharine Isabel Bemis, "Thanksgiving," in *Special Day Pageants for Little People* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1927); Constance D'Arcy Mackay, "The Pilgrims," *Woman's Home Companion* 1920; F. Ursula Payne, "The Spirit of New England: A Pageant of the Pilgrim Fathers," in *Plays and Pageants of Citizenship*, ed. F. Ursula Payne (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1920).

P. Baker, a pioneering playwright and theatre educator who taught at Harvard and Yale Universities.¹¹

Moreover, dozens of silent shorts and full-length films in the early twentieth century adapted popular Puritan narratives such as Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's narrative poem *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), the Salem witch trials, and other Puritans stories with silent film stars including Lillian Gish and Charles Ray.¹² When films adopted sound, the Puritans continued to fascinate filmmakers and audiences in films such as *The Scarlet Letter* (1934) starring Colleen Moore, *Maid of Salem* (1937) starring Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray, and *Plymouth Adventure* (1952) starring Spencer Tracy.¹³ Thus, by the time Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* premiered on Broadway in 1953, the Puritans were already firmly ensconced in a performance tradition both on stage and screen.

As the twentieth century continued, so too did a proliferation of performed representations and re-adaptations of the Puritans. In addition to five Broadway revivals of *The Crucible*, several film and TV adaptations were created, including Jean-Paul Sartre's 1957 French adaptation *Les Sorcières de Salem*, a 1967 TV movie broadcast on CBS, and a 1996 US feature film starring Winona Ryder and Daniel Day-Lewis with a

¹¹ W. G. Harding et al., "Pilgrim Tercentenary Celebration," (House of Representatives, 1920); George P. Baker, *The Pilgrim Spirit: A Pageant in Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Massachusetts December 21, 1620* (Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1921).

¹² Sidney Olcott, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (Kalem Company, 1908). Joseph W. Smiley and George Loane Tucker, dirs., *The Scarlet Letter* (IMP Studios, 1911); David Miles, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (Kinemacolor Company of America, 1913); Carl Harbaugh, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (Fox Film Corporations, 1917); Victor Sjöström, dir., Lillian Gish, perf., *The Scarlet Letter* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1926); Sidney Olcott, dir., *The Wooing of Miles Standish* (Kalem Company, 1907); Otis Turner, dir., *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (Selig Polyscope Company, 1910); Frederick Arthur Sullivan, dir., Charles Ray, perf., *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (Charles Ray Producing Inc., 1923); Raymond B. West, dir., Charles Ray, perf., *The Witch of Salem* (Mutual Film, 1913); Lucius Henderson, dir., *A Witch of Salem Town* (Universal Film Manufacturing Company, 1915); *Puritans and Indians* (Kalem Company, 1911); and Frank Tuttle, dir., *The Puritans* (Pathé Exchange, 1924).

¹³ Robert G. Vignola, dir., Colleen Moore, perf., *The Scarlet Letter* (Larry Darmour Productions, 1934); Frank Lloyd, Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray, perms., *Maid of Salem* (Paramount Pictures, 1937); and Clarence Brown, dir., Spencer Tracy, perf., *Plymouth Adventure* (MGM, 1952).

screenplay by Arthur Miller. In addition, numerous films, TV movies, and TV shows were created as direct adaptations of the play and/or built upon the (eventual) popularity of the play and its allegorical relationship to McCarthyism and political witch-hunts.¹⁴ CBS's radio-turned-TV historical reenactment series *You Are There* even covered the Salem witch hunts of 1692 in an episode aired nationally during the original Broadway run of Miller's play in March 1953.¹⁵

The novel *The Scarlet Letter* was also further adapted into several films and TV movies in the late twentieth century including Wim Wenders' 1973 *Der Scharlachrote Buchstabe* [*The Scarlet Letter*], a 1979 PBS mini-series, as well as more recent adaptations such as Roland Joffé's *The Scarlet Letter* (1994) starring Demi Moore.¹⁶ At the end of the twentieth-century, a resurgence of stage adaptations of the novel also occurred, including: feminist playwright Naomi Wallace's unpublished *THE SCARLET LETTER, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, as told by Anne Hibbins, the Witch, and recorded by Naomi Wallace* (1992); feminist playwright Phyllis Nagy's 1994 *The Scarlet Letter*, which I examine in my third chapter; Pulitzer-prize winner and MacArthur genius grant recipient Suzan Lori-Parks's modern adaptations *In the Blood* (1998) and *Fucking A*

¹⁴ *The Crucible* had revivals on Broadway in 1964, 1972, 1992, 2002, and 2016. "The Crucible," Internet Broadway Database, last modified 2017, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-show/the-crucible-2847>. Film adaptations of *The Crucible* include: Raymond Rouleau, dir., *Les Sorcières de Salem* (Films Borderie et al., 1957), first released in the US in December 1958; Alex Segal, dir., *The Crucible* (Columbia Broadcasting System, 1967); Nicholas Hytner, dir., *The Crucible* (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1996); Other adaptations of the Salem witch trials include: Philip Leacock, dir., Vanessa Redgrave, perf., *Three Sovereigns for Sarah* (American Playhouse and Night Owl Productions, 1985); and Joseph Sargent, dir., Kirstie Alley, perf., *Salem Witch Trials* (Alliance Atlantis Communications in association with Spring Creek Productions, 2002). Also see the CW series *Salem* (2014--), now in its third season. For a more comprehensive listing of cultural references to the Salem witch trials in literature, film, and TV see, "Cultural Depictions of the Salem Witch Trials, Wikipedia, last modified Jan. 5, 2017, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_depictions_of_the_Salem_witch_trials.

¹⁵ "The Witch Trials at Salem, Massachusetts (August 1692)," *You Are There* episode 9, season 1, aired Mar. 29, 1953.

¹⁶ Wim Wenders, dir., *Der Scharlachrote Buchstabe* (Eliás Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas S.L., et al., 1973); Rick Hauser, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (WGBH, 1979); and Roland Joffé, *The Scarlet Letter* (Allied Stars Ltd., et al, 1995).

(2000), collectively known as *The Red Letter Plays* (2001); and feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan's unpublished *The Scarlet Letter* (2002) and a recent opera *Pearl* (2015).¹⁷ In 2011, playwright Naomi Iizuka also adapted the novel for a production at Seattle's Intiman Theatre. Moreover, as I note in chapter three and my conclusion, I worked as a dramaturg for MFA playwriting candidate Sarah Saltwick's 2012 adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter*, which premiered in the fall of 2012 at The University of Texas at Austin.

Building off of representations such as these, this dissertation explores how popular culture reshapes and recirculates representations of the Puritans in the twentieth-century US national imaginary. During the twentieth century the Puritans of the national imaginary served to uphold the ideals of democracy, freedom, and, implicitly, hegemonic whiteness while simultaneously distancing the "progressive," "modern" US from the intolerance of its Puritan forbearers. Yet, as I will argue, the types of things twentieth and twenty-first century US citizens often criticized the Puritans for—such as sexual repression, religious intolerance, and anti-intellectualism—harken back to Victorian ideologies and a nineteenth-century re-historicization of the Puritans more so than the archive the seventeenth-century Puritans left behind. Furthermore, Native American studies and the emerging field of decolonization studies greatly trouble several components in twentieth-century representations of the Puritans, including the Puritans as the nation's first and ideal immigrants and the Puritans as the progenitors of US

¹⁷ Lenora Champagne, "Outside the Law: Feminist Adaptations of *The Scarlet Letter*," in *Feminist Theatrical Revisions of Classic Works: Critical Essays*, ed. Sharon Friedman (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2009), 186, n. 3. Phyllis Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," printed in *American Theatre* 12, no. 2 (1995): 23-38; Suzan-Lori Parks, *The Red Letter Plays* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2001); Celia Wren, "Theatre: A New Hester Prynne Who Takes on the Patriarchy," *The New York Times*, Sep. 15, 2002, Mar. 21, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/15/arts/theater-a-new-hester-prynne-who-takes-on-the-patriarchy.html>; Larry Murray, "'Pearl': The Scarlet Letter as an Opera Workshop at Shakespeare and Company," *Berkshire On Stage*, Aug. 2, 2012, Mar. 21, 2017, <https://berkshireonstage.com/2012/08/02/pearl-the-scarlet-letter-as-an-opera-workshop-at-shakespeare-co/>; Misha Berson, "Seattle's Intiman Theatre Premieres a New Adaptation of 'The Scarlet Letter'," *The Seattle Times*, Oct. 23, 2010, Mar. 21, 2017, <http://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/seattles-intiman-theatre-premieres-a-new-adaptation-of-the-scarlet-letter/>.

democratic values. I problematize these components more fully in the next section on Puritan formations.

Though the Puritans first entered US popular culture in the early nineteenth century, I choose to focus on the twentieth century for several reasons. First, the US visibly grappled with maintaining the hegemony of the idealized citizen as white, male, Protestant, and heterosexual while maintaining his invisibility under a guise of equality for all. It was, as sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant explain, a period of time when “[r]acial rule...moved from despotism [overt slavery, genocide, and conquest] to democracy, from domination to hegemony. In this transition, hegemonic forms of racial rule—those based on consent—eventually came to supplant those based on coercion. But only to some extent, only partially.”¹⁸ That is, the US’s national identity was changing and, to some extent as I discuss throughout this dissertation, expanding. Yet even with legal citizenship, US citizens of color remained on the periphery of social and political citizenship.

Representations of the Puritans were most often used as both reflections and reinforcements of defining national identity in terms of (an imagined) hegemonic whiteness. Whether represented (positively) as proto-Americans or (negatively) as moralizing kill-joys, they represented the US’s national origin story and helped to define and delimit what citizenship meant in the twentieth century. When people of color, predominantly Native Americans, appeared with the Puritans in the national imaginary, they were never explicitly afforded the same proto-Americanness and most often interrupted the legibility and civility of Puritan communities. These representations of

¹⁸ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 132.

Puritans and people of color had both immediate and sustained implications for the real bodies living in the twentieth century.

Furthermore, the twentieth century was a period of mass production in the US. Industrialization and capitalism solidified their hold on the country's economy. This is important because patriotism and capitalism often became conflated with each other: to buy was to support the economy and to support the economy was to support the US and thus demonstrate one's patriotism. A (white) national identity developed into forms of visual iconography—purchasing decorations for holidays, making “traditional” feasts for Thanksgiving, traveling for holidays, reciting the pledge of allegiance, and creating large public festivals—on a scale not quite realized in the nineteenth century. The Puritans informed the national identity being purchased and taught in many instances, especially for Thanksgiving.

During the twentieth century the US also moved from a predominantly print culture to a visual culture and finally to a mediatized culture. Representations of the Puritans were more often performed than in the nineteenth century with school pageants, films, plays, TV shows, and commercials, as demonstrated above. Finally, in the twentieth century state governments, with the oversight of the federal government, unified public education. The Puritans became a component of the history curriculum and canonical texts like *The Scarlet Letter* and, later, *The Crucible* became part of English literature curriculums, thereby reaching nearly every US citizen coming through the public education system.

This dissertation examines representations of the Puritans at three distinct moments of the twentieth century. I take as my entry point the early twentieth-century practice of using Thanksgiving plays and pageants in public schools to teach US history and assimilate European immigrant children (and, by extension, their parents) into a

unified (imagined) national identity in my first chapter. Progressive era Thanksgiving plays offer a compelling place to begin this investigation because, for the first time in the history of US education, educators emphasized the performance of heroic historical figures, like the Pilgrims, to coerce students into the physical embodiment of good citizenship practices. In the face of the massive immigration of poor, Catholic, Eastern orthodox, Jewish, and non-white Southern and Eastern Europeans, civic elites framed the Pilgrims as the ideal immigrants to which the inferior European immigrants should emulate.

The next chapter continues through the McCarthy era and early Civil Rights movement with an analysis of Arthur Miller's racial and performative adaptation of Tituba in *The Crucible* (1953). The third chapter concludes the twentieth century with an analysis of Phyllis Nagy's 1994 feminist stage adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 novel *The Scarlet Letter* within the context of its production in the Culture Wars of the 1990s as compared to the context of the novel's production in 1850. To conclude, I begin to consider what the role of the Puritans and the use of a Puritan past to represent a unified national identity might mean in the twenty-first century. Despite the still developing crisis of white, heterosexual masculinity in the idealized citizen, epitomized in movements such as the Tea Party, the alt-Right, and 2016 election of Donald J. Trump, the use of the Puritan past to reify a shared national past or to condemn conservative morality in the US has largely been absent.

Though these chapters progress chronologically, I am not suggesting that the meaning of representations of the Puritans in the national imaginary also evolve in a linear fashion. Indeed, at most of the moments examined, the Puritans exist in the national imaginary with the push-and-pull of contradictory meanings identified earlier. Thus twentieth-century US citizens could simultaneously hold the positive image of the

Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving next to the intolerance of the Puritans represented in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The Crucible* (1953). This push-and-pull, as I suggest, also reflects the tensions of remembering a national past steeped in settler colonialism, slavery, genocide, assimilation, freedom, and democracy.

This introduction provides a historical and theoretical foundation for examining how history, memory, and performance collide in representations of the Puritans and, subsequently, US citizenship. My analyses in this dissertation focus on what I call the Puritan formations of a given sociohistorical period. The concept of Puritan formations builds off of what Omi and Winant identify as racial formations, covered in more depth in the methodology section.¹⁹ By focusing on Puritan formations, I avoid creating a false dichotomy between historically “accurate” representations and “inaccurate” ones. As philosopher Michel Foucault argues, “The origin lies at a place of inevitable loss, the point where the truth of things corresponded to a truthful discourse, the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost.”²⁰

Rather than conceive of history as a false and impossible search for origins and their linear development to a final event, Foucault uses the concept of genealogy to suggest a more complicated, non-linear, web-like approach to history:

[genealogy] must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history...it must be sensitive to their recurrence...to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles...[it] must define even those instances when they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealized.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 79.

²¹ Ibid., 76.

Foucault's analysis reminds me to avoid making claims about the Puritans based on a misguided assumption that the truth of them exists somewhere and that representations of the Puritans in the twentieth century adhere to or deviate from that truth. Instead, I examine how Puritan formations (have) exist(ed) historiographically at given moments of time. These formations do not develop linearly, nor are they evolving towards something. They are more like snapshots, "recurrence[s]" that occur in similar, but ultimately "different roles."²²

For the purposes of elucidating Puritan formations as a method of analysis, the next section provides a brief overview of how Puritan formations began to function in the nineteenth century. I use New England statesman Daniel Webster's 1820 bicentennial oratory in Plymouth, Massachusetts to introduce several inventions of Puritan formations that first occurred in the nineteenth century. In the next section of this introduction, I offer my literature review and methodology. The literature review places much of the scholarship used in the summary of nineteenth-century Puritan formations within the context of their contributions to the wider field of Puritan studies and the legacy of the Puritans on US culture, politics, and thought. It continues with an overview of germinal works on imagining the nation and US national identity. Furthermore, the methodology section situates this dissertation in the field of performance studies, building off of both germinal studies in the confluence of history, memory, and citizenship in performances as well as the ways in which performance can be used as a methodological lens. Here I also elaborate on the concept of Puritan formations and how they are used to categorize racial formations on the specific bodies that enact them. Finally, the last section of this introduction provides a chapter overview for the dissertation.

²² Ibid., 79.

PURITAN FORMATIONS: A BRIEF SUMMARY

In 1820, Daniel Webster stood at the front of Plymouth's First (Congregational) Church and delivered what is today one of the most well-known and well-historicized narratives about the Pilgrims' legacy in the US prior to the invention of the First Thanksgiving myth.²³ Webster, a US statesman and New England son, had been chosen as the orator that year for a very special Forefathers' Day celebration. Since 1769, four years before the Boston Tea Party, Forefathers' Day had annually commemorated the first group of Puritans who landed on the shores of Plymouth, Massachusetts on December 22, 1620. Founded by the Old Colony Club, a Plymouth group of wealthy, male Puritan descendants, the holiday celebrated what was in 1769 an obscure history of the Puritans' landing. By the nineteenth century, as American and New England studies scholar Joseph Conforti observes, the holiday had firmly become "a ritualized celebration enunciating a heroic narrative of republican origins that was deployed to revamp older Puritan accounts of New England's distinctive genesis."²⁴ That is, Forefathers' Day at varying points in its celebrations served political purposes that connected the first Puritan settlers to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century republican causes in the (white) New England imaginary.²⁵ For Webster's 1820 speech, however, the town of Plymouth celebrated not just Forefathers' Day, but also the bicentennial of the Pilgrims' landing.

²³ Daniel Webster, *A Discourse, Delivered at Plymouth, December 22, 1820, In Commemoration of the First Settlement of New-England*, 4th ed. (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1826). [1821] I discuss the invention of the First Thanksgiving myth in my first chapter.

²⁴ Conforti also notes, "The new calendar added six days to the old calendar; the Mayflower had actually arrived in Plymouth Harbor on December 16." Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity From the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 176.

²⁵ The history of Forefathers' Day and how it was used for various political purposes is another example of Puritan formations, which I cannot explore fully here. The Old Colony Club eventually lost ideological control over the holiday as the Revolutionary War intensified. Though the holiday was not celebrated in the 1780s, it began again in the 1790s and was used for varying political purposes well into the nineteenth century. In many ways, it was a pre-cursor to the Thanksgiving holiday of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though scholars disagree on the extent. Ibid., 176-78; James W. Baker, *Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2009), 63-64; John

Despite New England's celebration of Forefathers' Day for nearly fifty years, the rest of the US had given little credence to how New England framed itself as the origin of republican virtues until the Pilgrim bicentennial and, more especially, Webster's speech.²⁶ In it, he declared:

[...]We have come to this Rock, to record here our homage for our Pilgrim Fathers; [...] our admiration of their virtues; [...] and our attachment to those principles of civil and religious liberty, which they encountered the dangers of the ocean, the storms of heaven, the violence of savages, [...] to enjoy and to establish.—And we would leave here, also, for the generations which are rising up rapidly to fill our places, some proof, that we have endeavoured to transmit the great inheritance unimpaired; that [...] we are not altogether unworthy of our origin.²⁷

As numerous scholars have noted, Webster's speech reflected a growing national, not just regional, historical narrative that put New England, especially the New England Puritans, at the center of US democracy and patriotism.²⁸ Not only did he credit the Pilgrims with New England's "traditions of stability and energy, order and restless improvement," he anticipated the spread of such values to the rest of the US as New Englanders migrated westward.²⁹ Moreover, as American studies and literary scholar John Seelye observes, he honored not just a dead past, but a past that could move the present country forward.³⁰

The idea of the future of a united nation was important at this point in US history because of several rifts forming within the relatively new republic. Conforti observes that

Seelye, *Memory's Nation: The Place of Plymouth Rock* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 41-47.

²⁶ By 1820, New England societies had spread to major cities across the US and many of them celebrated Forefathers' Day. Seelye, *Memory's Nation*: 4, 174-75.

²⁷ Webster, *A Discourse*: 7-8.

²⁸ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 64; Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 183; Seelye, *Memory's Nation*: 4; Jan C. Dawson, *The Unusable Past: America's Puritan Tradition, 1830 to 1930* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 26; Margaret Bendroth, *The Last Puritans: Mainline Protestants and the Power of the Past* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 28.

²⁹ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 185. Also see Seelye, *Memory's Nation*: 79.

³⁰ Seelye, *Memory's Nation*: 75.

instead of uniting the nation, the independence granted after the Revolutionary War actually created “an enhanced awareness of and a new political investment in regional difference.”³¹ In the first decades of the nineteenth century, New England considered secession as it watched political power shift to the South and West with events such as the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, which greatly expanded the geographical expanse of both regions. The growth of the South also meant the growth of slavery, which increased the southern states’ voting power over New England’s.³² Meanwhile, the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800 inaugurated “an unbroken twenty-four-year reign of Virginia presidents,” which further threatened New England hegemony over the republic.³³ Virginian politicians like Jefferson tended to shape republican values according to Enlightenment principles, working towards a secular society that emphasized “individual rights and opportunity.” These principles ran counter to New England principles, which emphasized “communal life” and infused republicanism with Puritan (moralistic) values.³⁴

In addition to reflecting the republican virtues of the New England Puritans, Webster’s speech also reflected the rather recent naming of the first band of Puritan Separatists to arrive at Plymouth Rock in 1620 as “Pilgrims.”³⁵ The first recorded use of

³¹ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 81-82.

³² Bendroth, *The Last Puritans*: 27; Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 116-19.

³³ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 117.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 81. For more on the differences in political ideology between Virginia and New England see Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 74-79.

³⁵ The name “Pilgrims” could have come from several sources. Most likely, as historian Albert Matthews writes, the name “Pilgrims” is a reference back to William Bradford’s 1630 [*History*] *Of Plymouth Plantation*. In describing the Separatists’ journey from Leyden, Holland to Plymouth, Massachusetts, Bradford writes, “So they lefte y^e goodly & pleasante citie, which had been ther resting place near .12. years; but they knew they were *pilgrimes*, & looked not much on those things, but lift vp their eyes to y^e heauens, their dearest cuntrie, and quieted their spirits.” Although Bradford’s manuscript disappeared during the Revolutionary War, this particular passage was still well known to orators and writers before the manuscript’s rediscovery and publication in 1856. Albert Matthews, *Publications of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, vol. 17 (Boston: The Colonial Socceity of Massachusetts, 1915), 356, my italics.

the term “Pilgrims” to name these Separatists had only recently occurred in publications around the 1798 Forefathers’ Day celebration in Boston, over 175 years after the “Pilgrims” landed at Plymouth Rock.³⁶ Prior to this naming, the Pilgrims were understood simply as the first wave of Puritan immigrants and unremarkable from the rest of the Puritans.³⁷ In terms of historical facts, *The Mayflower* carried 102 passengers; after leaving Plymouth, it became a slave ship.³⁸ Of the English passengers that landed in Plymouth, only forty were actual Separatists, or what we today call “Pilgrims.” The rest, Conforti explains, “were ‘strangers,’ secular-minded individuals hired for military or economic purposes.” These “strangers” included Captain Miles Standish and John Alden who I examine more closely in my first chapter.³⁹ After their first winter, only fifty-five Plymouth Separatists and strangers remained. Thirty-five members joined them from the *Fortune* in 1621 and sixty more from the *Anne* and *Little James* in 1623. Ten years after their initial arrival, in 1630, more Puritans began arriving in Massachusetts in much larger groups. By 1634, the Massachusetts Bay Colony had 10,000 settlers.⁴⁰

³⁶ Matthews includes an extensive historical exploration of the origin of the term “Pilgrim Fathers” in volume 17 of the *Publications of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts* (1915). In it, he observes that Thomas Paine’s ode written for the 1798 Boston Forefathers’ Day celebrations was the first appearance of the “word Pilgrim, as specifically applied to an early settler...and immediately caught the popular fancy” (327-328). He later confirms that “as applied specifically to the early settlers at Plymouth, Pilgrim first appeared in 1798 and Pilgrim Fathers in 1799” (352). Historian Ann Uhry Abrams cites a 1793 sermon by Chandler Robbins as the word’s first appearance. I have been unable to find this reference, however, in what she cites as volume 19, rather than volume 17, of Matthews’s *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*. Volume 17 does include an excerpt from Robbins’ sermon, which is probably what Abrams references, in which he refers to this first band of settlers as “pilgrimes” [sic] (359). I would argue, however, that Robbins uses the term “pilgrimes” in the sense of religious wanderers rather than as a proper noun. Ibid., 327-28, 352, 359. Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas: Rival Myths of American Origin* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 5, 285 n. 3.

³⁷ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 171; Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 98-99.

³⁸ Leland S. Person, “The Dark Labyrinth of Mind: Hawthorne, Hester, and the Ironies of Racial Mothering,” in *The Norton Critical Edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter and Other Writings*, ed. Leland S. Person (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), 663. [2001]

³⁹ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 17.

⁴⁰ Diana Karter Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving: An American Holiday, An American History* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1984), 7, 11; Matthews, *Publications of The Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 17: 363-65.

Theologically speaking, the Pilgrims were Separatists who believed that the Church of England retained too many Catholic influences and could not be redeemed. Therefore, they chose to separate completely from it. The Puritans were Non-Separatists who sought to reform the Church of England rather than separate completely from it. Even this explanation is oversimplified, however, because the Puritans did not share a monolithic theological system. Several historians, as Richard A. Bailey observes in *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (2011), have even decapitalized “puritans” to signify their heterogeneous beliefs, which included Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists.⁴¹ Thus, as Conforti argues, Plymouth’s main and really only “historical importance stems largely from the support, particularly foodstuffs, that it furnished to the shiploads of Puritan migrants who arrived in the region in the 1630s.”⁴² In 1691, the Plymouth colony merged with the Massachusetts Bay Colony and by that time any great differences between the two groups had disappeared.⁴³ The naming of this group as “Pilgrims” and separate from the rest of the Massachusetts Puritan settlers is an example of a Puritan formation because it created an artificial difference between the two groups that served various political and ideological purposes at different moments in US history.

The invention of a Puritan-Pilgrim national origin story and its mythologization over the course of the nineteenth century displaced the foundation of earlier colonial settlements in North America such as Jamestown, which was founded in 1607.⁴⁴ The use of Jamestown, which would have put Virginia rather than New England as the founding

⁴¹ Richard A. Bailey, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12, 20.

⁴² Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 17-18.

⁴³ Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving*: 11-12; Andrew F. Smith, *The Turkey: An American Story* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 67; Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 171-75; Bailey, *Race and Redemption*: 12, 20.

⁴⁴ Locating a US national origin story on the East Coast also forecloses the role of the Southwest in the nation’s formation.

US colony, did not fit the national origin story being constructed in the nineteenth century for several reasons. As historian of US Christianity Mark A. Noll argues, seventeenth-century Puritan “Massachusetts and the equally Puritan Connecticut remained the most cohesive, most religiously self-assured colonies in the New World.”⁴⁵ The Virginia colony, of which Jamestown was a part, was not nearly as cohesive and was originally driven more by economic interests than moral or religious ones. Moreover, not only did Jamestown (and Virginia) have slaves, but they also had the dubious honor of bringing the first African slaves to the New World in 1619. To the white nineteenth-century New England anti-slavery advocates and abolitionists promoting the Puritans-as-founding-myth, Jamestown and Virginia’s long connections to slavery made it a non-starter for a national origin story. The New England narrative of the Puritans, however, tended to leave out the presence of slaves, indigenous and of African descent, in colonial New England. While there were certainly less slaves in New England than in the colonial South, their presence has largely been erased from historical memory, a problem I discuss further in my second chapter.⁴⁶

Furthermore, Native American studies forces us to examine the Puritans as settlers and as decolonization studies scholars Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang pointedly observe, “settlers are not immigrants.”⁴⁷ This is because “[i]mmigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies.”⁴⁸ As any cursory examination of

⁴⁵ Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 31.

⁴⁶ For a full study on the development of the competing origin mythologies of Jamestown and Massachusetts (the Puritans), see, Abrams, *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas*. Also see, Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 182 and 189; Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 30-36; Janet Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving: A Ritual of American Nationality," *Critique of Anthropology* 12, no. 2 (1992): 184; Smith, *The Turkey: An American Story*: 81.

⁴⁷ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

the history of Puritan New England will demonstrate, the Puritans were not and did not try to be “beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies” of the land. They were, as Conforti observes, first and foremost *English* colonists, beholden to English law, including their charter for the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which gave them the right to occupy Indigenous land.⁴⁹ Indeed, the most important aspect of settler colonialism is the acquisition of land, which therefore requires the dispossession of Indigenous peoples.⁵⁰ Thus it is not surprising that, as Conforti explains, part of the appeal of settling in Massachusetts was that Native Americans, many of whom had died from European diseases earlier in the seventeenth century, had already cleared the land for agriculture.⁵¹

The consequences of settler colonialism do not end with the Puritans, however, and must be factored into future Puritan formations. As decolonization scholar Patrick Wolfe argues, “invasion is a structure not an event.”⁵² As such, it affects every aspect of a settler colonial society even after the Indigenous peoples are seemingly removed, assimilated, and/or destroyed: “When invasion is recognized as a structure rather than an event...narrating that history involves charting the continuities, discontinuities, adjustments, and departures whereby a logic that initially informed frontier killing transmutes into different modalities, discourses and institutional formations as it undergirds the historical development and complexification of settler society. This is not a hierarchical procedure.”⁵³ Rather than focusing solely on the Puritans, my analysis of Puritan formations seeks to chart these “different modalities, discourses and institutional

⁴⁹ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 17-31.

⁵⁰ Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” 5; Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 6-7; Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 388.

⁵¹ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 19-20.

⁵² Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 388.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 402.

formations” as they affect, reflect, and/or disappear the status of living Native Americans in the periods examined in each chapter. When the Puritans are read as the nation’s first and ideal immigrants, the story belies the settler history of the nation and the structural violence and dispossession on which it inherently sustains and constructs itself.

The presence of chattel slavery and the dispossession of Native Americans and their effects on formations of whiteness further complicate the historical underpinnings of Puritan formations. As I have already begun to explore, settler colonialism requires Indigenous peoples be “destroy[ed] and disappear[ed]” so that their “land is recast as property and as a resource.”⁵⁴ Tuck and Yang further observe, however, that settler colonialism also “involves the subjugation and forced labor of chattel slaves.”⁵⁵ Slaves are “commodities of labor and therefore it is the slave’s *person* that is the excess.” As such, their excess labor is needed to cultivate the land, but the excess of their person is “imprisonable, punishable, and murderable.”⁵⁶ So, the settler deals in property (land). To this end, he redefines Indigenous places as his property by removing (via war, allotments, treaties, disease, and/or assimilation) Indigenous peoples. To prosper in the settler colonial society, his property then needs “excess production” by “excess labor,” which he gets in the form of property-less chattel slaves. Thus, when the US government removed Native American tribes from east of the Mississippi to west of it after the Louisiana Purchase, they greatly expanded the availability of land for plantations in the South, and therefore extended the need for black slaves.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 6.

⁵⁵ Chattel slavery in the US could refer both to the enslavement of Indigenous or African peoples. After the nineteenth century, however, it largely refers only to African and African-descended slaves.

⁵⁶ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 6.

⁵⁷ Patrick Wolfe, "After the Frontier: Separation and Absorption in US Indian Policy," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 16-22.

The perceived diminishment of a Native American presence in relation to the perception of an increase in an African American presence is a pattern of racial formations seen frequently in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this racial formation, “Native Americanness is [seen as] subtractive” and blackness is seen as “expansive.” As “subtractive,” Native American identity is imagined as “becom[ing] fewer in number and less Native, but never exactly white, over time.” As expansive and evidenced in such regulations as the one-drop rule, blackness as an identity “ensur[es] that a slave/criminal status will be inherited by an expanding number of ‘black’ descendants.”⁵⁸ In these ways, the “settler-native-slave triad structures settler colonialism,” greatly complicating how people of color, including immigrants, migrants, and refugees arriving long after slavery, experience belonging and citizenship in the US.⁵⁹

Perhaps the most important element in a US origin story positively based on the Puritans as immigrants and victims of religious persecution, rather than settler colonialists, was the ways in which it linked republican values with Christian ideology. Though the revolutionaries “may have found it prudent to explain their intention to practice self-government in the secular language of the Enlightenment,” as historian Jan C. Dawson argues, “all Americans...knew that the success of their republican experiment depended upon God.”⁶⁰ For many US historians and writers in the nineteenth century, the aftermath of the French Revolution, where secularism without incumbent moralism led to

⁵⁸ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 12.

⁵⁹ Tuck and Yang explain that “[p]eople of color who enter/are brought into the settler colonial nation-state” might be “invited to be a settler in some scenarios, given the appropriate investments in whiteness, or [are] made an illegal, criminal presence in other scenarios. Ghetto colonialism, prisons, and under resourced compulsory schooling are specializations of settler colonialism in North America; they are produced by the collapsing of internal, external, and settler colonialisms, into new blended categories.” Ibid., 17-18.

⁶⁰ Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 25.

chaos and massive bloodshed, reinforced the idea that Christianity, specifically Protestantism, and republicanism needed each other. Daniel Webster's bicentennial oration, though not the first to argue for this linkage, still represents an historical milestone in Puritan formations because he "argued for the Republic's debt to Puritanism" as "America's oldest tradition and the only one that linked religious and political reform."⁶¹ Thus, throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, various forms of Protestantism and Protestant beliefs often infused the language used to describe, promote, memorialize, and/or disparage the Puritan legacy in the US.

By the early nineteenth-century, the Calvinism of the Puritans had evolved into two main denominations in New England and its diaspora, Unitarianism and Congregationalism, both of which greatly contributed to the Puritan formation of the nineteenth century.⁶² Both groups competed for and claimed control of their (shared) Puritan pasts to form their own denominational identities and to promote the New England foundations of the ever expanding US. Many of the most well-known writers who historicized and analyzed the Puritans prior to the Civil War, such as Daniel Webster, George Bancroft, Lyman Beecher, Lydia Marie Child, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Catherine Sedgwick, were themselves Congregationalists or Unitarians. Moreover, many of the preeminent institutions of higher education and theology in the US were founded as Congregational or Unitarian institutions, including Harvard (founded 1636), Yale (founded 1701), Dartmouth (1769), Oberlin College (1833), and The University of California at Berkeley (1868). Thus Congregationalism and Unitarianism had a huge influence on the intellectual and historiographical

⁶¹ Ibid., 26.

⁶² Unitarian (liberal) and Trinitarian (orthodox) Congregationalists officially split with the formation of the American Unitarian Association in 1825. Bendroth, *The Last Puritans*: 32.

development of the US, despite their small numbers as compared to other Protestant denominations in the nineteenth century.⁶³

The Congregationalists and Unitarians took different approaches in how they chose to historicize the Puritans, especially the glaring contradiction in nineteenth-century Puritan formations, which could represent the Puritans as the founders of republican virtues of religious and civil liberty while (historically speaking) they frequently persecuted outsiders.⁶⁴ The Congregationalists unabashedly claimed their Puritan past without much historical criticism while adapting and modernizing the Puritans' theological beliefs and practices. Historian and Executive Director for the Congregational Library Margaret Bendroth even argues that Congregationalists' historical understanding of their Puritan past as separate from their nineteenth- and twentieth-century presents allowed them to more readily "embrace change" than other Protestant denominations.⁶⁵ According to Bendroth, this helps to explain how the Congregationalists could "have the longest and in many ways the most dramatic narrative of change" as they adapted themselves over four centuries from New England Puritanism into the United Church of Christ, one of the most liberal Protestant denominations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.⁶⁶

On the other hand, nineteenth-century Unitarians tended to historicize their Puritan ancestors in more nuanced ways. Conforti explains that in antebellum novels by Unitarians Lydia Marie Child and Catherine Sedgwick the "Pilgrim past was imagined

⁶³ According to Noll, Methodists had the greatest effect on the "founding era of the United States." Though the number of Congregational churches continued to grow after the American Revolution, they did not grow as quickly as other churches. In contrast, Methodists "were the driving religious force" in the nineteenth century US, not Congregationalists. Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 48, 50, 60.

⁶⁴ Yet, as Noll observes, the historical Puritans "actually instituted a tighter governmental control of religion than existed in the Old World," contradicting the mythology that the Puritans promoted the idea of "religious liberty." Ibid., 74.

⁶⁵ Bendroth, *The Last Puritans*: 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 5.

[positively] as a regional religious heritage that coexisted with an oppressive Calvinist theology and the intolerance that it bred.”⁶⁷ That is, the Unitarians more clearly separated the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock as the paragons of “a useable religious-republican past” as opposed to the rest of the Puritans.⁶⁸ They problematized the (perceived) intolerance of the Puritans, while “Pilgrimizing” their more beneficial contributions to US democracy such as the concept of civic responsibility and civil and religious liberty.⁶⁹ Congregationalists, however, underplayed the differences between the Pilgrims and Puritans and focused instead on the seventeenth-century New England settlers’ emphasis on “[l]ocal self-government, lay control of churches, wide distribution of property” and other republican elements collectively generated among Pilgrims and Puritans.⁷⁰

The intellectual and institutional reach Congregationalists and Unitarians had in the nineteenth century had a huge effect in shaping the national imaginary and its Puritan-founding-mythology. Though both groups dealt with the negative stereotypes of their denominational and genealogical Puritan ancestors, their actions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries leaned towards liberalism and socially progressive movements such as abolitionism, temperance, voluntary and missionary societies, and the Social Gospel, further complicating Puritan formations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁷¹ That is, much of their ideological work in the nineteenth-century sociopolitical realm seemed to run counter to the most negative stereotypes of the

⁶⁷ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 192.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 189-93; Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 32.

⁷⁰ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 190.

⁷¹ Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 68-69; Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 77-90; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 785-804. Bendroth, *The Last Puritans*: 84-5, 134, 136, 138.

Puritans as intolerant of difference even while they claimed the Puritan past as their foundation and inspiration.⁷²

Outside of New England and its diaspora in the Midwest and West, however, the Puritans and their descendants continued to be stereotyped negatively largely because of New England's perceived hegemony over the cultural and social life in the nineteenth-century US. US cultural historian Michael Kammen notes that the South used the notion of the "Puritan" as an epithet towards "New England's customary cultural hegemony" as early as 1826 and continued such usage through the end of the nineteenth century.⁷³ Perhaps one of the most divisive issues was the way in which Congregationalists and Unitarians used their Puritan past to support antislavery and abolitionist views. For example, some "New England abolitionists represented escaped slaves as 'Pilgrims' reenacting the heroic journey in search of liberty that gave birth to the region."⁷⁴ In another example, Daniel Webster's 1820 bicentennial address "excoriate[d] the 'African slave-trade'" and its incompatibility with the concepts of liberty that the Pilgrims brought to the US.⁷⁵

Besides slavery, however, non-New Englanders found several other problems with the association between Puritans and nineteenth-century New England hegemony. Noll further explains that the mistrust of "Yankee meddling" inspired many [white] church people, especially in the South and West, to resist" Congregational (and Presbyterian) voluntary societies. They feared that joining such societies would diminish

⁷² Of course, whether or not these socially progressive activities made the Congregationalists and like-minded mainline Protestants more or less like the stereotypical intolerant, killjoy Puritans was a matter of perspective. For example, Anthony Comstock, the founder of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and the man behind one of the nation's first anti-obscenity laws The Comstock Act, was a Congregationalist.

⁷³ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*: 211.

⁷⁴ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 189.

⁷⁵ Seelye, *Memory's Nation*: 82; Webster, *A Discourse*: 52-54.

the autonomy of independent, local churches.⁷⁶ Moreover, the figure of the (white) Southern cavalier—chivalrous, masculine, and independent—ran counter to the communalism and ecumenisms promoted by Congregationalists, Unitarians, and other Northern mainline Protestants based on an understanding of their Puritan past.⁷⁷

The juxtaposition of the Southern cavalier to the New England Puritan in the mid-nineteenth century also reflected what the South negatively perceived as New England's secularizing rhetoric. As historian Jan C. Dawson explains, many in the South believed that Puritanism, or what it had become in the nineteenth century, "contained the seed of degeneration from religion to ideology, whereas southern religion embodied a respect for order and authority that deepened its commitment to orthodoxy." In this way, Dawson suggests, the historical seventeenth-century Puritan emphasis on strict, ordered religion gained a greater counterpart to the evangelicalism of the antebellum and postbellum South than the Unitarianism and Congregationalism of New England, even though the former developed at least a century after the latter.⁷⁸ Southerners, however, never wished to stake a claim to the Puritan past and they continued to associate the Puritans negatively with New England. As these examples demonstrate, much of the Puritan formations in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, especially between New England and the South, reflected the growing ideological rift between North and South prior to and in the years after the Civil War.

As industrialization and Eastern and Southern European immigration increased exponentially in the late nineteenth century, the ownership of the Puritan past began to lose the tint of New England regionalism and the denominationalism of Congregationalists and Unitarians of the early- to mid-nineteenth century in the wider

⁷⁶ Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 69-70.

⁷⁷ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 81; Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 62-75.

⁷⁸ Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 62, 63-64.

national imaginary.⁷⁹ For many civic elites across the US, the Pilgrims and Puritans represented a simple, rural, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant people who could serve as role models for the newly arriving immigrants. Though European colonists, and later immigrants, had been arriving in the US since the first European colonies were established in the seventeenth century, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European immigrants greatly threatened what had become a culturally Anglicized, Protestant hegemony in the US for several reasons. The first reason was that they were predominately from Southern and Eastern Europe, which made them less white than what had previously been a majority of Northern European immigrants. Moreover, they brought with them forms of Roman Catholicism, Judaism, and Eastern Orthodox churches that were less assimilable into the Protestant values of the US than previous European immigrants. Finally, they were also poor, less educated, and lived in poverty around urban and industrial centers.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, civic elites saw the value in assimilating these European immigrants rather than finding legal and cultural modes of separation and segregation as they had for African Americans, Native Americans, Asian immigrants, and Latin American immigrants. In their attempt to assimilate European immigrants, civic elites narrativized the Pilgrims specifically as “a small homogenous, egalitarian [sic] Christian community in which class differences were minimal, in which religion was central; a face-to-face community as a model of the national imagined community.”⁸¹ As my first chapter

⁷⁹ Both New England regionalism and Congregationalists continued to assert control over the Puritans in the national imaginary, though.

⁸⁰ Ahlstrom adds that there was also a “considerable minority of German Jews, articulate rationalists, and religious radicals.” Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 749-50, 851-52. Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 122-25.

⁸¹ Siskind, “The Invention of Thanksgiving,” 184-85.

examines in more detail, this is also when the Pilgrims became associated with the newly nationalized Thanksgiving holiday for the first time in either New England or US history.

In addition to being narrativized as the ideal immigrants and as part of a US founding mythology, the Puritans were also used to nostalgize a simpler, pre-industrial past. In general, the late nineteenth century was a period of time when “the past was being monetized,” with a renewed national fascination with New England and colonial history for reasons such as those given above.⁸² Specifically, as Margaret Bendroth observes, the “Puritans and Pilgrims were regularly appropriated for use in the modern marketplace, usually as symbols of old-fashioned virtue.”⁸³ Much like the Congregationalists and Unitarians had in the early-nineteenth century, civic elites tried to represent a shared national Puritan past “as the mixed blessing that they in fact were: a despotic theology counterbalanced by political impulses that offered liberal possibility.”⁸⁴ Perhaps because of this newly nostalgized Puritan past, the Puritans and Pilgrims were most often conflated in the national imaginary rather than being represented as oppositionally good (Pilgrims) and bad (Puritans). This is not to say that negative stereotypes ceased, especially in the South, but that the Puritans, in general, were seen more as a unifying national past than they had been previously.

While continuing to conflate Puritans and Pilgrims, many late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century intellectuals and academics, however, were less likely to universally acknowledge the positive aspects of the Puritan legacy in the US. Many negatively “conflated Puritanism with conservatism” and questioned its usability as a national past in what they perceived as the declining modern US culture of the twentieth

⁸² Bendroth, *The Last Puritans*: 72; Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 203-62; Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 94-97.

⁸³ Bendroth, *The Last Puritans*: 120.

⁸⁴ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*: 211.

century.⁸⁵ Dawson observes, however, that the “fact that their criticism of American culture, both before and after the war [World War I], focused on the Puritan, rather than on some other tradition, is an important commentary on the residual power of the Puritan legacy over their imaginations.”⁸⁶ That is, they were not trying to find a new national past so much as grapple with the legacy of the Puritan one. Literary critic H. L. Mencken is perhaps one of the best remembered of these critics to use the Puritans as a scapegoat to blame all that he saw wrong with US culture. He famously quipped, “Puritanism: the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, is happy.”⁸⁷ Even though the tide of historical and literary criticism of the Puritans in the academy would soon shift course again to analyze the nuance and complexity of Puritan belief systems, the anti-Puritanism of Mencken and many of his contemporaries filtered into the national imaginary and largely remained unchanged throughout the twentieth century.⁸⁸

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Studies of the seventeenth-century Puritans as well as literary, historical, and popular culture representations of them in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have primarily occurred in the fields of history, religious studies, literary studies, and regional (New England) studies. This dissertation builds upon this scholarship by bringing a performance studies perspective to representations of the Puritans in the twentieth century, specifically analyzing plays featuring the Puritans as characters. In what follows,

⁸⁵ Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 105; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*: 206-07 and 388; Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 131-45.

⁸⁶ Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 119.

⁸⁷ H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy: His Own Selection of His Choicest Writings* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1949), 624. [Originally written, but not necessarily published, between 1912 and the 1930s, see Mencken, pg. 616]

⁸⁸ Michael Kammen also points out that Stuart Pratt Sherman’s more positive characterization of the Puritans in the 1920s, which valued a tradition of “truth and values,” gained a much greater following in the next few decades than Mencken’s views. My point, however, is that Mencken’s criticisms, rather than debates in the academy, became more firmly wedged in the national imaginary’s views of the Puritans. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*: 390. Also see Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 131-45.

I trace the lineage of scholarship that serves as the foundation of this dissertation, beginning with co-founder of the field of American Studies and intellectual historian Perry Miller and literary and cultural critic Sacvan Bercovitch's germinal intellectual histories of the Puritans' legacy on US thought, culture, and politics.

Next, I examine scholarship within the fields of history and religious studies that have aided me in creating a historiography of the Puritans' representations in the national imaginary since the nineteenth century. I also examine recent historical scholarship documenting the seventeenth-century Puritans' relationship with Native Americans and people of African descent, which greatly troubles the national imaginary's representation of the Puritans as a homogeneous white, proto-American community. Moving outside the study of the Puritans, I then consider the work of Marxist historian and political scientist Benedict Anderson and Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm as they contribute to my understanding of how imagined pasts help to make the idea of the nation comprehensible. Because the US nation has been and continues to be imagined as white, I also examine several germinal works in the study of racial hegemony in the US.

Finally, I survey several germinal works on history, memory, and performance within the field of performance studies, including scholarship by performance scholars Elin Diamond, Diana Taylor, Freddie Rokem, and Joseph Roach. These works have helped me think through how performance functions in what I define in my methodology section as Puritan formations. As I will explain, Puritan formations are a form of what Omi and Winant term racial formations. As such, I also identify the ways in which I read race in the texts and performances examined, specifically Euro-American, Native American, and African-American, using scholarship by preeminent novelist and literary scholar Toni Morrison and literary studies scholar Renée Bergland. In doing so, this dissertation contributes to the interdisciplinary study of the Puritan legacy on the US

while emphasizing performance as integral to the study of national identity formation and performance.

As I briefly outlined in the previous section, numerous historians have traced the intellectual history of the Puritans and the Puritans' place in the national imaginary over time. They have explored how the notion of the "Puritan" was used to inform US national identity and discourse from the founding of the New England colonies to discussions of religious freedom, immigration, morality, and numerous other topics throughout US history. Though studies of the New England Puritans were published throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they greatly varied between filiopietism, for example US historian George Bancroft's *History of the United States* (1834), to condemnation from Progressive-era intellectuals such as H. L. Mencken. Perry Miller's groundbreaking, two-volume work *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939 and 1953) "redefined the field" of Puritan studies by providing the first intellectual history of the Puritans. In a 2001 retrospective of Miller's contributions to the field of American Studies, historian Murray G. Murphey argues that Miller's scholarship was entirely unique because "he saw the conceptual system, not just of the Puritans but of any society, as defining for the members of that society what their world is and how it is to be used."⁸⁹ Over the course of his career, Miller made the highly nuanced and complex New England Puritan world and their legacy to US thought and nation building legible to non-Puritans. Though subsequent scholars of the Puritans might agree or disagree with Miller, they all engage with him at some level or another.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Murray G. Murphey, "Perry Miller and American Studies," *American Studies* 42, no. 2 (2001): 6, 7.

⁹⁰ Ibid. Alden T. Vaughn, *The Puritan Tradition in America, 1620-1730* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1972), xxi. Miller's other notable intellectual history on the Puritans is *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956).

In creating an intellectual history of the Puritans and their influence on US thought and its political and religious culture, Sacvan Bercovitch's *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (1975) extends the spirit of Miller's intellectual work, though he does not explicitly engage him. Bercovitch examines what he "take[s] to be a central aspect of our Puritan legacy, the rhetoric of American identity" through a literary and theological analysis of Puritan minister Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), specifically "Nehemias Americanus," the first chapter of his biography of Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor John Winthrop in the second book of volume one. Like Miller, Bercovitch focuses his discussion of US rhetoric and identity through a study of the actual historical Puritans, rather than focusing explicitly on their legacy and historicization in future generations.⁹¹

More recently, historians have refocused intellectual histories from the actual Puritans' writings to how the Puritans were imagined and historicized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Much of this scholarship focuses specifically on the development of the Thanksgiving holiday and the use of the 1620 Pilgrim landing as a US founding mythology.⁹² Fewer scholars, however, have attempted to trace the idea of Puritans and Puritanism more broadly conceived than the Pilgrims' landing through various incarnations or, as I argue, formations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Three texts have been especially useful to me in conceiving of the model of Puritan formations and constructing a history of these formations: historian Jan C. Dawson's *The Unusable*

⁹¹ Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), ix. Bercovitch's last chapter does move the discussion to Ralph Waldo Emerson and the nineteenth century. Bercovitch published two other influential books on the Puritans and their legacy: *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) and *The Office of the Scarlet Letter* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991). The latter focuses specifically on how Nathaniel Hawthorne represented the Puritans.

⁹² Seelye, *Memory's Nation*; Smith, *The Turkey: An American Story*; Baker, *Thanksgiving*; Abrams, *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas*; Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving."; Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving*; Ellen M. Litwack, *America's Public Holidays, 1865-1920* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000).

Past: America's Puritan Tradition, 1830 to 1930 (1984), American and New England studies scholar Joseph A. Conforti's *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity From the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (2001), and historian and Executive Director for the Congregational Library Margaret Bendroth's *The Last Puritans: Mainline Protestants and the Power of the Past* (2015). All three owe much to the intellectual work of scholars like Perry Miller and Sacvan Bercovitch but further their arguments. As Dawson observes, previous studies looking solely at the historical Puritans and Puritan thought like Miller and Bercovitch's failed to "reconstruct a legacy believed by past generations sometimes to inspire and other times to obstruct national development."⁹³

It is fitting then that Dawson's monograph was one of the first to reconstruct this legacy historiographically as conceived by various generations of US intellectuals and writers since the nineteenth century. An intellectual history that examines political and literary journals as well as history and fiction written between the years 1830 and 1930, Dawson demonstrates how nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers sought to "understand the Puritan inheritance, to adapt it to current issues, to revise it, to critique it, and finally to make it serve the rapid expansion of American society and culture." Historiographically speaking, she argues that the "largely self-conscious remaking of America's Puritan tradition" began "with the romantic revival of interest in Puritanism around 1830, and its equally self-conscious unmaking, ending around 1930."⁹⁴ In many ways, her work provides the greatest part of the methodological and analytical foundation from which my concept of Puritan formations is formed. Her work, however, focuses

⁹³ Dawson, *The Unusable Past*: 3.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

more on the intellectual formation of the Puritans among US intellectuals rather than the Puritans' place in the wider national imaginary.

Rather than looking at the Puritan tradition in US culture, Conforti provides a history of New England's place in the national imaginary from a regional studies lens. The imagining of New England as a "cultural terrain" is largely connected to, but not entirely dependent upon, imaginings of the Puritans. He argues that "[i]maged *pasts* have helped New Englanders negotiate, traditionalize, and resist change...these narratives are *partial truths*, selective interpretations of New England experience that are held up as the *whole truth*."⁹⁵ In approaching the study of New England this way, he disrupts any perceived stability in the region as both an imagined and geographical place from the settlement of the Puritans in the seventeenth century through the late-twentieth century. Such an approach has helped me, along with Dawson's text, to sketch out a history of Puritan formations over the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. Both have also helped me form a theoretical approach to examining Puritan formations in the national imaginary at different historical moments, instead of engaging in a doomed search comparing the "real" Puritans to the adaptation of them by future generations.

Though both Dawson and Conforti consider the relationship between Puritan formations and competing Protestant denominations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Bendroth more fully develops this relationship in her recent denominational history of Congregationalism. Bendroth argues that mainline Protestants, with a specific focus on Congregationalists, were particularly adept during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries at "coming to terms with the authority of the past," especially as it concerned their Pilgrim and Puritan ancestors. "The result," she explains, "was a modern piety, a respectful but ironic distance from the past, an understanding of history and historical

⁹⁵ Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 6, 318 n. 14, his emphases.

context that contributed to a practical ethic of tolerance and equanimity.”⁹⁶ That is, she traces Congregational memory and its very intentional use of the Puritan past as it concerned theologians and scholars (and literati) as well as the ordinary people coming to church.

Important to my conception of Puritan formations is how the thoughts and writings of the literary elite recycle back into popular culture for general audiences and vice versa. Hers is one of the few books that juxtaposes an official history of the Congregational church with the experiences of everyday people gleaned through archival documents. Furthermore, Bendroth’s genealogical history illuminates the choices Congregationalists made in specific citations of their Puritan past to make them one of the more liberal and socially progressive Protestant denominations in the US. For my purposes, her argument further distances the more negative stereotypes of Puritans in the twentieth century from the historical Puritans’ legacy to US thought and culture. This provides only one example of how Puritan formations are separated from the historical study of the Puritans themselves and are instead reflective of the sociohistorical moment in which they are enacted. Building upon these books, this dissertation examines how Puritan formations functioned as one of the ways that nineteenth- and twentieth-century civic elites sought to construct a unified national identity in reference to the idealized citizen being white, Protestant, and male.

Several recent publications have also expanded the analytical lenses through which to examine the ways in which the historical Puritans interacted with Native Americans and African Americans, providing further historical evidence that disrupts how the national imaginary constructs a perception of the Puritans as an insular, white community. Historian Richard A. Bailey’s 2011 *Race and Redemption in Puritan New*

⁹⁶ Bendroth, *The Last Puritans*: 3.

England examines the often-contradictory processes through which the Puritans lived their faith and sought to “control their experiences with New Englanders of color...by seeking to redeem both themselves and their neighbors of color.”⁹⁷ As such, the Puritans actively sought to convert, assimilate, and yet also differentiate themselves from the Native Americans and Africans they encountered, conquered, and/or enslaved.

Further expanding upon the Puritans’ interactions with people of color beyond the First Thanksgiving and historical events such as the Pequot War, Margaret Ellen Newell’s 2015 *Brethren By Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* examines the prevalence of Indian slavery in colonial New England, a fact forgotten about and/or dehistoricized in the late nineteenth century.⁹⁸ By reactivating this history, Newell demonstrates that “[v]iewed through the lens of Indian slavery and forced servitude, New England...looks much more like contemporary Virginia, Barbados, Providence Island, New York, and other English ‘societies with slaves,’ to borrow Ira Berlin’s description.”⁹⁹ While this dissertation does not focus on the actual, historical Puritans, studies such as these help to deconstruct the mythology of Puritan formations and to analyze the ways in which Puritan formations function in a given time and place.

Numerous cultural historians and theorists have theorized the relationship between notions of history, memory, national identity, and citizenship, predominantly centering on the US and Europe.¹⁰⁰ They have explored how the invention of the nation-

⁹⁷ Bailey, *Race and Redemption*: 7.

⁹⁸ Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren By Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 4.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006); Michel de Certeau, *The*

state in the late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries necessitated the intertwined use of history and memory in the national imaginary to transmit lessons on good citizenship and to construct a usable national past focusing on the history of European colonists and Euro-Americans. Here I focus specifically on Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* and Hobsbawm's two essays in *The Invention of Tradition*, which have been especially helpful in theorizing how Puritan formations exist in and help to sustain the national imaginary as well as imagine the nation as white.

In his groundbreaking book, Anderson argues persuasively that the concept of the nation can be defined as "an imagined political community." At the heart of the nation as an imagined community, he explains, "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."¹⁰¹ That is, members of the nation, most of whom will never meet each other, imagine the nation into being and thus sustain its existence through an implicit adherence to the imagined community's limits (or "elastic" boundaries) and sovereignty.¹⁰²

Originally published the same year as Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Hobsbawm posited the concept of invented traditions in his co-edited collection *The Invention of Tradition*. Hobsbawm locates invented traditions as a phenomenon beginning in the nineteenth century (ideologically) meant to unite citizens under the organization of nation rather than race, class, religion, or (in the case of the US) state.¹⁰³

Writing of History, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*; Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

¹⁰¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: 6.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰³ Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions."

Hobsbawm defines invented traditions as a “set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.”¹⁰⁴ The establishment of continuity with a historic past serves the function of falsely constructing a linear progression of ideologies that culminate in the modern nation. Read together, the concept of invented traditions certainly supports a definition of the nation as an “imagined community” and could function as one of the devices through which the nation comes into (imagined) being.

In the context of the US, Puritan formations and the creation of a Puritan mythology greatly contribute to the comprehensibility of the US as an imagined white community, specifically in how it creates the semblance of “horizontal comradeship” through what Anderson terms “simultaneity.” Building off of philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin’s concept of “homogeneous, empty time,” Anderson theorizes simultaneity as “temporal coincidence,” an idea which was both made possible by and spread through the mass production of the novel and the newspaper beginning in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Through the simultaneity within the modern novel and newspaper, the reader can experience all of the characters and/or news events at once, even when those characters or news events do not know one another and will never be directly connected through companionship or causality. Yet what they have in common is the calendric time in which they move and exist. Anderson argues that the “idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community

¹⁰⁴ Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," 1.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: 7, 24-36. Anderson is citing Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Fantana, 1973).

moving steadily down (or up) history.” That is, an “American will never meet...more than a handful of his 240,000,000-odd fellow-Americans...But he has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity.”¹⁰⁶

The idea of Puritan formations and its concomitant whiteness, as it was spread in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through tangible sources such as novels, histories, public education, and performances, can be read as an example of simultaneity in the US as an imagined (white) community. At various points beginning in the late nineteenth century, the Puritans existed in the national imaginary as a (hi)story that, in the imagined community, could encompass all white US citizens, no matter who the Puritans’ actual descendants were. This helped to support the idea of “horizontal comradeship” among most white citizens despite the vast legal, economic, and educational disparities among other US citizens based on race, gender, sexuality, and class. As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the larger national purpose of the Puritans in the national imaginary often failed because it never could include all members of the nation, most notably African Americans and Native Americans.

Moreover, the creation of a national founding myth in the nineteenth century around the seventeenth-century Puritans, as I briefly summarized above, is an example of Hobsbawm’s invented tradition. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this founding myth was recycled into what Hobsbawm identifies as some of the primary invented traditions of Europe and the US--“the development of a secular equivalent of the church—primary education,” “the invention of public ceremonies,” and the “mass production of public monuments.”¹⁰⁷ Though I more explicitly deal with invented traditions in my first chapter on the First Thanksgiving, the concept is also applicable to

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 26.

¹⁰⁷ Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions,” 271.

the ways in which other Puritan myths, such as the Salem witch trials and Hawthorne's fictional novel *The Scarlet Letter*, are also first conferred to US citizens through public education courses in literature and/or history. Through the first conveyance of these Puritan founding myths through a nationally regulated public education system, US students are, in the theory of imagined communities, incorporated into the simultaneity of this founding myth, which supports a falsely linear, imagined, and white ancestry of the nation and its citizens. Much of how the nation is imagined and sustained through invented traditions is dependent upon how the nation remembers and narrativizes its history through the national imaginary.

Even outside of Puritan formations and a contested national origin story, the US nation has always been imagined as white. Michael Omi and Howard Winant explain that "[t]his identification as a white nation remains visible in the associations with whiteness that are visible across extensive historical time in such concepts as 'the American people' and in U.S. nationalism more generally."¹⁰⁸ As numerous scholars have demonstrated, whiteness constructs itself as universal, the "norm," and invisibilizes itself as such in such phrases as "the American people."¹⁰⁹ As film studies scholar Richard Dyer explains in *White*, "[o]ther people are raced, we [white people] are *just* people." He immediately goes on to observe that "[t]here is no more powerful position than that of being 'just' human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity."¹¹⁰ In the examples of novels and plays, the absence of racial signifiers to describe a character

¹⁰⁸ Omi and Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*: 12.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 2007); Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992). Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," in *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, ed. Margaret L. Anderson and Patricia Hill Collins (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2015). First published 1988 by Wellesley College Center for Research on Women Working Papers Series;

¹¹⁰ Dyer, *White*: 1-2, my emphases.

carries with it the assumption of the character's whiteness. Assumptions such as these contribute to the ways in which whiteness and white privilege make themselves invisible and "universal."

Moreover, race and, more specifically, the invisibility of whiteness are closely tied to colonial rule, empire, and nationhood. In these post/anti/neo-colonial contexts, "[r]ace operated as a multi-leveled organizing principle that established who was 'civilized' and who was 'savage,' who was 'free' (and hence human), and who was a slave (chattel, not a person)."¹¹¹ In this line of thought, normalized over centuries by racial representations, people of color always carry cultural specificity, precluding them from and marking them as Other to whiteness. Whiteness, however, is raced and as such is still subject to racial formations.

Thus, different categories of people at different moments of time have been able to claim "whiteness" often at the expense of aligning themselves along other lines of identity—gender, sexuality, class—with people of color. Historian David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness* traces how the white working class in the US became "white" over the course of the nineteenth century by consciously distancing themselves in politics and discourse from African Americans. He also looks at how European immigrants, specifically the Irish and, to a lesser extent, the Germans, became integrated into whiteness in the late-nineteenth century, marking how whiteness selectively manipulates inclusion and exclusion to maintain its power.¹¹² Works like Dyer, Omi and Winant, and Roediger's are relevant to the study of Puritan formations because they define and analyze whiteness not as a stable, coherent identity, but an identity dependent on

¹¹¹ Omi and Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*: 76.

¹¹² Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*.

sociohistorical circumstances in the service of maintaining white supremacy, especially as it concerns the US nation.

One of the ways I explore representations of the Puritans and whiteness in the twentieth century US national imaginary is by employing performance as both the focus of my analyses and as a methodology. In analyzing representations of the Puritans *in* performance and *as* performance, I build upon these works to demonstrate how national identity and citizenship are performed through actual bodies on stage performing as Puritans. In other words, I understand Puritan representations as deeply embodied rather than as solely textual. As performance scholar Elin Diamond has observed, the repetition of performance, whether experienced for the first time or not, “creates the terminology of ‘re,’ as in reembody, reinscribe, resignify. ‘Re’ acknowledges the preexisting discursive field, the repetition—and the desire to repeat—within the performative present, while ‘embody,’ ‘configure,’ ‘inscribe,’ ‘signify,’ assert the possibility of materializing something that exceeds our knowledge.”¹¹³ Nowhere is this clearer than in the reenactment and repetition of Puritan narratives through actors and spectators whose present, historical bodies consistently recreate and renegotiate who can claim the Puritan past and the idealized US citizen.

Most US residents who went through the public school system in the twentieth century not only encountered Puritan narratives in literature such as *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) or *The Crucible* (1953), but also reenacted at least one Puritan narrative, the First Thanksgiving. In addition, tourists and residents in New England have made the historically reconstructed Plimoth Plantation¹¹⁴ (founded 1947) and Salem Pioneer

¹¹³ Elin Diamond, "Introduction," in *Performance and Cultural Politics*, ed. Elin Diamond (London: Routledge, 1996), 2.

¹¹⁴ Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts, was founded in 1947 by Henry Hornblower II as a living history museum with “two English cottages and a fort on Plymouth’s historic waterfront.” It now has a replica of the *Mayflower* called the “*Mayflower II* (1957), the English Village (1959), the Wampanoag

Village (founded 1930) as well as the town of Salem, Massachusetts, very popular sites for the observation of and education about the Puritans. The popularity of these sites, which encourage the embodied participation of visitors and employ dozens of historical reenactors as Puritans, speaks to the desire of many contemporary US citizens to interact performatively with the US's Puritan past across time and space. Diamond further observes that performance "drifts between present and past, presence and absence, consciousness and memory. Every performance...embeds features of previous performances."¹¹⁵ Thus the medium of performance, which is always already dependent on its repeatability and reiterability, inherently blurs the lines between past, present, and future in its very ontology.

Indeed, many performance scholars within the last twenty years have argued for the essential place of performance in constructions of history, memory, and (national) identity.¹¹⁶ Connecting the methods of historiography and performance, performance scholar Freddie Rokem observes that "[h]istory can only be perceived as such when it becomes recapitulated, when we create some form of discourse, like the theatre, on the basis of which an organized repetition of the past is constructed, situating the chaotic torrents of the past within an aesthetic frame." In further developing the idea of how history is (historiographically) staged and put (theatrically) on a stage, he argues that "theatre performing history...connect[s] the past with the present through the creativity of the theatre, constantly 'quoting' from the past, but erasing the exact traces in order to

Homesite (1973), the Hornblower Visitor Center (1987), the Craft Center (1992), the Maxwell and Nye Barns (1994) and the Plimoth Grist Mill (2013)." "About Us," Plimoth Plantation, Aug. 29, 2016, <https://www.plimoth.org/about-us>.

¹¹⁵ Diamond, "Introduction," 1.

¹¹⁶ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Freddie Rokem, *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000); Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

gain full meaning in the present.”¹¹⁷ Because of the repeatability of performance, the “present” of meaning making in theatre performing history, as well as the meaning making as it concerns the history being performed, is constantly changing with each performance.

Thinking beyond the ontological theatre re-performing historical events, performance scholar Diana Taylor considers how specific narrative structures of certain historical encounters are repeated in both theatrical performances and the performances of everyday life long after the event itself, or what she calls “scenarios.” Taylor defines scenarios as “meaning-making paradigms that structure social environments, behaviors, and potential outcomes.” She further explains that a scenario’s “portable framework bears the weight of accumulative repeats. The scenario makes visible, yet again, what is already there: the ghosts, the images, the stereotypes.”¹¹⁸ While scenarios include textually based devices such as narrative and plot, they also employ performance based devices such as “scene,” “the embodiment of social actors,” and the position of its “participants, spectators, and witnesses.”¹¹⁹

Thinking through how performance can represent the past through theoretical devices such as theatre performing history and scenarios illuminates both why and how stories about the Puritans get recycled, retold, and repeated, but often for very different purposes. Representations of the Puritans can often be divided into two types. On the one hand, they might represent historical “events” such as the landing at Plymouth Rock, the First Thanksgiving (a myth), the Salem witch trials, and the story of the scarlet letter (fiction). On the other hand, representations might reinforce and/or condemn non-tangible ideas about what the Puritans represent to the nation imagining itself: the nation’s first

¹¹⁷ Rokem, *Performing History*: xi, xiii.

¹¹⁸ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*: 28.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29-32.

“immigrants,” promoters of civil and religious liberty, a Protestant work ethic, and moral conservatism.

Rather than dividing an analysis of these representations by Rokem’s theatre performing history and Taylor’s scenario, I consider how scenarios can function in the representation of historical events performed onstage and vice versa. For example, how does the scenario of Hester’s shaming in *The Scarlet Letter*—the letter as stigma, the pillory, the public humiliation for her private transgressions—get repeated in debates about abortion and women’s bodies in the late twentieth-century? Who are the social actors and how do they enact the memory of the Puritans even when the Puritans are not referenced? Such analyses open up the possibilities of discussion that go beyond questions of adaptation or (scarlet-letter-as) metaphor to think about what meanings become attached to “accumulative repeats” of the past.

Furthermore, bodies in performance are a key component in performance’s meaning-making paradigms. To link history and memory specifically through embodiment, performance scholar Joseph Roach develops the theoretical concept of surrogation in his influential *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance*. He describes “surrogation” as a theoretical process whereby a “culture reproduces and re-creates itself” through the repeated performance of roles via substitution after “death or other forms of departure.” That is, new bodies continually remake and reembody a specific role in a performance that may often be repeated yearly over centuries. As Roach explains, “the process of surrogation does not begin or end but continues as actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relations that constitute the social fabric.”¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*: 2. Roach specifically situates the process in the eighteenth-century cultural crucible of imperialism, indigeneity, slavery, and economic power in what he locates as the circum-Atlantic world. Within the cultural and geographical parameters Roach designates, surrogation does not provide a perfect analytical lens through which to examine the interrelatedness of memory, performance, and history in the uses of a Puritan national origin story in the twentieth century. It does, however, provide a

For late-nineteenth-century civic elites and their successors creating performances about the Puritans, I argue that these “vacancies” were less about the actual Puritans and their descendants and more about the constant threats (immigration, war, civil rights, secularism, feminism, and communism, to name a few) to a unified national identity based on a Puritan legacy of Anglo-American Protestants. When actors performed as Puritans, they repeatedly became “stand-ins” in the “doomed search for originals.”¹²¹ In these ways, performers became less the surrogates of the Puritans and more about surrogating discussions of contemporary (twentieth-century) issues. I build upon Roach’s work to demonstrate how national identity and citizenship are performed through actual twentieth-century bodies on stage performing as Puritans and their relationships to whiteness. As I will also demonstrate, however, this surrogation process works quite differently when performers embody Native Americans and black slaves as contemporaries to the Puritans.

As these scholars demonstrate, to say then that my method of analysis is performance is to say that performance creates and transfers ways of knowing that differ from reading and writing alone. As Taylor asserts, “Performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called ‘twice-behaved behavior.’”¹²² While the historiographical analyses I provide here depend upon the archival remains of performance, an understanding of performance as epistemology reminds me to attend to the ways that these performances engaged the bodies of the actors, playwrights, audiences, and critics. Taylor emphasizes how what she defines as the “repertoire”—an

springboard to examine how twentieth century bodies performing as Puritans went far beyond a mere history lesson or flippant historical fiction.

¹²¹ Ibid., 3.

¹²² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*: 2-3.

ephemeral space of “embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)” —usually works in “tandem” with the “archive”—a literal and metaphorical place comprised of “supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones).”¹²³ I use Taylor’s theorization as a starting point to think through how the archive and the national imaginary—inextricably formed by the confluence of repertoire, memory, popular culture, and history—work in tandem rather than oppositionally. That is, I analyze the reiterations and accumulations of past Puritan representations as performances in specific sociohistorical moments rather than as representations of the actual Puritans in history.

To think through how representations of the Puritans apply to conceptions of national identity and citizenship in such sociohistorical moments, I build much of my analysis off of the concept of “racial formations.” Citing the inadequacies of previous (social science) racial theories to account for the centrality of race to the “American experience,” Omi and Winant propose the concept of “racial formations” as an alternative approach to theorizing race in the US.¹²⁴ They define “racial formation” as “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, lived out, transformed, and destroyed.”¹²⁵ Thus, they use racial formations to identify how the ever-changing categories of race and its social, cultural, political, and phenomic significations have “played a unique role in the formation and historical development of the United States.”¹²⁶ The concept of racial formations, as a process, provides the lens through which I examine the relationships among race, citizenship, nation, and the Puritans throughout this dissertation.

¹²³ Ibid., 19, 21.

¹²⁴ Omi and Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*: 5, 2.

¹²⁵ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 109.

¹²⁶ Omi and Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*: 109.

Building off of Omi and Winant, the concept of what I term Puritan formations serves as a crucial aspect of my methodology. Puritan formations are analyses of the historiographical process by which the Puritans are represented and imagined at specific sociohistorical moments. As a type of racial formations, Puritan formations are always in process, a doing. They take into account political, social, cultural, and religious contexts as well as constructions of race, gender, and sexuality. While performances form the bulk of my objects of analyses, Puritan formations encompass how the Puritans are imagined in the national imaginary at different moments in time. Therefore, Puritan formations are not dependent on any one medium of transmission and instead encompass a wide scope of (potential) sources. Throughout this dissertation I analyze hundreds of published and archival documents, including scripts, performance reviews, programs, histories, court transcripts, memoirs, photographs, and novels as texts that contribute to the Puritan formations of a given time and place in the national imaginary. In thinking through how such archival documents reflect the presence of and impact on actual present bodies, I use the concept of Puritan formations, racial formations, and performance theory to theorize how a constructed historical memory can be embodied in and imposed upon present bodies.

Therefore, in using performance as a methodological lens, I attempt to reconceptualize how these archival materials took on three-dimensions by the bodies of the students, teachers, playwrights, actors, reviewers, and historians that created them. I ask: how are Puritan formations used at different moments to reinforce, comment upon, subvert, or reflect notions of gender, race, sexuality, and citizenship in specific performative presents? For example, I apply the concept of Puritan formations equally to Nathaniel Hawthorne's cultural production of *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850 as I do to Phyllis Nagy's stage adaptation of it 150 years later. Both texts engage the Puritan and racial

formations of their contemporary moments (1850 and 1994, respectively) to comment upon US national identity at the historical moments of their productions, but in very different ways. That is, Puritan formations are always in a process of becoming to serve the ideological needs of those who create and use them.

As documented in each of my chapters, I ask how and why a large portion of Puritan formations is used to signify a national origin story through the privileging and (re)defining of whiteness. That is, the Puritans are often problematically imagined not just as the nation's first immigrants but also as a homogeneous group of white settlers, erasing the presence and contributions of Native American and African Americans to the foundation of the nation. While some representations of the Puritans do contain embodiments of non-Puritans such as Squanto (Patuxet/Wampanoag) in the First Thanksgiving myth or Tituba in the Salem witch trials, I ask why their presence more often serves to reinforce the whiteness of the seventeenth-century Puritans rather than to provide historical agency or accuracy to the non-white peoples that frequently traded with, taught, fought with, and were enslaved by the Puritans. Therefore, much of my analysis of representations of Native Americans and African Americans as part of Puritan formations focuses on their absent presence. That is, even when Native Americans and African Americans are not physically present in representations of the Puritans, they still have a presence in how those representations contribute to Puritan formations. Much of the theorizing around these absent presences uses the language of haunting and ghosts.¹²⁷

As preeminent novelist and literary scholar Toni Morrison and literary studies scholar Renée L. Bergland observe, much of the racial ghosting language white writers

¹²⁷ Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*; Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover: The University Press of New England, 2000); Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Eve Tuck and C. Ree, "A Glossary of Haunting," in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press Inc., 2013).

have used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often occurs at historical moments when the public visibility of Native Americans and African Americans changes. In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Morrison argues that the formation of a US national literature in the nineteenth century, which contributed to the formation of a (white) US national character and identity, is inseparable from the presence of African slavery in the United States. She specifically observes that the increasing visibility of African Americans in real life after the Civil War simultaneously correlated to their increased invisibility, but never full absence, in white-authored literature. She calls this invisibility the Africanist presence, "the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify, as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people."¹²⁸ The Africanist presence can be found in the representations of African American characters like the figure of playwright Arthur Miller's Tituba in my second chapter or in color symbolism in novels such as Miller and Nathaniel Hawthorne's association of the Puritan devil as "black man" with actual black men, examined in my second and third chapters, respectively. Whether or not these (white, male) writers acknowledge their knowledge of slavery and the black presence in the United States, she argues, there is absolutely no way that its presence did not affect them as writers and US citizens.

Whereas Morrison predominantly considers the spectralness of living black characters, Bergland's study focuses on literal Native American ghosts. Similar to Morrison, she observes that the emergence of a national US literature coincides with the national disappearance/ghosting of Native Americans in the early to mid-nineteenth century. She argues, "In American letters, and in the American imagination, Native

¹²⁸ Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*: 7.

American ghosts function both as representations of national guilt and as triumphant agents of Americanization.”¹²⁹ As Bergland demonstrates, Native Americans predominantly exist as specters in white-authored US literature beginning in the nineteenth century. They are both invisible threats haunting the edges of Euro-American “civilization” and the literal ghosts that haunt Euro-American subjects. Their erasures position Native Americans as absent presences, pushed to the edge of existence despite the continued presence of actual Native Americans in the United States.

Though both of these studies focus on literary representations, they greatly inform my thinking on how Native Americans and African Americans as well as racially coded language serve to reify the white homogeneity of the Puritans. Used in this ways, their presence fails to complicate how we understand slavery, war, genocide, and the national belonging of living Native Americans and African American in relation to a national origin story. In analyzing the absent presence of Native Americans and African Americans as represented in Puritan formations, I am also keenly aware of the ways in which these representations reflect, reify, and/or change government policies, cultural stereotypes, and lived experiences for actual people of color living in the US.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

My first chapter examines the position of Thanksgiving in the US public education system and the development of young (white) citizens in “First Thanksgiving” plays in the early twentieth century. The association of the Pilgrims with the Thanksgiving holiday only occurred in the late nineteenth century. Even though the Pilgrims had been part of a national origin story since the early nineteenth century, their new association with Thanksgiving added a narrative of the Pilgrims-as-the-ideal-immigrants to Puritans formations, which continued to exist well into the twentieth

¹²⁹ Bergland, *The National Uncanny*: 4.

century (and arguable still does). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an amalgamation of predominantly white, female writers, directors, and teachers transformed the association between Pilgrims and the First Thanksgiving into the annual production of “Pilgrim” and “First Thanksgiving” pageants and plays in primary and secondary schools across the country. These pageants and plays attempted to assimilate the influx of European immigrant children, especially children in the primary grades, into the US founding myth and to teach them the behaviors of “good” citizenship.¹³⁰

This chapter analyzes several of these early twentieth-century Thanksgiving plays as a site of assimilation for European immigrant children through public education and patriotic indoctrination via the domesticity of the holiday. After collecting and reading through hundreds of Thanksgiving plays, I observed that Thanksgiving plays which asked students to perform *as* Pilgrims, rather than just recite a history of the Pilgrims, overwhelmingly emphasized the domesticity of the holiday and featured more roles for women than men. The teaching and celebration of Thanksgiving as a “domestic” holiday¹³¹ through these Thanksgiving plays imposed a nineteenth-century Anglo-American patriarchal family structure onto the students. They especially taught young girls to be the spiritual and physical caretakers of the home. When young boys actors were required, it was usually to perform as Native Americans rather than Pilgrim men or boys. This characteristic further reinforced the ways in which European immigrants were being assimilated into structures of whiteness and taught to be better citizens than people of color already living within the US. Moreover, the producers of these plays hoped to transfer US patriotism and embodied practices to European immigrant parents through their children. In this version of Puritan formations, the Pilgrims became even more

¹³⁰ Elizabeth Pleck, “The Making of the Domestic Occasion: The History of Thanksgiving in the United States,” *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 4 (1999): 779; Smith, *The Turkey: An American Story*: 81.

¹³¹ Pleck, “The Making of the Domestic Occasion,” 773.

prominent in an imagined national past while exemplifying the types of values that educators hoped to inculcate into young children.

My second chapter investigates the racial and historical adaptation of Tituba in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. Since its premiere in 1953, no other adaptation of the trials supersedes Miller's in popular culture. Yet his play is the first text, historical or fictional, to explicitly represent Tituba's race as black. While Miller frequently explained in various essays as well as the Penguin edition of the play where he deviated from the historical record in writing the play, he never explains his choice to change Tituba's racial representation. Moreover, while numerous scholars as well as Miller himself noted the play's allegorical relationship to McCarthyism and the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), far fewer connect the play to the early Civil Rights movement.¹³²

Therefore, this chapter begins with a historiographical analysis of Tituba's racial representations from the trials to Miller's play to contextualize how Miller's racial adaptation of her is a part of a larger story on the dynamism of racial formations in the US. Over the last four hundred years, her racial representation has changed from Indian, to half-Indian, half-African, and finally to black. Chronologically arriving in what US legal historian Mary L. Dudziak (2000) calls Cold War civil rights, I then analyze the sociopolitical context of the play's original 1953 production on Broadway using reviews and a genealogical attempt to reconstruct the original actor's performance of Tituba. Finally, I provide a close reading of act one to analyze and demonstrate the ways in which Tituba is both present and absent in the play's portrayal of a struggle for white civil and religious liberty. Throughout this discussion, Tituba is never represented as truly

¹³² The only scholarship I have found that analyzes the play in relation to civil rights is D. Quentin Miller, "The Signifying Poppet: Unseen Voodoo and Arthur Miller's Tituba," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 43, no. 4 (2007).

belonging in the Puritan community she (forcibly) serves. Thus she is never allowed the same sort of proto-Americanness that is almost always afforded the Puritans. Furthermore, her brief, but important, presence in narratives about the trials, including Miller's, makes visible the presence of slaves and people of color in Puritan communities. Yet her equally quick disappearance from these narratives correlates to a larger forgetting of her and seventeenth century people of color like her in the national imaginary.

My third chapter compares and contrasts the Puritan formations in the 1850 literary production of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* to the Puritan formations of the 1990s through the analysis of Phyllis Nagy's 1994 feminist stage adaptation of the novel. Like my other chapters, I have chosen these time periods as moments when the US was in great political instability. I specifically examine the ways in which public discourses around gender, sexuality, sex, race, and shame affected the production of both the novel and play through their use of the Puritan past.

When people assume Hawthorne was a seventeenth-century Puritan, as many do in the national imaginary, they miss an opportunity to examine the nineteenth-century sociopolitical forces affecting Hawthorne's production of the novel in antebellum Salem, Massachusetts. I examine how these issues, including slavery and abolition, (white) women's rights and suffrage, and the ways in which New England at this time asserted its influence in the construction of US national memory, influenced Hawthorne's representation of his nearly 200-year-old Puritan ancestors. Jumping to the end of the twentieth century, I compare Hawthorne's perception of the Puritans to the ways in which the Puritans, and specifically Hawthorne's representations of them, emerged in the national imaginary around a renewed interest in women's reproductive rights, sexuality, LGBT rights, and the conservative call for a US return to shame. I read these debates

primarily through the lenses of Lauren Berlant's theory of the intimate public sphere (1997) and her and Michael Warner's analysis of a US national heterosexuality (2005 [1998]). I also activate discourses of a renewed sense of national shame(lessness) in the 1990s as one of the specific ways that a crisis in perceptions of national heterosexuality manifested itself.

In the context of these debates especially in terms of shame(lessness), several artists, including Nagy, chose to re-adapt *The Scarlet Letter* into performance mediums. Much of my chapter asks why artists, especially those in the 1990s, chose to adapt the novel and what the impetus is to physically embody the novel's persistent spectacle of shame. I have chosen Nagy's adaptation specifically because it reached some prominence as a commissioned piece for the Denver Center Theatre Company in 1994, followed by a month long run at the New York off-Broadway Classic Stage Company later that year. It also received publication in *American Theatre* magazine and is now published by Samuel French, which also licenses the play's rights.¹³³ Most importantly, the play keeps the Puritan setting and characters, but infuses the dialogue with a modern twist, or what *New York Times* theatre critic Ben Brantley compared to "reading the book with jazzy, pop Freudian footnotes."¹³⁴ As a stage adaptation, every performance offers new possibilities for how the story is re-told and repeated for the audience. Moreover, the live audience is directly implicated in the staging of the play as witnesses to see and question the Puritan legacy of shaming in the US. This chapter ultimately asks how this novel's place in the national imaginary gets used to subvert, reify, and/or reinforce white heteronormativity in the US public sphere.

¹³³ Phyllis Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," *American Theatre*, Feb. 1995. Phyllis Nagy, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1995).

¹³⁴ Ben Brantley, "Magnifying Metaphors in a Work Rich in Them," *New York Times*, Oct. 20, 1994.

In the light of the 2016 presidential election, my conclusion considers how the US narrative about national identity may be shifting. Throughout the campaign and into President Donald Trump's first term, Trump has referenced an ambiguous national past where things were better with the phrase "Make America Great Again." While no one seems to agree exactly on when the US was last great, it is important for the purposes of this dissertation to note that the Puritans are never mentioned. My conclusion examines this absence to argue that the time period of a nostalgized, unified national past may be changing from the Puritan formations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the 1950s white, middle-class, nuclear family. Despite this changing narrative, many of the same problems in representing national identity exist as they did in idealizing the Puritans as proto-Americans, most especially as it concerns people of color in the US.

Chapter One: Playing Pilgrim, Playing House: Performing White Domesticity in Early Twentieth-Century Thanksgiving Plays for Children

Grandma's in the kitchen and the table's all set. She's been working for days, peeling potatoes, making pies, chopping vegetables, thawing the turkey, kneading the bread, and chasing sticky-fingered little grandchildren, and maybe a husband too, out of the kitchen. This is her domain every day of the year, but for Thanksgiving something almost magical happens when her hard work brings everyone to the table to give thanks for family, home, and nation. She's made a careful schedule the night before, rotating casseroles, vegetables, and pies in and out of the oven while the turkey gently cooks so that when the extended family arrives at noon everything will be ready. She calls everyone together, "Dinner's ready!" Children, now grown with little children of their own, gather excitedly around the table. And as for the *pièce de résistance*—the golden-brown, juicy, and perfectly seasoned turkey—Grandma carries it to the head of the table

so that Grandpa may have the honor of slicing it. While Grandpa did none of the work of preparing the feast, he is the patriarch and the now-retired breadwinner of the family and it is traditional for him slice it. Little Tommy and Susie fight over who will say the prayer before the meal so they both recite one of the most traditional Thanksgiving hymns, “We gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing....”¹³⁵ “I learned it at school,” Little Tommy explains to the praises he and Susie receive from around the table, “for our Thanksgiving pageant. Did you see me play an Indian, Grandma? Did you?” “*I was a Pilgrim,*” Little Susie chimes in, “and *I got to make popcorn.*”

For thousands of families in the twentieth century, this scenario, or something like it, played out annually on the fourth Thursday of November.¹³⁶ It could easily be the backstory in any number of Thanksgiving representations in popular culture, including Norman Rockwell’s iconic painting *Freedom from Want* (1941), also known as *The Thanksgiving Picture*. The scenario delineates clear gender roles where the matriarch of the family, often attended by sisters, aunts, and/or daughters, labors over a traditional meal of turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie. These dishes are understood as traditional because they are linked in the national imaginary to what the Pilgrims ate at the First Thanksgiving. Any members of the family that attended public schools in the US would be taught such “facts” about the First Thanksgiving. If the elder members of the family immigrated to the US as adults, however, elementary school students like Little Tommy would proudly explain to them the importance of this holiday and the

¹³⁵ For ubiquity of this hymn being sung by children at Thanksgiving see, Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 163; Elizabeth Pleck, *Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture, and Family Rituals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 28.

¹³⁶ Thanksgiving was traditionally celebrated on the last Thursday of November. In 1933, the last Thursday of November was also the last day of the month, which would have shortened the holiday shopping season. At the behest of several retailers, President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving to the second to last Thursday of the month. This caused a huge controversy with some states and city celebrating on the second to last Thursday of November and some on the last. In 1941, Congress passed a law making the fourth Thursday in November the official date of Thanksgiving. Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 153.

traditions, like the food, associated with it in celebrating the origins of the US nation via the Pilgrims, making the holiday at once domestic and patriotic.

Contrary to popular belief, however, the Pilgrims did not have the First Thanksgiving. At least, the Pilgrims did not have the First Thanksgiving as taught to millions of school children like Little Tommy and Susie in the twentieth century. The story usually went something like this:

In the autumn of 1621 was observed the first Thanksgiving. There had been a good harvest...the Pilgrims were able to have an abundant feast. Governor Bradford accordingly called the people together for a season of special thanksgiving in acknowledging God's goodness to them...Massasoit came with a number of his Indians and stayed three days, enjoying the feast so much that he returned the hospitality with a gift of five deer. Each year since has New England celebrated the ingathering of the harvest, until to-day the Thanksgiving of the Pilgrims has become a much loved national holiday.¹³⁷

This passage comes from playwright and educator Marie Irish's Thanksgiving exercise "A Story of Long Ago," which was published in 1904. Though Irish's exercise only names historical men, Governor Bradford and Massasoit, the feast was only made possible by the hard work of anonymous Pilgrim women, a characteristic typical of many First Thanksgiving representations in the twentieth century. Yet this narrative and its representations in US visual and media cultures only began to emerge in the late nineteenth century and did not reach fruition and ubiquity until the mid-twentieth century.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Marie Irish, "A Story of Long Ago: Thanksgiving Exercise for Twelve Children," in *The Days We Celebrate: A Collection of Original Dialogues, Recitations, Entertainments and Other Pieces for Holidays and Special Occasions* (Chicago: T. S. Denison and Company, 1904), 94-95.

¹³⁸ For sources that trace the history of the holiday see, Baker, *Thanksgiving*; Smith, *The Turkey: An American Story*; Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving*; Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*: 21-42; Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving."; Litwicks, *America's Public Holidays, 1865-1920*: 148-238; Margaret J. Weinberger, "How America Invented Thanksgiving" (Dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 2003); Roth, "Talking Turkey: Visual Media and the Unraveling of Thanksgiving."

One of the reasons that the First Thanksgiving myth of an outdoor feast between thankful Pilgrims and Indians and their attendant gender roles emerged in the US during the twentieth century was exactly because of its prominence in elementary school education. Multiple generations of US citizens in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have participated in the great elementary school rite of passage, the Thanksgiving pageant/play, where they not only learn about but also embody the Pilgrims and their Native American “neighbors.” Because Thanksgiving was one of the most popular holidays to teach and celebrate in elementary schools during the Progressive era, publishers printed dozens of anthologies of dramas, recitations, marches, songs, and performative exercises for Thanksgiving between the 1890s and 1950s.¹³⁹ It was largely through these embodied exercises and the visual iconography used to inform them in the early twentieth century that the Pilgrims became firmly associated with Thanksgiving, allowing the First Thanksgiving myth to fully emerge.¹⁴⁰ While multiple scholars have mentioned the correlation between the national growth of the Thanksgiving holiday and its association with the Pilgrims to its celebration and performance in Progressive era public education, none have looked specifically at the hundreds of pageants, plays, and exercises that asked students to embody the lessons being taught.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ For sources outlining the celebration of public holidays in public education see Clarice Whittenburg, “Holiday Observance in the Primary Grades” (Thesis, The University of Chicago, 1933); Robert Haven Schauffler, ed. *The Days We Celebrate* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1940); The Committee of Eight, *The Study of History in the Elementary Schools: Report to the American Historical Association* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909).

¹⁴⁰ When the Pilgrims first began to be associated with the Thanksgiving holiday in the nineteenth century, it was largely through narratives of the landing of the *Mayflower*, the fictitious Miles Standish—John Alden—Priscilla Mullins love triangle, and/or a violent frontier-like encounter between the Pilgrims and Indians. These representations were not ubiquitous with Thanksgiving in the nineteenth century, however, in the same way that the Pilgrims’ feast did in the twentieth century.

¹⁴¹ Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 115-28; Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving*: 222-24; Siskind, “The Invention of Thanksgiving,” 181-85; Pleck, “The Making of the Domestic Occasion,” 778-81. Other sources that note the importance of plays, pageants, and skits in indoctrinating patriotism during other public holidays include: Litwicky, *America’s Public Holidays, 1865-1920*: 174-90.

This chapter examines the emergence of Thanksgiving plays that required students to perform *as* Pilgrims as a means used by white Progressive educators and civic elites to assimilate immigrant children and, by extension, their parents into “correct” citizenship practices, especially concerning gender roles and the domestic sphere. Between 1880 and 1920 an unprecedented 27.6 million immigrants arrived on US shores predominantly from Southern and Eastern Europe.¹⁴² The concentrated visibility of these new immigrants’ cultural and religious differences from Anglo-, middle-class, and Protestant US ideals easily marked them as “foreigners” to native-born US citizens.¹⁴³ Yet to civic elites, these new, less-than-ideal immigrants were still more assimilable into the US founding narrative and the practices of good citizenship than people of color already living in and/or immigrating to the US.¹⁴⁴ This was especially true of what was alternately represented as the Pilgrims’ violent or friendly Native American neighbors.

One of the ways in which Progressives attempted to assimilate immigrant children to create a unified national identity was in teaching proper gender roles as a key component of “correct” citizenship. As historian of twentieth century US women’s history Elizabeth Pleck explains, “adjusting to life in the United States usually involved accommodating to a different gender division of labor, with the responsibility for making or maintaining ritual, preserving a foreign language or dialect, or transmitting a religious heritage given over to women.”¹⁴⁵ Also during this time, civic elites promoted Thanksgiving to the public as a holiday that sought to establish a core US identity based on Anglo-American, Protestant, and middle-class values. Specifically, Thanksgiving

¹⁴² Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 749-50.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 851.

¹⁴⁴ “Non-white” in the late nineteenth century referred predominantly to people not descendant from Northern European stock, with Anglo-Saxons serving as the ideal ancestry. For the scientific discourses defending this viewpoint see, *ibid.*, 855. For a larger contextual history of the development of “whiteness” and its incorporation of multiple European peoples see Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*; Dyer, *White*.

¹⁴⁵ Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*: 13.

unified the discourses of nation and family.¹⁴⁶ Since many of the children in public schools were born to immigrant families, the forced celebration of Thanksgiving in schools provided a model of gender roles that exemplified middle-class separate spheres ideology and the cult of domesticity in conjunction with other patriotic ideals.

As I will argue, early twentieth-century Thanksgiving plays that represent the Pilgrims do not just emphasize hard work and religious liberty as core values to the Pilgrims and, by extension, to future US citizens. Plays from this era that reenact scenes from Pilgrim life often anachronistically focus more on the domesticity of Thanksgiving in the Pilgrim era and the work ethic of Pilgrim women than actual historical Pilgrim people or events. They also impose Victorian era separate spheres ideology and the cult of domesticity onto the Pilgrims themselves. Most plays provide substantially more roles for Pilgrim women/girls than for Pilgrim men/boys, negating a “great men of history” narrative for a more domestic one. Many plays did require several boy actors, but to play Native American roles rather than Pilgrim ones. In doing so, these plays demonstrate correct citizenship through the embodied adherence to Victorian-derived gender roles tinged with Progressive educational theories of “savage boyhood.”

In the conflation of family, nation, and Pilgrims, students performing as Pilgrims supported a false historical continuity between the gender roles of the Pilgrims-as-*proto-Americans*, predominantly of mothers, daughters, wives and one patriarchal figure, and the early twentieth century. Moreover, the performances of boys as Native Americans allowed them a masculine outlet for the domesticity of the holiday and modeled the type of behavior that they must psychologically move through to become the “civilized,” white patriarch of a family. Modeling the gender roles of the nuclear family through the nostalgized history of the Pilgrims allowed students, especially girls, to temporarily claim

¹⁴⁶ Pleck, “The Making of the Domestic Occasion,” 776; Siskind, “The Invention of Thanksgiving,” 168.

an ancestry with the Pilgrims despite ethnic, national, religious, temporal, geographical and/or class differences. Even as Native Americans, boys were not marked as Others so much as pre-Pilgrim patriarchs. The Progressives hoped that, like Pilgrim parents, the students would pass these lessons on to their own families.

I organize this chapter into two sections. The first section provides a contextual framework on how the invention of the Thanksgiving holiday in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries braided together discourses on nation, national identity, family, whiteness, and the concept of manifest domesticity. The second section, divided into two sub-sections, provides close readings of several plays that ask students to perform *as* Pilgrims, a sub-genre of Thanksgiving plays that requires students to embody Pilgrim and Native American characters in speech and/or gesture rather than plays that simply require students to stand and recite history while dressed like a Pilgrim.¹⁴⁷ The first group of plays, the first sub-section, epitomizes the domesticity of the holiday through the repeated use of characters named “Priscilla.” The use of the name “Priscilla” references, whether explicitly or implicitly, the character Priscilla Mullins,¹⁴⁸ most famously represented in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s 1858 narrative poem *The Courtship of Miles Standish* and Jane G. Austin’s 1889 novel *Standish of Standish* and loosely based on an actual Pilgrim woman. My reading of these plays provides a nuanced analysis of how domesticity could function and be taught in celebrations of the holiday. The second sub-section examines how plays that celebrated a domestic, and thus feminized, holiday used boy actors in a period of time when many (male) civic elites feared the over-feminization

¹⁴⁷ Not all Thanksgiving plays even have Pilgrims. Some anthropomorphize foods associated with Thanksgiving. Others place Thanksgiving within a larger historical context and posit that its lineage goes much further back than the Pilgrims to the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and English harvest festivals. These types of plays seek to position the US nation as the culmination of a positivist progression in Western history.

¹⁴⁸ Sometimes written as “Mullens.”

of modern boys. Many plays negotiated this tension by allowing boys to play Native Americans rather than Pilgrim men/boys. The presence of Native Americans in mimicry also adds to an analysis of how whiteness functions in these plays to define US identity against twentieth-century conceptions of domestic and foreign Others.

THANKSGIVING: CELEBRATING NATION AND FAMILY

The invention of Thanksgiving as a national holiday and its subsequent association with the Pilgrims in the twentieth century is a byproduct of two of the most important invented traditions in the US: the creation and celebration of public holidays and a new national and compulsory public education system.¹⁴⁹ As described in the introduction, Marxist historian and social theorist Eric Hobsbawm defines “invented traditions” as a nineteenth-century phenomenon meant to unite citizens under the organization of nation and national history rather than race, class, religion, or state.¹⁵⁰ In the growing heterogeneity and modernization of the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, civic elites promoted Thanksgiving to the public as a holiday that sought to establish a core US identity based on Anglo-American, Protestant, and middle-class values.

Since President Abraham Lincoln’s Thanksgiving proclamation in 1863, Thanksgiving had celebrated two interrelated units that the later Progressives feared were splintering: nation and family.¹⁵¹ As anthropologist Janet Siskind explains, “Thanksgiving

¹⁴⁹ Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions,” 279-80.

¹⁵⁰ Other authors also identify Thanksgiving as an invented tradition. See Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 102-03; Pleck, “The Making of the Domestic Occasion,” 774; Siskind, “The Invention of Thanksgiving,” 169, 82-83.

¹⁵¹ Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*: 22-24. Thanksgiving itself was not a nationally recognized annual holiday until 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln, perhaps responding to Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale’s nearly twenty year campaign for Thanksgiving, issued a proclamation making the last Thursday in November a national day of Thanksgiving. Along with a second proclamation in 1864, the last Thursday in November began “an unbroken tradition” of observing Thanksgiving as a national holiday until it became an official federal holiday in 1941. The Thanksgiving that emerged after the Civil War inaugurated a

celebrates and obfuscates the destruction of community, constructing the family and nation as the only bastions against a Hobbesian world, and making the appearance of proper family relations, as demonstrated by full observance of the feast, the requirement and proof of national identity.”¹⁵² In this construction of Thanksgiving, “proper family relations” was conflated with “proof of national identity.” That is, Thanksgiving became an invented tradition to celebrate nation as family and family as nation.

Thanksgiving’s association of nation and family was symbolically accomplished through its association with the Pilgrims as the ideal immigrants beginning in the late nineteenth century. As former Director of Research at Plimoth Plantation James W. Baker observes, the first use of the Pilgrims in association with a national Thanksgiving in the late-nineteenth century falsely pointed to a historically linear US origin story based on the landing of the *Mayflower* and the hardships faced by the Pilgrims in equal, if not greater, proportion to the 1621 autumnal feast. That is, multiple aspects of the Pilgrim narrative, rather than just the 1621 feast, became associated with the Thanksgiving holiday.¹⁵³ These narratives were part of the national origin story reflected in Daniel Webster’s 1820 bicentennial oration speech examined in the introduction, which positioned New England as the place of the nation’s founding. Yet it was decades before the celebration of Thanksgiving gave these Puritan formations an annual and national platform on which to be remembered. To civic elites from around the country in the late nineteenth century, reaching back to the Pilgrims and forcing a linear continuity between “then” and “now” provided the best model for national identity in the rapid pace of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Moreover, by representing the Pilgrims

national ritual that celebrated the nation and family though it still took several decades for the entire nation to celebrate it.

¹⁵² Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving," 175.

¹⁵³ The 1621 feast only became ubiquitous with the holiday in the mid-twentieth century. Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 112-13.

as the “ideal immigrant” they created a standard by which to judge what they considered as the less desirable immigrants of Southern and Eastern Europe.¹⁵⁴

Though the US had seen a steady influx of European immigrants since at least the 1820s, the ethnic, religious, and class makeup of the immigrants arriving after 1880 greatly differed from the previous immigrants.¹⁵⁵ Most of the new immigrants were from Southern and Eastern Europe rather than Northern Europe, marking them as European but not of Anglo-Saxon or, in eugenicist terms, Teutonic descent.¹⁵⁶ They were also poorer, less educated, and lived in poverty around urban and/or industrial centers. They brought with them forms of Roman Catholicism, Judaism, and Eastern Orthodox churches that were less assimilable into the Protestant values of the US nation than previous immigrants who were mostly “evenly divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants” with a “considerable minority of German Jews, articulate rationalists, and religious radicals.”¹⁵⁷

The use of the representation of the Pilgrims as the ideal immigrants to these new European immigrants also necessitated a change in representations of Native Americans in relation to the Pilgrims. It has only been since the 1950s that the seventeenth-century Native Americans have been represented ubiquitously as the friendly, helpful neighbors to the Pilgrims in the First Thanksgiving myth. During the first half of the twentieth century, their representations greatly vacillated, including instances where they were an absent presence, talked about but never seen. In the late nineteenth century, Baker even

¹⁵⁴ See Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving," 168, 83; Pleck, "The Making of the Domestic Occasion," 778-84; Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving*: 221.

¹⁵⁵ This is certainly not to say that European immigration to the US before 1880 always went smoothly. The antebellum Know Nothing party specifically developed around anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant views. Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 123.

¹⁵⁶ Eugenicists divided Europe into three races: Teutonic, Alpine, and Mediterranean. The eugenicists considered Teutonic, German and English, the best. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 855.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 851; Also see, Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 123-25.

observes that the visual representations of Pilgrims and Indians were actually “characterized by a climate of violence and tension between the New England colonists and the Native Americans.”¹⁵⁸ For example, the 1869 image *Thanksgiving Day in New England Two Hundred Years Ago* shows a white man running through a door chased by flying arrows, signifying a Native American attack outside, as a Puritan family sitting to Thanksgiving dinner looks on in shock, fear, and surprise.¹⁵⁹ Such depictions coincided with the expansion of the Western frontier and the frontier skirmishes between Plains Indians and the US military and/or white settlers.

During the nineteenth century when these Thanksgiving images appeared, the US government’s strategy of Native American dispossession had focused primarily on the removal of Native Americans to land further west and/or allotment. Through most of the nineteenth century, allotment was a “recurrent feature of removal treaties” and under it, “certain tribal members would stay behind and, as proprietors of individual parcels of land, become agriculturalists.”¹⁶⁰ The US government assumed that the “allottees would sell their plots [to white buyers] in order to join tribal fellows who had moved west.”¹⁶¹ Thus, it was a legally sanctioned way for “[w]hite traders to recover debts incurred by individual Indians” when those white traders “bought” the Indian land.¹⁶² It was also touted as a fair, but expedient way for white people to acquire more land and still move Native Americans further west.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 108.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

¹⁶⁰ Wolfe, "After the Frontier," 17.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶³ Allotment was entirely dependent, however, on the idea that all Native Americans were nomads and not agriculturalists. This of course was a myth used to justify the subjugation and removal of Native Americans by white settlers and speculators. When Native American allottees chose not to sell, though not desirable to white land acquisition, Native Americans were seen as assimilable by the national imaginary and thus ceased to Indians. *Ibid.*, 18-19.

By the late nineteenth century, however, the option to remove Native Americans further west was quickly running out of western land on which to move them. Moreover, the land the government moved them to was not empty but already occupied by other Native American peoples with different languages and cultures. The mobility of the Plains Indians both in terms of the expanse of lands they occupied nomadically and their ability to fight and/or retreat quickly posed a particular problem to the US government and white travelers moving westward, which resulted in the creation of the reservation system.¹⁶⁴ The reservation system delimited the land the Plains Indians could “possess” and forced them to stay in one, predictable place. This “disappearing” of Native Americans to territories further west and/or to reservations correlated to the development of the spectral Indian in US literature that literary studies scholar Renée Bergland (2000) analyzes as well as representations of the living, but quickly disappearing Noble Savage in the work of such authors as James Fenimore Cooper.¹⁶⁵

In the late nineteenth century visual representations of the Pilgrims and Indians, however, the narrative depicted was not one of nostalgia and ghosting but instead surrogated the Pilgrims for the (white) nineteenth-century pioneers moving west, settling on Native American land, and meeting Native resistance. This is not to say that all representations of Native Americans were violent at this time. Many representations remained, nostalgic, spectral, and/or an idealization of the Noble Savage. I argue instead images of colonial violence between the Pilgrims and Native Americans initially positioned the Pilgrims more as settlers than immigrants, which as I explained in the introduction, is an important differentiation to make.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 28.

¹⁶⁵ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 14-17.

However, two events happened at the turn of the twentieth century that seem to have begun changing the relationship between Native Americans and Pilgrims in the national imaginary: the close of the frontier and the unprecedented influx of Eastern and Southern European immigrants. With the official close of the frontier in 1890, the US government's strategy of Native American dispossession changed from a focus on removal to one of assimilation.¹⁶⁶ Under the Dawes Act of 1887, allotments became one of the most preferred governmental modes of assimilation.¹⁶⁷ Rather than being used in conjunction with the removal of Native Americans from tribal lands as allotments previously had been, under the Dawes Act they functioned mainly as a means by which individual Native Americans became owners of private property within the reservation system.¹⁶⁸

Humanitarians advocated strongly for the act because they "believed that communal landholding was an obstacle to the civilization they wanted the Indians to acquire."¹⁶⁹ By owning private land, humanitarians and politicians hope to break up the communality of Native American tribes and to emphasize instead individual property ownership, one of the core values of the settler colonial mindset and the "progressive individualism of the American dream."¹⁷⁰ Moreover, reformers hoped that "individually owned parcels of lands" would provide legal ground to "protect tribal reservations from

¹⁶⁶ In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner delivered "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" to the American Historical Association. In it, he names 1890 as the official close of the Western frontier in the US. His address has been highly influential in the periodization of US—Native American policies and marks the passing of the visible Native American to invisible in cultural memory. Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier, 1846-1890*, Revised ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 249-50.

¹⁶⁷ Another preferred mode was Indian boarding schools.

¹⁶⁸ Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, vol. 1 and 2 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 666-67. "Indians who did not live on reservations or whose tribe had no reservation could make their selection on any part of the public domain, surveyed or not surveyed, and receive an allotment under the same provisions." Ibid., 668.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 669.

¹⁷⁰ Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 400.

the onslaught of the whites.”¹⁷¹ As settler colonialism studies scholar Patrick Wolfe observes, however, in the decades following the Act, “Indian numbers rapidly hit the lowest level [government agencies] would ever record” and the “total acreage held by Indians in the United States fell by two thirds.”¹⁷²

In addition to providing an alternative means of Native elimination and dispossession, the government’s overwhelming emphasis on Native American assimilation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also reflected how the US wished to assimilate its new European immigrants. Wolfe observes that “more direct modes of elimination” for Native Americans, such as removal and death, “would have conflicted with the establishment and legitimation of the rule of law among a diverse and potentially unruly [European] immigrant populace that was still in the making.”¹⁷³ Thus, the US government followed two different paths of assimilation: one for Native Americans via allotment and boarding schools and one for immigrants in such things as public education and public holidays. Thus, as these different modes of assimilation were being adopted, representations of the Pilgrims and Native Americans started to get friendlier as the Pilgrims became less associated with settlers, like the pioneers out West, and more with immigrants.

As I discussed in my introduction, representing the Pilgrims as the ideal immigrants belies the settler colonial founding history of the US. Choosing to represent the Pilgrims as peaceful immigrants who could get along with their indigenous neighbors rather than a more violent representation of colonial settlers helped promote the egalitarian and democratic values civic elites hoped to teach the new European immigrants. In the Pilgrims-as-ideal-immigrants narrative, these immigrants could be

¹⁷¹ Prucha, *The Great Father*, 669.

¹⁷² Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 400.

¹⁷³ Wolfe, “After the Frontier,” 34.

worked into the settler component and, eventually, the structural whiteness of the settler-native-slave triad discussed in the introduction. Native Americans' relationship to the US, however, remained as domestic foreigners. This is one of the ways that Native Americanness is seen in the US as subtractive. Whereas European immigrants could adopt hyphenated identities, Native Americans had to choose between Native or ("never quite white") American.¹⁷⁴

The position of actual and stereotyped Native Americans in the early twentieth century as well as the ways in which they were used in the First Thanksgiving myth demonstrates the double meaning of domestic as both the women's sphere of the home and the nation as a domestic entity. The cult of domesticity was a nineteenth century derivation of separate spheres ideology. As historian and family studies scholar Elizabeth Pleck explains, it represented a "nineteenth-century ideal of the family" that both reflected and defined (white) middle-class values. The domestic sphere, or the home, represented the space of the (white) wife/mother where "she did the symbolic work of maintaining family feeling along with celebrating certain holidays."¹⁷⁵ Victorian writers, especially white women, shaped conceptions of women's labors as "labor[s] of love" rather than work.¹⁷⁶ In this conception, women freely chose to uphold the emotional and physical well-being of the household.¹⁷⁷ In American studies scholar Amy Kaplan's article "Manifest Domesticity," she analyzes the coterminous development in the nineteenth century of Manifest Destiny and the cult of domesticity. She argues that imagining the nation as the domestic (home) is not merely metaphorical, but was also

¹⁷⁴ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 12.

¹⁷⁵ Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*: 16.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁷⁷ The cult of domesticity as an ideal was predominantly available only to white middle- or upper-class women and often invisibilized the economic necessity of labor among working-class, women of color, and/or immigrant women. *Ibid.*, 16-17.

evidence of the scope of women's influence outside the more traditionally understood women's sphere in the nineteenth century. Specifically, she argues that "domesticity is more mobile and less stabilizing; it travels in contradictory circuits both to expand and contract the boundaries of home and nation and to produce shifting conceptions of the foreign."¹⁷⁸ In making this argument, Kaplan expands the traditional meaning of domesticity in separate spheres ideology and the cult of domesticity to include women's influence on the imperialist expansion and protection of the domestic, both home and nation, against (racialized) foreign influences.

While many gender studies scholars writing before and after Kaplan (and Pleck) have problematized separate spheres ideology as eliding the "lived experience" of women, I take from this article the ways in which (the cult of) domesticity was idealized in the nineteenth and into the twentieth century as well as the ways in which it was recycled into children's toys and early education.¹⁷⁹ As performance scholar Robin Bernstein observes, "[f]ragmentary images or gestures often linger, altered yet recognizable, in the culture of childhood after they have receded or even disappeared from adult culture."¹⁸⁰ Things—nursery rhymes, stories, clothing, images—that began in the province of adulthood in a given period and later transformed into the domain of

¹⁷⁸ Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (1998): 583.

¹⁷⁹ Anthropologist Deborah L. Rotman's article "Separate Spheres? Beyond the Dichotomies of Domesticity" is one example of more recent scholarship that troubles the strict dichotomy imposed by assigning masculine and feminine to the public and private spheres, respectively. She observes in both her literature review and the evidence for her article that the "lived experiences of women and men...were more dynamic than this rigid dichotomy suggests." Similarly, literary studies scholars Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher explain in the introduction to their anthology *No More Separate Spheres!: A Next Wave American Studies Reader* that the purpose of the book is to "dismantle" the underpinnings and assumptions of separate spheres ideology. Deborah L. Rotman, "Separate Spheres?: Beyond the Dichotomies of Domesticity," *Current Anthropology* 47, no. 4 (2006): 666; Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher, "Introduction," in *No More Separate Spheres!: A Next Wave American Studies Reader*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 8.

¹⁸⁰ Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University, 2011), 7.

children often retain while making invisible the adult values of the culture that first created those things.¹⁸¹ In the case of Thanksgiving plays in the early twentieth century, I argue, the idea of manifest domesticity was one of the main concepts recirculated into the children's sphere.

The concept of "manifest domesticity" complicates an easy identification of who qualifies as "foreign" and "domestic" in US discourse and the national imaginary. Because the racial identity of the US nation was imagined as Anglo-Saxon and Protestant in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (and arguably still is), people of color could never be fully incorporated into the US domestic nation even with citizenship. This left them in a murky spot between foreign and domestic. Kaplan argues that the overlapping languages of Manifest Destiny, foreign policy, and domesticity in the nineteenth century "heightened the fraught and contingent nature of the boundary between the domestic and the foreign, a boundary that breaks down around questions of the racial identity of the nation as home."¹⁸² Here again, civic elites could incorporate European immigrants into the domestic nation represented by the proto-American Pilgrims-as-ideal-immigrants by juxtaposing the Pilgrims against the Native American elements of the story.

Despite their indigeneity to the North American continent, Native Americans have been perpetually treated and imagined as domestic foreigners by the US government. For example, Kaplan describes that the outcome of the Supreme Court decision in *Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia* (1831) effectively made Native Americans foreigners within the "geographic boundaries of the nation" by defining tribes

¹⁸¹ For the ways in which the images and narratives of Thanksgiving were specifically targeted to children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving," 185; Pleck, "The Making of the Domestic Occasion," 779; Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 116-17.

¹⁸² Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," 585.

as “domestic dependent nations.”¹⁸³ This phrase, however, is inherently contradictory. As Patrick Wolfe observes, “‘domestic’ and ‘dependent’ defuse and diminish the sovereign implications of the third term, ‘nation.’”¹⁸⁴ The result of the US government granting sovereignty and dependency further led to the dispossession of Native Americans by denying them a sovereign status as it was granted to foreign nations in treaty-making and subsuming them instead into the realm of “internal [US] administration.”¹⁸⁵

In 1871, Congress essentially reversed this decision by “abolish[ing] the treaty system” and made Native Americans “wards of the state,” a concept still quite different from citizenship, assimilation, or members of the domestic nation.¹⁸⁶ From a policy perspective, the denial of treaty-making helped to move the image of Native Americans in the national imaginary as external threats to the US nation and its expansion and instead to an internal problem now “administrative rather than political.” As such, they remained the US’s “indigenous foreigners.”¹⁸⁷ Therefore, the middle-class, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant nation could incorporate, though reluctantly, ethnic, class, and religious differences that arrived one hundred fifty years after its founding more readily than the racial and cultural differences inherent in its very founding.

In the changing legal status of Native Americans and their representations in the national imaginary as well as the immigration of external foreigners, domesticity, as the “engine of national expansion,” would achieve its imperialist endeavors “through the emanation of woman’s moral influence.”¹⁸⁸ This moral influence stemmed decidedly from Protestant values, making women responsible for the spiritual well-being of both

¹⁸³ For more on racialized distinctions between domestic and foreign see *ibid.*, 584.

¹⁸⁴ Wolfe, “After the Frontier,” 15.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

¹⁸⁶ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 861.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 849.

¹⁸⁸ Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” 586.

her family and the foreigners incorporated within the national expansion. The impetus for Manifest Destiny and, by extension, manifest domesticity was furthered heightened by the mainstream Protestant belief in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that “the American was characteristically a ‘postmillennialist’” and that “the Kingdom of God would be realized in history, almost surely in American history.”¹⁸⁹ These beliefs structured Protestant thought broadly and was not necessarily beholden to Calvinist genealogical origins.

As a New England tradition initially, Thanksgiving (sans Pilgrims) throughout the nineteenth-century included prayers said before the meal and special Thanksgiving church services, which connected the holiday geographically and denominationally, if not yet explicitly, to the Puritans.¹⁹⁰ New Englanders who initially pushed for the national adoption of the holiday in the 1850s and 1860s, like Sarah Josepha Hale,¹⁹¹ argued that Thanksgiving would refocus a nation that “had lost its sense of spiritual mission” because of processes like industrialization and urban growth by looking back to the “religious morality [*i.e.*, Protestant] of an earlier generation [*i.e.*, Puritans].”¹⁹² Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Protestant discourse surrounding the celebration remained strong, but was expanded beyond the denominational descendants of New England Calvinism. In fact, as New England and social historian Diana Appelbaum observes, many twentieth-century immigrant parents resisted adopting the

¹⁸⁹ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 845.

¹⁹⁰ Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving," 168.

¹⁹¹ Sarah Josepha Hale was a New England writer and the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book* from 1837 to 1877. Throughout her tenure at *Godey's Lady's Book*, she campaigned for the inclusion of the traditionally New England holiday of Thanksgiving to become an official national holiday. Even after President Lincoln's 1863 Thanksgiving proclamation, she continued to campaign for the holiday to be made a federal one. For more on her advocacy for Thanksgiving in *Godey's Lady's Book* see Weinberger, "How America Invented Thanksgiving."

¹⁹² Pleck, "The Making of the Domestic Occasion," 776.

Thanksgiving traditions their children brought home from school because they felt it was such a proselytizing holiday.¹⁹³

With its associations of home, family, cooking, feasts, and Protestant prayers, the Thanksgiving that developed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards was also a prime example of the domestic occasion, making use of the meaning of “domestic” in separate spheres ideology. Pleck defines the domestic occasion as a “family gathering held in the home which paid homage to the ideal of the ‘affectionate family.’ Such a family was a privatized nuclear one, with a nurturant mother creating a proper home atmosphere, and providing children with a protected and supervised upbringing.”¹⁹⁴ The idea of a private, nuclear family with a loving mother who provides for the emotional and physical well-being of her children was also a part of Victorian-era separate spheres ideology.

Even before becoming a national holiday in 1863, Thanksgiving had already begun “to exemplify the feminine” as a domestic occasion.¹⁹⁵ In the performance of Thanksgiving rituals at home, Pleck explains, “Thanksgiving was a day of intensified patriarchy, when the difference between male and female responsibilities was pronounced.”¹⁹⁶ If the study and performance of Thanksgiving and the Pilgrims in early twentieth-century elementary schools were meant to help assimilate children, then one of the first things they would learn were US white, middle-class, and Protestant conceptions of gender and the family, including separate spheres ideology and the cult of domesticity. Furthermore, because the majority of public school teachers and the playwrights of children’s holiday plays were white, middle-class, Protestant women in the early twentieth century, the theory of manifest domesticity adds a further dimension to the

¹⁹³ Appelbaum, *Thanksgiving*: 222-28.

¹⁹⁴ Pleck, “The Making of the Domestic Occasion,” 773.

¹⁹⁵ Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 64.

¹⁹⁶ Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*: 24.

ways in which Thanksgiving plays sought to assimilate children into a unified national identity.

THANKSGIVING PLAYS IN THE CLASSROOM

In the next two sections, I provide a close reading of plays that require students to perform *as* Pilgrims or what I call performing history plays, rather than simply memorizing and reciting long passages of historical narratives while dressed as Pilgrims. Performing history plays asked students to dress and act like Pilgrims in movement sequences and/or dialogue. I chose to analyze performing history plays because these plays required students to imagine themselves as Pilgrims. These plays often contained historical facts but moved beyond facts to impart the feelings and behaviors of the dominant US white middle-class, veiled within lessons on the Pilgrims and domesticity, for students to emulate in their daily lives. Furthermore, as I discovered the vast majority of these play focus on the domestic sphere of Pilgrim life, rather than enacting specific historical events or people.

Having Progressive era students perform in Thanksgiving plays, pageants, recitations, and exercises, whether performing history or reciting it in costume, signaled a growing number of Progressive educators who advocated for the place of drama in the classroom. They emphasized that using drama in the classroom increased students' knowledge retention, levels of engagement, ability to empathize with others, as well as the ability to imitate the morals and character of the hero/ines they studied.¹⁹⁷ Though educator Eleanore Hubbard warns in *The Teaching of History Through Dramatic*

¹⁹⁷ Margaret Knox, "Introduction," in *Plays for School Children*, ed. Anna M. Lütkenhaus (New York: The Century Co., 1915); Percival Chubb, ed. *Festival and Plays in Schools and Elsewhere* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1912); Eleanore Hubbard, *The Teaching of History Through Dramatic Presentation* (Chicago: Benj. H. Sanborn and Co., 1935); Constance D'Arcy Mackay, *Patriotic Plays and Pageants for Young People* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1912).

Presentation (1935) that history still requires the knowledge of facts,¹⁹⁸ she advocates that students must also learn the affect of history and historical figures to remember those facts:

It is not enough, of course, to dress the characters up in periodic costumes, place them in medieval castles or colonial cottages, give them historic names, and expect to transmit this feeling. They must be people, with the thoughts, ideas, customs, and characteristics of their times and, more especially, of human beings. They must live and move and have their being in order that the vivid presentation of the period or events, the living atmosphere that envelops them, may give that period or those events a vitality and a reality that logical, clear, unbiased historical presentation may fail to do. Facts we can learn. *Truth we should feel.*¹⁹⁹

The emphasis on learning by doing and feeling, according to the Progressives, taught students not just the facts of history but the feelings and struggles that the hero/ines of US history faced within their respective historical contexts.

Educators toted the effects of using drama by demonstrating the ways that the broad strokes of history taught in the lower grades through drama remained with students throughout their education and into adulthood. Hubbard later asks,

Can any child, no matter how young or slow, who has ever been Jefferson, Clara Barton, Balboa, Morse, Dolly Madison, or George Rogers Clark, ever forget what made that person famous? No...The actor has entered into the life of the hero or heroine and, for better or worse and we hope for all time (like a successful marriage!), they have become one and the same.²⁰⁰

Moreover, educators foresaw the power of dramatized US history to follow a student to “the work bench, or behind the counter, or even in the lecture-room or in travel to historic places”²⁰¹ because drama impressed not just historical facts on the mind but also affective memories.

¹⁹⁸ Hubbard, *The Teaching of History*: 6.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 40, my emphasis.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 47.

²⁰¹ Horace G. Brown, "Observance of Historic Days at School," *Education* 32 (1911): 151-52.

The argument to use drama to teach the affect of history presages the ways in which performance studies scholars have theorized embodiment in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In performance studies terms, these educators asked students to embody both what Diana Taylor calls the repertoire, including the way the body moves in historical costumes and imagining what the historical character might have felt, and archive.²⁰² In other ways, the repetition of performances of historical characters from year to year surrogates, to use Joseph Roach's term, those characters in each new body that performs them. In this way, the performance of these historical characters is both an act of remembering and forgetting.²⁰³ The repetition of affective narratives learned through embodiment disappear other narratives that might be told and other bodies that might perform, as I will demonstrate in the Pilgrim plays examined here.

Celebrating Domesticity: Plays About "Priscilla"

One of the most popular Thanksgiving stories to represent onstage and emphasize the domesticity of the holiday was that of the fictionalized love-triangle of the "Pilgrim" characters²⁰⁴ John Alden, Miles Standish,²⁰⁵ and Priscilla Mullins.²⁰⁶ In what has become something of a US folktale, Miles Standish, a captain, is in love with Priscilla Mullins. Afraid to tell her about his feelings, he asks his friend John Alden to tell her for him. Unbeknownst to Standish, Alden is also in love with Mullins. Out of loyalty to his friend, however, Alden carries out Standish's request. Mullins, however, is actually in love with Alden. The story ends with a marriage between Alden and Mullins. There are two famous literary representations of this story: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1858 narrative

²⁰² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*.

²⁰³ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*.

²⁰⁴ As noted in the introduction, neither John Alden nor Miles Standish was actually a Pilgrim, but "strangers." Since the nineteenth century, however, they have been Pilgrims in the national imaginary. Conforti, *Imagining New England*: 17.

²⁰⁵ Sometimes spelled as "Myles."

²⁰⁶ Sometimes spelled "Mullens"

poem *The Courtship of Miles Standish* and Jane G. Austin's 1889 novel *Standish of Standish*. Most of the Thanksgiving plays representing this story are derived from Austin's novel, though writers often conflated the two sources.²⁰⁷ Austin's novel is also more central to the narrativization of the First Thanksgiving myth and its subsequent performances than Longfellow's poem for two reasons: 1) its popularity provided the "tipping point" for a sustained association of the Pilgrims with Thanksgiving; and 2) Austin was the first writer or artist to set the not-yet-famous Pilgrim feast outdoors. Future writers and artists drew heavily on her detailed descriptions of the feast, which were entirely fictional, to portray what they called historically accurate descriptions and images of the 1621 outdoor feast.²⁰⁸

Both Austin's novel and Longfellow's poem contributed to an ongoing public sentimental attachment to the love triangle that continued well into the twentieth century.²⁰⁹ Writers often presented the fictional descriptions in both as historical facts as well as conflating the two sources.²¹⁰ The resulting Alden couple (Priscilla and John) provided some of the earliest visual iconography and thematic tropes for the Pilgrims and Thanksgiving, predating representations of the First Thanksgiving feast located outdoors.²¹¹ They were like the "Adam and Eve" of the US, the first famous couple in the Puritans' errand into the wilderness. Progressive educators originally used pictures

²⁰⁷ Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 121.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

²⁰⁹ Examples of the Alden-Mullins-Standish love triangle in twentieth-century popular culture include: two silent shorts titled *The Wooing of Miles Standish* (1907) and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1910); a full-length silent film *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1923); an animated Looney Tunes short called *The Hardship of Miles Standish* (1940); a TV movie titled *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1953); and a *Matinee Theatre* episode titled "The Courtship of Miles Standish" (1955); Miles Standish, sans romantic entanglements, also appears in the film *Free Birds* (2013), "The Mayflower Voyagers" episode of *This is America Charlie Brown* (1988), and the episode "A History Channel Thanksgiving" of *South Park* (2011).

²¹⁰ For example, "[a] monologue on the 'The First Thanksgiving' by Pauline Bristow conflates Jane G. Austin with Longfellow to arrive at a Thanksgiving description that ends with the acceptance of Alden's famous proposal." Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 121.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 102.

featuring the Alden couple, or more generalized Pilgrim couples “with a generic Indian couple added for balance,” rather than the Pilgrim outdoor feast to decorate their classrooms because there was significantly more of the former available from classroom supply companies. Teachers used holiday decorations including some bought from supply companies and some created by students to “create an evocative holiday atmosphere” and to contribute to the affective lessons of the holiday.²¹² I would also argue that the representation of the couple not only filled in a lack of available pictorial representations of the Pilgrims but also supported the idea that Thanksgiving celebrates the nuclear family and nation.

In many Thanksgiving plays, the name “Priscilla,” sometimes based on the famous love-triangle and sometimes used more generically, represents the moniker of the ultimate domestic woman. In popular culture and in some of the Thanksgiving plays examined here, she is frequently associated with a spinning-wheel, which represents her domesticity and almost functions as a metonym for Priscilla, thus replacing the person with the object. In this section, I examine three plays featuring the name “Priscilla.” Marie Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving: Adapted from ‘Standish of Standish’” (1923) is a clear adaptation of the Alden-Mullins-Standish love triangle and prominently features Priscilla Mullens²¹³ as the most desirable domestic Pilgrim woman. Clare J. Denton’s “The Governor’s Proclamation” (1905) is not an overt adaptation of the love triangle, but its protagonist is a young woman named “Priscilla” who spends the entire play knitting, which closely resembles spinning. There is even a spinning wheel onstage. The third play is Harriette Wilbur’s “Priscilla” (1910). This is a choreographed march featuring no dialogue, which clearly separates the gender roles of boys and girls by props, costumes,

²¹² Ibid., 125.

²¹³ Irish uses the alternative spelling “Mullens,” as opposed to “Mullins.”

and movement. In this play, every girl represents “Priscilla” and the spiritual protection she offers the domestic.

In Marie Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923), the protagonist, Priscilla Mullens, must put aside her selfishness and desire for leisure in order to literally serve the community their First Thanksgiving feast. The play opens with Priscilla enjoying the sunshine “after hours of work at the spinning wheel.” She dreams of “dear old England” but elaborates that she “would not give up [their] new home; well [has she] learned to love it and [their] crop hath done famously.”²¹⁴ Her friends Mary Chilton²¹⁵ and Desire Minter, both names of actual Pilgrims, enter to tell Priscilla about Governor Bradford’s proclamation of setting aside “a day, or rather a number of days of feasting and thanksgiving for the mercies God hath showed [them].” In opposition to her friends’ excitement, Priscilla balks at the amount of work it will require of her:

PRISCILLA [*dryly*]: Hm! It sounds well enough, but who is to make ready this feasting?

MARY: Why—all of us—and chiefly you, dear, for none else can so season a delicate dish or—

PRISCILLA: Ay, ay, but dost think that to do a good deal harder cooking than our wont will be so very sprightly a holiday for us?

DESIRE: But ’twill be doing our part to make others happy methinks.

PRISCILLA [*gaily*]: Now, then, if thou ‘rt not at thy old tricks of shaming my selfishness.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Marie Irish, “The First Thanksgiving,” in *Choice Thanksgiving Entertainments* (Dayton: Paine Publishing Company, 1923), 97.

²¹⁵ In the mid-nineteenth century, a mythological account emerged that Mary Chilton was the first Pilgrim to set foot on Plymouth shores in 1620: “She was actually in competition with John Alden for this honor... Even though neither she nor John was anywhere near Plymouth Rock on December 11, 1620, Mary Chilton became the first Pilgrim woman to be individually celebrated through her association with the landing.” Baker, *Thanksgiving*: 101. This is just another example of an invented genealogy of the Pilgrims.

²¹⁶ Irish, “The First Thanksgiving,” 98.

Priscilla, confronted with sustaining the happiness of others, changes her reaction and acknowledges her “selfishness.”

As this dialogue begins to demonstrate, the overall play is less about the courtship aspects of Jane G. Austin’s *Standish of Standish* (1889) and more about Thanksgiving as a domestic occasion. When John Alden does enter in the midst of the girls’ discussion, he exclaims, “How now, chatterboxes! Hast nought to do but visit when there is so much work to be done?” Whether teasing, flirting, chastising, or a combination of the three, John points out their idleness while not appearing to do any work himself. Priscilla immediately asks him to take the basket of grapes she is holding to Dame Brewster so that she will have “more time to discuss the forthcoming feast” with the women. Mistress Winslow soon enters to chastise, like John earlier, the ladies for “stand[ing] thus in chatter.” Like the young women, Mistress Winslow expresses the communities’ expectations of Priscilla’s “marchplanes and manchets and plum-porridge and possets and all manner of tasty eats, such as thou only canst make.” Priscilla replies that she will do “[a]ll that [she] can do” as “blithely and steadfastly” as she can.²¹⁷ Then she assigns tasks to the other young women.

Like most Thanksgiving plays that are specifically focused on Thanksgiving as a domestic occasion, Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923) requires more girl actors (5) than boys (2) and also focuses on a trope often seen in Thanksgiving plays: the association of women’s gossip and cooking together with Thanksgiving as a domestic occasion.²¹⁸ As Elizabeth Pleck explains in relation to the nineteenth-century New England Thanksgiving, “because they cooked together on Thanksgiving day, and in the days of preparation before that, women enjoyed female companionship in the kitchen and

²¹⁷ Ibid., 99.

²¹⁸ The characters depicted are: Mistress Winslow, Priscilla Mullens, Mary Chilton, Desire Minter, Elizabeth Tilley, John Alden, and Squanto. I discuss Squanto’s inclusion later in this chapter.

could display their mastery of womanly skills to each other.”²¹⁹ In the preparation of the feast, women left their individual homes to come together, cook, and gossip. The resulting feast demonstrated their mastery of domestic duties and their families rewarded them with extra compliments.²²⁰ In the play, playwright Marie Irish juxtaposes Priscilla’s initial reluctance to celebrate a holiday requiring so much work with the compliments she receives from the women around her. Priscilla’s cooking skills benefit the entire community, which would make it a selfish act to renege on her cooking and leadership duties.

The play also balances regulating women’s “chatter” through John’s teasing and Mistress Winslow’s reproach with the chatter’s expositional function in sharing news among the young women and audience. According to Pleck, the collective gossip of women while preparing the Thanksgiving meal functioned “to shape reputations and draw lines between the violators of community norms and the insiders.”²²¹ Thus, gossiping served as another way for women to provide stability and emotional well being for their families, but only when they could establish themselves as “insiders.” In Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923), the dialogue that the women engage in demonstrates a cooperative atmosphere that looks forward to preparing the feast. They can also establish themselves as insiders by being some of the first in the town to excitedly share the news about the planned feast and to organize other women.

When a flirtatious encounter between Priscilla and John does arise in the play, it is in direct relation to the domestic occasion. After John returns from his errand, Priscilla asks him if he has gathered any Spanish chestnuts. Hesitantly, he reveals that he has a store of beechnuts that he has been saving. She accusatorily asks if he “gather[ed] them

²¹⁹ Irish, “The First Thanksgiving,” 99.

²²⁰ Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*: 25.

²²¹ Ibid.

for the brave Captain Myles Standish,” which is the first time Standish is mentioned. He reveals that he was saving them for her. She chastises him for not giving them to her sooner and hints that he is also a “laggard [...] in something else.” Up until this point, the other girls have been onstage with Priscilla, but they now decide to “go to the Common house and list to the plans of the women.” Elizabeth offers to wait for Priscilla, but Priscilla urges her on with the excuse that she must “give John directions for the wood to do our cooking.”

Whereas Priscilla’s previous interactions with John have been strictly business, the end of the play heightens the flirtatious exchanges and love triangle tensions. Now alone, John regales that with this feast “Captain Standish will admire [Priscilla] more than ever.”²²² Though John continues to try and convince her of Standish’s good qualities, Priscilla asks him to “[t]alk not” of Standish and changes the subject to the cooking wood. He agrees to speak to the men about it and exits. Here, Priscilla delivers the most famous line of the entire love triangle story: ““Why don’t you speak for yourself, John?””²²³ While Priscilla is the first to mention Standish, she subsumes her feelings under the guise of preparing the feast efficiently. She does not want to talk about Standish and she does her best to get John to stop both to keep the feast plans on schedule and to push him to admit his true feelings. In the context of the entire play, however, the courtship plotline is only secondary to Priscilla’s dedication and domesticity.

Like Marie Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923), Clara J. Denton’s play “The Governor’s Proclamation” (1905) takes place the day that Governor Bradford makes his Thanksgiving proclamation and also requires five girl actors and two boy actors.²²⁴ The

²²² Irish, “The First Thanksgiving,” 100.

²²³ Ibid., 101.

²²⁴ The characters are listed as: “Priscilla, a Pilgrim maiden; Return, her father; Dorothy, her mother; Peregrine, her young friend and neighbor; Patience, Relief, Prudence, friends and neighbors.”

play is divided into two halves: the first highlights Priscilla's domesticity as a young man, Peregrine,²²⁵ courts her while the second half highlights the domestic and the spiritual aspects of the actual holiday. The play begins with Priscilla sitting in a "straight-backed chair, busily knitting on a coarse woolen sock" as Peregrine enters. The stage directions describe Priscilla performing her domestic welcoming gestures: "Priscilla rises, drops old-fashioned curtsy, shakes hands with Peregrine, takes his hat and places it on the table, they both sit, he on the other side of the table from Priscilla." Priscilla resumes knitting while Peregrine comments upon it:

PEREGRINE. Busy as ever, I see, Priscilla?

PRISCILLA. O, yes, Peregrine, what would become of us poor Pilgrims if it were not for the work that we really have to do?

PEREGRINE. That's true, Priscilla, work drives away a great many sad thoughts.

PRISCILLA. That it does, Peregrine. [...].²²⁶

In this and the following exchange, work is essential to both the Pilgrims' survival and their emotional wellbeing. Yet most of the work discussed in their dialogue and the rest of the play is women's work.

Whereas the first half of the play prominently features the domestic and courtship rhetoric between Priscilla and Peregrine, the second half of the play focuses on the domestic, patriotic, and spiritual aspects of the holiday. After Priscilla and Peregrine's flirtatious fight, Priscilla's father, Father Return, enters to tell them of Governor Bradford's proclamation. Soon after Father Return makes his announcement, the rest of the cast—Mother Dorothy and the family's "friends and neighbors," Patience, Relief, and

²²⁵ Peregrine White was the first baby born in Plymouth Colony. Clearly this name invokes the historical memory of someone who became part of the Pilgrim mythos but does not actually represent him. He would have been about 1 for the 1621 Pilgrim feast.

²²⁶ Clara J. Denton, "The Governor's Proclamation," in *All the Holidays: Recitations, Dialogues and Exercises for All School Holidays with Much Original Matter*, ed. Clara J. Denton (Chicago: A. Flanagan Company, 1905), 151.

Prudence—also enter. The dialogue engages the role of women in the preparation of the meal and the patriotic and spiritual meaning of the holiday.

Following the domestic narrative that I have previously identified, Mother Dorothy focuses on the practical planning of the holiday; in contrast, Father Return, one of the only examples of an older Pilgrim man in the plays I examined, discusses the holiday's more abstract and patriotic meanings. Reacting to the young neighboring women's excitement for the holiday, Mother Dorothy warns, "[...] I think you will find there will not be much rest for us [the women]. You must remember that our friends will come from far and wide to pray and sing praises, and we who live near the meeting-house cannot let them go hungry, so I think it will mean some work to prepare a feast in honor of the day."²²⁷ Young Prudence immediately gets up to go "home at once and tell [her] mother so that she be getting things ready." Prudence's fixation on the material aspects of the feast, rather than what it celebrates, worries Father Return who fears that too many people will think like her. He dreams that "when [future generations of Pilgrims] have become, in this strange land, a wise and powerful nation, the people of those days will keep this great day in a spirit of true thankfulness, forgetting for a little while the pleasures of the table."²²⁸ Father Return's hopes provide a patriotic counter to Priscilla's earlier dreams of going back to England.

In the context of the play's 1905 publication, Father Return's hopes for the future of the nation reflects the spiritual and imperialist optimism of the US between 1890 and World War I. Despite the influx of immigrants, social problems at home, and armed conflicts abroad, explains church historian Robert T. Handy, Protestants assumed that the

²²⁷ Ibid., 154-55.

²²⁸ Ibid., 155.

US “was still a Christian nation.”²²⁹ Moreover, they felt they had a job to spread Christianity to others as evidenced by the renewal in missionary work at home and abroad, the rise of revivalism, evangelicalism, and fundamentalism, as well as the number of organizations that combined social reform with evangelical values. Churches and politicians entwined Protestant and imperialistic rhetoric to justify US expansion and to paint the language of both the Spanish American War and World War I as holy wars and great crusades.²³⁰ Though the belief in manifest destiny had been around since the early nineteenth century, mainline Protestants had never felt quite so close to accomplishing it if they could also maintain their hegemony over the US, *i.e.*, domesticate and assimilate the foreign influence of immigrants. It is thus fitting that Father Return ends the play by leading the cast in the singing of the Doxology, a hymn of praise that celebrates the blessings of God for both the Pilgrims in the play and the US in 1905.

Following the logic of manifest domesticity, however, it is actually Mother Dorothy who keeps the family on track to appropriately celebrate the holiday according to their Protestant beliefs. After Father Return first announces Governor Bradford’s decree to have a day of Thanksgiving, Mother Dorothy immediately retorts, “Surely you do not expect the Pilgrims to observe the Popish custom of keeping any one day above another?”²³¹ She immediately tries to protect her family from breaking with their Pilgrim

²²⁹ Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 118. Mark A. Noll observes that the rise of premillennial dispensationalism, which dealt with the end times, beginning in the 1880s and continuing well into the twentieth century may have also been a “defensive reaction to the realization that American culture was slipping away from traditional Protestant control.” Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 145. As more recently argued, the image and ideal of a tri-faith America, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish emerged during World War I but did not reach fruition until after the war. Kevin M. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); David Mislin, “One Nation, Three Faiths: World War I and the Shaping of ‘Protestant-Catholic-Jewish’ America,” *Church History* 84 no. 4 (2015).

²³⁰ Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities*: 118. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 883-89.

²³¹ Denton, “The Governor’s Proclamation,” 154.

spiritual beliefs while also criticizing the traditions of Catholicism for anyone in the 1905 audience or play. Furthermore, when Father Return later expresses his patriotic hopes for the future, Mother Dorothy counters his hopefulness with the problems of the present. She observes that from her close readings of the Bible “human nature...mourn[s] for the ‘flesh pots of Egypt,’ more or less, so don’t expect too much of the future generations, Father Return.”²³²

Again, her comments speak directly to the twentieth-century audience watching as a direct indictment of the undesirable immigrants coming to the US while isolating her family as a better example of humanity. That her next lines return the focus to the feast preparations (“But, come, Priscilla, put away that knitting, and come with me to see what fowls are fit to kill for the feast”) suggests that hard work, domesticity, and obedience are part of what separates them—the Pilgrims and/or white, Protestant, middle class US citizens—from the “flesh pots of Egypt”—foreign immigrants. Father Return, undeterred by Mother Dorothy’s cynicism, resolves that if he “must not expect too much of future generations, then [he] must do [his] best with the people just at hand,” before inviting everyone to sing the Doxology.²³³ His words and actions again gesture towards the twentieth-century audience watching to help the people “at hand” be better (Protestant) patriotic US citizens.

So far the plays examined feature a main character named “Priscilla” who is courted and diligently performs her domesticity. Clara J. Denton’s “The Governor’s Proclamation” (1905) also included an overt representation of the patriotic and spiritual implications of the holiday. In contrast, Marie Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923) focused entirely on the preparations of the Thanksgiving holiday through an adaptation of

²³² Ibid., 156.

²³³ Ibid.

a scene in Jane G. Austin's novel *Standish of Standish* (1889). As stated before, both plays also had more parts for girls (five in each) than boys (two in each) though only one, Irish's, featured a Native American character, which I address later. The next play examined, Harriette Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910), features an equal number of girls and boys in couplets performing what I call the Bible and gun metaphor. Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910) is not based on the Alden love triangle, but the use of the name "Priscilla" certainly draws from the story's cultural capital. Rather, Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910) is more clearly a moving adaptation of George Henry Boughton's painting *Pilgrims Going to Church* (1867), one of the earliest and most iconographic visual representations of the Pilgrims.²³⁴

In the process of creating Puritan representations in performance, it is important to note that the historical Pilgrims did not create pictures of themselves. It was not until the nineteenth century that artists began to imagine their visual representations and, like Austin's novel and Longfellow's poem, these images recycled through the national imaginary as historically accurate depictions. Boughton's painting *Pilgrims Going to Church* (1867), in particular, greatly influenced the depiction of the Pilgrims visually, gesturally, and thematically in many of the plays examined here. In it, a somber procession of men, women, and children cross a snowy expanse of field on their way to a meetinghouse nestled among the trees in the distance. The men carry guns and surround a cluster of women, children, and an elder minister. Nearly everyone carries prayer books, a juxtaposition of props that symbolizes the greater contradictions of colonial endeavors.

²³⁴ Boughton's painting was an extremely popular reference in Thanksgiving plays. Stanley Schell's compilation of performance pieces "Thanksgiving: Past and Present" (1907) includes a living tableau of *Pilgrims Going to Church*. Marie Irish also includes a living tableau of the painting in "Thanksgiving Tableaux" (1904). Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 879-89.

What is perhaps hinted at in the Boughton painting, but not fully depicted, is the gendered nature of the objects the Pilgrims carry: men carry guns with their prayer-books tucked away in belts or carried in hand near their bodies; women carry only prayer-books but always in their hands, pressed near their bodies.²³⁵ Plays that ask students to perform as Pilgrims, like Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910), often repeat this trope and clearly instruct the boys to carry guns and the girls Bibles.²³⁶ Like the men protecting the center group in Boughton's painting, the Pilgrim men represented in these Thanksgiving plays protect the outer boundaries of the community from an immediate, physical threat while the Pilgrim women protect the home as the spiritual and emotional center of the community/nation. Even in Thanksgiving plays that do not require the specific props of guns and Bibles, the feelings engendered and represented by them often remain.

Though Wilbur refers to "Priscilla" (1910) as a "Puritan play," it is actually more like a choreographed march without dialogue using Pilgrim iconography.²³⁷ The play requires "ten boys and ten girls, seven to ten years of age or smaller." The number of boys and girls must be equal so that they can also be coupled. The children are dressed rather typically for Pilgrim Thanksgiving plays with girls in "plain, dark dresses, white caps, cuffs and collars" carrying "prayer-books" and boys in "conical hats, ...knee trousers, capes, white collars, buckled shoes" carrying guns.²³⁸ Wilbur also includes

²³⁵ Within this trope, religious elders (always male) often carry a prayer-book and not a gun. This may be due to the growing sentimentalization and feminization of New England ministers in American culture during the nineteenth century. See Stanley Schell, "Thanksgiving: Past and Present," in *Werner's Readings and Recitations*, ed. Stanley Schell (New York: Edgar S. Werner and Company, 1907), 64; Irish, "Thanksgiving Tableaux," 98.

²³⁶ Though Bibles and prayer-books serve different functions, the two terms are used fairly interchangeably in the plays and literature examined.

²³⁷ Playwrights and teachers often conflated the "Puritans" and the "Pilgrims."

²³⁸ She specifies for the gun, "an air-rifle or a wooden one, something that will be harmless." Harriette Wilbur, "Priscilla," in *Little Plays for Little Players: A Collection of Simple Entertainments for Children Suitable for Use on Thanksgiving Day, Washington's Birthday, Patriot's Day and for General Use*, ed. Harriette Wilbur (Boston: Walter H. Baker and Company, 1910), 27.

detailed instructions for choreography along with diagrams illustrating different stage positions.²³⁹

The boys march in to form a line of five on either side of the stage. Then the girls march in “softly” to form two lines of five between the boys. Visually, they are coupled boy-girl, girl-boy for almost the entire play. The boys form an outer perimeter around the girls. In these positions, the boys complete a cycle of drill patterns with their guns while the girls remain mostly still:

1. Girls hold books with hands clasped on breast, and heads bowed. Boys raise guns up, then down. Repeat sixteen counts.
2. Guns held obliquely overhead toward centre, then back to chest position. Girls same position as in (1).
3. Guns forward, up, down, to chest, prayer-books the same.
4. Boys repeat (2), girls raising books in right and left hands to gun barrels.
5. Guns extended at outer sides, girls as in (1).
6. Girls kneel, boys repeat (2).
7. Boys kneel, in attitude of firing, girls as in (6).
8. All rise. Girls as in (1).²⁴⁰

The boys provide most of the movement in this sequence, while the girls predominantly hold their first position, books held at their breast with heads bowed.

The extended stillness of what looks like the girls’ spiritual contemplation reinforces the notion of protection: the boys protect the girls from physical dangers while the girls protect the spiritual well-being of the group. In step four, the girls hold out their books to their partners’ gun barrels, which briefly speaks to the interdependence of these

²³⁹ In the spirit of making this performance easier for the teacher, Wilbur includes illustrations of the patterns for the construction of the Pilgrim hats, cuffs, and collars.

²⁴⁰ Wilbur, "Priscilla," 28.

two props in the invented Pilgrim narrative and the gendered ideology it promotes. It also speaks to manifest destiny and manifest domesticity's reliance on violent imperialism and Christianity to colonize peoples outside the nation and assimilate foreigners within the nation. While manifest destiny relies on the ideology of men with guns, manifest domesticity relies on the ideology of domestic women and their Bibles.²⁴¹ The notion of interdependence is repeated in steps six and seven, when first the girls and then the boys kneel. Whereas the girls kneel with their prayer-books in what most likely (depending on the individual production) looks like a moment of supplication, the boys kneel "in the attitude of firing" their guns. This brief tableau reflects the unresolved, and often unacknowledged, tension in narratives of the Pilgrims as proto-Americans that juxtaposes religious liberty against their violent colonization.

The next sequences of movements repeat the basic ideas and gestures just described. When one group marches through center or down the sides of the stage, the other group kneels in the manner described above. This means that boys march only when the girls kneel in supplication and the girls march only when the boys, also referred to as "sentries," kneel in a position of protecting the girls until they all move in the final positions of the performance.²⁴² In the next sequence of movements, the children walk in concentric circles, the girls in the inside circle going left and the boys on the outside going to the right. They end up in two lines across the back of the stage: boys downstage and girls slightly upstage. The two center boys walk to the outside of the two center girls. The rest of the boys repeat until they take their original formation of four lines of five,

²⁴¹ Women played a huge part in missionary work both within the US, primarily to Native American schools and reservations, and outside the US. See for example, Betty A. DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Matthew Burton Bowman, *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity."

²⁴² Wilbur, "Priscilla," 29-30.

boy-girl, girl-boy.²⁴³ In boy-girl and girl-boy couples, they turn from the group and “march down the sides and off at rear left and rear right.”²⁴⁴

This march requires ordered precision and simultaneous movements. The only differences between the marchers are their genders, signaled by costume, prop, and movement. Such choreographed homogeneity attempts to hide other differences the students may have from each other and incorporate them into “correct” gendered behaviors. Though both groups kneel at various times, the movement does not carry the same gendered meanings. When the girls kneel, they kneel with their prayer-books in hand and signify a moment of supplication and/or submission. When the boys kneel, their kneeling signifies readying the gun to actually fire, not just carrying it as a precautionary measure as in the Boughton painting. While the march begins with the boys and girls entering separately, it ends with them exiting as couples, reinforcing a worldview that the protection of the community begins in the micro-nation of nuclear families.

Neither the performance of Wilbur’s “Priscilla” (1910) nor the Boughton painting it references explicitly addresses from what or whom the Pilgrim men/boys protect the Pilgrim women/girls. On the most basic, stereotypical level, the boys protect the girls from savage Indians as in the image *Thanksgiving Day in New England Two Hundred Years Ago* examined earlier in this chapter; this assessment is highly complicated, however, by two factors: the changing political status and popular culture representations of Native Americans and the popular perception of a growing crisis of masculinity in Protestant churches and public education in the early twentieth century. Thanksgiving’s equal status with patriotic holidays such as George Washington’s Birthday and the Fourth of July, both of which celebrated the military accomplishments of men, was countered by

²⁴³ Ibid., 31-32.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 32.

Thanksgiving's simultaneous celebration of domesticity and women's sphere. Moreover, the close of the frontier in 1890 and the perception of living Native Americans disappearing to reservations and/or assimilating into US culture by the twentieth century signaled an extremely ambiguous relationship with Native American representations in popular culture. I argue that these two factors complicated how boys performed in Thanksgiving plays, which created tension around how to best use boys in plays that advocated primarily for the domesticity of girls.

Playing Indian: Plays With(out) Native Americans

Native American representations in Thanksgiving plays fulfilled many diverse and at times contradictory purposes. While each of these purposes could be analyzed more broadly in the role of racial representations, mimicry, and Othering in US discourse and popular culture, my analysis focuses on how they shape and define whiteness in relation to appropriate gender roles. As I have discussed, many Thanksgiving plays asking students to perform as Pilgrims were used to teach girls to provide for the material and spiritual well-being of her family as well as to protect the home from foreign influences. Native Americans represented these foreign influences in multiple ways, which I discuss below. Moreover, Native Americans served to ensure the successful transition from primitive white boyhood into masculine manhood, which would ultimately further support the nuclear family.

To support the lessons in citizenship in Thanksgiving plays performing history, Native American representations served several sometimes conflicting and/or conciliatory purposes. That these lessons were often contradictory is not surprising. As scholars in the emerging field of decolonization studies Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang explain, “[e]verything within a settler colonial society strains to destroy or assimilate the Native in order to disappear them from the land—this is how a society can have multiple

simultaneous and conflicting messages about Indigenous peoples.”²⁴⁵ Therefore, as the original domestic foreigners, Native Americans in plays about the First Thanksgiving sometimes functioned as stand-ins for other foreign and difficult to assimilate threats to the hegemony of a Protestant US. In the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these threats included Catholics, Jewish people, Latin American immigrants, and Asian immigrants. As stated above, civic elites more readily targeted European immigrants for assimilation into a white, Protestant US than other foreign immigrants. African Americans remained largely absent from this assimilationist discourse. As stand-in for such foreign threats, the presence of seventeenth-century Native Americans in performing history plays largely negated the presence of Native Americans actually living in the twentieth century US.

In another function of Native American representation in performing history plays, Native Americans were used to differentiate “white America” as always separate from and superior to its indigenous foreigners. In both this and the previous narrative, European immigrant children could perform as Pilgrims and be integrated into the US by being taught to differentiate themselves from (domestic/racialized) foreigners who were less “civilized,” spoke in broken English, and were sometimes quite “savage.” In still another function, some Native American representations provided a naïvely positive example in US history where white Americans got along well with Others. This is exemplified in narratives that feature helpful, friendly Native Americans teaching planting skills and/or joining the Pilgrims for the Thanksgiving feast.

Finally, Native American representations sometimes functioned to provide Euro-American boys an active and primitive outlet for what educational theorists and psychologists called savage boyhood. These scholars hoped that by promoting savage

²⁴⁵ Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” 9.

boyhood as a developmental stage for boys they would also be able to address what they perceived as a growing crisis of masculinity that effeminized (white) boys and young men. By having boys embody the “savage” Indians, they hoped to instill masculine characteristics the boys would take into manhood. Through all of these functions Thanksgiving plays that include references to Native Americans, as foe or friend, served less to include Native Americans in the US’s founding myth or to be historically accurate and more to advocate for the superiority of white, Protestant culture over both the “dead/vanquished” Native Americans and other, more immediately threatening, racialized foreigners. I explore some of these ideas in the analyses that follow.

First, very few plays ask schoolchildren to perform as Native American characters, if they are even mentioned at all. In Wilbur’s “Priscilla” (1910), Native Americans are never actually seen in performance though they could easily be understood as the invisible threat offstage as they might also be in Boughton’s painting; however, because “Priscilla” was published after the closing of the frontier amidst the very immediate threat of unprecedented European immigration, the armed protection the boys offered the spiritually armed girls could also be read by teachers/audiences to symbolize an unseen foreign immigrant threat. Even if the actors/students in “Priscilla” were immigrants themselves, their role performing as Pilgrims surrogated them as proto-Americans and positioned them safely as “Americanized,” in school at least, as opposed to their not yet Americanized parents and immigrant communities. Such a strategy also reflected one of the Progressives’ main goals in inculcating students with national holidays like Thanksgiving: to assimilate immigrant parents through their children.²⁴⁶ If children started bringing home Americanized, Protestant traditions and values, civic elites hoped that the parents would also learn and follow them.

²⁴⁶ Pleck, “The Making of the Domestic Occasion,” 778-84.

Clara J. Denton's play "The Governor's Proclamation" (1905) provides another example of an immediate, but unembodied Native American threat to the Pilgrim community. Unlike Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910), Denton's white Pilgrim characters verbally reference "Indians." For example, Priscilla mentions a new peace "treaty" with Native Americans as something for which to be thankful. A little later in the play, Father Return lists as one of the Pilgrims' blessings "a peaceful summer free from the attacks of the ferocious Indians."²⁴⁷ Published in 1905, Denton's representation of the Native Americans as once ferocious and now peaceful seems to reference a vestigial and stereotypical narrative of the "savage" frontier Indians rather than a stand-in for contemporary (1905) foreign immigrant threats. Because "The Governor's Proclamation" is an exemplary depiction of female domesticity and the spiritual components of Thanksgiving, requiring the actual embodiment of violent Indians could have taken away from the overall message. Instead, Native Americans are mentioned but left unembodied to clearly separate the moral, military, and spiritual superiority of the Pilgrims (white, middle-class, Protestant US citizens) and the young citizens who perform as them from their "savage" Indian neighbors.

The lack of student performers actually embodying violent or threatening Native Americans leads into the second characteristic of Native Americans often seen in these Thanksgiving plays: when Native Americans are actually embodied, they are most often portrayed as primitive but kind and very rarely "savage." In the previously examined "The First Thanksgiving" (1923) by Marie Irish, for example, Squanto does appear.²⁴⁸ That he enters when only the young women of the play—Priscilla, Elizabeth, Desire, and Mary—are onstage speaks to his non-threatening presence in the play. When Elizabeth

²⁴⁷ Denton, "The Governor's Proclamation," 153.

²⁴⁸ In the first Thanksgiving myth, Squanto helped the Pilgrims survive their first winter by teaching them how to plant maize.

excitedly asks Squanto if he is going to “invite the Indians to [their] festival,” he replies, in stereotypically broken English, that he is going to Namaket to “send out runner to great Massasoit, invite him come, bring brother, bring braves, come makum big feast with pale face.”²⁴⁹ His broken English, journey to the Indians, and the actor’s possibly greased-up face only further differentiates the character from the young white girls performing their domestic duties within the community while he remains an unthreatening presence to the purity and innocence of the actual girls playing Pilgrims.

The embodied presence of Native Americans such as Squanto in Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923) also reflects a third characteristic of Native Americans in these Thanksgiving plays: only boys play Native American characters.²⁵⁰ This fact may reflect an attempt to be historically accurate; that is, only male Native Americans are associated with the historical Pilgrim mythos, including Squanto, Samoset, Massasoit, and the ninety braves Massasoit brought with him to the 1621 feast. More likely, however, the predominance of boys playing Indian has to do with early twentieth century theories of developmental psychology in the burgeoning Child Study movement. Advocates of Child Study believed that young (white) children existed in a developmental stage akin to “primitive” societies. Thus, the Committee of Eight—a group appointed by the American Historical Association in 1905 to compose a unified curriculum for the study of history in elementary schools—stressed the importance of learning about “primitive life” in the primary grades.²⁵¹ By learning about how primitive societies operated in everyday life, children built a foundation upon which to learn how to behave in a more complicated society like the US, making them better citizens. When discussing childhood, however,

²⁴⁹ Irish, “The First Thanksgiving,” 99.

²⁵⁰ I could only find one exception where two girls played “squaws.” See Clara J. Denton, “The First Thanksgiving Day,” in *Entertainments for All the Year* (Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Company, 1910), 207-11.

²⁵¹ The Committee of Eight, *The Study of History*: 1.

educators and Child Study experts unwittingly made boyhood the universal and claimed “that girls had a natural proclivity (determined by biology and heredity) for home and domestic life.”²⁵²

Without the ability to expend this savage behavior and energy, boys might become prematurely gentleman-like, evidence of their feminization, or not adequately progress into the expectations of middle-class manhood.²⁵³ Moreover, these, mostly male, scientists greatly feared what they perceived as the feminization of boys in modern, urban society. In the face of increased access to manufactured goods, urban life, and a preponderance of female teachers and Protestant religious leaders, they believed that modern boys lacked exposure to the character-building, harsh circumstances of past generations such as those depicted in stories about the Pilgrims.²⁵⁴

In this picture of childhood development, hunting and guns could provide one of the necessary outlets for a (white, middle-class) boy’s savage instincts. For preeminent Child Study scholar Stanley G. Hall, the gun signified the highest evolutionary tier of savage boyhood, surpassing the more primitive forms of weapons such as rocks, slingshots, and bows and arrows. Weapons used in hunting and/or tormenting small creatures represented control over nature.²⁵⁵ Hall explained that the gun specifically represented “the most effective stimulus of the imagination [he] ever had” because it let him imagine all of the creatures that might be lurking in the wild.²⁵⁶ This imagining stimulated both “originality and independence” as well as a way to work through savage

²⁵² Amy Susan Green, "Savage Childhood: The Scientific Construction of Girlhood and Boyhood in the Progressive Era" (Dissertation Yale University 1995), 4, 228.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁵⁴ Fundamentalism, one of the most influential religious movements in US history, resisted science and modernity, but held a similar anxiety about the feminization of boys due to women’s great outnumbering of men and usurpation of leadership roles, though not clergy roles, within Protestant churches. Since Child Study contributed more greatly to the curriculum than fundamentalism, I focus more on how their assessment of savage boyhood may be reflected in the plays analyzed here.

²⁵⁵ Green, "Savage Childhood," 157-58.

²⁵⁶ Hall quoted in *ibid.*, 158.

instincts.²⁵⁷ The actual brandishing of prop guns in Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910) and its symbolic use in other plays is one of the ways boys might work out their savage instincts in plays celebrating one of the most domestic, feminine, and yet also patriotic of all occasions, Thanksgiving.

Another way that boys might work through their savage instincts was through dressing up, acting like, and learning about the "primitive" skills of Native Americans, or white perceptions of primitive Indian skills, as seen in many of these Thanksgiving plays. The purpose of boys playing Indian in some of the plays examined here is similar to the purpose of such games as "cops and robbers" and "cowboys and Indians," which Child Study experts hoped would help boys work out and progress beyond their savage behaviors. This approach built upon a much longer tradition in US history of what historian and American Studies scholar Philip J. Deloria calls "playing Indian." Deloria argues that the frequency of white men playing Indian in the US represents an ongoing and often contradictory re/invention of national identity beginning with the Indian disguises used for the Boston Tea Party to mark the colonists as "American" rather than "British." From the Revolutionary War to the end of the twentieth century, white men playing Indian revealed and negotiated "dialectical tensions at the heart of American identities: open meaning and essential reality, interior and exterior Otherness, subjectivity and objectivity, desire and repulsion, nobility and savagery, individualism and nationalism."²⁵⁸

At the turn of the twentieth century, Child Study experts, Progressive educators, and civic elites sought to address what they perceived as a crisis of masculinity by combining the multifaceted idea of what Deloria theorizes as playing Indian with

²⁵⁷ Hall quoted in *ibid.*

²⁵⁸ Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 185.

patriotic indoctrination. Hence, the primary grades in the early twentieth century emphasized a firm foundation in primitive life and public holidays before learning about the military and political history of the US.²⁵⁹ Additionally, private organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, the Seton Indian program, and numerous Indian camps emerged in an attempt to return urban boys to “authentic” Native American practices and help instill in them masculinity and patriotism.²⁶⁰ The desire to “play” Indian also reflects what Tuck and Yang describe as the “desire to become *without becoming [Indian]*.” This serves not so much as to remember or honor Native Americans but to re-enact the process by which the “Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping.”²⁶¹ In these ways, advocating for boys to “play Indian” also simultaneously served to reinforce a settler colonial narrative for immigrant and native-born boys.

Dorothy Lehman Sumeran’s play “Thanksgiving for Ellen” (1937) is an excellent example of a play that combines these lessons on boys playing Indian while still teaching the correct domestic behavior for girls. The play requires a cast of nine boys and only four girls. While all four girls play Pilgrim women/girls, only one of the boys performs as a Pilgrim boy, John Billington. Billington is based on an actual Pilgrim who Sumeran describes as “the real ‘bad boy’ of those early days. He did run off with the I[ndians] and was returned by the chief himself, who bore the boy, dressed in skins and feathers, home on his shoulders.” The other eight boys appear briefly towards the end of the play as Indians “dressed as warriors.”²⁶² The Pilgrim women/girls include: Mistress White, the

²⁵⁹ The Committee of Eight, *The Study of History*: 1.

²⁶⁰ Deloria, *Playing Indian*: 95-127.

²⁶¹ Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” 14, their emphasis.

²⁶² Dorothy Lehman Sumeran, “Thanksgiving for Ellen,” in *Thanksgiving in the Schoolroom: A Book of Original Entertainments for Schools of All Grades*, ed. Corinne B. Jones, et al. (Chicago: Beckley-Cardy Company, 1937), 90.

mother of the first infant born in Plymouth colony, Peregrine White; Mistress Hopkins, the mother of the only infant born during the Mayflower's voyage, Oceanus; Ellen Moore, a Pilgrim name Sumeran uses factiously since Moore actually died during the first winter; and Priscilla Mullins, whose name Sumeran only uses for familiarity since the play is not an adaptation of the love triangle story. While all of these characters are fictionalized versions of actual Pilgrim names, Sumeran specifically engages the historical narratives around Billington as the Pilgrim "bad boy," and Mistress White and Hopkins's roles as very important Pilgrim mothers. Moreover, one of the most important characters and males in the play, baby Peregrine White, is not played by an actor, but by a doll.

The play takes place in Mistress White's yard as she and her "bound out" servant Ellen Moore work on preparations for the Thanksgiving feast. The beginning of the play highlights the work of Pilgrim women preparing the feast, marking it as a play that still strongly recognizes the domesticity of the Thanksgiving holiday. Props fill the stage and suggest the amount of work to be done:

The table is well filled with the following: four large pumpkins, onions, cabbage, small rude basket of nuts, a wooden bowl filled with yellow field corn on the cob, and at the farther end Front several pewter mugs and candlesticks to be cleaned. Toward center of yard is a rude stool beside which is a large basket of field corn on the cob. A bowl is on the stool. Near the table is a stool holding a bowl of water and a towel.²⁶³

These props provide the girl actors onstage with constant options for doing the work of preparations. When the play opens with Mistress White and Ellen onstage, the stage directions emphasize their work ethic with the instruction that they work "with a will."²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Ibid., 91.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

The play centers on young Ellen's actions when Mistress White leaves her in charge of watching baby Peregrine while Mistress White visits Mistress Hopkins. John Billington comes to visit Ellen but only after first playing a trick on her by rustling the corn shocks, hooting like an owl, and terrifying her. Like in Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910) Ellen perceives an unseen threat in the corn shocks, but what or who it may be is initially unclear. When she discovers it is only John, Ellen chides him both for scaring her and for all the rules he frequently breaks. Priscilla Mullins enters and, after some small talk and John's exit, asks Ellen to come to her house to see a new dress she just finished. Ellen hesitates to leave Peregrine, but finally agrees. The stage curtain is drawn to indicate a "lapse of time" and opened again to the same setting.²⁶⁵ Ellen and Priscilla reenter to find baby Peregrine missing. Panicking, they notice Indians in the corn shocks off-stage, and thus unseen by the audience, with the baby. They debate about what to do until John reappears. They ask him to go talk to the Indians and convince them to give the baby back. John comes back with the Indians who give the baby back in a stylized dance. Relieved, Ellen realizes that she must tell Mistress White what happened, which ends the play with a moral lesson on not abandoning your domestic duties.

Like other plays that represent Thanksgiving as a domestic occasion filled with women's work, Sumeran's "Thanksgiving for Ellen" (1937) devotes a fair amount of dialogue and action to the domesticity of the holiday, women's gossip, and women sharing their work with each other. The beginning of the play features Mistresses Hopkins and White discussing what they have to be thankful for, Ellen's value as a servant, and baby Peregrine's growth. Moreover, Mistress White only leaves Ellen in charge of Peregrine to help Mistress Hopkins with her own preparations as well as to share her "golden loaf" recipe and to "pass judgment, too, on the new cloth [Hopkins]

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 100.

finished dyeing.”²⁶⁶ Because both Mistress White and, more egregiously, Ellen leave their domestic duties to socialize with other women, the play also demonstrates the fine line between the benefit of women’s socialization and the dangers to the community in the dereliction of duties as Mistress Winslow warns in Marie Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923).

As a play initially focusing on the domestic preparations for the feast, Sumeran’s “Thanksgiving for Ellen” (1937) places the one Pilgrim boy, John Billington, in a precarious position. Stepping into the domestic sphere to help with preparations would not fit in with the strict gender roles established in plays that reenact scenes from the Pilgrims’ lives. He is not courting anyone as John Alden did in Marie Irish’s “The First Thanksgiving” (1923) and Peregrine did in Denton’s “The Governor’s Proclamation” (1905), though his actions are flirtatious. He is not the elder patriotic patriarch like Father Return in Denton’s “The Governor’s Proclamation” (1905). Nor is he immediately protecting the spiritual integrity and innocence of the girls as in Wilbur’s “Priscilla” (1910). He is just a boy actor who is as susceptible to either stalling in the boy-as-savage developmental model or being feminized by the domesticity of the holiday as the Pilgrim boy he performs.

While John Billington does end up saving the day and protecting the Pilgrim girls, he also functions as a hybrid of Indian primitivism and the early twentieth century Puritan formation of middle-class respectability and could serve as a lesson for the boy playing him and/or the boys in the audience. His hybridity removes him from the domesticity of the holiday and models him as a transitional figure in the developmental model of boyhood. Instead of initially entering through Mistress White’s yard, John enters from the corn shocks, outside the boundaries of the community and presaging the Indians’

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 94.

entrance from the same place. Ellen soon further reinforces his connection to the Indians while she cuts up pumpkins and rebukes him for scaring her:

ELLEN [*working hard*]. It's a good thing the Indians have taught you something. You've run with them until you are as wild as they. You were gone all summer with them. Had the colony worried to death. What you see in them! [*Goes over to look at the baby.*]

JOHN. Humph. You saw how all the other boys looked when the chief brought me home all dressed up in feathers and wampum. Eyes almost popped out of their heads. They'd go off, too, if they dared. I wish I were an Indian. I'd be just like Massasoit. He's my friend.²⁶⁷

John expresses a sense of belonging more with the Indians than with the Pilgrims. Moreover, he asserts that all Pilgrim boys feel this to some extent. Most of them just do not have the courage to act on it.

Ellen responds in a way that implies she has already accepted her role in the Pilgrim community and that John should as well: "You were born white and you'll have to die white."²⁶⁸ She encourages him to move beyond his primitive inclinations and grow up into Pilgrim/white, middle-class respectability all while she continues to cut vegetables and take care of Peregrine. Her physical actions take care of the home while her words protect the Pilgrim/white, middle-class sensibilities of home. She continues to berate him with a summary of his bad behavior and warns him that Governor Bradford might choose to send him back to England. Having tasted the wild, quite literally in the food he consumes throughout this dialogue, John declares that he will "never go back to England."²⁶⁹ John displays the type of rugged individualism that Progressive reformers wanted to see. He ran away with the Indians and though he dreams of going back to

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 97.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 98.

them, he ultimately remains with the civilized Pilgrims. He uses the skills he learned from the Indians to support the Pilgrim community.

When Ellen and Priscilla come back onstage to discover that baby Peregrine is missing, they quickly realize the Indians have taken him; however, the audience does not get to see the Indians at first. They only experience the Indians' unseen presence by watching Priscilla and Ellen perform their terror and voyeuristic fascination. Priscilla and Ellen look and point off-stage with fear while describing what they see: "They are in a circle. One was holding the baby, looking at him so hard. They were all as solemn and oh, [*whispers*] I was near them before I saw them. I all but fainted."²⁷⁰ They strategize that they could trade the baby for "bright and pretty" things like beads and Ellen's mother's brooch.²⁷¹ This strategy likens the unseen Indians more towards animals than civilized humans. The corn shocks rustle again and John jumps out as he did earlier in the play. After learning about what has happened, John goes to talk to the Indians. Again, the audience only experiences John's conversation with the Indians through Ellen and Priscilla's commentary on what they see happening off-stage. John runs back on stage and advises them, "Keep quiet and watch." "[M]ysteriously," he tells them to hide their fear and not move.²⁷²

When the group of eight Indians enters onto the stage, their movements are highly organized, stylistic, and silent though in a different way than the marchers in Wilbur's "Priscilla" (1910). The stage directions describe that they "enter with a queer, weird step, their movements slow, deliberate, full of mystery: four steps very slow, the right foot forward with a stamp on first count, flexing the right knee second count, left foot on the

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 101.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 102.

²⁷² Ibid., 104.

third count, left knee flexed on fourth count.”²⁷³ They continue this sequence of movements until they circle Peregrine’s cradle three times. Then the leader “places the baby in the cradle, and standing upright makes a slash through the air over the cradle with his tomahawk.” His warriors repeat “this rite,” circle the cradle twice, and then exit off-stage “with measured tread, deliberately and without haste.”²⁷⁴ Even though the Indians never threaten the girls or the baby, the girls’ fear of them, the Indians’ “weird” movements, and the slash of the tomahawk contribute to a sense of danger.

The Indian men protect and save baby Peregrine, the first baby born in the colony. He represents the first proto-American, identifiably male born on (future) US soil. His physical exchange from Pilgrim girls to Indians and back to Pilgrim girls represents a rite of passage for a character not even embodied by an actual person. When Priscilla and Ellen realize after his return that Peregrine is not scared but rather laughing, John brags that Peregrine is “no weakling. He knew they weren’t going to hurt him.” John explains that the Indians performed a “ceremonial. They were asking their gods to make the ‘pale-faced papoose’ strong and healthy. He’s the first white baby they have ever seen. They heard him crying in the yard, no one was near and [*going to help himself to nuts*] so—.”²⁷⁵ Through this sequence of events, John initiates Peregrine into some sort of American boyhood. Like John, Peregrine temporarily leaves the confines of the colony and imbibes some of the rugged individual spirit the Progressives once sought from his brief encounter with the Indians. The Indians’ ceremonial, unseen by the audience, becomes a symbolic blessing bestowed upon the Pilgrims as a whole by their “primitive” neighbors. Their movements, when the audience finally sees them, concretize their otherness. From

²⁷³ Ibid., 104.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 105.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 105.

a practical standpoint, their presence also employs more boys from the class to participate in a very structured way of playing Indian.

Even though the Indians represent no danger to Ellen and Priscilla and actually help them, Ellen and Priscilla are still not tolerant or accepting of the Indians. They chastise the Indians for “coming into people’s yards and taking their babies behind their backs.” They do not appreciate the literal and figurative boundary crossing. Priscilla asks why they “don’t ask permission when they want to do their dances all over the place.” Ellen and Priscilla continue to protect the homogeneity of the community. John, as a mover between worlds, asserts his (male) authority and condescendingly responds, “That was a great honor, girl. You don’t understand Indians.” It is clear that Ellen and Priscilla “owe” John for their shirking of responsibilities. He only asks for a piece of pie as he “grab[s] another handful of nuts for his pocket.”²⁷⁶ John’s one heroic move magnifies Ellen and Priscilla’s mistake of leaving baby Peregrine alone, rather than the massive domestic chores that began the play. The play ends with Ellen resolved to tell Mistress White about her mistake as she “brac[es]” her body and begins to quickly peel pumpkins.²⁷⁷

CONCLUSION

Representations of Native Americans in performing history plays often served to counter the feminized domesticity of the holiday by giving the boys playing Indian a “masculine” reason to be in the plays. In the context of these plays, the only contact girls playing Pilgrim women/girls usually had with boys playing Native Americans were when the Native Americans represented were primitive, but kind and not immediately threatening. Thus the Pilgrim women/girls’ white purity, innocence, and biology were

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 106.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 107.

protected. Even though Ellen and Priscilla were afraid of the unseen Indian presence in the majority of Sumeran's "Thanksgiving for Ellen" (1937), the representations of Native Americans onstage was ultimately primitive but unthreatening. The greatest crime committed in the play is not done by the Native Americans but by the Pilgrims girls leaving Peregrine unattended, a dereliction of domestic duties.

In all of the plays examined here, the number of boys only equaled or exceeded the number of girls when the boys provide physical protection for the girls against unseen "Indian" threats, or perhaps foreign immigrant threats, and/or to play primitive, but kind Indians. While Indians were certainly separated from the Pilgrims and white culture through speech, make-up, gestures, and dress, they very rarely embodied a physical, violent threat to the Pilgrims. They were also never assimilable. Even when helpful, they were always kept separate.

When early twentieth century plays asked students to perform as Pilgrims (and Indians), they presented assimilatory values that went beyond the recitation of a patriotic history. Undoubtedly, students learned many things about the Pilgrims and Puritan formations through many other embodied exercises and curricular assignments meant to instill in them a sense of patriotic citizenship: the Pilgrims were the first immigrants; the Pilgrims signed one of the first democratic documents in the (future) US, *The Mayflower Compact*; the Pilgrims believed in religious liberty; the Pilgrims cooperated with their Native American neighbors; the Pilgrims faced very harsh conditions but persevered. This version of the Pilgrims reflected the type of Puritan formations Daniel Webster and other New Englanders hoped to make a core part of the national imaginary in the nineteenth century.

Asking students to dress up as Pilgrims and imagine themselves as Pilgrims in plays, however, put the performativity of white, middle-class gender roles on display and

in their bodies through performance. The type of citizenship modeled for students through their performances as Pilgrims did not just promote the ability to cooperate in a family, school, and community as an integral part of the larger participation of citizens in the nation. It also surreptitiously tied the performance of correct gender roles, exaggerated during the Thanksgiving holiday, as key components to being a good US citizen. Masking the ideological underpinnings of such Victorian influenced gender roles in the seventeenth-century Pilgrims served the dual purpose of naturalizing European immigrant students and supporting a coherent, linear national origin story that also depended upon them. This narrative also reinforced a dispossession of Native American cultures and their contributions to the formation of the US while completing ignoring the presence and contributions of African Americans to the creation of the US imagined in these narratives. In the next chapter, I specifically address the absent presence of people of color and the presence of slavery in relation to the historical Puritans through a historiographical analysis of the changing racial representations of Tituba, the “black witch of Salem.”

Chapter Two: (E)racing Tituba: Adapting Memory, History, and Race for Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*

When I have informally asked people about their memories of *The Crucible*, they inevitably comment on the play's allegorical connection to McCarthyism, the religious intolerance of the Puritans, Abigail Williams and her "hysterical" cadre of girls, and/or John Proctor's guilt, shame, or extramarital affair. In these answers, it is important to note that what is most often remembered about the play concerns the (white) Puritans. Indeed, Miller's play is easily the most famous representation of the Salem witch trials to date and has irrevocably shaped the perception of the Puritans in the national imaginary. Much of this is due to its prominence both in the US literary and theatre canons.

It is Miller's most performed work despite its initial run of only 197 Broadway performances.²⁷⁸ It is a staple both in English literature and theatre classes. Few go through the American public school system and/or higher education without encountering it. As stated in the introduction, it has also been adapted into four films: Jean-Paul Sartre's French adaptation *Les Sorcières de Salem* in 1957, a CBS TV movie in 1967, a second TV movie in 1980, and the first American feature film version in 1996 with a screenplay by Miller himself. It has had Broadway revivals in 1964, 1972, 1991, 2002, and 2016. Saturday Night Live even commented upon the play's prominence, especially in high school, with the musical sketch "Crucible Cast Party" featuring *Hamilton* and *In the Heights* creator and star Lin-Manuel Miranda.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Christopher Bigsby, "Introduction," in *The Crucible by Arthur Miller* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), xvi, xxiii.

²⁷⁹ Raymond Rouleau, dir., *Les Sorcières de Salem* (Films Borderie et al., 1957), first released in the US in December 1958; Alex Segal, dir., *The Crucible* (Columbia Broadcasting System, 1967); Nicholas Hytner, dir., *The Crucible* (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1996); "The Crucible," Internet Broadway Database, last modified 2017, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-show/the-crucible-2847>; "Crucible Cast Party [feat. Lin-Manuel Miranda]," Saturday Night Live, Oct. 8, 2016, Mar. 21, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkjX83-Cc>.

Yet when I have also informally asked people about Tituba, the play's only character of color and the first to confess to witchcraft, I inevitably get some combination of "black," "slave," "voodoo," or "witch" or, even more commonly, "Oh yeah...Tituba. I always forget about her. She's important, right?" These two sets of comments, one identifying Tituba as a black witch and the other as a forgotten, perhaps unimportant, character, reflect a much larger historical misforgetting of Tituba, her racial representations, and her role in the Salem witch trials. Despite her presence and importance to historical narratives about the Salem witch trials, Tituba's presence as a slave in the Puritan community has most often been represented as an anomaly. Yet even the singularity of her presence in these narratives makes visible the historical Puritans' frequent interactions with people of color and (African and Native American) slaves, which disrupts the common Puritan formation of a homogenous white community.²⁸⁰

Furthermore, over the past 300 years, white writers and historians have continually adapted Tituba's race to fit the racial anxieties and to maintain the white hegemony of their own historical periods. While many of the Puritan formations discussed in this dissertation, including within *The Crucible*, emphasize the proto-Americanness of the Puritans, Tituba is continually excluded from a similar representation. Moreover, her racial representation has changed from an "Indian" woman in the court documents of the Salem witch trials (1692), to a half-Indian, half-black slave in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Giles Corey of Salem Farm* (1868), and finally to a "Negro slave" in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953). Despite Miller's insistence and explications on using historical writings to write the play, he is the first author of history

²⁸⁰ For more on slavery in Puritan New England see for example, Newell, *Brethren By Nature*; Bailey, *Race and Redemption*.

or fiction to represent Tituba's race as black.²⁸¹ Yet Miller never explained, or even noted, his choice to change her race. As such, his representation of her as black has gone largely unquestioned in popular culture.

While many scholars have commented upon the play's connection to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) and McCarthyism, very few consider the role of the Civil Rights movement on the development of the play.²⁸² Recent historical scholarship has argued strongly for the ways in which the long civil rights movement (late 1930s to 1970s) and the Cold War influenced each other, adding a further dimension to Miller's choice to represent Tituba as black.²⁸³ In her germinal history *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, US legal historian Mary L. Dudziak calls this new temporalization Cold War civil rights, combining what had previously been historicized as two separate movements. In this book, she argues that "civil rights reform was *in part* a product of the Cold War." She observes that in the early Cold War, US government officials were greatly "hampered" in promoting the US as an egalitarian democratic state to the world "by [its] continuing racial injustice at home." Yet at the same time, the "primacy of anticommunism in postwar American politics

²⁸¹ The Penguin edition of the play contains extensive notes written by Miller on the historical characters in the play interspersed throughout the dialogue of Act I. Arthur Miller, *The Crucible: A Play in Four Acts* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

²⁸² The only scholarship I have found that begins to examine the play within the context of the early civil rights movement is Miller, "The Signifying Poppet."

²⁸³ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall argues that the civil rights movement extended far beyond the "'classical' phase of the struggle," usually dated from the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the "passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965." She argues for a historicization that traces the "'long civil rights movement' that took root in the liberal and radical milieu of the late 1930s,...accelerated during World War II,...and in the 1960s and 1970s inspired a 'movement of movements.'" Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 81, no. 4 (2005): 1234-35. For a comprehensive literature review of how the civil rights movement and the Cold War have been historicized together see, Jeff Woods, "The Cold War and the Struggle for Civil Rights," *OAH Magazine of History* 24, no. 4 (2010).

culture left a very narrow space for [domestic] criticism of the status quo.”²⁸⁴ This left civil rights groups and activists in an extremely precarious position, which greatly limited the extent to which they could advocate for social reform domestically and internationally before being accused of communist infiltration. In fact, as historian Manfred Berg observes, “Southern racists were among the most ardent anticommunists and tried their best to discredit the civil rights struggle as a Communist conspiracy.”²⁸⁵ Therefore, as Dudziak and others have observed, the US government and civil rights groups participated in a carefully choreographed dance from “1946 through the mid-1960s.” During this time, the government demonstrated that civil rights reform was part of American democracy’s “story of progress...and that democratic change, however slow and gradual, was superior to dictatorial imposition” [i.e., communism] while civil rights groups often tried to disavow themselves of red-baiting.²⁸⁶

Though Cold War civil rights encompassed many racial groups including Native Americans, US policymakers tended to “[see] American race relations through the lens of a black/white paradigm” and focused on what they saw as “the Negro problem.”²⁸⁷ Across the US, not just the South, the prominence of segregation, lynching, and court cases involving acts of racism also made blackness more visible to US and foreign observers than other racial minorities. The US attempted to spin such racist acts into a

²⁸⁴ Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 12-13, her emphasis.

²⁸⁵ Manfred Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War,” *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 75. Also see, Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

²⁸⁶ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*: 13. Also see, Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement.”; Andrew Denson, “Native Americans in Cold War Public Diplomacy: Indian Politics, American History, and the US Information Agency,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 36, no. 2 (2012); Mary L. Dudziak, “Brown as a Cold War Case,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 1 (2004). Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism.”

²⁸⁷ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*: 14. For more on Native American civil rights read in conjunction with the Cold War see, Denson, “Native Americans in Cold War Public Diplomacy.”

larger narrative of progress, as Dudziak explains, where “racism was not a fundamental national value, and that it was going away.” In “*Brown* as a Cold War Case,” Dudziak argues that the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* is an important milestone in the US “State Department’s arguments about the nature of the U.S. constitution and the inevitable character of American racial progress.”²⁸⁸ That is, the US put forth a story during the early Cold War whereby African Americans were in the process of becoming equal.

However, the US government told a very different story about racial progress as it concerned Native Americans. Native American historian Andrew Denson observes that the US Information Agency’s (USIA) narratives during the 1950s and 1960s “focused on acknowledging past oppression [of Native Americans] while recounting a modern history of justice and government-led improvement.” That is, the US government represented Native Americans as an example of successfully using democracy to combat racism and inequality.²⁸⁹ While both Denson and Dudziak’s arguments focus specifically on how the US government used policies and judicial decisions to shape its international reputation, it is highly conceivable that these representations recycled back into the (domestic, white) national imaginary.

Moreover, by the 1950s Native American forms of “magic” were less feared in the white imagination than the “black magic” of Afro-Caribbean derivation, which is important for a play about magic.²⁹⁰ This fear or lack of fear may have been partially due to the narrative circulated in the national imaginary that Native Americans had successfully integrated, if not fully assimilated, into US culture while African Americans

²⁸⁸ Dudziak, “*Brown* as a Cold War Case,” 38.

²⁸⁹ Denson, “Native Americans in Cold War Public Diplomacy,” 4, 9-13.

²⁹⁰ D. Quentin Miller makes a similar point: “But an Indian slave was perhaps too abstract and unfamiliar a figure for Miller’s audience to comprehend.” Miller, “The Signifying Poppet,” 452.

were still made quite visibly Other with public acts such as segregation. A fascination with “voodoo,” as a catch-all term for African-derived religious practices in the Caribbean and Latin America, in mid-twentieth century popular culture was one of the ways the white national imaginary used to make black bodies Other. By the 1950s, as literary scholar D. Quentin Miller observes, the associations among the West Indies (specifically Haiti), “voodoo,” black magic, and black bodies had been firmly established in US popular culture in examples such as Eugene O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones* (1920) and Orson Welles’s 1936 production of “Voodoo” *Macbeth*. Part of this probably had to do with the relatively recent US occupation of Haiti from 1919 to 1934.²⁹¹ African American studies scholar Kameelah L. Martin even suggests that “America builds much of its twentieth-century fictive reality and popular film representations of black life on the impressions of the primitive Haitian crafted by U.S. interlopers.”²⁹² Moreover, as D. Quentin Miller points out, “the word ‘voodoo’ was not a part of the English language during the time of the Salem witch trials” (seventeenth century), but it would be a very familiar concept to the 1953 audience of *The Crucible*.

Thus in representing Tituba as black, Arthur Miller could also play upon the white imagination’s fear/fascination with voodoo.²⁹³ Furthermore, the first actor to play Tituba in *The Crucible*, Jacqueline Andre, largely made her career playing the dark, mysterious, West Indian Other in plays like *The Emperor Jones* (1920), The “Voodoo” *Macbeth*

²⁹¹ Ibid., 446-48.

²⁹² Kameelah L. Martin, *Envisioning Black Feminist Voodoo Aesthetics: African Spirituality in American Cinema* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), xxxi.

²⁹³ As early as 1974, when Tituba was already firmly established as black in the national imaginary, prominent Puritan historian Chadwick Hansen observes that one of Miller’s “dramatic reasons for blackening Tituba” was to “dramatize her as a voodoo priestess.” Chadwick Hansen, “The Metamorphosis of Tituba, or Why American Intellectuals Can’t Tell an Indian Witch from a Negro,” *The New England Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1974): 10.

(1936), and *Haiti* (1938).²⁹⁴ While the historical Tituba was the first to confess to witchcraft in Salem, Arthur Miller manipulated the historical record to fit the racial anxieties of the 1950s. Miller's choice also reveals his own racial biases in the ways in which he replicates negative stereotypes of African Americans to reinforce the moral redemption of his white Puritan characters.

This chapter largely focuses on Arthur Miller's 1953 play *The Crucible* and its relationship to the evolving historiography of Tituba's race from the archival documents of the 1692 Salem Witch Trials to Miller's play. Over the past 300 years, the literary, historical, and performed figure of Tituba has been used more often to define notions of whiteness and the Puritan formations of a given historical period than it has been about the historical Tituba. Tituba's centuries-long mediation between Native American and African American encapsulates a genealogical tracing of the understanding of race, citizenship, and the Puritans in the national imaginary that severely disrupts the imagined white homogeneity of Puritan communities. The purpose of this chapter is not to argue for the historical Tituba's actual race, but to examine how her race has been represented since the Salem witch trials as a reflection of the Puritan formations of a given time. Throughout this chapter, I use sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant's concept of racial formations, examined in the introduction, as a theoretical frame to analyze her changing racial representations.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a contextual history of her changing racial representations from the trial transcripts through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This historiographical summary places Arthur Miller's representation of Tituba within a larger context and introduces several

²⁹⁴ Allen Woll, *Dictionary of the Black Theatre: Broadway, Off-Broadway, and Selected Harlem Theatre* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), 72-73; "The Playbill: *The Crucible*," *Playbill*, 1953, Nov. 30, 2015, <http://www.playbillvault.com/Show/Detail/8275/The-Crucible>.

documents that Miller would eventually use in his adaptation of the historical events of the Salem witch trials. I specifically consider the racial and Puritan formations of the historical moments in which Tituba is written about. The second section continues this historiographical summary, but focuses specifically on the how the effects of Cold War civil rights may have influenced Miller's representation of Tituba in the mid-twentieth century.

The last section of the chapter closely examines Miller's representation of Tituba in *The Crucible* and is divided into three sub-sections. I begin by examining the original performances of Tituba during the play's 1953 run on Broadway by Jacqueline Andre and Claudia McNeil. In the absence of performance reviews describing her performance, I must use alternative ways of analyzing what the performing black body might bring to her performance. In the next sub-section, I examine the contexts in which Miller wrote the play, including an analysis of the sources he used. Though Miller is able to find his own connection to the Puritans, he specifically excludes Tituba from a similar narrative of proto-Americanness by constantly making her Other and foreign to the Puritans. I argue that Miller uses the device of Tituba's race, a concept borrowed from African American theatre scholar Harry J. Elam, as a dramaturgical device to better incite the action of the play and enhance the proto-American Puritan characters' moral struggles.²⁹⁵ Finally, I do a close reading of Tituba's in/visibility in Act I, including her climatic confession. Though she is absent for much of the scene, her presence/absence is integral to the inciting incident of the play and reflects a larger misforgetting and misunderstanding of Tituba in the national imaginary.

²⁹⁵ Harry J. Elam Jr., "The Device of Race: An Introduction," in *African American Performance and Theater History: A Critical Reader*, ed. Harry J. Elam Jr. and David Krasner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

TITUBA: A RACIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

Whereas popular culture since *The Crucible* imagines Tituba as black, historians since the 1970s generally contend that she was actually indigenous, specifically an Arawak or Carib Indian.²⁹⁶ The most widely used narrative is that the Reverend Samuel Parris brought Tituba as a slave to Salem from Barbados. Late twentieth and early twenty-first historians, however, by no means unanimously agree on her race or even how she arrived in Salem.²⁹⁷ Regardless of where she was originally from or the race she actually embodied, documents written during and immediately after the 1692 Salem witch trials clearly refer to Tituba as "Indian." As early American historian Elaine Breslaw argues, "nothing in the records indicates that she was anything but Indian."²⁹⁸ Concurrently, historian Bernard Rosenthal, who specializes in the Salem witch trials,

²⁹⁶ Breslaw (1996, 1997) and Hansen (1974) provide some of the most extensive analyses of the historical evidence to support their reading of Tituba as indigenous, though they disagree on which group of indigenous peoples. Hansen refers to Tituba as a *Carib* Indian but does not explain his evidence (or reasoning) for doing so. Breslaw posits that she was *Arawak*: "Barbadian sources indicate that the most probable place of origin for Indian slaves in Barbados was the northeastern coast of South America, where settlements of Dutch-allied Arawaks were likely prey for England's slave traders." More recently public and New England historian Emerson W. Baker (2015) refers to Tituba as "Indian" and observes that she "most likely was born in the Caribbean or Florida and brought to New England by Samuel Parris." He bases this on Breslaw's (1996) work and historian Mary Beth Norton's *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002). Pulitzer-prize winning nonfiction author Stacy Schiff (2015) also simply identifies Tituba as "Indian" without further explanation throughout her book. She also does not discuss Tituba's background. Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of Tituba," 3; Elaine G. Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession: The Multicultural Dimensions of the 1692 Salem Witch-Hunt," *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 3 (1997): 537; Elaine G. Breslaw, *Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Emerson W. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 18, 306 n.12; Stacy Schiff, *The Witches: Salem, 1692* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015).

²⁹⁷ For scholarship that argues for Tituba's blackness, see Early American historian Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Devil's Disciples: Makers of the Salem Witchcraft Trials* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). Rosenthal (1998) takes great issue with Hoffer's methodology, however, and finds Hoffer's conclusions very misleading. In determining Tituba's origins, Rosenthal (1998) and Breslaw (1997) read the historical evidence differently. Rosenthal claims that "there is no record that [Parris] brought slaves or servants with him when he returned to New England." Alternatively, Breslaw asserts that one of the few facts known about Tituba is "she and another slave, John Indian, who became her husband, were brought from Barbados by Samuel Parris" though "[w]hether Tituba and John were born in Barbados is not known." Bernard Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," *The New England Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (1998): 199-201, 197; Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 537.

²⁹⁸ Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 536.

observes that "in the space of thirteen pages of the Salem Witchcraft papers, Tituba is described as an Indian no less than fifteen times, an attribution that also emerges elsewhere in the collection of contemporary documents."²⁹⁹ This is important because the Puritans were fairly consistent on labeling Africans as "Negros" and Native Americans as "Indians." As US colonial and religious historian Richard A. Bailey observes, a Native American might be labeled "black," as a generic catchall term for non-white, but a visually identifiable African or African-descended person would never be labeled as "Indian."³⁰⁰

Puritan views on Native American spiritualities further support why they consistently labeled Tituba as "Indian" in trial documents.³⁰¹ To the Puritans, both Native Americans and Africans were considered spiritually inferior, children of the devil, and required conversion to Christianity; however, as Bailey explains, Native American spiritualities were much more immediate concerns and sources of fear to the Puritans than African ones. Perhaps because the African slave trade was relatively small in New England at the time, the Puritans were initially less apt to "recognize the organization of African religions in the same way that they did those of the Indians."³⁰² Moreover, Native Americans actively fighting against the Puritans threatened the expansion of New England colonies. In fact, the Puritans largely justified their colonization of the New England colonies as an evangelical endeavor to specifically convert Native Americans to Christianity.³⁰³

The Puritans did have both African and Native American slaves, a further historical fact often erased from the national imaginary. Non-standardized record keeping

²⁹⁹ Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 195.

³⁰⁰ Bailey, *Race and Redemption*: 40-43.

³⁰¹ Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 536.

³⁰² Bailey, *Race and Redemption*: 52.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 49.

makes it difficult to accurately account for the populations of Africans, Native Americans, and mixed-race individuals in the New England colonies.³⁰⁴ While the number of African slaves in New England was certainly smaller than their Southern neighbors, Bailey observes that it was still “no less degrading or dehumanizing for those who were trapped within the system.”³⁰⁵ Additionally, Native American survivors of colonial warfare and disease—most often women, children, and the elderly—were often taken as slaves.³⁰⁶ Despite Miller’s problematic representation of Tituba in *The Crucible*, the embodied inclusion of her character ghosts these facts and how they have been largely forgotten in many Puritan formations over time.

Records from the trials also clearly document Tituba's confession as the first of many subsequent confessions of witchcraft in Salem. Her confession, however, does not contain the elements the twenty-first century national imaginary now ascribes to her such as voodoo, blood drinking, or a frenzied circle of girls. What follows is a brief timeline of events that led up to her historical confession. The narrative of events generally begins in the winter of 1691/1692 when Betty Parris (age 9) and Abigail Williams (age 11) started acting strangely.³⁰⁷ The Reverend John Hale, who eventually examined them, later reported that Parris and Williams' symptoms began after seeing a terrible vision while using "an egg and a glass," an English folk magic technique, to practice fortune-telling.³⁰⁸ Then on February 25, 1692, Tituba and her husband John Indian made a “witchcake” at the behest and under the supervision of Puritan Mary Sibley to help find the witch

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 26-27.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 34.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 32-33. Also see Newell, *Brethren By Nature*.

³⁰⁷ Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 538.

³⁰⁸ Hansen explains that the egg and glass was an “English folk method of divining.” The girls used it “to discover their future husbands’ occupations.” Tituba’s involvement in this act has never been proven. Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of Tituba," 4. More recent scholarship has suggested that the girls did not engage in any fortune telling before the incident. I’ve chosen to leave it in as evidence that the Puritans were still aware of English magic as a counterpoint to the national imaginary’s assumption that Tituba brought “black” or “voodoo” magic to the community. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*: 15, 305 n.7.

afflicting the girls.³⁰⁹ Soon after the witchcake event, three of the growing number of afflicted girls—Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam, and Elizabeth Hubbard—accused Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osburn of witchcraft. Both Good and Osburn were Puritans, though ill regarded in the community.

On February 29, 1692, Tituba, Good, and Osburn were arrested. From March 1 to March 5, 1692, they were questioned in the Salem meetinghouse.³¹⁰ Good was examined first, followed by Osburn, and finally Tituba.³¹¹ Both Good and Osburn maintained their innocence, though Good did accuse Osburn of being a witch.³¹² Tituba, however, did eventually confess and named Good, Osburn, two anonymous Boston women, and one anonymous Boston man,³¹³ all white, as witches. Moreover, her confession included the accusation that the witches also afflicted her and caused her to do these bad things.³¹⁴

Yet Tituba's confession, coaxed out of her over a period of days, was never as clear-cut an admission of guilt as it was later narrativized to be; nor does it clearly articulate teaching the young Puritan girls any magic or witchcraft. Prior to her arrest in 1692, Tituba "lived an unremarkable life" and had never been accused of occult activity.³¹⁵ According to Breslaw, Tituba consciously shaped her confession to draw from

³⁰⁹ A "witchcake" was "a concoction of rye meal and the girls' urine baked in ashes" that was then "fed...to a dog. Supposedly, the dog was a 'familiar,' the animal companion of a witch. According to English folklore, the dog, bewitched by the cake, would reveal the name of the witch who was afflicting the girls." Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 538. Reading through archival documents, however, Schiff questions whether or not Tituba was involved in the witchcake incident or if it was just John Indian. Baker locates both Tituba and John Indian in the making of the witchcake. Schiff, *The Witches: Salem, 1692*: 26, 429-30; Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft*: 15, 305 n. 5.

³¹⁰ Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 540.

³¹¹ Charles Wentworth Upham, *Salem Witchcraft; with an Account of Salem Village, and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Boston: Wiggin and Lunt, 1867), 13-30. Though Upham is a problematic source in his narrative descriptions of the events, he also includes reprints of several archival documents, which I cite here.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 15.

³¹³ Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 540.

³¹⁴ John Hale, "From 'A Modest Inquiry Into the Nature of Witchcraft,' by John Hale, 1702," in *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706*, ed. George Lincoln Burr (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1914), 415.

³¹⁵ Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 539.

Puritan understandings of evil, "blending elements from English, African, and American Indian notions of the occult," while shifting blame away from herself.³¹⁶ Breslaw elaborates,

Tituba's confession was a ploy to confirm Puritan anxieties, to shift blame to outsiders [of Salem], and to distract her tormentors with the fear of evil. By locating the evil forces not only in Boston strangers but also in the two [white] Salem women arrested with her, Tituba supported the allegations of the Parris and Putnam families. By appearing to collaborate with her own accusers, she demonstrated the correct deference to her betters.³¹⁷

Breslaw's agential analysis of Tituba's confession identifies Tituba not as the actual instigator of witchcraft but as a subject onto which the Puritans clearly projected their own fears, paranoia, and anxiety, as future generations would also do according to the racial and Puritans formations of the time.

Like her role in *The Crucible*, Tituba quickly disappears in the trial records after her confession. The only reference to her fate appears briefly in Boston merchant Robert Calef's *More Wonders of The Invisible World* (1700) when he notes,

She was afterwards committed to prison, and lay there till sold for her fees. The account she since gives of it is, that her master did beat her and otherways abuse her, to make her confess and accuse (such as he called) her sister-witches, and that whatsoever she said by way of confessing or accusing others, was the effect of such usage: her master refused to pay her fees, unless she would stand to what she had said.³¹⁸

Refusing to stand by her confession, she stayed in prison for over a year and a month. She was only released at the end of the ordeal when all of the other leftover prisoners were also released pending the payment of their jail fees. Since her master, Samuel Parris, would not pay her fee, she was sold. Nothing else is known about her.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ Ibid., 535-36.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 548.

³¹⁸ Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World, or The Wonders of the Invisible World Displayed in Five Parts: Part I. An Account of the Sufferings....* (Salem, MA 1700; repr., London: Cushing and Appleton, 1823), 189.

³¹⁹ Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 556.

While the court's interest in Tituba waned as the Salem witch trials continued, several histories published immediately after the trials pinpointed her confession as the inciting incident for all of the events that followed. Hence, her confession, given by a person of color, was blamed for the ensuing crimes that predominantly white Puritan bodies committed, confessed to, and/or died.³²⁰ For example, the Reverend John Hale, who examined several of the afflicted girls, writes in his personal history/memoir *A Modest Inquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft* (1702) that the "success of Tituba's confession encouraged those in Authority to examine others that were suspected, and the event was, that more confessed themselves guilty of the Crimes they were suspected for."³²¹ The simultaneous arrest and interrogation of Puritans Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne as well as the fortune telling dabblings of Betty Parris and Abigail Williams were subsumed by Tituba's confession.³²² Though she was not the only person of color to be accused or arrested, the narrative that began to emerge from these histories was of a woman of color, identified as Indian, becoming the instigator of a witch-hunt that mostly consumed white bodies.

The history of Tituba's changing racial representations in popular culture over the next 300 years vacillates between fictional and historiographical treatments that build off of one another and blur the boundaries between fiction and historical facts. Besides a few histories of the trials published in the eighteenth century, she did not really begin to appear in popular culture until the mid-nineteenth century where she remained represented as an "Indian" until the end of the century. Rosenthal argues that the mythical

³²⁰ There were at least two women of African descent later accused of witchcraft: "a woman named Mary Black, described by her contemporaries as a 'Negro;' a woman named Candy, similarly designated a 'Negro.'" Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 195.

³²¹ Hale, "From 'A Modest Inquiry Into the Nature of Witchcraft,' by John Hale, 1702," 415. Also cited in Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 201fn42.

³²² Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 191.

Tituba of twentieth century popular culture did not actually begin to take shape until John Neal's 1828 novel *Rachel Dyer*, the "first novel about the Salem witch trials,"³²³ published 136 years after the actual trials and only two years before the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Though she only appears in four pages of the novel, she is described as an Indian "woman of diabolical power" who conjures apparitions in the night while feigning benign servitude in the daytime.³²⁴

This novel began changing the narrative to make the acts she performs before her confession more terrifying and threatening to the white bodies that employ her. Four years after the publication of *Rachel Dyer* (1828), the Salem Unitarian minister Charles Wentworth Upham published his history *Lectures on Witchcraft* (1832), a compilation of his lectures on the trials delivered a year earlier at the Salem Lyceum.³²⁵ While Upham does not directly name Tituba, he does mention "an Indian woman attached to Mr. Parris' family." He further describes that she was made to confess "[b]y operating on the old creature's fears and imagination" and "by using severe treatment towards her."³²⁶

Tituba also entered the theatre world in Cornelius Mathews's rather successful play *Witchcraft: A Tragedy in Five Acts* (1846).³²⁷ The play is one of only a handful in the history of US theatre that represent the Salem witch trials, though unlike Miller, Mathews does not engage the historical record.³²⁸ Like in *Rachel Dyer* (1828) and *Lectures on Witchcraft* (1832), Tituba is mentioned only briefly in a Puritan character's

³²³ Ibid., 191.

³²⁴ John Neal, *Rachel Dyer: A North American Story* (Portland: Shirley and Hyde, 1828), 59.

³²⁵ Lisa M. Vetere, "Imagining the Mastery of Cotton Mather: The Performance of Antebellum Manhood in Charles W. Upham's *Lectures on Witchcraft*," *Clio* 40, no. 2 (2011): 211.

³²⁶ Charles W. Upham, *Lectures on Witchcraft, Comprising a History of the Delusion in Salem in 1692* (Boston: Carter, Hendee and Babcock, 1831), 22.

³²⁷ I have been unable to find any substantial scholarship on this play or Mathews's sources. The play premiered in 1846 and was published in 1852. Arthur Hobson Quinn, *A History of the American Drama: From the Beginning to the Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, Inc., 1951), 276.

³²⁸ The Salem witch trials seems to have only really become a popular topic to adapt into performance after the growing success of *The Crucible*.

passing reference. He describes her as “old Tituba, the shriveled squaw” who may or may not have taught Gideon Bodish, whose mother is accused of witchcraft, how to use plants for magical purposes.³²⁹ Mathews never mentions Tituba again in the play and she never actually appears as a character. The memory of her in the play exists as a foreign, pagan influence on someone who should otherwise be a law-abiding, God-fearing Puritan.

Mathews’s play (1846) as well as Neal’s novel (1828) and Upham’s history (1832) each represent Tituba as a wild, non-Christian, Indian threat to ordered Puritan society, reflecting the racial formation of Native Americans in the first half of the nineteenth century. Written during the height of Indian Removal in the US,³³⁰ living Native Americans were considered an immediate threat to US Manifest Destiny. Yet with the “success” of Indian removal in much of the eastern US, as historian and American studies scholar Phillip Deloria explains in *Playing Indian*, the (white) national imaginary became fascinated with “a friendlier, more nostalgic image” of the Indian’s primitive past.³³¹ The Tituba represented in the mid-nineteenth century is more an example of this nostalgic, yet tragic, primitive Indian than a savage frontier Indian. As the possessor of both natural wisdom and frightening Indian magic in the Puritan past, she is both natural and supernatural. As such, she disrupts the stability of the Puritan community, which was already imagined as proto-American. Yet her presence is so brief in each of these sources that she, as an historical actor, is easily overshadowed in the scope of these works.

Because of her supernatural abilities, her disappearance within these texts, and her Indianness as read through the nineteenth century, Tituba’s racial representation begins to

³²⁹ Cornelius Mathews, *Witchcraft; A Tragedy in Five Acts* (New York: S. French, 1852), 25.

³³⁰ Bergland states, “The age of Indian Removal is often demarcated as the period between 1820 and 1850.” Bergland, *The National Uncanny*: 50.

³³¹ Deloria, *Playing Indian*: 63. As I discussed in the introduction, New England writers, intellectuals, and activists largely shaped much of the antebellum national imaginary. Their nostalgic representations of Indians, however, belied the presence of actual Native Americans, like William Apess, living in their midst.

move toward Indian spectralization, the vanishing Indian trope or what literary scholar Renée L. Bergland defines as the Indian ghost. As discussed in the introduction, Bergland observes that the seeming disappearance of Native Americans via removal and allotment transformed into a Native American spectral presence, or Indian ghosts, in nineteenth-century literature.³³² The trope of the Indian ghost essentially invisibilized the continued presence, though greatly reduced, of actual living Native Americans. As the nineteenth century continued, the narrative expansion of Tituba's magical acts, rather than her confession, made her appear more and more sinister, spectral, and racially Other to the Puritan past.

While there is no evidence that Neal's, Upham's, or Mathews's works necessarily influenced each other in how they represented the trials or Tituba, there is some evidence that British writer Elizabeth Gaskell's fictional story "Lois the Witch" (1859) may have drawn inspiration from and expanded upon Upham's history *Lectures on Witchcraft* (1832).³³³ In Gaskell's story, the Tituba of history is broken into two wily Indian women characters, Nattee and Hota.³³⁴ Gaskell characterizes the Indian women as telling young Puritan girls in their charge "frightening stories" and also leading the girls in "magical dabbings."³³⁵ The actions of both Nattee and Hota reflect, for the first time, what would later become a steadfast narrative element of popular culture's Tituba, mainly her corruption of young white girls through their inculcation to magic. None of the Titubas examined above in Neal's *Rachel Dyer* (1828), Upham's *Lectures* (1832), or Mathews's

³³² Nearly all of the writers she examines wrote before the Civil War. The authors she analyzes include Cotton Mather (1663-1728), Mary Rowlandson (1637-1711), Philip Freneau (1752-1832), Sarah Wentworth Morton (1759-1846), Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), Washington Irving (1783-1859), Samuel Woodworth (1784-1842), Lydia Marie Child (1802-1880), James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), and William Apess (1798-1839).

³³³ Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 194.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 192-94.

³³⁵ Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 193.

Witchcraft (1846) were a direct threat to young white womanhood specifically, but rather represented a threat to Puritan society more broadly. Gaskell's story more strongly points towards future representations of Tituba as an Indian ghost—spectral, supernatural, and located in the past—as well as the narrative of her conscious corruption of young white girls than the previous representations of Tituba examined.

Though Gaskell does not actually name Tituba, Rosenthal observes a correlation between her representations of Nattee and Hota and Upham's representation of Tituba in his second and more influential Salem history, *Salem Witchcraft* (1867).³³⁶ As Rosenthal explains, Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* introduced several "myths that would become facts for future narrators" without question.³³⁷ His book influenced Salem historiography for the next century and was one of the main sources Miller used in creating *The Crucible*.³³⁸ In regards to Tituba, Rosenthal observes Upham's invention of two new "narrative elements: that Parris's slaves had imported provocative tales from their homeland; and that Tituba had met with a circle of girls and 'inflamed' their imaginations with those tales."³³⁹ Neither of these elements is supported by archival documents. Furthermore, as Rosenthal argues, the narratives Upham invents are not reflected in previous representations of Tituba, whether historical or fictional. He suggests, instead, that Upham pulled a characterization of Tituba from the two Indian women in Gaskell's "Lois the Witch" (1859), which itself, as stated before, was also probably influenced by Upham's previous *Lectures on Witchcraft* (1832).³⁴⁰ While Gaskell may have begun

³³⁶ Ibid., 194.

³³⁷ Ibid., 191-92.

³³⁸ For Miller's use of *Salem Witchcraft* see Arthur Miller, "Why I Wrote 'The Crucible': An Artist's Answer to Politics," *The New Yorker* 1996, 160; Arthur Miller, *Timebends: A Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1987), 337. For the influence of *Salem Witchcraft* on Salem historiography see for examples, Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 191; Robin DeRosa, *The Making of Salem: The Witch Trials in History, Fiction and Tourism* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2009), 75-83.

³³⁹ Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 192.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 192-93.

moving the Salem narrative towards two Indian women's racial corruption of young white girls, Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* gave it historical credibility by mis-characterizing the fictionalization of the Indian women's actions as historical facts concerning Tituba.

One year after the publication of Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* (1867), New England poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms* (1868) and changed Tituba's race from "Indian" to half-Indian, half-African.³⁴¹ This verse drama is an incredibly important document in tracing Tituba's changing racial formations because Longfellow is the first writer, historical or fictional, to name her as anything other than "Indian."³⁴² Though Longfellow introduces her as "an Indian woman" in the *Dramatis Personae*, he later reveals that her father was "an Obi man" who "taught [her] magic/Taught [her] the use of herbs and images."³⁴³ Thus, Longfellow asserts Tituba's African ancestry through her father and her magical ancestry through Africa,³⁴⁴ not her Native American side. Like Upham's use in *Salem Witchcraft* (1867) of Gaskell's fictional characterizations of two Indian women in "Lois the Witch" (1858), historians and writers incorporated Longfellow's racial representation of Tituba as (largely unquestioned) fact.³⁴⁵

Longfellow's *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms* (1868), published only one year after Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* (1867), reflects a shift in Euro-Americans' racial anxieties in the late nineteenth century. Longfellow published his drama just three years

³⁴¹ Chadwick Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of Tituba, or Why American Intellectuals Can't Tell an Indian Witch from a Negro," *ibid.* 47, no. 1 (1974): 6; Breslaw, "Tituba's Confession," 536. *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms* is the second verse drama in Longfellow's larger work *The New England Tragedies*. Though a verse drama, it was never actually meant to be performed. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1902), 240-42.

³⁴² As stated before, historians still disagree on the race of the real, historical Tituba. My purpose here is only to trace her representation in the most influential works contributing to her representation in popular culture over the last 300 years.

³⁴³ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "Giles Corey of the Salem Farms," in *The New-England Tragedies* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields 1868), 99, 113.

³⁴⁴ Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 6.

³⁴⁵ Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of Tituba," 6-7.

after the end of the Civil War and nearly forty years after the passage of the Indian Removal Act during a transitional moment in the in/visibility of Native Americans and African Americans in the US. As Rosenthal explains in relation to Longfellow's representation of Tituba, "The romanticized Indian of the nineteenth century having been virtually eliminated or removed to reservations, the feared 'Negro' survived."³⁴⁶ Read through the lens of Bergland's argument about Indian ghosts in US literature, Longfellow is, in a sense, finalizing the process of turning the Indian Tituba of court records into an Indian ghost, a forced "technique of removal" that "white writers [use to] effectively remove [Native Americans] from American lands, and place them, instead, within the American imagination."³⁴⁷ By asserting her African ancestry, Longfellow's *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms* begins a process carried out by future writers of removing her Native Americanness entirely.

Longfellow's representation of Tituba also reflects the increasing visibility of African Americans in real life after the Civil War; as the preeminent novelist and literary scholar Toni Morrison argues, however, they were also simultaneously invisibilized in literature through what she calls the Africanist presence as discussed in the introduction.³⁴⁸ Unlike the literal ghosts that Bergland examines, Morrison considers the spectralness of living black characters in white American literature. Longfellow is the first to assert the Africanist presence onto Tituba simultaneously as the visibility of actual African Americans increased. Arguably, Longfellow's representation of Tituba works to combine these two literary tropes (visible Indian ghost and invisible Africanist presence).

³⁴⁶ Rosenthal, "Tituba's Story," 202.

³⁴⁷ Bergland, *The National Uncanny*: 4.

³⁴⁸ Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*. The writers Morrison primarily analyzes were all published after the Civil War. These include Mark Twain (1835-1910), Henry James (1843-1916), Willa Cather (1873-1947), Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964), and Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961). The exception is Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849).

Certainly, Longfellow's representation of Tituba seems to occupy a space that becomes the textual embodiment of changing literary tropes that reflect the changing (in)visibility of race in the US.

MAKING TITUBA BLACK: COLD WAR RACIAL FORMATIONS

Published nearly 100 years after *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms* (1868), historical nonfiction author Marion Starkey's popular history *The Devil in Massachusetts* (1949) continued the tradition Longfellow set of representing Tituba as half-Indian, half-black.³⁴⁹ Starkey specifically identifies Tituba as "half Carib and half Negro,"³⁵⁰ but her physical and psychological descriptions of Tituba throughout the book correlate more strongly with black minstrel stereotypes than Native American stereotypes.³⁵¹ Furthermore, Starkey's representation of Tituba reflects a 1940s racial formation based on white people's racial prejudices towards people of color, especially African Americans past and present, rather than pulling from any reliable historical sources.

Moreover, World War II and the early Cold War added even more pressure for the US to give the appearance of assimilation and, more importantly, racial equality to differentiate themselves from European fascism and the Soviet Union.³⁵² It was also at the height of what Michael Omi and Howard Winant identify as the ethnicity paradigm in sociological perceptions of racial formations. Problematically, the ethnicity paradigm as it evolved specifically in the 1940s to the 1960s followed the "immigrant analogy," a

³⁴⁹ Between Longfellow's *Giles Corey of the Salem Farms* (1868) and Starkey's *The Devil in Massachusetts* (1949), at least one other play appeared representing the Salem Witch Trials: Mary Wilkins Freeman's *Giles Corey, Yeoman* (1893); however, Tituba is never mentioned or represented in the drama.

³⁵⁰ Marion L. Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Inquiry into the Salem Witch Trials* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 9.

³⁵¹ Hansen makes a similar point: "It is hard for the reader to remember that such a Tituba is half-Indian [in Starkey (1949)], and perhaps it was hard for the author as well, because at one point she calls Tituba 'the trembling black woman.'" Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of Tituba," 8.

³⁵² Angela Aleiss, *Making the White Man's Indians: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), Chp. 4: "War and Its Indian Allies," 59-79; Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*: 15-16.

model based on the assimilation and integration of Southern and Eastern European immigrants in the early twentieth century into the “default of whiteness” through things like the First Thanksgiving myth discussed in chapter one.³⁵³ The “immigrant analogy,” as it began to be applied to people of color in the mid-twentieth century, “assum[ed] that racially identified individuals and groups, like immigrants, could adapt to new circumstances.”³⁵⁴ Yet, as Omi and Winant explain, the immigrant analogy did not work the same way for racialized minorities as it did for ethnic whites from Southern and Eastern Europe, often resulting in a white supremacist conflation of racial assimilation and equality.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the racial inequalities of African Americans were highly visible throughout the US and internationally in a way that the inequalities of other racial minorities, such as Native Americans, were not. Civil rights groups, predominantly African American though certainly not exclusively, seized upon this opportunity to make the struggle for racial equality public and visible both within the US and to the outside world. For example, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established a Fair Employment Practices Committee in 1941 largely because of efforts “led mainly by A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.” As historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall explains, the establishment of this committee placed “racial discrimination on the national agenda for the first time since Reconstruction.”³⁵⁵ The 1944 Supreme Court decision in *Smith v. Allwright*, which “declared the white primary unconstitutional,” was

³⁵³ Omi and Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*: 29, 46.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁵⁵ Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement,” 1248. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was an African American labor union founded in 1925 by socialist journalist A. Philip Randolph. Randolph would go on to head the National Negro Congress (NNC), “an umbrella organization to coordinate black protest activities,” in 1936. Manfred Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War,” *ibid.* 94, no. 1 (2007): 80. Also see, Paula F. Pfeffer, “Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters,” *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, ed. Colin A. Palmer, 335-338, Vol. 1 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2006).

also a very public victory for civil rights advocates and “sparked a major, South-wide voter registration drive.” Hall even argues that the decision “[r]ival[ed] in importance the later and more celebrated *Brown [v. Board of Education]* decision.”³⁵⁶

Civil rights advocates also increased the international visibility of racial discrimination in the US by seeking audiences with the newly established United Nations (UN). Acquiescing in large part to pressure from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the US State Department “appointed Walter White, W.E.B. Du Bois (the NAACP’s director of special research), and Mary McLeod Bethune of the National Council of Negro Women to be official consultants at the United Nations (UN) conference in San Francisco” in 1945.³⁵⁷ These representatives, and others like them, appealed to the UN in 1945 as well as future sessions to intervene in European colonial occupations around the world and to consider racial inequality in the US as a human rights issue.³⁵⁸ The UN, however, continuously demurred in intervening in the sociopolitical issues of its “most powerful member,” the United States.

In 1947, W.E.B. Du Bois with several coauthors presented a petition titled *An Appeal to the World: A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and an Appeal to the United Nation for Redress*. When the UN refused to take action on it, the “document was immediately released to the press and in early 1948 published as a booklet.” As historian Manfred Berg observes, “[a]ll major U.S. newspapers and magazines reported on the petition, and most of the commentary conceded that it addressed a painful weakness in

³⁵⁶ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *ibid.* 81, no. 4 (2005): 1248.

³⁵⁷ Manfred Berg, “Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War,” *ibid.* 94, no. 1 (2007): 81.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 81-82; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *ibid.* 81, no. 4 (2005): 1248-50.

America's international credibility."³⁵⁹ Southern commentators and segregationists, however, argued that in releasing the document "the NAACP had embarrassed the United States," and thus supported Soviet propaganda.³⁶⁰ It also helped to fuel accusations of Communist infiltration in civil rights groups like the NAACP.³⁶¹ Thus, while many (white) US citizens in positions of power could see the hypocrisy in promoting the US to the world as the democratic ideal while continuing to sustain blatant racial inequalities, there was not a consensus on whether or not African Americans should or could be integrated and/or assimilated into US society.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) implemented policies and procedures to actively assimilate Native Americans into this European immigrant analogy through the implementation of its termination policy. Officially, the policy began with the 1953 passage of House Concurrent Resolution 108 (HCR 108), but Congress and the BIA had begun termination processes in the late 1940s.³⁶² The termination policy, as Andrew Denson explains, effectively sought "to end the separate status of Indian tribes and, in the process, disentangle the federal government from Indian Affairs." This separation took several forms, including "removing the trust status of reservation lands, dissolving the tribal government, and withdrawing special federal services from the Indian community."³⁶³ While the US government had used assimilation as one the main strategies for Native American dispossession since the 1871 legislation that ended all

³⁵⁹ Manfred Berg, "Black Civil Rights and Liberal Anticommunism: The NAACP in the Early Cold War," *ibid.* 94, no. 1 (2007): 82.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 88. Many early civil rights groups joined with labor groups, which often did involve Communists. The NAACP, especially during the Cold War, publically disavowed political affiliations in a partial attempt to distance themselves from the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA), though they did act in ways that endorsed Truman in the 1948 presidential election. *Ibid.*, 86. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *ibid.* 81, no. 4 (2005): 1245-48.

³⁶² Prucha, *The Great Father*, 1 and 2: 1013-40.

³⁶³ Denson, "Native Americans in Cold War Public Diplomacy," 7.

treaties with Native Americans, the implementation and scope of assimilatory measures differed greatly over the course of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, as discussed in chapter one, the US government promoted allotment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the main strategy for Native American assimilation.³⁶⁴

By the late 1940s, the US government sought assimilation by dissolving the federal guardianship over Native American land that had been in place since the 1831 *Cherokee v. Georgia* Supreme Court decision, which made Native American tribes “domestic dependent nations.”³⁶⁵ As Deloria explains, the termination policy also strongly encouraged Indian people to move from “reservations to urban areas” and helped to support the white view of “Indian people as either assimilated or imminently assimilable.”³⁶⁶ As early as 1948, BIA-sponsored offices first sought to find “off-reservation employment” for the Navajos and Hopis. These placement agencies, which continued to work through the 1950s, also assisted Native Americans in “adjust[ing] to the new life” as well as helping “employer groups and employment agencies to recruit Indian workers.”³⁶⁷ Deloria describes the BIA’s policy as “an urban version of Indian assimilation.” Its aim, he argues, “was to eliminate all tribal political and social structures in order to turn Indian *individuals* loose into American society.”³⁶⁸

The emphasis on individuals is important because, as also discussed in chapter one, the US government feared the communality of Indian peoples as antithetical to the individualism and democracy of the US nation. In the context of the early Cold War, the

³⁶⁴ Wolfe, “After the Frontier,” 26-32.

³⁶⁵ For more about *Cherokee v. Georgia* (1831) see, *ibid.*, 15-16; Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” 584; Prucha, *The Great Father*, 1 and 2: 57-58, 209-10.

³⁶⁶ Deloria, *Playing Indian*: 142. This is not a reflection of how Native Americans actually felt and belies a long history of activism and protest movements against the US government.

³⁶⁷ Prucha, *The Great Father*, 1 and 2: 1080.

³⁶⁸ Deloria, *Playing Indian*: 142, his emphasis.

repeated Native American tendencies, over time and among different peoples, towards communality over individuality had a decidedly communist tinge to it. As settler colonialism studies scholar Patrick Wolfe reminds us, “Indians were the original communist menace.”³⁶⁹ As this brief summary demonstrates, the US government took a much more direct and immediate approach to assimilatory measures for Native Americans than it did for African Americans. During the mid-twentieth century, it promoted a conception of Native Americans as (almost) “assimilated” into the national imaginary while remaining more ambivalent about the social citizenship of African Americans.

Starkey’s *The Devil in Massachusetts* (1949) played into these racial formations of Native Americans and African Americans by underplaying white stereotypes of Indianness and exploiting racist fears against black bodies. Starkey describes Tituba as the “consort” of John Indian, thus painting the relationship as somehow illicit and engaging in stereotypes that hypersexualize black women. She also describes Tituba as lazy, slow, sneaky, and quite cognizant of finding ways of “easing her lot,” such as “idling with the little girls,” which correlate with minstrel stereotypes. Starkey also recounts that “in the absence of the elder Parrises, Tituba yielded to the temptation to show the children tricks and spells, fragments of something like voodoo remembered from the Barbados.”³⁷⁰ Starkey frequently narrates Tituba languidly remembering life in Barbados, an assertion that shows Starkey knew nothing about plantation life there.³⁷¹ Tituba also becomes the perfect mammy figure to the young Betty Parris:

³⁶⁹ Wolfe, “After the Frontier,” 26.

³⁷⁰ Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts*: 9-10.

³⁷¹ Later Starkey writes that Tituba testifies that the tall man offered her “pretty things.” Starkey comments, “Pretty things! The colors of the tropics blazed a moment in Tituba’s mind as she looked at this drab assembly and at the blanched faces, all exactly alike. When since the Barbados had she seen pretty things? There had been only the silken, honey-colored hair of little Betty.” Ibid., 44.

The half savage slave loved to cuddle the child in her own snuggery by the fire, stroke her fair hair and murmur to her old tales and nonsense rhymes. Never from her mother had the child received such affection, for though godly parents loved their children as much as any heathen, they would not risk spoiling them.³⁷²

In this example, Tituba fulfills the mammy role in spoiling the “fair hair[ed]” child with love and affection in place of the child’s more emotionally distant parents. It is also one of only a few examples where Starkey includes a reference to any Native American heritage, albeit with the racist epithet “savage.” Yet again, however, Tituba comprises only a small fraction of the overall historical narrative Starkey writes.³⁷³ Thus, as in narratives since the nineteenth century, she still plays an important, but small role in the overall trials and tribulations of the Puritan characters.

Struggling with the effects of the Holocaust and the House Un-American Activities Committee’s (HUAC) intensified effort to root out communists at the beginning of the Cold War, Miller describes discovering Starkey’s history as a fateful act. He first learned about the Salem witch trials during an American history class he took while a student at the University of Michigan in the 1930s, but it was Starkey’s history that made him feel that he could finally adapt it into a play.³⁷⁴ In April 1952, as stage and film director Elia Kazan went before the HUAC committee, Miller traveled to Salem to examine the trial transcripts in the courthouse. While there, he discovered Upham’s *Salem Witchcraft* (1867), which, he claims, confirmed his suspicions that Abigail Williams had had an affair with John Proctor when she was the Proctors’ house servant.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Ibid., 11.

³⁷³ She appears mainly in three chapters, II: Young People’s Circle, III: The Possessed, and IV: Tituba, out of twenty-two. Her release is also mentioned in chapter nineteen, “Jail Delivery.”

³⁷⁴ Miller, *Timebends*: 330.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 337. The historical Abigail Williams was about 11 and John Proctor in his 60’s when the trials began. There is no archival evidence of an affair. Arguably, Miller found what he wanted to find.

During the play's run on Broadway, Miller initially denied that the play was "an historical allegory" between the Salem witch-hunt and HUAC's search for communists despite nearly every reviewer making such a connection.³⁷⁶ Writing decades later in 1996, however, he more readily makes the connection:

'The Crucible' was an act of desperation....[B]y 1950, when I began to think of writing about the hunt for Reds in America, I was motivated in some great part by paralysis that had set in among many liberals who, despite their discomfort with the inquisitors' violation of civil rights, were fearful, and with good reason, of being identified as covert Communists if they should protest too strongly.³⁷⁷

It was not until he began researching the Salem witch trials, he explains, that he found "the tools to illuminate [the] miasma" of the historical moment in the 1940s and 1950s. Miller's allegorical critique of the HUAC hearings went beyond a simple condemnation of its inquisitors, though. It also included a critique of his fellow (white) liberals' silence, his own mixed feelings about the once-hopeful communism of liberals in the 1930s, and his fear that the Red Scare in the US resembled the rise of fascism and anti-Semitism in Europe only years before.³⁷⁸

One of the reasons Miller seems to have connected with the complex moral universe and orthodoxy of the Puritans as they struggled through the trials was because they reminded him of his encounters with Judaism. While researching for the play, he realized that he "felt strangely at home with these New Englanders, moved in the darkest part of my mind by some instinct that they were putative ur-Hebrews, with the same fierce idealism, devotion to God, tendency to legalistic reductiveness, the same longings for the pure and intellectually elegant argument."³⁷⁹ While looking at black and white

³⁷⁶ Arthur Miller quoted in Henry Hewes, "Arthur Miller and How He Went to the Devil," *Saturday Review*, January 31, 1953, 25.

³⁷⁷ Miller, "Why I Wrote 'The Crucible': An Artist's Answer to Politics," 159.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.; Miller, *Timebends*: 328-42.

³⁷⁹ Miller, *Timebends*: 42.

etchings depicting scenes from the trials in the Salem courthouse in 1952, he describes seeing the Salem men's long beards and the light emanating through high windows suddenly reminding him of the synagogue on 114th Street in New York where he went with his great-grandfather as a child.³⁸⁰

In personally connecting to the Puritans through his own Jewish memories, Miller was able to simultaneously connect himself to the proto-American Puritans. Attracted to the “breathtaking heroism of certain of the victims who displayed an almost frightening personal integrity,” he asserts that “the best part of this country was made of such stuff.”³⁸¹ Through this Puritan story, he launches his own protest against what he perceives as a repeated infringement against civil liberties in the 1950s. In bringing to light the “heroism” of these historical characters, he asserts his own Americanness at a time when one's performance of Americanness could be reaffirmed or destroyed in a HUAC courtroom. Though the Puritans may have acted harshly and prejudicially towards each other during the trials, Miller's writings about his play suggest that he did not demonize the Puritans so much as examine their moral complexity and humanity. Moreover, as he eventually admitted, he understood the trials to reflect his own (white, Jewish) interactions with the historical moment in the 1950s as it concerned communists, liberals, and HUAC, all predominantly white.

He did not afford, however, the same affirmation of Americanness to Tituba as he did to himself through the Puritans. As described above, *The Crucible* premiered in the midst of Cold War civil rights, only four years after W.E.B. Du Bois's UN petition *An Appeal to the World* was leaked to the press and one year before *Brown vs. The Board of Education* (1954). Picking up on the racial formations in which Miller wrote by reading

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 36-43.

³⁸¹ Arthur Miller quoted in Hewes, "Arthur Miller and How He Went to the Devil," 25.

Miller's "Tituba" against Ralph Ellison's narrator in *Invisible Man* (1952), literary scholar D. Quentin Miller argues that Tituba's blackness and her near complete disappearance from the play after Act I "is a subtle and unconscious illustration of the invisibility of African Americans as well as an acknowledgement of the degree to which they control the movement of American history, the American character and American literature."³⁸² D. Quentin Miller's observations both echo and cite Toni Morrison's analysis of the Africanist presence's ability to be both in/visible in US literature and an integral component to shaping US identity. Furthermore, it reinforces Tituba's importance to the "movement of American history" both in the historical event of the play and the seventeenth century trials, which temporarily disrupts the singularity of the Puritans as proto-Americans.

While Arthur Miller writes several times about his use of the trial archives and historical research for *The Crucible*, he rarely mentions Tituba. Miller cites three main sources for his historical research: the trial transcripts, Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* (1867), and Starkey's *The Devil in Massachusetts* (1949). As demonstrated in this chapter, documents from the trials refer to Tituba as "Indian;" Upham (1867) also refers to Tituba as "Indian;" and, finally, Starkey refers to her as half-Carib, half-Negro following the tradition of racial representation that began with Longfellow's *Giles Corey of Salem Farms* (1868). Miller is very careful to explain several of the artistic changes he made from his historical research. For example, he explains changing the word "doll" to "poppet," changing Abigail Williams's age from eleven to eighteen, and having John Proctor confess and then recant his confession.³⁸³ He does not explicitly explain,

³⁸² Miller, "The Signifying Poppet," 439.

³⁸³ Miller quoted in Hewes, "Arthur Miller and How He Went to the Devil," 24. See also Miller, *The Crucible*: 2.

however, why he represents Tituba as black when none of the previous sources explicitly did so.

One possible explanation is that he misinterpreted the historical record. In discussing his historical research for the play, Miller explains,

Almost every testimony I had read revealed the sexual theme, either open or barely concealed; the Devil himself, for one thing, was almost always a black man in a white community, and of course the initial inflammatory instance that convinced so many that the town was under Luciferian siege was the forced confession of the black slave Tituba.³⁸⁴

Miller's interpretation of these records has two problems. First, Miller betrays his own racist assumptions and the legacy of racial formations from slavery that link blackness and black bodies with excessive sexuality. The white fear and stereotype of hypersexualized people of color stems from a perceived threat to "white heteronormativity" and "reproductivity," both through miscegenation and increasing non-white populations.³⁸⁵ The hypersexualization of black bodies specifically is part of the larger legacy of slavery when white people sexually exploited and regulated the sexual conduct of slaves.³⁸⁶ Miller uses these racist tropes by linking the "sexual theme" he observed in testimonies with the threatening presence of a "black man in a white community," which also leads to the second problem: he interprets the many Puritan references to the devil as a "black man" as the Devil's embodiment within a man of African descent. Such an interpretation of a "black man" reflects a mid-twentieth century understanding of blackness, not necessarily a Puritan one.

³⁸⁴ Miller, *Timebends*: 340.

³⁸⁵ Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 131.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.; Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 84-85.

For the Puritans, the term "black" represented three meanings that were not always considered when nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians, like Upham (1867) and Starkey (1949), analyzed the Salem documents: 1) a generic term for physical difference as the "most basic nonwhite color," usually applied to Native Americans or Africans; 2) a specific term used as a synonym for "negro," applied only to those of visible African descent; and 3) a theological term indicating "perceived sins and shortcomings."³⁸⁷ In the third meaning, most important to Miller's misinterpretation, blackness connoted a theological association with the devil in the abstract and a "racialized sense of sin" in Native Americans and Africans. Puritans feared Native American spirituality much more so than African spirituality. Thus, when they used "blackness" in a theological sense they more readily referred to either the abstract or Native Americans. Beginning with Longfellow and concretized by Miller, the "blackness" of Tituba's witchcraft became a more direct reflection of the racial formation of blackness attached to African Americans in the twentieth century.

Yet in a 1953 interview Miller demonstrated that he was well aware of the Puritans' fear of Indian spirituality. In the political turmoil of 1953, he fiercely denied making the play an "historical allegory" and explained that he even "eliminated certain striking similarities" between the years 1692 and 1953. As an example, he observes that "the Salemites believed that the surrounding Indians, who had never been converted to Christianity, were in alliance with the witches." He suggests that "[s]ome might have equated the Indians with Russians and the local witches with Communists" and implies that he left Indians out of the play to avoid this comparison.³⁸⁸ So perhaps Miller changed

³⁸⁷ Bailey, *Race and Redemption*: 42, 45.

³⁸⁸ Arthur Miller quoted in Hewes, "Arthur Miller and How He Went to the Devil," 25.

Tituba's race in order to hide what he saw as a too easily drawn allegory between witches, Indians, communists, and Russians.³⁸⁹

Such an explanation, however, does not explain why Miller does not discuss the change he makes in Tituba's racial representation and why he always refers to her as the "black slave Tituba" when discussing the actual historical Tituba.³⁹⁰ Another explanation may be that Miller changed Tituba's race to black to match a racial formation that associated blackness with "voodoo," a concept much more familiar and frightening to a 1950s white audience than the Native American magical practices that frightened the Puritans. As the previous paragraphs demonstrate, Miller may have had several reasons for changing Tituba's race, but the underlying factor is Miller's use of 1950s racial formations to play upon white fears of a dark, corrupting Other who is not easily assimilated; however, in simultaneously using the Puritans as a vehicle for this historical allegory that quickly forgets Tituba, Miller masks a US racial history that stretches back to the first colonies to examine feelings of hypocrisy, guilt, and moral ambiguity in white characters about other white characters.

As I have examined, the importance of Tituba's role in the trials has changed in her historiographical and fictional representations, from the after-effects of her confession to a focus on the performance of her magical corrupting acts towards young white Puritan girls. In these narratives, her importance to the overall narrative is overshadowed by the trials and testimonies of the dozens of other accused, mostly Puritan, witches. Having thus played her part in instigating, she has a tendency to disappear soon after her confession. This is also true of the representation of Tituba in

³⁸⁹ Miller also briefly describes the Indians' relationship with the Salem Puritans in some of his historical commentary interspersed throughout Act I of the play. Miller, *The Crucible*: 5.

³⁹⁰ Miller, *Timebends*: 339 and 340.

The Crucible. Tituba appears only three times in the four-act play:³⁹¹ at the very beginning of Act I when she also speaks the first words of the play before disappearing again; at the very end of Act I when she confesses; and briefly at the very beginning of Act IV preceding John Proctor's confession.³⁹² Indeed, Tituba is spoken about more than she is actually seen on stage, making much of her presence in the play a disembodied, not present on stage, memory of the Puritans. She is both visible and invisible, embodied by the actor and disembodied by the playwright for the purpose of Puritan redemption.

PERFORMING TITUBA

The 1953 performances of *The Crucible*, as well as its many revivals, regional productions, and adaptations move the Africanist presence outside of literature and into the realm of performance. Moreover, in representing Tituba as black, Miller entered the

³⁹¹ According to reviews, the original production was divided into two acts and a prologue; however, the first published edition from Viking contains four acts and was published during the run of the play (April 1953). It was reprinted in the October 1953 issue of *Theatre Arts*. At some point during the play's Broadway run, Miller inserted a new scene between Abigail Williams and John Proctor during the summer of the play's original Broadway run in 1953. The acting edition of the play, first published by Dramatist Play Services (DPS) in 1954, contains only two acts. The added scene became Act II, Scene I in this edition. Besides of the division of acts, it is unclear how the script used in the 1953 production (prologue and 2 Acts) differed from the Viking edition (four acts) and the acting edition (two acts and no prologue). What had been the "Prologue" in the original 1953 performance of the play and Act I in the first published Viking edition (1953) became Act I, Scene I in the DPS acting edition (1954). Penguin Books picked up the Viking edition of the play and its copyright in 1976. The dialogue of the play amongst these editions remains the same, but some of the stage directions and, of course, the division of acts differ between the Viking/Penguin editions and the DPS editions. Needless to say, the publishing history and the differences between the acting and literary editions of the play deserves more research. I have chosen to use the Penguin edition largely because it contains long passages of historical commentary written by Miller. This gives greater insight into how Miller consciously (and unconsciously) crafted his historical characters for the 1950s stage. For the publishing history of the play see Stefani Koorey, *Arthur Miller's Life and Literature: An Annotated and Comprehensive Guide* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000), 4-5. For reviews that mention the original structure of a prologue and two acts, see, Brooks Atkinson, "Review of *The Crucible*, by Arthur Miller, directed by Jed Harris, Martin Beck Theatre," *New York Times* Jan 23, 1953; Harry Raymond, "'The Crucible,' Arthur Miller's Best Play, Dramatizes Salem Witchhunt," *Daily Worker (New York)*, January 28, 1953. For mention of the added scene between Williams and Proctor, see, Brooks Atkinson, "Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible' in a New Edition With Several New Actors and One New Scene," *New York Times* July 2, 1953.

³⁹² D. Quentin Miller focuses on Tituba's "gradual disappearance" in the play to argue that the emotional power of John Proctor's "soul-wrenching dilemma" is only made visible through her disappearance. Miller, "The Signifying Poppet," 439.

discourse that links “performance,” “blackness,” and “visibility.” While race is always already a performative social construct, many scholars note performance as an integral methodological framework for identifying and analyzing concepts of blackness.³⁹³ African American theatre scholar Harry J. Elam, Jr. notes that “the discourse on race, the definitions and meanings of blackness, have been intricately linked to issues of theater and performance. Definitions of race, like the processes of theater, fundamentally depend on the relationship between the seen and unseen, between the visibly marked and unmarked, between the ‘real’ and the illusionary.”³⁹⁴ Elam specifically compares theatre’s devices, or how “the signification of objects [performers, props, etc.] results from their specific usage in the moment,” to the device of race.³⁹⁵ The device of race concretizes an illusion into real-world meaning-making paradigms through its repeated application in a given historical/social/cultural framework.

In what follows, I provide a close reading of Tituba’s in/visibility in Act I of *The Crucible*. I begin by introducing the two actors who originated the role, Jacqueline Andre and Claudia McNeil. Andre originated the role of Tituba and performed in the majority of *The Crucible*’s 197 Broadway performances. Though records are unclear, McNeil was presumably either Andre’s understudy or her replacement in the last week of performances.³⁹⁶ The fact of Tituba’s embodied presence in performance still frames my

³⁹³ For examples, see Elam Jr., “The Device of Race.”; E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Harvey Young, *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010); Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision*.

³⁹⁴ Elam Jr., “The Device of Race,” 4.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 5. Elam builds upon Lorraine Hansberry’s assertion, “Race—racism—is a device. No more. No less. It explains nothing at all.”

³⁹⁶ Records do not indicate if or when Andre left *The Crucible*. About six months into its production, however, Arthur Miller made significant directing, casting, and scenery changes to the play. Brooks Atkinson’s review of the revised production, however, still lists Jacqueline Andre playing Tituba on 2 July 1953, only nine days before the show closed. Yet Claudia McNeil repeatedly cites *The Crucible* as her breakout Broadway role. Furthermore, a 1953 manuscript of the play housed at The University of Michigan

close reading despite the dearth of published information about her original performance, as I discuss below. Next, I examine Tituba's dramaturgical representation beginning with her brief entrance and exit at the top of the show, identifying what other characters say about her while she is off-stage and how that contributes to the witchcraft accusations against her, and finally analyzing the performativity of her confession. I am continually guided by performance scholar E. Patrick Johnson's question, "What happens when 'blackness' is embodied?,"³⁹⁷ and what this may have required for the performers playing her. I also consider how *The Crucible* as a racial project contributes to and reflects the racial formation of "blackness" in the 1950s.

Tituba's presence in the play through the performing black body could easily vacillate between the tropes of mammy and voodoo witch to a white audience, but it is difficult to gauge her reception because she is rarely mentioned in reviews. Out of twenty reviews published in *The Crucible*'s opening month, only three specifically reference Jacqueline Andre as Tituba and none reference McNeil. *The New York World-Telegram*'s William Hawkins observes that Andre is "striking as the Barbadian,"³⁹⁸ but Robert Coleman of the *Daily Mirror* just includes her name in a list of "salutes" to the actors.³⁹⁹ Only Harry Raymond of the Communist newspaper *The Daily Worker* gives any details of her actual performance. He writes,

Library includes the word "'McNeil' ... penciled at the top of the first inserted page," which could be "a possible reference to actress Claudia McNeil who replaced the original Tituba, Jacqueline Andre, during the play's run at the Martin Beck Theatre in 1953." Atkinson, "Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible' in a New Edition With Several New Actors and One New Scene."; "The Playbill: *Simply Heavenly*," *Playbill*, 1957, Nov. 30, 2015, <http://www.playbillvault.com/Show/Detail/9356/Simply-Heavenly.p.24>; "The Playbill: A Raisin in the Sun," *Playbill* 1959, Nov. 30, 2015, <http://www.playbillvault.com/Show/Detail/4376/A-Raisin-in-the-Sun.p.22>; "Details of *The Crucible*: Drama in Two Acts (Script) by Arthur Miller," ArchiveGrid, Nov. 30, 2015, <https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/collection/data/183260843>.

³⁹⁷ Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness*: 2.

³⁹⁸ He does not give any of the characters' names. William Hawkins, "Witchcraft Boiled in 'The Crucible'," *New York World-Telegram and The Sun*, January 23, 1953, 384.

³⁹⁹ Robert Coleman, "'The Crucible' A Stirring, Well-Acted Melodrama," *Daily Mirror (New York)*, 23 Jan. 1953, 385.

Miller, however, has marred his otherwise strong portrayal of brave men and women in the struggle against bigotry and persecution by writing an extremely stereotyped role for the one Negro member of the cast. It is a mark of chauvinism to present on the dramatic stage at this day, when the struggle for Negro rights is such a burning issue, a Negro woman as an Aunt Jemima type. And Miller has made this bad error. The role of the Barbados woman, played by the talented Negro actress Jacqueline Andre, should certainly have been concluded in the heroic vein. It would have given greater power and special meaning to the play.⁴⁰⁰

Though Raymond's critique of the play is largely about Tituba's place in the script, his review suggests that Andre possessed in her performance more talent and agency than the script actually allowed her. Raymond's review also demonstrates that her embodied presence stood out both for being "the one Negro member of the [all white] cast" and for portraying a tired, racist "Aunt Jemima" stereotype in a play about the "struggle against bigotry and persecution." He stops short of calling Tituba a slave, however, and instead refers to her as "a Negro servant woman from Barbados."

These reviews of the original production raise several issues. First, the forgetting of Tituba in them parallels her removal from the dramatic action of the play itself. In addition, replacing her historical role as a slave and instead referring to her as the "Negro servant woman,"⁴⁰¹ the "Barbados Negro woman,"⁴⁰² or the "Barbadian"⁴⁰³ further erases the presence of slavery in the Puritan formations of the national imaginary. Furthermore, Andre's performance of what was perceived, as Raymond tells us, as an African American stereotype may have made reviewers view her performance as "instinctual" rather than requiring any actual skill or artistry, a common racist stereotype about black performers.

⁴⁰⁰ Raymond, "'The Crucible,' Arthur Miller's Best Play, Dramatizes Salem Witchhunt," 195.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² John Chapman, "Miller's 'The Crucible' Terrifying Tragedy About Puritan Bigotry," *Daily News (New York)*, 23 Jan. 1953, 383.

⁴⁰³ Hawkins, "Witchcraft Boiled in 'The Crucible'," 384.

In lieu of reviews, the first two actors to embody her, Jacqueline Andre and Claudia McNeil, offer two different performance possibilities based upon their larger bodies of work. Andre began her acting career in the late 1920s and worked steadily during the next quarter of a century in many landmark productions including several at the Negro Theatre Unit of the Federal Theatre Project and the American Negro Theatre. Though never reaching the fame of colleagues like Paul Robeson, Canada Lee, and Ruby Dee, she nevertheless kept herself employed.⁴⁰⁴ Her roles included several West Indian characters: an ensemble member in *The Emperor Jones* on Broadway and on film,⁴⁰⁵ a Haitian “Witch Woman” in Orson Welles’s “Voodoo” *Macbeth* (1936),⁴⁰⁶ and “First Woman” in *Haiti* (1938).⁴⁰⁷ By the late 1940s, she was known for doing “many characterizations in French Spanish and West Indian dialects.”⁴⁰⁸ Because the production histories of *The Crucible* never recall the casting or acting choices of Andre, it is impossible to know why Miller and director Jed Harris chose to cast her. Presumably, however, her acting history fulfilled a “type” they wanted Tituba to embody: black, West Indian, and able to perform a stage version of “voodoo.”

⁴⁰⁴ At various points in her career, Jacqueline Andre went by “Jacqueline Martin,” “Jacqueline Ghant Martin,” and “Jacqueline Ghant Andre.”

⁴⁰⁵ The biography for Andre in *The Crucible*’s Playbill credits “the writing genius of Eugene O’Neil” for her “early success in the theatre,” explaining that she “first gained recognition in his ‘Emperor Jones’ on stage and screen.” I can find no published cast list to confirm this; however, the cast list for the 1933 film only includes the main characters and none of the incidental or background characters. The play also had three Broadway revivals between the 1933 film and the original 1920 production. It may be that her name has gotten lost as a replacement actor or that she had a non-speaking part. For her reference to *Emperor Jones*, see “The Playbill: *The Crucible*”, 30.

⁴⁰⁶ She is credited here as “Jacqueline Ghant Martin.” Elsa Ryan, “Production Notebook from New York Production of *Macbeth*,” American Memory: The New Deal Stage, Selections from the Federal Theatre Project, 1935-1939 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1936), 2.

⁴⁰⁷ See Woll, *Dictionary of the Black Theatre: Broadway, Off-Broadway, and Selected Harlem Theatre*: 72-73. She was credited as “Jacqueline Ghant Martin.”

⁴⁰⁸ “The Playbill: *For Heaven’s Sake, Mother*,” *Playbill*, 1948, Nov. 30, 2015, <http://www.playbillvault.com/Show/Detail/10831/For-Heavens-Sake-Mother>.

While “Tituba” seems to be Andre’s last role on Broadway, it was McNeil’s first at age 36. Prior to *The Crucible*, McNeil had an established singing career and had recently toured with Katherine Dunham in South America. After *The Crucible*, McNeil continued performing on Broadway, most famously as Mama Younger in Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). Unlike Andre’s West Indian voodoo type, McNeil’s acting trajectory often put her within the realm of “mammy” stereotypes.⁴⁰⁹ In analyzing her performance of the stage and screen versions of Mama Younger in *A Raisin in the Sun*, black studies and theatre scholar Margaret B. Wilkerson notes that McNeil’s visual appearance reminded white audiences of “the dark-skinned, white-haired, conservative mammy of the ‘good old days,’ who revered the master, sought to emulate his lifestyle, and struggled to keep her unruly children in line.” Wilkerson goes on, however, to underscore the importance of analyzing McNeil’s performance strategies: “Visually, McNeil fit the stereotype, but her actions belied the concept.”⁴¹⁰ McNeil’s appearance fulfilled a certain type for white audiences, and in doing so, may have emphasized the “mammy” aspects of Tituba over the West Indian voodoo witch that Andre may have represented. Wilkerson’s analysis also opens up the possibility that McNeil, as well as Andre, may have subverted the stereotype for those who looked closely. With very little archived information on the original performances of Tituba,

⁴⁰⁹ McNeil’s father was African American and her mother was Apache, adding another depth of racial formation to her embodiment of Tituba. She was adopted and raised Catholic by Jewish parents. As far as I can tell, her Native American heritage was never commented upon in her portrayal or choice of acting roles. For her parentage, see Myrna Oliver, "Obituary: Claudia McNeil; 'Raisin in the Sun' Actress," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 30, 1993, Oct. 26, 2015, http://articles.latimes.com/1993-11-30/local/me-62315_1_claudia-mcneil.

⁴¹⁰ Margaret B. Wilkerson, "Political Radicalism and Artistic Innovation in the Works of Lorraine Hansberry," in *African American Performance and Theater History*, ed. Harry J. Jr. Elam and David Krasner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 42. The out-of-town trials featured an ongoing battle between Lorraine Hansberry, Sydney Poitier, and McNeil over whether the play was Walter or Mama’s story. Also see Phillip Rose, *You Can't Do That on Broadway!: A Raisin in the Sun and Other Theatrical Improbabilities* (New York: Limelight Editions, 2001).

however, it is nearly impossible to discern what each actor brought to the character, what qualities got them cast, or any possible subversions they brought to the performance.

When Tituba first enters at the top of Act I, Miller emphasizes her mammy-ness and sets the tone for how a white author, even a liberal one, imagined race in the 1950s:

The door opens, and his [Rev. Samuel Parris's] Negro slave enters. [...] Parris brought her with him from Barbados [...]. She enters as one does who can no longer bear to be barred from the sight of her beloved, but she is also frightened because her slave sense has warned her that, as always, trouble in this house eventually lands on her back.⁴¹¹

By comparing her concern for Betty Parris to the feeling of being “barred from the sight of her beloved,” Miller emphasizes that Tituba’s only “love” is for those in her charge, a common mammy characteristic. The further erasure of her historical husband John Indian in the play as a whole prevents her from having to split her focus and concern for her Puritan family.

Yet Miller’s repeated stage directions to perform “fright” begin to complicate common mammy tropes. After Tituba speaks the first words of the play (“My Betty be hearty soon?”), the Reverend Samuel Parris immediately yells at her and chases her out of the room.⁴¹² In doing so, Parris demonstrates his temper and creates the nascent impression of an unhappy household. Miller’s narrative description of him, as someone who “cut a villainous path” wherever he went, supports this reading.⁴¹³ Unlike most mammies, Tituba expresses more fear than respect for her master, an element that will become more important for her later characterization as a witch. Parris’s actions in the beginning of the play, however, allow the audience to temporarily sympathize with Tituba. After her exit, however, Tituba does not appear on stage for another twenty-five

⁴¹¹ Miller, *The Crucible*: 7-8.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

pages of dialogue, but by that time the audience's perception of her has probably begun to change.

Through the dialogue and actions of the white Puritan characters, the audience learns that Tituba may actually be responsible for her "beloved's" afflictions. Parris reveals that Betty became sick after he discovered her and her friends dancing in the forest the night before. He also saw Tituba "waving her arms over the fire" and "heard a screeching and gibberish coming from her mouth." He describes her as "swaying like a dumb beast over that fire."⁴¹⁴ In this comparison, he likens her movement, speech, and intelligence to that of a beast, less than human. Abigail Williams, Parris's niece and arguably more of the hysteria instigator than Tituba, alternatively describes Tituba's actions as only singing "her Barbados songs," unwittingly creating a comparison in the audience's mind of Tituba's native language to "screeching and gibberish."⁴¹⁵ Abigail's language echoes the eugenicist rhetoric of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that argued that people of color, especially Africans, were at a more primitive stage in human development than white Europeans. Additionally, she collapses Tituba's native country, Barbados, into the name of a language itself, erasing the complex ecosystem of language, culture, and history on the island.⁴¹⁶

With the additional information that Parris saw "someone naked running through the trees,"⁴¹⁷ Miller begins to associate Tituba with the corruption of the girls' sexual purity. Miller deviates from the historical record, however, in describing them as dancing "*naked*," specifically so he can make "it easier for the audience to relate the Puritans'

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ D. Quentin Miller argues that Abigail "convert[s] 'Barbados' from Tituba's country of origin to a language that enables her to communicate with an evil spirit....the insinuation is clear: the Devil cannot be summoned directly by these girls, in English." Miller, "The Signifying Poppet," 442.

⁴¹⁷ Miller, *The Crucible*: 10.

horror at such a thing to their own.”⁴¹⁸ We know that Miller perceived a sexual theme in the testimonies he read, but as stated before, there is very little information about Tituba’s actions before her confession in the historical record. Miller builds upon later representations of Tituba, like Upham (1867) and Starkey’s (1949), which give her a more principal role in the Puritan girls’ corruption. The shock that Miller adds, however, is not a more detailed description of voodoo rituals but the image of the young, white girls running around naked. Miller denies Tituba any performance of sexuality onstage, however, which further reinforces her role as a mammy while onstage.⁴¹⁹

After Parris reveals what he saw in the woods to Abigail and the audience, he changes tactics to interrogate not what the girls and Tituba did in the forest but the color of Abigail’s character. He asks if her “name in the town” is “entirely white.” She retorts that her name has “no blush.” He pushes further and asks why it is that Goody Proctor, Abigail’s former employer, “comes so rarely to the church this year for she will not sit so close to something soiled.” Abigail answers, “She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave.” Soon after, she exclaims, “They want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them.”⁴²⁰ Throughout the play, Miller engages a long Western tradition of color symbolism that associates whiteness with good and blackness with evil to represent the Puritans’ inner moral struggles. In this exchange, Abigail and Parris go through an entire list of moral significations: from white (innocent), to blush (something between sin and purity), and to soiled (morally corrupt). In such close proximity to these moral significations, Abigail’s

⁴¹⁸ Miller quoted in Hewes, “Arthur Miller and How He Went to the Devil,” 24, his italics.

⁴¹⁹ For more on Tituba’s desexualization and mammy role see Suzanne Roszak, “Salem Rewritten Again: Arthur Miller, Maryse Condé, and Appropriating the Bildungsroman,” *Comparative Literature* 66, no. 1 (2014): 116-17.

⁴²⁰ Miller, *The Crucible*: 11.

sudden mention of blackening her face simultaneously speaks to race, the minstrel device of performing blackness, and moral corruption, but all in a metaphorical sense.

As unmarked white bodies, Parris, Abigail, and other Puritans at various points throughout the play use color imagery metaphorically; Miller's use of a black body onstage in the figure of Tituba, however, literalizes these metaphors and helps to define the white characters by what they are not. As Toni Morrison observes, white writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries often used black/white color imagery and characters to symbolize the internalized conflicts of white characters.⁴²¹ These white writers and artists often used black bodies and notions of blackness to make visible concepts of freedom and existential crises in direct relation to the legacy and history of slavery in the US. Miller continues this tradition but does so at the nascent moment of the Civil Rights Movement, when African Americans, not Puritans, were entering a very visible struggle for freedom and equality. In using Tituba while she is off-stage to bolster the Puritans' moral dilemmas and search for self-definition, he only makes her more invisible.

As Act I continues, the audience gradually learns more about what (might have) happened in the woods. Mrs. Ann Putnam, concerned about her own daughter's sudden affliction, reluctantly reveals that she sent her daughter, Ruth, to Tituba so that Tituba would conjure the spirits of Mrs. Putnam's seven dead babies and divulge who murdered them.⁴²² Rather than direct blame towards Mrs. Putnam who solicited the witchcraft, this revelation centers the blame on Tituba as the actual instigator of witchcraft. The final information about the happenings in the forest is revealed when Mr. Hale, a minister of

⁴²¹ Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*: 38.

⁴²² Miller, *The Crucible*: 14-15, 36.

Beverly considered an expert in witchcraft, arrives. As Hale's questioning of Abigail intensifies, she finally implicates Tituba:

ABIGAIL: I never called [the Devil]! Tituba, Tituba...

PARRIS, *blanched*: She called the Devil?

HALE: I should like to speak with Tituba.⁴²³

In this exchange, Abigail does not explicitly admit that Tituba called the devil. It is Hale and Parris who transform Abigail's vague mention of Tituba—"Tituba, Tituba..."—into the first accusation.

As the line of questioning continues, it becomes clear that Hale's leading questions provide Abigail the fodder to support the upcoming accusation against Tituba:

HALE: Did you feel any strangeness when she called him? A sudden cold wind, perhaps? A trembling below the ground?

ABIGAIL: I didn't see no Devil! *Shaking Betty*: Betty, wake up. Betty! Betty!

HALE: You cannot evade me, Abigail. Did your cousin drink any of the brew in that kettle?

ABIGAIL: She never drank it!

HALE: Did you drink it?

ABIGAIL: No, sir!

Here, Abigail adeptly lets Hale do the work of finding the evidence that will shift blame away from her. Abigail, at first, does not accuse Tituba of calling the devil and distances herself and Betty from any questionable actions in the forest: they never saw the devil and they never drank the brew.

With Hale's further questions—"Did Tituba ask you to drink it?"—Abigail's seeming hesitance becomes a calculated manipulation of Hale's and Parris's suspicions:

⁴²³ Ibid., 40.

HALE: Did Tituba ask you to drink it?

ABIGAIL: She tried, but I refused.

HALE: Why are you concealing? Have you sold yourself to Lucifer?

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

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

ABIGAIL: She made me do it! She made Betty do it!⁴²⁴

She transforms her hesitance from trying to come up with a story to a hesitance informed by fear. Importantly, Abigail does not directly accuse Tituba—"She made me do it!"—until she, and the audience, actually see Tituba onstage. At this point in the play, Tituba has been absent for most of the act. Abigail removes the implication of magic from the realm of speculation and places it in the live, embodied presence of Tituba, so visibly different from the rest of the Puritans onstage.

With seven white Puritan characters onstage in the 1953 performances, Tituba stands apart as the only character of color onstage. Moreover, the white characters, especially Abigail, have now firmly implicated her for their own actions and, more abstractly, as the symbolic darkness that afflicts the young girls. Now onstage, Tituba becomes an embodiment of blackness who can serve as a visual signifying counterpart to the unmarked Puritan characters' interior moral conflicts and white bodies for the audience. In *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness*, visual culture and media studies scholar Nicole Fleetwood argues that "seeing black is always a problem in a visual field that structures the troubling presence of blackness."⁴²⁵ Fleetwood explains,

Blackness fills in space between matter, between object and subject, between bodies, between looking and being looked upon. It fills the void and is the void.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision*: 3.

Through its circulation, blackness attaches to bodies and narratives coded as such but it always exceeds these attachments.⁴²⁶

Tituba's embodied presence, performed by Jacqueline Andre and Claudia McNeil, brings the abstraction of color symbolism into the material and real. She becomes hypervisible. And yet in what she represents, the presence of slaves and people of color in Puritan Salem, her hypervisibility makes her an aberration and cements in the national imaginary a forgetting of other bodies of color in the historical Puritan community.

Returning to the play, Tituba's immediate responses to her interrogators are most likely genuine rather than calculated lies to cover her own participation in these events. After Abigail accuses Tituba, Tituba, "shocked and angry," exclaims "Abby!"⁴²⁷ That she refers to Abigail as "Abby" here suggests a level of familiarity that previously only Parris,⁴²⁸ Proctor,⁴²⁹ Mary Warren,⁴³⁰ and Betty Parris⁴³¹ have expressed: two of Abigail's close friends, her lover, and her uncle. Tituba's genuineness and her familiarity in calling Abigail "Abby" bespeak her mammy role as a caretaker and nanny in this motherless household, as does her obedience to Abby. Abigail, now resolved on how she can shift blame away from herself, declares that Tituba "makes [her] drink blood." While Tituba does confirm this, she attempts to alleviate the situation by explaining it was only "chicken blood" not Mrs. Putnam's "baby's blood" as Mrs. Putnam suggests. When Hale asks her if she is silencing Betty, Tituba responds, "I love me Betty!"⁴³²

Hale's leading questions seem to convince the rest of the Puritans present in Parris's house that Tituba is the witch afflicting the girls. He is so enamored with the idea

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁴²⁷ Miller, *The Crucible*: 41.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 40.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 21-22.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 17-19.

⁴³¹ Ibid., 18.

⁴³² Ibid., 41.

that his books lay out the exact proscriptions of witchcraft that his questions preemptively reveal the evidence of it, which Abigail can then take and manipulate:

HALE: You have sent your spirit out upon this child, have you not? Are you gathering souls for the Devil?

ABIGAIL: She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer!

Parris confirms that Abigail “have often laughed at prayer.”⁴³³ Encouraged by the blame shifting to Tituba, Abigail continues:

ABIGAIL: She comes to me every night to go and drink blood!

TITUBA: You beg *me* to conjure! She beg *me* make charm—⁴³⁴

Tituba, as the mammy and faithful servant, continues telling the truth until, betrayed, she is pushed into a corner to save her own life. Her reactions suggest surprise and betrayal. She did indeed create conjurings but only at the requests of Abigail and Mrs. Putnam. There is no evidence, dramaturgically speaking, that this was an ongoing occurrence or that Tituba instigated it first and then drew in the young girls.

When Tituba continues to assert her innocence (“I don’t compact with no Devil!”), Parris warns her, “You will confess yourself or I will take you out and whip you to your death, Tituba!” Putnam joins in, “This woman must be hanged! She must be taken and hanged!”⁴³⁵ Left with no choice but a probable death, Tituba begins to confess:

TITUBA, *terrified, falls to her knees*: No, no, don’t hang Tituba! I tell him I don’t desire to work for him, sir.

PARRIS: The Devil?

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. Miller’s italics.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 42.

HALE: Then you saw him! *Tituba weeps.* Now Tituba, I know that when we bind ourselves to Hell it is very hard to break with it. We are going to help you tear yourself free—⁴³⁶

It is unclear in this exchange if the one who Tituba does not “desire to work for” is the Devil or Parris, who has just threatened to “whip” her to death. Neither Parris nor Hale allows her to answer directly at this point, however.

Instead, Hale begins the process of eliciting her confession (“We are going to help you tear yourself free”) in a manner that Chadwick Hansen refers to “as a revivalist would bring a sinner to confess her sins.”⁴³⁷ Immediately, Tituba works to shift the brunt of the blame from herself in what is pretty clearly a manufactured confession:

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

[...]

HALE: [...] You would be a good Christian woman, would you not, Tituba?

TITUBA: Aye, sir, a good Christian woman.

HALE: And you love these little children?

TITUBA: Oh, yes, sir, I don’t desire to hurt little children.

[...]

HALE: Now, in God’s holy name—

TITUBA: Bless Him. Bless Him. *She is rocking on her knees, sobbing in terror.*

[...]

HALE: Open yourself, Tituba—open yourself and let God’s holy light shine on you.

TITUBA: Oh, bless the Lord.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Hansen, “The Metamorphosis of Tituba,” 10.

⁴³⁸ Miller, *The Crucible*: 42-43.

In this exchange between minister and confessor, Tituba defends herself as best she can. She asserts she is a “good Christian woman;” she does not “desire to hurt little children;” she loves God; and she can prove her fidelity to God in her ability to praise God. Miller emphasizes her mammy qualities in her subservience and acquiescence to Hale’s revivalist syntax.

With Hale’s next question, Tituba changes her tactics and, like Abigail before her, uses the information in the interrogation questions themselves to inform her answers.

HALE: When the Devil comes to you does he ever come—with another person? *She stares up into his face.* Perhaps another person in the village? Someone you know.

PARRIS: Who came with him?

PUTNAM: Sarah Good? Did you ever see Sarah Good with him? Or Osburn?

PARRIS: Was it man or woman came with him?

TITUBA: Man or woman. Was—was woman.

PARRIS: What woman? A woman, you said. What woman?

TITUBA: It was black dark, and I—

PARRIS: You could see him, why could you not see her?

TITUBA: Well, they was always talking; they was always runnin’ round and carryin’ on—

PARRIS: You mean out of Salem? Salem witches?

TITUBA: I believe so, yes, sir.⁴³⁹

Hale, Parris, and Putnam first assault Tituba with questions that allow Tituba to implicate another person without, at this point, naming specific names. Tituba implements several stalling tactics to avoid naming anyone specifically; it was a woman, but maybe not

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 43-44.

clearly a woman because it was “black dark” and the Devil and this person never identified themselves.

When Parris cuts her off to ask if she means “Salem witches,” he very subtly shifts the accused from one supposed woman to several witches. Hale picks up on this number change and asks her now to tell them who “they,” the witches, are. For her confession, Hale offers her salvation. His words act doubly, for in being “put in [their] hands to discover the Devil’s agents among [them],” she serves her sole purpose for both the Puritans and the playwright. It is, as Chadwick Hansen argues, “as vulgar a scene as Miller ever wrote, with Tituba featured as Aunt Jemima at the Salem Camp Meeting.”⁴⁴⁰

Hale, the good cop to Parris’s bad cop in this interrogation scenario, uses kindness to help Tituba relax into naming the witches. When he asks “[w]ho came to [her] with the devil,” she offers back his own suggestion of “four.” Her agitation increases through this question as she begins to rock “*back and forth again, staring ahead.*” Parris interrupts her and demands names. With her life and well-being still in danger, Tituba “*suddenly burst[s] out,*” “Oh, how many times he bid me kill you, Mr. Parris!”⁴⁴¹

PARRIS: Kill me!

TITUBA, *in a fury*: He say Mr. Parris must be kill! Mr. Parris no goodly man, Mr. Parris mean man and no gentle man, and he bid me rise out of my bed and cut your throat! *They gasp.* But I tell him “No! I don’t hate that man. I don’t want kill that man.” But he say, “You work for me, Tituba, and I make you free! I give you pretty dress to wear, and put you way high up in the air, and you gone fly back to Barbados!” And I say, “You lie, Devil, you lie!” And then he come one stormy night to me, and he say, “Look! I have *white* people belong to me.” And I look — and there was Goody Good.⁴⁴²

This passage of dialogue is, next to her dialogue in Act IV, the most controversial. Out of context, it reads like an actual confession, as opposed to a coerced false one, that stems

⁴⁴⁰ Hansen, “The Metamorphosis of Tituba,” 11.

⁴⁴¹ Miller, *The Crucible*: 44.

⁴⁴² Ibid. Miller’s italics.

from a vengeance-seeking slave manipulating the situation to threaten her master. Moreover, in the context of the 1950s, it reinforces a white fear of black bodies that do not assimilate once freedom and (legal) equality is achieved.

As I have demonstrated, however, there is no previous dramaturgical evidence that Tituba went out into the forest to inculcate the girls into devil-worship and witchcraft. Within the extended confession, as analyzed here, Tituba first reacts to Abigail's accusation with a sense of surprise and betrayal, followed by a genuine defense of her character. With her interrogators unsatisfied, she begins to acquiesce to their questions, shifting the blame from herself but hesitating to name names. Throughout the interrogation, Parris is aggressive and threatens more than once to hurt her. When Miller stages a verbally threatened, quivering Tituba followed by an explosive confession of hatred towards her master through the words of the Devil, he further reduces her character into a racist stereotype for the white fetishistic gaze. He also, potentially, disrupts the sympathy garnered from the mammy stereotype and thus solidifies the perception of her guilt.

Importantly, only after this outburst does Tituba begin naming actual names from the community. The names she names, however, are not those that she hates, like Parris. Instead, she names the names already given to her by her interrogators—names that represent people those present already suspect and who occupy lower social positions in Puritan society, starting with Sarah Good and then Goody Osburn. Mrs. Putnam reveals her suspicion that Osburn, serving as midwife to three of her births, killed her babies. Hale encourages Tituba to give more names and plays upon the suffering of Betty, who possesses “God-given innocence” and a “tender” soul. Before Tituba can say anything, Abigail stands and declares,

ABIGAIL: I want to open myself! *They turn to her, startled. She is enraptured, as though in a pearly light.* I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!

*As she is speaking, Betty is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant. [...]*⁴⁴³

In the context of this confession scene, Tituba only directly names the names already suggested to her by Thomas Putnam: Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn, which was also a common strategy for those called in front of HUAC.⁴⁴⁴ With her announcement of Osburn, Mrs. Putnam reveals her reasons for suspecting Osburn and, later in the play, the audience learns of the Puritans' prejudices towards both women. Hale still focuses on getting Tituba to help remove the Devil's grip on Betty, but Abigail suddenly takes the control and focus of the situation, solidifying the usurpation of Tituba's (potential) power.⁴⁴⁵ Tituba is not mentioned or allowed to speak in the rest of Act I. Betty and Abigail take over naming names.

CONCLUSION

Miller adapts Tituba to function as a dramaturgical device that depends upon what Harry J. Elam, Jr. identifies as the device of race. Dramaturgically speaking, Tituba exists almost solely to provide the climax to Act I and incite the action for the rest of the play. Besides the occasional mention of her name by other characters later in the play, she disappears from sight until her brief re-appearance in Act IV. Even within Act I, she only physically appears in a very small portion. Miller's metaphorical use of blackness cannot be separated from the material use of actual black bodies onstage, the device of race. The presence of a black actor playing her serves to further reinforce the racist conflation of

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 44-45.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁴⁵ Miller, "The Signifying Poppet," 440-41.

voodoo, African slavery, the mammy, and the corruptibility of blackness on young white girls and falsely normalizes this very specific 1950s racial formation within a Puritan historical context.

Miller also uses the device of race to emphasize Tituba's betrayal to the white community as the mammy figure to Betty and Abigail. As the archival trial records which Miller perused document, Tituba was arrested with Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn and only after Good and Osburn's interrogations did she give her confession. In the play, Tituba is the first accused, interrogated, and arrested, in that order. Good's and Osburn's relationship to Tituba's confession in the historical records changes the power dynamics slightly from how the records document the events to how Miller, via Upham and Starkey, adapt them. It demonstrates that the Puritans were willing to accuse white witches at the same time that they accused Tituba, a person of color.

By bringing her confession into the house she serves, Miller emphasizes the domesticity of Tituba as mammy. The confession appears more intimate, less planned, and more contained. She confesses over the body of the afflicted Betty Parris, her "beloved," which emphasizes to the audience her dereliction of duties. It is a private confession, unheard by judges, and the audience can easily forget about her fate. After Tituba confesses, she all but disappears, out of sight. Abigail immediately appropriates Tituba's confession "*enraptured, as though in a pearly light.*"⁴⁴⁶ Though complicit, and arguably the actual instigator of these actions, Abigail is able to use the light/white to make herself visible in a way that Tituba never could.

Tituba returns at the opening of Act IV, in a jail cell months later. Her dialogue here suggests that she really does consort with the Devil:

⁴⁴⁶ Miller, *The Crucible*: 45.

Oh, it be no Hell on Barbados. Devil, him be pleasureman in Barbados, him be singin' and dancin' in Barbados. It's you folks—you riles him up 'round here; it be too cold 'round here for that Old Boy. He freeze his soul in Massachusetts, but in Barbados he just as sweet and—*A bellowing cow is heard, and Tituba leaps up and calls to the window: Aye, sir! That's him, Sarah!*⁴⁴⁷

Here, I disagree with Hansen that Hale's revivalist-esque interrogation of Tituba is "as vulgar scene a scene as Miller ever wrote."⁴⁴⁸ Her presence in Act IV is much worse because it makes her seem like a stereotype of the "voodoo priestess,"⁴⁴⁹ making trouble for the town rather than a powerless woman used as a scapegoat for the morally questionable actions of the main Puritan characters and then forgotten. In other words, it solidifies her as the instigator of the crisis when in reality the blame lies with the Puritans themselves.

In comparing the political climate and political hypocrisy in the 1950s to the 1690s, Miller attempts to reclaim a historical narrative where heroism wins over hysteria; however as theatre critic Harry Raymond observed in his 1953 review, Miller denies Tituba that same heroism. Furthermore, Miller differentiates her from the Puritan community so effectively in Act I that she actually seems to become the version of her—Devil-worshipping, voodoo practicing—that the Puritans and the white audience fear most. To follow the logic of an historical allegory between the 1950s and 1690s, Miller seems to see the Puritans as early Americans, but not Tituba. Thus despite her embodiment on a stage in 1953, she remains un-American, different, threatening, visible, and invisible.

With the seeds sown in 1953, Tituba is now black in the national imaginary. While some representations, like Maryse Condé's novel *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* (1992), attempt to reclaim her agency and to specifically reclaim her position as a black

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁴⁸ Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of Tituba," 11.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 10.

woman in history, the stereotype of her as the instigator of the incident and the corrupter of young white women persists. When considering how Miller uses the device of race to make Tituba his own dramaturgical “poppet,” however, her racial transformation over time must also be examined. Tituba onstage embodies as much white racial anxiety today as she did for the Puritans in 1692. To forget, however, that her race has transformed from Native American to half-Indian, half-African, and, finally, to black is to also to forget that racial formations are a process, not a stable ontology. The figure of Tituba makes the Puritan use of slavery, both Native American and African, at once both visible and invisible. Her presence onstage makes this obvious to audiences, but their near forgetting of her by the end of the play replicates the racial amnesia those in the US also have about the Puritans and slavery. Revealing the presence of slavery in Puritan communities threatens to deconstruct the myth of the Puritans-as-America’s-first-immigrants by underscoring how genocide, slavery, and colonization led to the creation of the US, not religious freedom.

Chapter Three: (M)other and Baby: A Community's Failings in Phyllis Nagy's *The Scarlet Letter* (1994)

"Shame! Shame! Shame!" the students shouted at one of their peers, singled out atop a rehearsal platform with a scarlet letter "A" dangling from her neck. Amidst laughter and giggles, another student soon proclaimed, "Ooooooh! I want to go next!" The scarlet A necklace was then removed from the first student's neck and put around the second student's neck. He stepped atop the platform and the chorus began again: "Shame! Shame! Shame! Throw 'em in the stocks!" This exercise in shaming began in a devising workshop for a new stage adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* in the spring of 2012 at The University of Texas at Austin. This was one of the first sequences that the undergraduate students had devised in rehearsals. Though it did not officially make it into the final, public performances of the workshop, the students spontaneously brought it back in their pre-show interactions with the audience. They grabbed their friends and their friends grabbed them, begging to wear the "A," step upon the "pillory," and be shamed. As such, it became something like a carnival attraction: "Come! Get your shame! Step on up! Everyone has something to be shamed for!"

I was fascinated by the ways in which the students, even the non-theatre majors, eagerly passed around the letter "A" and put their bodies on display. In most ways, these moments were utterly frivolous and got the audience excited for the show. But in other ways, it was also very serious because the students were enacting what Diana Taylor refers to as a "scenario" of shaming, which I examine in greater detail below. Though they were laughing, I knew from my dramaturgical work with them that the students were very aware of how society sought to shame them, especially in terms of women's sexuality. They frequently noted a double standard for (cis-)women versus (cis-)men in such concepts as the purity myths for women and the practice of "slut-shaming."

Therefore, perhaps at some level they knew that a scenario of shaming was just as relevant to them in 2012 as it had been for Hester Prynne in 1850/1640s.

As this example begins to demonstrate, *The Scarlet Letter* is now ubiquitous in the national imaginary as a story about the Puritans, sexual transgressions, and shame. According to feminist literary and Hawthorne scholar Nina Baym, *The Scarlet Letter* has never been out-of-print since it premiered in 1850 and has had a new edition almost every year since, despite the novel's initial lack of popular success. Literary scholar Claudia Durst Johnson adds, "[i]t is now one of the ten most frequently read novels in junior and senior high schools in the United States."⁴⁵⁰ Since the late nineteenth century, as also noted in the introduction, it has been an extremely popular text for stage and film adaptations, only a fraction of which are published and/or extant.⁴⁵¹ Building off of this desire to perform the novel, high school English teachers have even begun assigning the creation of YouTube "book trailers" for *The Scarlet Letter*.⁴⁵² The assignment merges the

⁴⁵⁰ Nina Baym, "Hawthorne's 'Scarlet Letter': Producing and Maintaining an American Literary Classic," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 30, no. 2 (1996): 62; Claudia Durst Johnson, *Understanding The Scarlet Letter: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), x. I traced the Baym (1996) and Durst (1991) citations from Kimberly Free Muirhead, *Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter: A Critical Resource Guide and Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of Literary Criticism, 1950-2000*, vol. 73, *Studies in American Literature* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), lxxxiv.

⁴⁵¹ For examples in published and archived stage adaptations, see: Andrews, *The Scarlet Letter: A Drama in Three Acts*; Harrison, *A Romantic Drama in Four Acts Entitled, The Scarlet Letter*; Hatton, *The Scarlet Letter, or, Hester Prynne: A Drama in Three Acts*; Peck, *Nathaniel Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter, Dramatized: A Play in Five Acts*; Smith, *The Scarlet Stigma, A Drama in Four Acts*; Damrosch and Lathrop, *The Scarlet Letter: Opera in Three Acts*. James DeMaiolo, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Applause, 1996); Phyllis Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," printed in *American Theatre* 12, no. 2 (1995): 23-38; and Parks, *The Red Letter Plays*. For examples in film, see: Sidney Olcott, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (Kalem Company, 1908). Joseph W. Smiley and George Loane Tucker, dirs., *The Scarlet Letter* (IMP Studios, 1911); David Miles, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (Kinemacolor Company of America, 1913); Carl Harbaugh, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (Fox Film Corporations, 1917); Robert G. Vignola, dir., Colleen Moore, perf., *The Scarlet Letter* (Larry Darmour Productions, 1934); Franklin J. Schnaffner, "The Scarlet Letter," in *Studio One in Hollywood* (Columbia Broadcasting System, 1950); "The Scarlet Letter," in *Kraft Theatre* (1954); Rick Hauser, dir., *The Scarlet Letter* (WGBH, 1979); and Roland Joffé, *The Scarlet Letter* (Allied Stars Ltd., et al, 1995).

⁴⁵² Several examples of these "book trailers" can be simply found by typing "scarlet letter book trailers" into any internet search engine. For some specific examples see: ghero9, "The Scarlet Letter Trailer," YouTube, posted Nov. 26, 2011, accessed Feb. 1, 2017,

themes of the novel with the languages of performance and film as students reenact the most dramatic moments from the novel. Building off of these continuous desires to perform the novel, this chapter asks how the context of the original novel's production and its use of the Puritans has been reshaped and reimagined to re-fit conceptions of gender, race, sexuality, and the state in the historical moments of adaptation.

One answer may be how the national imaginary deploys the symbol of a scarlet letter as a metonym for the public shaming of an individual or, in late-stage consumer capitalism, corporations. This shaming is often centered on a sexual transgression.⁴⁵³ Moreover, this shaming is also often conflated with state regulations, discipline, and/or punishment. For example, a 2001 law adopted in Florida under then governor Jeb Bush was quickly deemed "the Scarlet Letter law" because it "required women to put their sexual history on display." By this law, a woman who wanted to put her baby up for adoption but did not know the identity of its biological father was required to provide notice of the pending adoption in the newspaper. The requirements of this notice forced women by law to divulge extremely personal details, including possible dates, times, and

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uy3zP4RgYeE>; deejaycorbett, "Scarlet Letter Trailer," YouTube, posted Oct. 13, 2013, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_07CDJ3-Xo; iCarleigh, "The Scarlet Letter~Trailer," YouTube, posted Nov. 6, 2011, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQiHleWHtfM>; will sherman, "The Scarlet Letter: Trailer 2015," YouTube, posted Feb. 17, 2015, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDYL0P_prmw.

⁴⁵³ For example, several media headlines juxtaposed a "scarlet letter" with the 2015 Ashley Madison scandal, whereby hackers made public the user data for a dating site targeted at married men interested in affairs. Gracy Olmstead, "The Scarlet Letter and Ashley Madison," *The American Conservative*, Aug. 22, 2015, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/olmstead/the-scarlet-letter-and-ashley-madison/>; Alex Bradshaw, "Chilling Effects of the Ashley Madison Scarlet Letter," Center for Democracy and Technology, Aug. 28, 2015, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <https://cdt.org/blog/chilling-effects-of-the-ashley-madison-scarlet-letter/>; Kyle Chayka, "The Scarlet 'A,' for Ashley," *Pacific Standard*, Aug. 21, 2015, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <https://psmag.com/the-scarlet-a-for-ashley-6c8d72e03c43#.l6jq9jzg4>. Discursive uses of the scarlet letter have also recently appeared in relation to campus sexual assaults, whereby students found guilty of sexual assault by university authorities would receive a mark on their transcript. Tovia Smith, "Push Grows for A 'Scarlet Letter' On Transcripts of Campus Sexual Offenders," *NPR*, May 11, 2016, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2016/05/11/477656378/push-grows-for-a-scarlet-letter-on-transcripts-of-campus-sexual-offenders>.

locations for the baby's conception. The notice had to be reprinted once a week for a month "at the expense of either the mother or the people who wanted to adopt the baby."⁴⁵⁴ In theory, the law reinforced paternity rights, giving the biological father a chance to claim his unknown child. In practice, as a three-judge state appellate panel ruled in 2003, "the law's provision that could force women, including rape victims and minors, to make details of their sexual lives public in newspaper legal advertisements was an unconstitutional invasion of privacy."⁴⁵⁵

The colloquial naming of the Scarlet Letter law as such, while certainly pertinent to the requirements of the law, also intertextually referenced Bush's own use of the novel *The Scarlet Letter* in his 1996 memoir *Profiles in Character*. In it, he bemoans what he perceives as the decline of shame as "one of the great regulators in conduct" in late twentieth-century US society. He claims that "[o]ne of the reasons more young women are giving birth out of wedlock and more young men are walking away from their paternal obligations is that there is no longer a stigma attached to this behavior, no reason to feel shame.... Infamous shotgun weddings and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* are reminders that public condemnation of irresponsible sexual behavior has strong historical roots."⁴⁵⁶ In the context of his governorship and the types of regulations he sought for women's bodies like the Scarlet Letter law, the "public condemnation" that he cites may extend beyond societal hegemony to actual state regulations, thus conflating

⁴⁵⁴ Bush believed the law had many problems and so did not actually sign it into law, but allowed it to pass without vetoing it. Danielle Kurtzleben, "Jeb Bush and Florida's 'Scarlet Letter Law,' Explained," NPR, June 10, 2015, Feb. 1, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/06/10/413431225/jeb-bush-and-floridas-scarlet-letter-law-explained>

⁴⁵⁵ John-Thor Dahlburg, "Florida Ends 'Scarlet Letter' Adoption Law," *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 2003, accessed Feb. 1, 2017, <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/may/31/nation/na-scarlet31>. Bush repealed the law in May 2003, a month after the state appellate decision. He replaced it with a law that created a paternity registry, whereby men who thought they might have fathered a child could add their names.

⁴⁵⁶ Jeb Bush and Brian Yablonski, *Profiles in Character* (Miami: Foundation for Florida's Future, 1996), 52-53; Kurtzleben, "Jeb Bush and Florida's 'Scarlet Letter Law,' Explained".

the state with sexual discipline.⁴⁵⁷ Furthermore, when he references *The Scarlet Letter* in his memoir, it is unclear if he means Hawthorne's 1850 representation of the Puritans or the rather common misconception in popular culture that Hawthorne was actually a Puritan in the seventeenth century himself. If it is the latter, his argument gives the novel an extra aura of historical authenticity and precedent. Either way, by implication, Bush hints at a Puritan formation of the twentieth century wherein the US moral center is dependent upon its Puritan heritage of shaming and the state's discipline of that shaming.

Though Hawthorne pulled his 1850 representations of the Puritans from the Puritan formations of the early- to mid-nineteenth century, his novel has indelibly shaped and continues to shape the Puritan formations and how the US nation thinks of shame in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The narrative of Puritan shaming that he illustrates has become what Diana Taylor terms a scenario: Hester Prynne stands on the pillory; she is defiant, but ashamed, holding infant Pearl in front of her scarlet letter, secretly embellished with gold thread; the crowd below, especially the townswomen, shame her; the colonial authorities, including her guilty lover, interrogate her. This is an incredibly potent image that is literally and metaphorically applicable to many real-life experiences, as the naming of the "Scarlet Letter" law only begins to demonstrate. As a scenario, enactments of these images, whether in performed adaptations of the novel or real-life shamings of sexual transgressors, are "meaning-making paradigms that structure social environments, behaviors, and potential outcomes." They have a script, scenic

⁴⁵⁷ Bush has a long track record of taking policy stances that attempt to regulate women's bodies and lives. See for examples, Laura Bassett, "Jeb Bush is to the Right of George W. On Abortion," *The Huffington Post*, Mar. 25, 2015, Mar. 21, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/25/jeb-bush-abortion_n_6940568.html; Eric Bradner, "Jeb Bush to Women on Welfare in 1994 'Get a Husband'," CNN, June 11, 2015, Mar. 21, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/11/politics/jeb-bush-to-women-on-welfare-in-1994-get-a-husband/>.

setting, and, most importantly for the purposes of shaming and regulations in this chapter, “the social embodiment of social actors” and “participants, spectators, and witnesses.”⁴⁵⁸

Shaming itself is a performative act, which, much like Puritan formations, has become a key part of the US psyche and an imagined moral center. Psychologist Dov Cohen defines shame as a “feeling that one’s failings (especially one’s moral failings) are or would be looked at by others with contempt.” It is a “practice that involves both an individual and a community and blurs the line between them.”⁴⁵⁹ That is, shame is dependent on a community that both witnesses and participates in the feeling of shame and the act of shaming against an individual. This is one of the main factors that differentiate shame from guilt or humiliation. Furthermore, Cohen argues that an examination of shame is essential to “understand[ing] most issues that dominate the political and cultural landscape in the United States.”⁴⁶⁰ Likewise, literary and cultural studies scholar Myra Mendible observes that “shame discourses and practices inform significant aspects of the American habitus, the dispositions and judgments that shape our identity as citizens, consumers, and moral actors.”⁴⁶¹ Like the Salem witch trial narratives examined in chapter two, the *Scarlet Letter* scenario is one of the key parts of how the national imaginary associates Puritans with shame, punishment, and the regulatory structures of jail, pillory, and stocks. And, like all Puritan formations, US citizens can use this part of the Puritan past positively, like Bush, or to critique the nation’s reliance on regulatory structures to include some and exclude Others.

⁴⁵⁸ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*: 28, 29-32.

⁴⁵⁹ Dov Cohen, “The American National Conversation about (Everything but) Shame,” *Social Research* 70, no. 4 (2003): 1075, 1084.

⁴⁶⁰ Cohen, “The American National Conversation,” 1075.

⁴⁶¹ Myra Mendible, “Introduction: American Shame and the Boundaries of Belonging,” in *American Shame: Stigma and the Body Politic*, ed. Myra Medible (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 9.

In the case of *The Scarlet Letter*, firmly engrained in the national imaginary even for those who have never read it, perhaps it is this performativity and theatricality of shaming that has made it such a popular text for stage and film adaptations. In such an anti-theatrical society as the Puritans', it is ironic that Hester's very public spectacle of shame has been theatricalized so many times. Hester greatly troubles the idealization of domestic, heteronormative womanhood seen so frequently in the Priscilla character of First Thanksgiving plays. Yet like the invention of a Puritan national origin story, Thanksgiving plays, and *The Crucible*, the context for the original production of the novel is much less about the actual, historical Puritans than Hawthorne's relationship to changing power structures in the antebellum US.

This chapter specifically examines the 1994 production of Phyllis Nagy's feminist stage adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* and frames its analysis around the scenario of shaming, heteronormative patriarchy, and Puritan formations in the 1990s. As I have outlined in the introduction to this dissertation and in the paragraphs above, there are dozens of stage and film adaptations of the novel. I have chosen to focus on the 1990s, rather than earlier adaptations, because of the specific ways Puritan formations and shame were being used in the 1990s, as demonstrated in examples like Bush's memoir. I argue that these uses resonate quite strongly with the context of the novel's original production in the 1850s.

Nagy was certainly not alone in seeing the connections between *The Scarlet Letter*, shame, and the 1990s political context. For example, Naomi Wallace also wrote an adaptation titled *THE SCARLET LETTER, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, as told by Anne Hibbins, the Witch, and recorded by Naomi Wallace* (1992), which was given a staged reading at the off-Broadway Classic Stage Company during the run of Nagy's adaptation

there in 1994.⁴⁶² One year later, the feature film *The Scarlet Letter* premiered starring Demi Moore and directed by Roland Joffé. In the years that followed, several other stage adaptations debuted including MacArthur Genius Grant awardee Suzan-Lori Parks's radical reimagining *In the Blood* (1998) and *Fucking A* (2000), collectively known as *The Red Letter Plays*, and feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan's *The Scarlet Letter* (2002), which was commissioned by Shakespeare and Company under Tina Packer.

I have specifically chosen Nagy's adaptation because she maintains the Puritan setting of the novel and its basic plot points, but adapts the language and character relationships to comment upon citizenship, sexuality, gender, and belonging within a specifically 1990s context. Furthermore, Nagy shifts the focus of the play away from Hester's innermost thoughts and feelings, as in the novel, and replaces it with adult Pearl who, Nagy explicitly explains, "at no time attempts to play her as child."⁴⁶³ Pearl narrates the play to the audience, allowing them to hear her perspective of the events transpiring on stage as they simultaneously see her perform her infant and childhood self as an adult. Her ability to go-between the presentness of the (twentieth-century) audience and the Puritan characters in the scene troubles the temporality of the play, calling attention to both its own theatricality and the ways in which the twentieth-century national imaginary often imagines *The Scarlet Letter* as a "true" narrative about the Puritans, complicating once again the way that narrative can pass between history and fiction while self-erasing how its genealogy connects to both.

Whereas the novel is commonly read as the individual's (Hester's) journey to redemption and an ambivalent critique of patriarchy in its strictures of correct gender behavior for men and women, I argue that Nagy critiques the more modern concept of

⁴⁶² Wallace's play is still currently unpublished. Champagne, "Outside the Law," 186, n.3.

⁴⁶³ Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 23.

heteronormativity through the lens of shame by showing how each Puritan individual's acts in the community contribute to the overall breakdown of infinite possibilities for our future in the shadow of a national Puritan past. By activating shame in each of the characters, and not just Hester, the play makes visible the damage heteronormativity does to all (white) bodies and forces the audience to become witnesses to this shaming. Instead of inching towards progress, the utopian New Israel the Puritans hoped to establish, their/our community is like a broken record that will play again in tomorrow night's performance. In the specific medium of performance, each re-presentation calls attention to how structures of power like heteronormativity, not the historical Puritans' legacy on US morality and thought, continually fail individuals in our society. In this representation, it is not Puritan society that fails the characters, but the (private) individual acts of each of the society's members represented in the play.

But who can really be members of this/our Puritan society? As discussed throughout this dissertation, the Puritans in the national imaginary are white, Anglo-Protestants. In chapters one and two I discussed how people of color, specifically Native Americans and African Americans, are represented in relation to the Puritans in the national imaginary as well as debunking the myth that the Puritans had little to no contact with people of color in various Puritan formations. In this chapter, I specifically examine how whiteness functions in relation to the Puritans in the national imaginary and the Puritan formations of Hawthorne and Nagy's time. While Hawthorne imbues his novel with the Africanist presence and Indian spectralization, Nagy erases or, perhaps, represses most of the vocabulary suggesting the presence of people of color in or near the community she writes for (contemporary audiences) and about (Puritans). In doing so, which was not necessarily a conscious intention on Nagy's part, the play also reifies the

implicit whiteness of heteronormativity, complicating the play's overall critique of sex, shame, and heteronormativity.⁴⁶⁴

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the sociopolitical context in which Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter* and how he participated in and contributed to the Puritan formations in the antebellum US. Unlike many of his fellow antebellum New England writers, Hawthorne never wrote about his Puritan ancestors filiopietistically, though he also did not completely condemn them. In the next section, I begin to consider the sociopolitical context of the 1990s and the ways that shame and the Puritans entered political and national discourse. To begin analyzing how heteronormativity and its implicit whiteness function within Nagy's use of the Puritans in the 1990s, I use cultural theorist Lauren Berlant's concept of the "privatization of citizenship" and the "intimate public sphere" as it developed in the US at the turn of the twentieth century as well as her and social and queer theorist Michael Warner's examination of national heterosexuality. Next in this section, I expand my analysis of the ways in which conservative pundits and critics, like Bush above, specifically located a crisis in national heterosexuality and heteronormativity in a perceived shamelessness in US culture during the late twentieth century. Here I also expand upon working definitions and theoretical conceptions of shame through the work of Dov Cohen and Myra Mendible, both cited above.

⁴⁶⁴ In the 1994 Classic State Company production, Native American actor Sheila Tousey played Hibbins. I would argue that the text of the play is very conducive to color conscious casting as a condemnation of contemporary politics. The presence of actors of color would only further complicate the ways that whiteness, as an institution and identity, is implicitly tied to heteronormativity. Furthermore, my intent is not to criticize Nagy for removing the racist signifiers from Hawthorne's novel and I do not suggest that there was a right or wrong way for Nagy to adapt the racism inherent in Hawthorne's text. I seek instead to observe and examine the ways in which whiteness functions in the play slightly differently than it does in the novel, reflecting both changing racial and Puritan formations between the historical moments when both were produced.

My third section is broken into two sub-sections, both of which provide a close reading of Nagy's play while comparing it to the novel's context. The first sub-section analyzes the ways in which the Africanist presence and Indian spectralization infuse the language and imagery of the novel and the ways in which Nagy carefully removes these absent presences. The second sub-section examines each of the main characters in the play to demonstrate how each participate in shaming and feeling shame, while none ever completely experience a sense of belonging in the community. While the Puritan formations of novel and play take on different representations and meanings, each also negotiates how a (imagined) national Puritan past can move the nation/community forward or keep it back.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: PURITAN FORMATIONS IN HIS LIFE AND WRITING

Writing in the nineteenth-century about his seventeenth-century Puritan ancestors, Hawthorne entwined nineteenth-century contemporary issues concerning gender, sexuality, spirituality, and US identity with hauntings of his autobiography and Puritan family history. The harsh, stern, and sexually repressive countenances of the Puritans represented in his novel are now so ubiquitous in popular culture that, as noted before, many twenty-first-century readers do not even realize that Hawthorne was not actually a seventeenth-century Puritan, only a descendant distanced by several generations. Temporally speaking, Hawthorne was about as close to his subject matter as a reader in 2017 is connected to the War of 1812. Spatially speaking, however, Hawthorne spent his life in the epicenter of early- to mid-nineteenth century Puritan formations as he moved back and forth between Salem, Concord, and Boston, Massachusetts.

The Puritan past was all around him in the institutional memories of places that he worked, such as the Salem Custom House, the places he visited, and the intellectual circles he frequented. Moreover, antebellum Boston was the cultural and intellectual hub

in the US at the time, surpassing other East Coast cities like New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. in contributions to US thought and literature.⁴⁶⁵ Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., one of Hawthorne's colleagues in the Saturday Club, even called Boston "the thinking centre of the continent, and therefore of the planet."⁴⁶⁶ As the summary of Puritan formations in the introduction to this dissertation also demonstrates, many of these New England and Boston writers and thinkers played an active role in creating and shaping a Puritan national origin story. Hawthorne even graduated in 1825 from Bowdoin College with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whose poems *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858) and *Giles Corey of Salem Farms* (1868), discussed in chapters one and two, respectively, had an enormous impact on Puritan formations well into the twentieth century.

Though Hawthorne was not a historian, his adaptation of the Puritans and each new adaptation of his novel have shaped an historical understanding of the Puritans in the national imaginary.⁴⁶⁷ As a nineteenth-century writer who researched the seventeenth-century Puritan past and participated in the Puritan formations of his own time, Hawthorne functioned much like the historiographer in choosing how to negotiate past and present. As theatre historians Thomas Postlewait and Charlotte M. Canning observe, "[historians] perceive the past through a contemporary lens that necessarily refracts the distant events [they] seek to represent...Past actions are reenacted in the present

⁴⁶⁵ For more on the importance of New England and Boston in shaping US antebellum culture see, Conforti, *Imagining New England*.

⁴⁶⁶ Holmes quoted in Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 7. Menand explains that the Saturday Club was "a literary dining and conversation society whose participants included Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., James Russell Lowell, and Charles Eliot Norton." *ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁶⁷ For a detailed analysis of the historical sources Hawthorne used in writing *The Scarlet Letter*, including George Bancroft's *History of the United States*, see Charles Ryskamp, "The New England Sources of *The Scarlet Letter*," in *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter and Other Writings*, ed. Leland S. Person, A Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2005 [1959]).

discourse; they are joined yet still separated in the representation.”⁴⁶⁸ As an adapter of the historical Puritans, who by 1850 were firmly ensconced in the national imaginary as a vital part of a US founding mythology, Hawthorne also engaged with the questions of how and why he was choosing to represent the past in his own contemporary present.

Born in 1804, Nathaniel Hawthorne both loathed and respected his Puritan ancestors, a tension frequently borne out in his writings about them.⁴⁶⁹ After an underwhelming college career at Bowdoin College, where he also met and became friends with Longfellow and future US president Franklin Pierce, he began to research the Puritan history of the New England colonies and his own ancestry for what he hoped would be a successful writing career. Through that research, he discovered that his father’s family could trace their heritage back to the Puritan *Hathornes*, including the infamous Judge Hathorne of the Salem witch trials. This familial history caused great shame and guilt in Nathaniel Hawthorne. In addition to sentencing innocent people to death, as all the Salem judges had, Judge Hathorne was the only judge to never recant his position. Feminist literary and Hawthorne scholar Nina Baym even suggests that Nathaniel Hawthorne changed the spelling of his name from “Hathorne” in direct response to what he learned about his Puritan ancestors’ participation in the witch trials.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁸ Thomas Postlewait and Charlotte M. Canning, "Representing the Past: An Introduction on Five Themes," in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, ed. Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010), 10.

⁴⁶⁹ His short stories featuring the Puritans include “Mrs. Hutchinson” (1830), “Young Goodman Brown” (1835), “The Minister’s Black Veil” (1835), “The May-Pole of Merry Mount” (1837), and “Endicott and the Red Cross” (1837). His third novel *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) is set in the mid-nineteenth century, but includes flashback to seventeenth century Salem, Massachusetts.

⁴⁷⁰ Hawthorne’s father died when he was four. After his father’s death, his mother moved him and his two sisters back to her family’s house. Hawthorne did not have much contact with his father’s family. Nina Baym, "Introduction," in *The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), viii-ix.

In “The Custom-House,” Hawthorne’s autobiographical introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne apologized to the reader for his Puritan ancestors: “...I, the present writer, as [the Puritans’] representative, hereby take shame upon myself for their sakes, and pray that any curse incurred by them...may be now and henceforth removed.” Moreover, he also feared that his industrious and religious Puritan ancestors, who he both loathed and respected, would deplore his often stagnant writing career and generally “idle” character: “No aim, that I have ever cherished, would they recognize as laudable; no success of mine...would they deem otherwise than worthless, if not positively worthless.” He imagined the “grey shadow of [his] forefathers” deriding his flailing writing career for its failure in “glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation.”⁴⁷¹

Hawthorne saw himself as the degenerate descendant of his Puritan ancestors who still felt both ancestrally and viscerally drawn to Salem and who also wanted to break free from the Puritan hold it had over him. In these ways, he felt both ashamed of the actions of his Puritan ancestors and yet also felt shame for what they might think of him and his career. Temporally distant from the Puritans, they followed him everywhere in the ghosts he carried with him, the places he visited, and the people he met, many of who could also trace their ancestors to Puritan Massachusetts. Read through the lenses of Hawthorne’s respect and loathing for the Puritans, “The Custom House” is not just an autobiographical grappling with his relationship with the Puritans, but an apologia for his chosen career as a writer. Not only did he feel that his career might lack the vigorous Protestant work ethic of his ancestors, he was also never really financially successful at it.

⁴⁷¹ Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Custom House,” in *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983 [1850]), 13.

Therefore, he had to take other jobs to support himself and eventually, his growing family.⁴⁷²

In 1846, Democratic President James K. Polk appointed his fellow Democrat Hawthorne to “Uncle Sam’s brick edifice,” the Salem Custom House. While the job brought him both respectability and time to write, it also pulled Hawthorne “like the bad half-penny” back to Salem, the “inevitable centre of the universe.”⁴⁷³ Though he knew his job depended upon the whim of politicians, he expected to have it for a long time. After all, his subordinates were all “ancient sea-captains” who survived the “periodical terrors of a Presidential election” and did very little but sleep and chat.⁴⁷⁴ But, alas, his dreams of a respectable, but easy job and a steady income were dashed when Zachary Taylor, a Whig, won the presidential election in 1848. The Whigs, viewing Hawthorne as a political enemy despite his “inactivity in political affairs,” decided to fire him, or, more graphically, “decapitated” him. He laments, “little heroic as he was, it seemed more decorous to be overthrown in the downfall of the party with which he had been content to stand, than to remain a forlorn survivor, when so many worthier men were falling.”⁴⁷⁵ And so, “with his head safely on his shoulders,” he grabbed his writing accouterments and “was again a literary man.”⁴⁷⁶

In “The Custom-House,” Hawthorne positions himself as a martyr, a mere bystander who falls victim to the political whims of the age; his lack of a strong political stance also reflects his general politics. As he describes his dismissal from the Custom-

⁴⁷² He married Sophia Peabody in 1842 and had a daughter in 1844, a son in 1846, and a second daughter in 1851.

⁴⁷³ Before this job, Hawthorne and Sophia had spent three years living at The Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts. Hawthorne spent much of his time writing and lived very close to several other writers and transcendentalists including Ralph Waldo Emerson. Hawthorne, “The Custom House,” 14-15.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁷⁵ He switches to talking about himself in the third-person in this section. Ibid., 41.

⁴⁷⁶ Around this time his mother also dies. He does not mention this in “The Custom-House,” but it most likely had an effect on the way he characterizes Hester Prynne as a mother. Ibid., 42.

House, he explains that he was never actually quite sure if his fellow Democrats liked him: "...the late Surveyor [Hawthorne] was not altogether ill-pleased to be recognized by the Whigs as an enemy; since his inactivity in political affairs...had sometimes made it questionable with his brother Democrats whether he was a friend." Yet "after he had won the crown of martyrdom, (though with no longer a head to wear it on)," he felt more community with the Democrats because they were all being treated equally terribly by the Whigs. He and the whole party had been "overthrown" and the tenor of his interactions with politics changed from a "hostile administration" to the "humiliating mercy of a friendly one."⁴⁷⁷ By not strictly aligning himself with the Democrats, he could avoid any messy political situations. He could claim their support and his importance to them (status), with the bare minimum of political commitment.

Despite Hawthorne's lack of strong political stances, *The Scarlet Letter* is certainly not apolitical or free from the sociopolitical contexts of its production. Hawthorne wrote at a time when US literature and the reading public were fascinated with history. Literary scholar and historian Ann Douglas notes that "[b]etween 1800 and 1860, 90 of the 348 best-sellers in America...were either histories or books on historical topics."⁴⁷⁸ Hawthorne's interest in researching New England history paralleled a national increasing interest after the Revolutionary War in German-influenced historiography and the creation of a national usable past, as noted in the introduction to this dissertation. Moreover, Hawthorne wrote at a time when the previously steadfast structures of society seemed to be crumbling, especially concerning the status of slavery and (white) women. Published in 1850, *The Scarlet Letter* debuted the same year as the Missouri Compromise and, more specifically, the Fugitive Slave Act. It appeared only two years before his

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁷⁸ Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1977), 169.

colleague Harriet Beecher Stowe published her more explicitly political and nationally influential novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852).

The Scarlet Letter is literally and metaphorically about patriarchal frames and the law, which makes an analysis of Hawthorne's relationship to these changing social structures in the US even more important. In the novel, the raised framing of the wooden scaffold on which Hester Prynne first stands to unveil both her scarlet letter and infant Pearl marks the beginning, middle, and end of the novel as well as three of the most important plot points: the revelation and shaming of Hester; the midnight tableaux of Hester, Dimmesdale, and Pearl before a red "A" appears in the sky; and the confession and death of Dimmesdale. The scaffold represents the patriarchal authority of Puritan ideology and spirituality.

Only those who break the law, who disrupt the strict structure of society, appear on the scaffold. In Hawthorne's nineteenth-century context, antislavery feminists like Stowe and Hawthorne's sisters-in-law Elizabeth Peabody and Mary Peabody Mann called for both the abolition of slavery and more freedoms for women. Literary and Hawthorne scholar Thomas R. Mitchell even argues that abolitionist feminist Margaret Fuller was not just a model for Hester, as others have suggested, but that Fuller "informs Hawthorne's total conception of Hester, the Hester who inspires Hawthorne's sympathetic admiration and respect as well as his fears and guilt."⁴⁷⁹ Mitchell's reading further complicates how to analyze Hester in terms of whether or not Hawthorne condemns her transgressions of femininity or celebrates them.⁴⁸⁰ Thus, the framework of

⁴⁷⁹ For other scholars arguing that Fuller was a model for Hawthorne, Mitchell cites Francis E. Kearns (1965), Larry J. Reynolds (1988), and Sacvan Bercovitch (1991). Thomas R. Mitchell, *Hawthorne's Fuller Mystery* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 132-33.

⁴⁸⁰ Over the course of her career, feminist literary scholar Nina Baym has argued that Hawthorne was a "feminist writer" largely based on his characterization of Hester. She admits that "most self-identified Hawthorne feminists" reject her readings. Her article, "Revisiting Hawthorne's Feminism," provides a good introduction to the scholarly debates over whether or now Hawthorne and/or *The Scarlet Letter* can be

patriarchal authority in the novel parallels how Hawthorne grappled with the changing definitions of national identity, patriarchy, and citizenship in the antebellum US. His use of the Puritans also parallels his complex ancestral and intellectual relationship with them at a time when the US reading public was fascinated with all things historical. Yet despite the events happening around him and his friendships with feminists and abolitionists, Hawthorne remained, at best, ambivalent about slavery and the status of women, especially women writers, relationships I expand upon below.

SHAME AND PURITAN FORMATIONS IN THE 1990S

By the end of the twentieth century, the US was once again facing a moment of political instability where citizenship, sexuality, and public/private acts became (re)politicized. Cultural theorist Lauren Berlant argues that the Reaganite right inaugurated the privatization of citizenship in the US, essentially eviscerating a public sphere in the traditional sense and replacing it with what she calls the intimate public sphere. She explains that the development of the intimate public sphere in the late 1990s "renders citizenship as a condition of social membership produced by personal acts and values, especially acts originating in or directed toward the family sphere."⁴⁸¹ In a footnote to this passage, she makes the distinction between a national emphasis on the "white, middle-class family" during the Cold War and during the (post-) Reaganite era. During the Cold War, she explains, the "family" functioned as the symbolic and material support to the US through "national consumer and political culture," but was still subsumed by the nation-state as the over-arching entity of the "moral, ethical, and political *horizon* of national or political interest."⁴⁸² The rise of the Reaganite right,

considered feminist. Nina Baym, "'Revisiting Hawthorne's Feminism'," in *The Norton Critical Edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter and Other Writings*, ed. Leland S. Person (New York: W. W. Norton and Company 2005 [2004]), 545.

⁴⁸¹ Berlant, *The Queen of America*: 5.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 262.

however, repositioned the family not as the symbolic supporters of political culture but as the literal ones: the private affairs of citizens now shaped their status as good citizens. That is, the individual citizen's "proper horizon of national interest is said to be the family and its radiating zones of practice."⁴⁸³

Much of the conservative discourse surrounding shame in the 1990s connected to the (perceived) degradation of the American family in the intimate public sphere. For example, the 1996 article "The Problem of the Fatherless Child II" appearing in the conservative magazine *The National Review* recapped letters received by conservative commentator and author William F. Buckley Jr. about children born into "fatherless" homes. Buckley noted that "[a] great many [readers] wondered what has happened to the primary sanction against illegitimacy in the past, which has been shame. Shame before God, yes, but also before the community." These comments return again to the idea that shame is dependent upon community. One reader even suggested returning to the "old stocks of Puritan times." Buckley explains in response that "[t]he family is the basic unit of our society and it has a cancer. And yet the components of the cancer—illegitimacy, promiscuity, adultery, increased divorce, homosexuality—are accepted as 'lifestyles' and even exalted."⁴⁸⁴ In his mind, "accepted as 'lifestyles'" is equivalent to a loss of shame and a cancer eroding the foundation of society.

Buckley's critique of "lifestyles" such as "promiscuity" and "homosexuality" are most likely reactions to the increased visibility of non-heteronormative identities, one of the results of the various identity politics movements since the 1960s.⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, Berlant

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 262-3.

⁴⁸⁴ Wm. F. Buckley, Jr., "The Problem of the Fatherless Child II," *National Review*, Mar. 11 1996.

⁴⁸⁵ This is not to say that identity politics movements suddenly sprang up in the 1960s. As I explain in chapter two, the civil rights movement can be traced much earlier. Largely influenced by and taking strategies from the civil rights movement, many other movements emerged in the public sphere and created a new visibility around multiple identities including LGBT, feminisms, Native American rights, Latin@ rights, etc..

locates the rise of the intimate public sphere with the public performances of sustained critique of and resistance to the hegemony of (white) heteronormative identity as the core national culture. This resulted in the "traumatized" identity of citizens, like Buckley, who previously considered themselves to have no identity at all.⁴⁸⁶ Berlant notes that when the normativity and assumption of (white) heterosexuality is put into question, the future of the nation also comes into question. That is, previous conceptions of nationality and citizenship positioned the (white) heteronormative family as the only reproductive entities of young, future citizens; however, "[w]hen the modal form of the citizen is called into question, when it is no longer a straight, white, reproductively inclined heterosexual but rather might be anything, any jumble of things, the logic of the national future comes into crisis."⁴⁸⁷ So, identity politics and their remnants from the 1960s not only made heterosexuality visible, and thus contestable, in public; they also disrupted the legibility and predictability of the future nation and its citizens.

The US nation-state, largely structured by the assumption that heterosexuality is key to the reproduction of children-as-future citizens, also shapes its laws and policies to support and promote national heterosexuality. Berlant and social and queer theorist Michael Warner further define the term "national heterosexuality" as "the mechanism by which a core national culture can be imagined as a sanitized space of sentimental feeling and immaculate behavior, a space of pure citizenship."⁴⁸⁸ Heterosexual culture centralizes the "sex act protected in the zone of privacy" as the place that it "protects and from which

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 2-3. Berlant seems to frame heteronormativity with an implicit notion of whiteness; therefore she does not always name "white heteronormativity." I have chosen to make this more explicit in order to examine how "whiteness" and "heteronormativity" function in both Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and Nagy's *The Scarlet Letter* (1994).

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁸⁸ Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," in *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Press, 2005), 189.

it abstracts its model of ethics.”⁴⁸⁹ The (married) heterosexual couple becomes the reproductive entity of property, capital, and future citizens. Heteronormativity normalizes heterosexual culture by assigning it the “sense of rightness” to the extreme that it becomes ordinary and banal.⁴⁹⁰ Heteronormativity, however, is not the same as heterosexuality, which Berlant and Warner also point out is “not a thing” and “never has more than a provisional unity.”⁴⁹¹ That is, sex can be heterosexual at the same time that it is non-heteronormative.⁴⁹² Heteronormativity is more like the overarching organizational machine, “the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged,” which makes heterosexual culture desirable.⁴⁹³ Heteronormativity structures heterosexual culture.

Perhaps it was this loss of the zone of privacy and the perceived attacks on heteronormativity that caused many conservative politicians, critics, and pundits in the late twentieth century to bemoan what they saw as the decline of shame as a regulatory structure in US culture. In the 1995 *Newsweek* article “The Return of Shame,” journalists Jonathan Alter and Pat Wingert called for the return of shame both through legislations, judicial proceedings that used shame as punishment and rehabilitation, and a better moral consensus among Americans. They surmised that shame might actually be returning to America via the “red faces” that “represent our anger—over crime, welfare, politicians. The other is the red face we’d like to see on the guilty—a face of remorse, even

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 195. According to Berlant, the phrase “zone of privacy” originates in Justice William O. Douglas’s opinion in the Supreme Court case *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), which “designated for the first the heterosexual act of intercourse in marital bedrooms as protected by a zone of privacy into which courts must not peer and with which they must not interfere.” The implications of this were that the “sex” of married, heterosexual couples must not be made public or visible. Berlant, *The Queen of America*: 59.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 194

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 192.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 194, 309.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 309.

mortification.”⁴⁹⁴ Their inclusion of what they see as a lack of shame in “crime, welfare, [and] politicians” moves the recipients of shame outside of the more traditionally understood sexual transgressions of unwed mothers and homosexuality and into the more implicit domain of heteronormativity. Similarly, the quotation from Jeb Bush’s 1995 memoir in the introduction to this chapter comes from a section titled, “The Restoration of Shame,” where he objects not just to the lack of shame in unwed mothers and fatherless children but also in (inner city) juvenile offenders, how parents and schools discipline children, “poor academic performance,” welfare recipients, and “bankruptcy and homestead laws [that] foster irresponsible financial behavior.”⁴⁹⁵ Notice too that many of the groups he attacks are poor and, by implication, women and/or people of color.

In both examples, Alter and Wingert’s and Bush’s, the offenders’ “personal acts and values, especially acts originating in or directed toward the family sphere” do not meet the “conditions of social membership” for citizenship or national belonging.⁴⁹⁶ Both articles frequently use a first person plural, “we,” “our,” and “us,” which creates its own sense of community among their readership, or what Benedict Anderson would call a sense of simultaneity. Mendible explains that “shame narratives reify and reproduce beliefs about the state of the nation and its people.” This requires an “us” versus “them” mentality, whereby “‘our’ image is contaminated and sullied by ‘their’ behavior.”⁴⁹⁷ In this way shame can be a strategy of exclusion and inclusion, belonging and displacement. Wingert and Alter make a similar observation when they decry that the goal of shame “is not mere retribution but conformity—good conformity, the kind that makes it easier for

⁴⁹⁴ Jonathan Alter and Pat Wingert, “The Return of Shame,” *Newsweek*, Feb. 6 1995.

⁴⁹⁵ Bush and Yablonski, *Profiles in Character*: 53-55.

⁴⁹⁶ Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 5.

⁴⁹⁷ Mendible, “Introduction,” 5.

people to form communities.”⁴⁹⁸ Indeed, shame, as epitomized in *The Scarlet Letter*, is a powerful regulatory device for the state to control the behavior of citizens through heteronormativity.

Therefore, an important aspect to shame is the role of power and what bodies shame is meant to keep in check. As Mendible also observes, “[s]hame as commodity spectacle is most productive (and profitable) when projected on media-worthy objects, on bodies that matter enough to merit attention.”⁴⁹⁹ Thus, she differentiates what she calls reintegrative shaming and stigmatizing shaming. In the former, “the shamed subject can make amends, show proper deference to the judgments and expectations of the group, and maintain the social and cultural bonds of belonging.” In the latter, the group “casts its object into an underclass or even subclass group that is irredeemable. This is a literal and figurative expulsion—the realm of the outcast, the criminal, the alien.”⁵⁰⁰ As a white, Puritan woman Hester Prynne, as she exists in the national imaginary, seems to be especially “media-worthy.” Thus in many of the adaptations and re-readings of the novel, she has been singled out as an example of transgression and, depending upon the reader/viewer, redemption. She is allowed to reintegrate into society with the scarlet letter “A” upon her chest and the corporeal “A” in the form of Pearl by her side.

Yet much of the shame that Bush and others bemoaned a lack of was/is centered more on stigmatizing shame. As noted above, Bush’s references are dotted with allusions to the poor and people of color. And in “The Problem of the Fatherless Child I,” Buckley notes the “steep rise in illegitimate births over the past thirty years (from 5 per cent to 18 per cent among white; 25 to 63 per cent among blacks).” Instead of a general statistic, he specifically separates these rates out by race. Pulling from libertarian political scientist

⁴⁹⁸ Alter and Wingert, “The Return of Shame.”

⁴⁹⁹ Mendible, “Introduction,” 3.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 10.

Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* (1984), Buckley suggests "an end to public welfare as a disincentive to sexual promiscuity (and to sloth)."⁵⁰¹ In many ways, these articles echo back to such racist rhetoric as Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (also known as *The Moynihan Report*), which articulated a pathologization of African Americans and what he identified as a predominant matriarchal family structure. In adapting a novel largely about the most famous unwed mother in the national imaginary within the context of the 1990s, it is curious that Nagy does not explicitly engage with race. Instead, as I describe below, she very consciously attempts to repress it, which, intentionally or not, reifies the perception of the Puritans as a homogenous white community.

THE SCARLET LETTER: WHITENESS, SEXUALITY, AND SHAME

Into the Woods

In what follows, I examine how Nagy adapts the scenic setting of the novel and specifically Hawthorne's characterization of the woods to provide a deeper analysis of how racial and Puritan formations appear in the novel and play. The stage setting for Nagy's *The Scarlet Letter* is rather sparse, despite the number of different locations it represents. Included are "an enormous prison doorway, the portal of which is surrounded by a wild rose bush; a balcony overlooking that doorway; a graveyard; and a large scaffold." Upstage and "closing in" on the rest of the settings "is a vast expanse of wood—suffocating, threatening, infinite and completely dominating the environment."⁵⁰² Importantly, the settings represented never allow the audience to see the domestic interiors described in the novel: the interior of Hester's cottage by the sea, Dimmesdale's boarding room, or Governor Bellingham's mansion. All of the action in the play takes

⁵⁰¹ Wm. F. Buckley, Jr., "The Problem of the Fatherless Child I," *National Review*, Mar. 11, 1996, 70.

⁵⁰² Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 23.

place either outside of or in the interior of Hester's (public) jail cell. The implements of law and order—the jail, the scaffold, and the suggestion of their mortal consequences, the graveyard—are always visible in the varying light and shadows of the lighting design. Thus, all of the character's private desires never have the chance to recede into private spaces. In the description of the setting, Nagy visually depicts in the performance space what Lauren Berlant calls the “privatization of citizenship” and the “intimate public sphere.”⁵⁰³ That the “vast expanse of wood” encroaches upon these man-made, public spaces while a wild rose bush retakes the prison doorway suggests that the imposition of “civilization” on nature is illusory and temporary.

Like in the novel, the woods in the play are also the symbolic space of human (uncivilized, uncultivated, non-heteronormative) transgressions, where characters can escape from the watchful public eye. Nagy's language in describing the natural elements in the play is infused with innuendos of patriarchal interpretations of female sexuality. That the woods are “suffocating, threatening, and infinite” recalls images of feminine lack and symbolic castration. The rose bush that surrounds the prison doorway, though also present in the book, might purposely resemble a vagina and symbolically represent the regulation of women's sexuality as the actual doorway to a prison.⁵⁰⁴ Moreover, Chillingworth describes the woods as “a vast space full of nothing but a threat of the unseen,” which recalls both castration and the threatening power of the womb.⁵⁰⁵ That

⁵⁰³ Berlant, *The Queen of America*: 5.

⁵⁰⁴ The novel describes, “...on one side of the portal [prison-door], and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-bush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems...” Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983 [1850]), 45.

⁵⁰⁵ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 25.

Chillingworth first appears “from the woods” speaks to his sense of emasculation, becoming the shamed cuckold to what he perceives as Hester’s disloyalty.⁵⁰⁶

Alternatively, (adult) Pearl also first appears onstage from the woods.⁵⁰⁷ Her relationship to the woods is different from Chillingworth’s, however. She declares that she doesn’t “like nice men. She like[s] the woods.” Furthermore, she likes “the feel of the trees swaying dangerously above me, the threat of a sudden disaster.”⁵⁰⁸ Nagy positions Pearl as Other by having her always played by an adult actor and by simultaneously making her the only character that actually likes the woods. Nagy also marks her as queer with lines such as “I don’t like nice men” and “I love a woman who gambles even more than I love the woods.”⁵⁰⁹ Pearl is not ashamed of announcing to the audience and other characters, all witnesses, that she is different from these characters and what they would like her to be.

In the novel, the woods are a place of transitions and transgressions: where witches and sinners meet the “Black Man,” a place from which Native Americans come, the boundary between Hester’s cottage and Boston, and where Dimmesdale and Hester meet. The woods separate Hester’s coastal cottage from the town of Boston; therefore, she must literally cross their liminal space to travel from the domestic to the public. It also separates the missionary outpost of the “Apostle [John] Eliot,” who is attempting to convert Native Americans to Christianity, from the town of Boston. In his role as minister, Dimmesdale must also physically traverse the liminal space between the “savage” and the “civilized.”

⁵⁰⁶ While the stage directions describe that “Roger Chillingworth appears beside Brackett [the jailer], as if from nowhere,” Brackett soon notes that Chillingworth “come[s] from the woods.” It would probably be directorial choice to decide from where exactly onstage Chillingworth appears. *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁰⁷ The stage directions indicate that she “seems to come forward, as she speaks, from the vast expanse of wood, right down to the edge of the scaffold.” *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Tellingly, it is on one of his trips back to Boston from the Apostle Elliot that Hester confronts Dimmesdale in the woods about Chillingworth's plans against him.⁵¹⁰ The resultant three chapters which describe their encounter, "The Pastor and His Parishioner," "A Flood of Sunshine," and "The Child at the Brook-Side," are full of some of the most sensual, though not sexual, language in the entire novel:

Such was the sympathy of Nature--that wild, heathen Nature of the forest, never subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth--with the bliss of these two spirits! Love, whether newly-born, or aroused from a death-like slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world. Had the forest still kept its gloom, it would have been bright in Hester's eyes, and bright in Arthur Dimmesdale's!⁵¹¹

Their "bliss," bringing their hearts overflowing radiance, is only made possible by their illicit presence in the woods. Thus, the performance of sensuality, and by extension, sexuality is made more possible through the woods. As the realm of the Indians, it is also made possible by the hypersexualization of people of color. Yet in Nagy's play, we never see characters cross through the woods. At most, like Chillingworth and Pearl, they step out of the woods. These facts, in combination with the lack of representation of the domestic interiors from the novel, refocus the play onto the (public) community itself, diminishing a comparison between "civilization" and "wilderness" evident in the novel.

Within the context of the novel's production in the mid-nineteenth century, Hawthorne's simultaneous use of language like "wild, heathen" and "never subjugated by human law" also suggests racialized Otherness, not just a symbolic division between regulated sexuality and free-flowing sensuality. Literary scholar Renée L. Bergland observes that in addition to the "real, substantial Indians" that physically appear in the

⁵¹⁰ Towards the end of the novel, Hester learns that Dimmesdale will be returning through the woods from a visit to the "Apostle Eliot, among his Indian converts," giving her the opportunity to wait for him in the privacy of the woods and warn him of Chillingworth's treachery. Hawthorne is referencing the historical figure of John Eliot and his praying Indians. Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 159.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 177.

novel, Hawthorne “central[izes]” the role of Indian spectralization more so than in any of his other writings.⁵¹² Much of this spectralization occurs within or in reference to the forest. For example, Hawthorne writes that Hester inhabited a “moral wilderness, as vast, as intricate and shadowy, as the untamed forest” and that her “intellect and heart had their home...in desert places, where she roamed *as freely as the wild Indian in his woods*.”⁵¹³ In Hawthorne’s descriptions such as these, Bergland argues that “each of the main characters [in *The Scarlet Letter*] is transformed into an Indian, or, at the very least, is described as internalizing Indian consciousness.”⁵¹⁴ Yet in Nagy’s play, the words “native” or “Indian” are only used once, when Dimmesdale mentions Chillingworth’s “native” wife. Chillingworth quickly denies ever having a “native” wife, temporarily making and quickly unmaking an absent presence of Native Americans in this play.⁵¹⁵

In the novel, Hawthorne manipulates his haunted Puritan ancestors to also enhance the haunting presence of Native Americans to New England society in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1850, the Native American presence in New England had been greatly diminished, while the Western frontier expanded and armed conflicts with Native Americans increased. Hawthorne, as a researcher of the Puritans, definitely knew that the Native Americans were a threatening presence to the Puritans, but were not as directly a threat to the 1850 New Englanders. By explicitly comparing Hester’s “wildness” to the

⁵¹² In the novel, real Indians appear in the crowd scenes for both Hester’s first public scene on the scaffold (“An Indian, in his native garb, was standing there,” [56]) and during the Election Day events (“A party of Indians...stood apart, with countenances of inflexible gravity, beyond what even the Puritan aspect could attain” [202]). Bergland, *The National Uncanny*: 157; Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*.

⁵¹³ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 174, my emphasis.

⁵¹⁴ Bergland observes that as Hester’s daughter, “[t]he child Pearl is also identified with Indians, though it is hard to say whether that identification darkens or brightens her aspect.” Bergland, *The National Uncanny*: 157-58. During the Election Day events, Hawthorne narrates that “[Pearl] ran and looked the wild Indian in the face; and he grew conscious of a nature wilder than his own.” Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 212.

⁵¹⁵ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 28.

“Indian” and the forest to morality, Hawthorne worked within the racial formations and literary conventions of his time.

Yet as a member of the educated New England literati, Hawthorne must also have been at least aware of Pequot writer William Apess. Born in 1798 Jeffersonian Connecticut, Apess actively “published, preached, and organized across New England on behalf of Indian Rights.” His 1829 autobiography *Son of the Forest* was a best seller and “set a pattern for Native American autobiography.”⁵¹⁶ Though, as Bergland observes, this book and several other publications “can be read as capitulations to white discourse, or at least unsuccessful resistances,” he continued writing and teaching for nearly the next ten years as a vocal activist for (living) Indian rights.⁵¹⁷ Thus, he is at least one example of how Hawthorne’s spectralization of Native Americans in *The Scarlet Letter* elides the knowledge he must have had possessed of the Native American presence still living immediately around him.

In addition to the absent presence of Native Americans in the novel and its elision of contemporary (antebellum) Native Americans, Hawthorne also used the “Africanist” presence while erasing a history of African slaves in the Puritans’ and his own community. Throughout the novel, references to the “Black Man,” who appears in the woods, invoke manifestations of the Christian devil and, indirectly, black bodies. African American and women’s historian Jean Fagan Yellin observes that the novel “presents a classic displacement: color is the sign not of race, but of grace—and of its absence” as well as “the obsessive concern with blacks and blackness...that is characteristic of American political discourse in the last decades before Emancipation.”⁵¹⁸ The choice of

⁵¹⁶ David L. Moore, *That Dream Shall Have a Name: Native Americans Rewriting America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 379.

⁵¹⁷ Bergland, *The National Uncanny*: 122.

⁵¹⁸ Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 138.

color and the racial connotations are not coincidental in Hawthorne's references to the "Black Man," just as they were not coincidental in actual Puritan writing, as I examined in the different racial formations of Tituba in chapter two.⁵¹⁹ That the "Black Man" commits his crimes in the woods further symbolically associates the woods with dark sexual, moral, and racial transgressions. Yet, here also, Nagy changes the language in the play so that instead of "Black Man," the characters say "dark man."⁵²⁰ While this might still reference a man of color, it is certainly less explicit and specific than "Black Man."

The novel also abounds with imagery suggestive of slavery and the iconography of Hawthorne's contemporaries and associates, (white) antislavery feminists. Jean Fagan Yellin observes that Hawthorne's "opening scene" on the scaffold, which I have called the shaming scenario, makes great use of one of antislavery women's "central icons:" "the figure of a woman forcibly exposed in public." Furthermore, Yellin argues that the novel's "recurrent references to the scarlet letter as a brand force the connections between the embroidered symbol and the instruments of slavery."⁵²¹ In the inclusion of the shaming scenario, Nagy's play, perhaps unknowingly, ghosts this particularly piece of antislavery imagery, but it is an association that most of the twentieth-century audience would never notice. Moreover, Nagy never mentions "branding" further dissociating slavery from the play. Yet in the novel's antebellum context, these icons were highly symbolic to debates around feminism, slavery, and abolitionism. In fact, Yellin argues that *The Scarlet Letter* is "[p]erhaps the most complex and influential literary work that uses the antislavery women's iconography [iron chains, branding, etc.] to reject their

⁵¹⁹ Bailey, *Race and Redemption*.

⁵²⁰ For examples, Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 26; 28.

⁵²¹ Yellin, *Women and Sisters*: 133.

ideology.”⁵²² Read within this context it would be ill-advised to interpret his descriptions of the scarlet letter as a brand metaphorically.⁵²³

Furthermore, Yellin argues that Hawthorne consciously erased the historical presence of African slaves in Puritan Boston to help Other Hester Prynne within her own community through such symbolism. She explains, “By obliterating this historic black presence, Hawthorne’s narrator helps guarantee Hester’s absolute isolation.”⁵²⁴ That is, though he compares her iconographically to a slave mother and infuses the novel with color as the sign of “grace” and “its absence,” he provides no actual slaves from which to directly compare Hester’s situation. Moreover, literary scholar Leland S. Person argues, “in identifying Hester with slave motherhood, Hawthorne interrogates and critiques the familiar identification of [white] women and slaves—the conflation in nineteenth-century victimology of white mothers and slave mothers.”⁵²⁵ Rather than distancing the white mother from the slave mother, Person argues that Hawthorne further complicates their relationship. Careful not to create a one-on-one comparison between Hester and a slave mother, Person contends that Hester (metaphorically) “represents an amalgam, or amalgamation” of racial identities.⁵²⁶ In Hawthorne’s notoriously ambiguous fashion, he might be critiquing the (white) racial privilege of white antislavery feminists or attempting to undermine their entire message on slavery and womanhood.⁵²⁷

⁵²² Ibid., 125.

⁵²³ For example, one of the gossiping women at the scaffold declares that they “should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne’s forehead.” Hester Prynne asserts to Mr. Wilson that she can never take off the scarlet letter for it is “too deeply branded.” The narrator also describes that “[w]hen strangers looked curiously at the scarlet letter...they branded it afresh in Hester’s soul.” Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 49, 63, 77.

⁵²⁴ Yellin, *Women and Sisters*: 138.

⁵²⁵ Person, “The Dark Labyrinth of Mind: Hawthorne, Hester, and the Ironies of Racial Mothering,” 664.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 662.

⁵²⁷ Person argues that Hawthorne seems to critique the racial privilege inherent in white antislavery feminists’ conflation of a white mother and slave mother while blurring Hester’s racial identity. According to Yellin, however, Hawthorne uses such antislavery feminist iconography not to complicate the relationship between slave mother and white mother. Instead, Yellin argues that he uses it to unabashedly

Historically speaking, Hawthorne and his wife, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, certainly had knowledge of local abolitionist efforts and several contradictorily congenial and tense relationships with local antislavery feminists. Yellin highlights the fact that several black townswomen in Salem, Massachusetts, Hawthorne's hometown, organized the first female antislavery society in the US in 1832, which eventually "joined an interracial organization that sent delegates to all three Conventions of American Women Against Slavery." Yellin also calls attention to the fact that Hawthorne's wife, Sophia Peabody, spent a year and a half with her sister Mary living on a Cuban sugar plantation before they were married. Yellin contends that the "Cuban experience motivated Mary Peabody to become an active abolitionist, but it prompted Sophia to decide not even to think about slavery," which is also reflected in Hawthorne's public attitudes toward slavery.⁵²⁸ Throughout her discussion of Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, Yellin characterizes her as an educated woman who kept company with several antislavery feminists but who chose not to acknowledge ("not to think about") their views on slavery and womanhood. Perhaps most importantly to the actual characterizations in the novel, however, several of the local politicians that actually did the "beheading" of Hawthorne were also closely associated with local antislavery feminists. This association meant that "Salem politics dictated that feminism's strongest supporters were Hawthorne's bitterest political enemies."⁵²⁹

critique and undermine the antislavery feminists' views on both slavery and womanhood. Ultimately, Hawthorne's political and ideological intentions in creating and portraying Hester Prynne as well as his views on slavery and the antislavery feminists remain fiercely contested. Compare for example Yellin and Person with Nina Baym's "Revisiting Hawthorne's Feminism" and Robert S. Levine's "Antebellum Feminists on Hawthorne: Reconsidering the Reception of *The Scarlet Letter*." All of these articles can be found in The Norton Critical Edition of *The Scarlet Letter and Other Writings* (2005).

⁵²⁸ Yellin, *Women and Sisters*: 127.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

Hawthorne's (possible) comparisons between Hester, slave mothers, antislavery feminists, and Indian spectralization reveal how the sexuality and sensuality in the book is always already tied to race. Hawthorne often ties his racialized language in with descriptions of the wilderness, including the associations of the forest with the Indians and the place of the "Black Man." In removing these racist nineteenth-century signifiers from the language of the woods and from the rest of the play, perhaps in a neoliberal attempt at colorblindness, Nagy ends up reifying the universality of whiteness through its invisibility and unmarkedness. When Nagy erases the language and presence of racialized Otherness, she focuses the symbolism of the characters' language and actions down to a critique of heteronormativity. By not also explicitly addressing race in this Puritan-themed play, she leaves that heteronormativity unmarked as white.

Shame! Shame! Shame! Everyone Gets ('A')Shamed

The play begins with Hester's body in the dark and her disembodied voice delivering the first words of the play: "I made it myself. There was no other way. I searched every shop in Boston to no avail. The scarlet letter could not be bought. So I started from scratch."⁵³⁰ For a play and a novel that focuses on the theatricality and visibility of Hester's shaming punishment in a society that disavows spectacle, detaching Hester's voice from her body begins to play with the visible and invisible spectacles of shame, bodies, and sexualities in the play. As the lights come up to reveal Hester and her jailer, Master Brackett, she continues describing the process of the scarlet letter's construction. Hester sought "gold silk thread" to adorn the letter because it is "precious." Hester's association with precious objects defines Hester as a consumer of "pretty things."⁵³¹

⁵³⁰ Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 23.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

However, it also positions both Hester and, by extension, Pearl as objects of attention and value, which the community feels need to be protected from themselves for the sake of the community. As Mendible explains, “[i]n a society of spectacle, an event or persons becomes meaningful only when it appears as image...Relevant here is how these interactions deflect attention from the self and toward its objects: shame in this context has nothing to do with our own behaviors or flaws. It remains safely detached—a story we tell about *them*.”⁵³² Read within this context, Hester’s use of gold thread serves to emphasize the visibility of and her ability to control the scarlet letter as “image.” It is both a symbol of shame and of subversion and as such its meanings becomes somewhat detached from her crime. This is how by the end of Hester’s life years later, in both the novel and the play, it loses much of its stigma. As Pearl narrates in the play, “Boston cannot recall why it was she wore the scarlet letter in the first place.”⁵³³ In the context of the 1990s, however, Nagy’s emphasis on the materiality and wealth associated with the construction of the scarlet letter as image becomes an outward symbol of what makes Hester “media-worthy.”

In the first scaffold scene in the play, Nagy begins to adjust from the novel what (sexual) sins are most worthy of such stigmas as the scarlet letter in the context of the 1990s. When Hester first approaches the scaffold, Governor Bellingham immediately demands to know the name of the child’s father without any initial musings on Hester’s main sin of adultery in the novel.⁵³⁴ Hester refuses outright to “name” the father twice before pointedly asking, “Is there a man among you who is sinless, Governor?” This,

⁵³² Mendible, “Introduction,” 2.

⁵³³ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 38. The novel describes, “But, in the lapse of the toilsome, thoughtful, and self-devoted years that made up Hester’s life, the scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world’s scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence too.” Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 227.

⁵³⁴ Bellingham is the governor of Boston, making him the most powerful and important person in the city. While he also appears in the novel, Nagy expands his role in the play.

again, foreshadows the sins and subsequent shame of the characters, including Bellingham, Nagy will reveal over the course of the play. When Bellingham, in frustrated rage, calls on Hester to be “silent,” she reiterates that she has “no other wish than to be silent...But I will not name the child’s father,” making visible the contradiction of Bellingham’s simultaneous desires to control her, silence her, and make her confess.⁵³⁵

In Hawthorne’s novel, it is the Reverend John Wilson and not Governor Bellingham who begins Hester’s interrogation.⁵³⁶ Wilson points to the act of Hester’s sin itself rather than centering any questions on the name of the father or the consequences of the sin, the scarlet letter and Pearl. He encourages her to “no longer hide the name of him who tempted [her] to this grievous fall.”⁵³⁷ He explains that “the shame lay in the *commission of the sin*, and *not* in the showing of it forth.”⁵³⁸ With encouragement and the repeated appeals of Wilson and then Governor Bellingham, a reluctant Dimmesdale finally questions Hester. He asks her to “speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer.”⁵³⁹ It is only after Hester’s repeated refusals to answer that a new voice in the crowd at the scaffold, Chillingworth’s, challenges her to “give [her] child a father.”⁵⁴⁰ His demand is the first time her “partner in sin” is framed as the father of her infant rather than a co-conspirator in the act of the sin itself.

Nagy adapts the novel so that Hester’s interrogation on the scaffold discursively positions the infant Pearl as both the result and victim of Hester’s transgressions. Nagy’s characters repeatedly ask Hester to explicitly name the “father” not her partner in the “commission of sin,” an extremely subtle but important change in wording from the

⁵³⁵ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 24.

⁵³⁶ Wilson is the “eldest clergyman of Boston,” positioning him hierarchically above Dimmesdale. Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 60.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 61, my emphasis.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 62.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 63.

novel.⁵⁴¹ This wording better reflects changing conceptions around motherhood, children, and citizenship in the late-twentieth century than a nineteenth- (novel) or even seventeenth-century (Puritan) viewpoint. As the scene in the play continues, Mistress Hibbins, Bellingham's sister and a suspected witch, also flippantly demands the name of the "child's father" and emphasizes that "we," the town, "want his blood,"⁵⁴² a statement which she does not make in the novel since she is not even present in the first scaffold scene; however, in the play it positions her as a part of the community and not Hester's ally, which will become even more important later in the play.

When Hibbins insists that the town "want[s] his blood," Nagy plays with the double meaning of the phrase in the context of the 1990s: 1) the quest for vengeance, justice, and/or death and 2) a genetic paternity test to prove his guilt/status as father. In the former context, the quest for vengeance is unique to the play. In the novel, it is only Chillingworth who explicitly seeks vengeance, rather the punishment and redemption of the sinner, in finding Hester's partner. In the latter context, Hibbins's phrasing reflects the availability and demand for paternity tests in the late 1990s, which would never have been a possibility for the Puritans or for Hawthorne's audience. Performance scholar Peggy Phelan closely analyzes the changing legal and psychic space of paternity in the US of the late 1980s and early 1990s through a reading of abortion protests by the New Right's Operation Rescue. Phelan is careful to emphasize that these protests occur predominately between and among white bodies, a reflection again of how ideal

⁵⁴¹ In both the novel and the play, Chillingworth is obsessed with discovering Pearl's father from his first sight of Hester on the scaffold. But he is the only one who frames the co-conspirator as "father" rather than "partner." It's not just the act of adultery that drives him mad, although it's a good component, but the misplacement of fatherhood. This deserves further investigation.

⁵⁴² Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 24.

citizenship, the nation, and reproduction are still inextricable linked to whiteness in US hegemonic discourse.⁵⁴³

Though both white men and women participate in these abortion protests, Phelan argues that men's role in these protests represents an attempt to take back control over (white) women's bodies. She notes that their tactics effectively erase the white woman's/mother's body to focus on the fetus. At a legal level, this correlates with the newer ability to test with greater accuracy the paternity of children, thus making paternity testable and visible. She argues, "Rather than seeing paternity's 'doubtability' as *only* a source of psychic anxiety, as Freud argued, I am suggesting that the unverifiable status of paternity also provided justification for [men's] role as policemen over women and criminals (leading some to think of female sexuality as criminality)."⁵⁴⁴ This verifiability leaves the ability to inference, which had been an integral part of the psychic space of paternity, no longer viable. Genetic verifiability makes paternity visible and threatens the patriarchal role of the white male heterosexual subject by negating his "policemen" role.

This places Hester's role in Nagy's play within the context of renewed debates over abortion and paternity in the 1990s and a rather new way for white men to assert authority over white women. In the play, this rather new use of shame re-frames Hester as a single, unwed (white) mother and Pearl as a fatherless (white) child. This is different than the ways in which Hawthorne placed Hester within the discourses of slave mothers and antislavery feminists, making the connection between race and sexuality more pronounced. By reinstating the white father in the play, Hester would complete the white heteronormative family unit, which then serves the purpose of replicating the nation. In continually asking for the name of the father, the (white) patriarchal state authority of

⁵⁴³ She dots her footnotes with references to sources that examine women of color and reproduction, which going back to slavery in the US has an entirely different and more brutal history than white women.

⁵⁴⁴ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), 139.

Boston, Governor Bellingham, expresses similar white masculine anxieties as the Operation Rescue protestors and further attempts to control Hester's body beyond the scarlet letter. His demands to know the name of the father bounce through several time registers in the play: the now of the audience watching when paternity is assumed to be verifiable and integral to the control of the woman's/fetus's body and the nineteenth and seventeenth century when paternity had slightly different connotations. The other characters' questioning of Hester supports Bellingham's patriarchal authority and protects the national heterosexuality of the colony.⁵⁴⁵ As an anomaly in their community, Hester is made even more visible and is ripe for what Mendible calls reintegrative shaming. While her scarlet letter is a large portion of this shaming, her unwillingness to name the father also plays a part.

Yet it seems for all of the reiteration of the issue of paternity and the child's wellbeing, the interrogators ignore Hester's mimed infant Pearl until she, or rather Pearl-as-adult-narrator, begins screaming halfway through the shaming scenario. Throughout this scene, the adult Pearl stands apart from Hester, who mimes holding an infant in her arms. As stated above, Nagy warns that the actor "at no time attempts to play [Pearl] as a child." In this way throughout the play, Pearl disrupts the episodic linearity of the narrative and the coherence of her character. Pearl bounces between the "presentness" of a given scene in Boston "300 years ago" and the "presentness" of the twentieth-century audience observing her as narrator.⁵⁴⁶

When adult Pearl finally screams in the first scaffold scene, the characters hear it as infant Pearl screaming while the audience sees it as the adult Pearl screaming. Such a device further detaches the image of Hester from an idealized, heteronormative

⁵⁴⁵ Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," in *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Press, 2005 [1998]), 189.

⁵⁴⁶ Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 23.

motherhood. Even while holding the “infant,” she and (adult) Pearl are disconnected. They are already two fully separate, independent people. Throughout the play, narrator-Pearl differentiates herself from her mother: “Unlike my mother, I have no affection for pretty things;” “Hester courts punishment, but me, I crave catastrophe;” “My mother is mesmerized by this man [Dimmesdale]. I take immediately against him.”⁵⁴⁷ Through Pearl’s omniscient narration, the story comes to be as much about Pearl and how she differentiates herself from her mother as about Hester Prynne and the scarlet letter.

The character of Hibbins adds a third dimension to the relationship between Hester and Pearl and the representation and regulation of women’s sexuality in the play. Perhaps sensing (adult) Pearl’s loyal, but detached relationship from her mother, Hibbins seeks more to align herself with seven-year-old Pearl instead of Hester. In her participation in Hester’s shaming during the first scaffold scene, Hibbins attempts to cement a place as part of the community, rather than apart from it like Hester. But Hibbins’s reputation as a “voluptuous woman,” a suspected witch, and a possibly murdering widow always makes her membership in the community of Nagy’s play suspect.⁵⁴⁸ In frustration and feeling ashamed of his sister, Governor Bellingham even suggests at one point that she “needs a noose...not a tonic” to cure her agitation.⁵⁴⁹

While in the novel Hibbins is also described as a “witch” and “widow,” Hawthorne further describes her as “bitter-tempered,” an “old lady” with a “sour and discontented face,” and a “cankered-wrath.”⁵⁵⁰ As such, she is represented as much older than Hester with fewer redeeming qualities. In Nagy’s play, the stage directions describe

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 23; 24.

⁵⁴⁸ Dimmesdale shares that Hibbins “may have murdered her husband” to which Chillingworth responds, “Voluptuous women often do.” In this exchange of lines, Dimmesdale and Chillingworth link women’s sexuality to criminality and thus also link Hibbins, and later Hester his unnamed “voluptuous wife,” with criminal sexuality. Ibid., 27.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁵⁰ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 47; 103; 31; 83; 209.

Hibbins as “maddeningly sexy” in body and clothes and place her age as “just past 30.” Alternatively, the stage directions describe Hester as “cloth[ing] herself quite austere,” except for the scarlet letter, “Hester’s one luxurious accessory.”⁵⁵¹ The scarlet letter, rather than the clothes she wears, marks her transgression. Hibbins’s fine clothing accentuating her voluptuous body makes the association between women’s sexuality and the body literal, while Hester symbolizes it more through the letter and Pearl. As a visibly “sexy,” higher-class woman, Hibbins is also visible as worthy of shame. Both Hester and Hibbins embody different stereotypes of criminalized sexuality worthy of shame in (white) female bodies made aberrant in the context of their white, Puritan Boston community. When Hawthorne made connections between Hester and slave mothers, he created a generalized “slave mother,” no one in particular. And he made “her” visible in Hester’s white body. Nagy loses the references to slaves but not the notability, and thus possibility for reintegrative shaming, of white transgressions.

Instead of reaching out to Hester, Hibbins later attempts to ally herself with young seven-year-old (adult) Pearl in a scene taking place in the town graveyard. By this point in the play, Pearl is certainly represented as “other” but she does not yet represent to the community the same criminalized sexuality as Hester and Hibbins. Nagy specifically changes the scene in the novel where Hibbins asks Hester to join her in the forest to meet the “Black Man” so that Hibbins asks Pearl instead of Hester to see the “dark man.” Hibbins approaches Pearl while she is alone playing in the graveyard. In attempting to align herself with Pearl, Hibbins reassures Pearl that Hester is “her sister,” making her Pearl’s “aunt” and acknowledging the ways that Hester and Hibbins are alike in the discourse of kinship. Pearl succinctly responds, “Hester has no friends and I’m her only

⁵⁵¹ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 23.

relative.” Hibbins replies, “A little girl as bright as you should know of metaphor. Let me tell you about metaphor, Pearl,” handing her a mirror.

When Pearl looks into Hibbins’ mirror, she sees nothing but dirt on her face.⁵⁵² Nagy’s dialogue sets up a reading of Pearl’s dirty face with several metaphorical possibilities. It temporarily marks her face as Hester’s “A” marks her chest and Hibbins’ “sexiness” marks her whole body. In this moment, the dirt might call attention to the difficulty with which an audience might associate seven-year-old Pearl with childhood innocence and purity since what they see is an adult actor. As such, the dirt symbolically juxtaposes the purity and innocence of a virgin and/or children (child Pearl) with the appearance of a grown woman’s (Hibbins’s and/or Pearl’s) sexuality.

Yet this comparison is only made possible by the ways in which childhood, innocence, and sexuality are implicitly tied to whiteness as a structure of power. As cultural historian Robin Bernstein explains, childhood innocence, as it was constructed in the nineteenth century and reverberated into the twentieth, helped to maintain whiteness as a structure of power through a process of forgetting, or the “performance of not-noticing.” The paragon of (white) childhood innocence in this scenario is Little Eva from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (novel and play). Much of Eva’s innocence stems from a “performed transcendence of social categories of class, gender, and...race.”⁵⁵³ That is, she “loves everyone” regardless of race and gender. Moreover, “she is already halfway to heaven,” which further associates whiteness with purity and salvation.⁵⁵⁴ Having an adult perform Pearl may prevent the association of Pearl with the perceived pureness, innocence, and asexuality of white childhood, allowing for a more direct comparison of her non-

⁵⁵² Ibid., 26.

⁵⁵³ Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*: 6.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

heteronormative sexuality to that of Hibbins and Hester; however, it still relies upon an initial association between childhood innocence and whiteness.

Furthermore, the metaphor of dirt is racially tinged with the white obsession with cleanliness and its association with moral purity. Cultural and film studies scholar Richard Dyer explains that whiteness “shows the dirt of the body.” The presence of white garments such as white underwear and white sheets serve as the epitome of cleanliness, free from both literal and metaphorical dirt. In the case of white bridal wear, he explains, this dirt “is at once literal (sweat, semen, secretions and, in fantasies about virgins, blood) and moral.”⁵⁵⁵ White women especially are encouraged to look clean both in their overall appearance and, specifically, the clarity of their skin.⁵⁵⁶ The presence of dirt on Pearl’s face suggests, in the discourse of white color symbolism, her uncleanness and her moral impurity, if not yet a sexual awakening. Whether Nagy intentionally invokes whiteness in the use of dirt or not, and I would argue she does not consciously do so, she ends up limiting the extent to which each of these women—Pearl, Hibbins, and Hester—can exist outside of the law of heteronormative patriarchy when much of their rebellion is made visible through the discourse of whiteness.

Despite this presence of dirt possibly marking her as impure and unclean, Pearl still appears shameless and in her refusal to feel shame, she ultimately cannot relate to Hibbins. Perhaps alarmed by Pearl’s assertion that she sees only dirt in the mirror, Hibbins immediately removes the mirror and chides Pearl: “What a vain little girl. You can’t stop looking at your own reflection in the glass.”⁵⁵⁷ Such a statement is reflective of Hibbins’s seeming push-and-pull strategy with Pearl, first complimenting and then insulting her, in a way that is at once defensive, desperate, and meant to invoke shame in

⁵⁵⁵ Dyer, *White*: 76.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76-78.

⁵⁵⁷ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 26.

Pearl. Hibbins' agitation and precarious relationship to belonging in the town is not helped when even young Pearl observes that everyone thinks Hibbins is a witch.

But Hibbins persists in explaining that she and Pearl are like one another. Hibbins insists that like Hester, she and Pearl have letters, but theirs are invisible to the world.⁵⁵⁸ That is, their aberrations and transgressions are not as easily identifiable as Hester's illegitimate child and scarlet letter. This is why, performance scholar Lenora Champagne argues, that Hibbins and Pearl are better suited to be allies in Nagy's play because they "do not bear the law; they exist alongside it, separate from it, outside it, as though they are free of it."⁵⁵⁹ Outside of the law, perhaps they could also be free of shame and exist outside of an "us" versus "them" mentality.

Yet Pearl will not align with Hibbins. She holds a grudge against Hibbins because she "laughed at [Pearl]...[w]hen [Pearl] stood with Hester. On the scaffold."⁵⁶⁰ Notice that Pearl does not invoke punishment on Hester's behalf but because of her own, self-aware humiliation, even as an infant. So Hibbins does not gain an ally in Pearl and eventually even loses the protection of her powerful brother, Governor Bellingham, and her ever-precarious insider status. She is hung as a witch, Pearl tells us at the end of the play, sometime after Dimmesdale's funeral.⁵⁶¹ It seems that Hibbins's fate is just as tied to the regulatory structures of shame in heteronormative patriarchy as Hester's. On the other hand, even if Pearl is oblivious to the rules, she certainly chooses not to participate in feeling any shame for breaking them.

Nagy expands her critique of heteronormativity through the discourse of shame to highlight not just its effect on the women of the play, but also the men, especially

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Champagne, "Outside the Law," 180.

⁵⁶⁰ Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 26.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 38.

Dimmesdale. Like in the novel, Dimmesdale's shame and guilt transform into a physical and spiritual sickness that ultimately kills him after he confesses his "crime." In the novel, the character of Dimmesdale may reflect Hawthorne's own struggle and feelings of shame with the "masculine" and "feminine" roles and careers being redefined in the nineteenth century. Ann Douglas traces the increasing feminization of New England ministers and male writers as simultaneously occurring with the formation of Victorian sentimental fiction in the US. Male authors and male clergy had to deal with the ever-increasing female reading and church-going public. In catering to that public, Douglas argues, those traditionally masculine jobs, writer and minister, increasingly came to be seen as effeminizing.⁵⁶²

Hawthorne's apologia in "The Custom-House" can also be read as a grappling with his anxieties of his perceived masculinity in a feminized position such as writing. Literary scholar T. Walter Herbert, Jr. observes that historically speaking "Hawthorne's anxieties were easily aroused [on prevailing gender issues] because he felt his own character to be anomalous in relation to the prevailing standard of masterful public manhood." He feared that the "self-hood expressed in his writing" and its emotional (sentimental) character might further position him as "feminine." These fears play into how he defends himself as an author in "The Custom-House." Therefore in his writing, Herbert argues, "Hawthorne covertly yet persistently resisted conventional definitions of manhood" to avoid a self-contradiction of the "effeminized" writer and "masculine" hero in his traditionally ambiguous and at times contradictory fashion.⁵⁶³ Thus, his masculine

⁵⁶² Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*.

⁵⁶³ T. Walter Jr. Herbert, "Nathaniel Hawthorne, Una Hawthorne, and The Scarlet Letter: Interactive Selfhoods and the Cultural Construction of Gender," *PMLA* 103, no. 12 (1988): 285.

anxieties are reflected in the character of Dimmesdale who many critics have labeled as effeminate or womanly.⁵⁶⁴

In the context of Nagy's 1994 adaptation, Dimmesdale is not feminized so much as queered, a concept that would not have been immediately available to Hawthorne in 1850. As such, the shame Dimmesdale suffers from does not just stem from his fear of the community discovering his adultery with Hester and fathering Pearl, which could result in reintegrative shaming; it also stems from an even further disruption of the heteronormative community, (perhaps) being gay, which could result in stigmatizing shame. So when Chillingworth tells Dimmesdale that the weed he has been treating Dimmesdale with "grows from a secret buried in the heart of the man who rests in that unmarked grave," it could mean several things in a 1990s context.⁵⁶⁵ In the novel, the secret Chillingworth hints at is Dimmesdale and Hester's crime of adultery for which he seeks vengeance. In the context of the play in the 1990s, however, the secret might also be interpreted as Dimmesdale inability to "out" himself as gay and/or having a gender identity that is more feminine than masculine.

Moreover, Nagy references homophobic perceptions of gay men in her characterization of Dimmesdale that Far Right conservatives and anti-gay advocates would recognize. For example, when Chillingworth pushes a discussion about women,

⁵⁶⁴ Herbert argues, "Pearl's inhuman nature results from the sin of her parents, so the narrative manifestly asserts, and that sin is rooted in distortions of gender. In the story of Hester and Arthur a manly woman and a womanly man repair their aberrant characters; they reciprocally enable one another to attain 'true' manhood and 'true womanhood,' and this fulfillment redeems their child." *ibid.*, 288. Similarly, Erika M. Kreger argues that Dimmesdale's "passivity and hypocrisy link him to the weak heroines and deceptive villains of the eighteen-century novels repeatedly condemned and ridiculed in pre-Civil War public commentary." Erika M. Kreger, "Depravity Dressed Up in a Fascinating Garb': Sentimental Motifs and the Seduced Hero(ine) in *The Scarlet Letter*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 54, no. 3 (1999): 310.

⁵⁶⁵ Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 28. In the novel, Chillingworth uses a very similar line: "I found them growing on a grave, which bore no tombstone, nor other memorial of the dead man, save these ugly weeds that have taken upon themselves to keep him in remembrance. They grew out of his heart, and typify, it may be, some hideous secret that was buried with him, and which he had done better to confess during his lifetime." Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 114-15.

Dimmesdale lists off all of the reasons women do not like him: he is “not a handsome man;” he “lack[s] a certain...rugged...quality that appeals to women;” he has a “femininity about [himself]...that appeals sometimes to children;” he does not “care much for children. They sweat. They’re untidy.”⁵⁶⁶ Here, Dimmesdale associates himself with femininity, a dislike of children (the reproductive product of heteronormative relations), and a need for cleanliness. Dimmesdale identifies all of the qualities that he lacks to be the patriarchal leader, according to hegemonic society, of a heteronormative family. Yet he does so in an incredibly self-derogatory way that repeats without subverting homophobic rhetoric. In doing so, he ultimately undermines himself and makes himself seem rather unlikable.

Dimmesdale is also obsessed with his own death. Despite his dislike of untidy children, he crawls through the graveyard dirt on multiple occasions, which is also Nagy’s invention. The first scene when the audience sees Chillingworth and Dimmesdale alone together occurs in the graveyard during act one. Noticing Dimmesdale’s tiredness, Chillingworth advises him to rest in the graveyard. So Arthur “sits in the dirt.”⁵⁶⁷ On the one hand, sitting in the dirt aligns Dimmesdale with (biological daughter) Pearl, who the audience has just seen playing in the graveyard dirt in her scene with Hibbins, as described above. On the other hand, it also metaphorically puts him one foot in the grave, predicting his eventual death but also characterizing him as one who lives with the threat of death hanging over his head. Within the context of the play’s production, the threat of death could foreshadow Dimmesdale’s own death in the play and its parallel version in the novel. It might also obliquely reference the AIDS crisis and the pathologization of gay men by the US government and heteronormative society in the 1980s and 1990s.

⁵⁶⁶ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 28.

⁵⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 27. The prominence of the graveyard to the plot and set is largely an invention by Nagy.

By the beginning of act two, Dimmesdale is again seen crawling through the graveyard dirt on his hands and knees obsessively looking for the weed Chillingworth uses to treat him.⁵⁶⁸ The triad of Dimmesdale's lack of interest in women, the weed that grows from secrets, and his location in the graveyard all symbolically, if obliquely and problematically, position Dimmesdale as gay or, at the very least, not possessing the masculine qualities expected of (white) men in heteronormative culture. These factors result in a deeply hidden shame, which begins to drive him mad and causes him to fail Pearl as a father. She hints at this when she tells the audience in the first scaffold scene that she "take[s] immediately against him" and screams at the first sound of his voice.

He also fails Hester, who Pearl describes as being "mesmerized by no man, and yet, she is mesmerized by this man," in two ways.⁵⁶⁹ First, he remains frozen by his guilt and shame, unable to confess to his act and claim a relationship with Hester, as also in the novel. Second, he is never really honest to her about his feelings. When Dimmesdale and Hester meet in the forest during act two, represented onstage but always within sight of the other public settings of the play, Hester must talk him through every gesture that might make their encounter even mildly romantic. Their conversation is initially awkward and begins to demonstrate that ultimately these two lovers are incompatible with each other. For small talk, they observe that "[t]rees can be very tall" and "grow until they're cut down." Dimmesdale tries to give Hester flowers that he picked, but, as it turns out, she does not "like flowers."⁵⁷⁰ Together, they play at what they think a good heteronormative relationship should be, though neither of them quite fits within its boundaries. Even when they go to kiss, Dimmesdale "accidentally bites her lip."⁵⁷¹ He

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., 28, 32.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 35.

draws blood, which references the circling metaphors of red (the scarlet letter), blood (“Do witches bleed?”), HIV/AIDS (one foot in the grave and a secret buried), identity (feminine and masculine qualities), and bodies (bodies that bleed; bodies that die; bodies that sin).⁵⁷²

Though there is no evidence that Nagy wanted the audience to interpret Dimmesdale’s relationship to the graveyard in any one way, it does also evoke, whether intentionally or not, a reoccurring relationship between whiteness and death in Western art. In his analysis of “whiteness as death,” Richard Dyer asks, “[i]f it is the spirit not body that makes a person white [in Western representations of Christianity], then where does this leave the white body which is the vehicle for the reproduction of whiteness, of white power and possession, here on earth?”⁵⁷³ That is, if white is simultaneously an absence, specifically an “absence of colour,” not reliant on the body but, nonetheless, deeply signified through the body, how can whiteness maintain its power when the materiality of the body is gone? When the structure of power of whiteness is thus abstracted, Dyer suggests, whiteness is always already death. “Whites,” he argues, “often seem to have a special relation with death, to yearn for it but also to bring it to others.”⁵⁷⁴

In the play, Dimmesdale’s impending death is deeply tied to his Christian dogma, his sexuality, his repressed shame, and the heteronormative structures in which he does not quite fit. As in the novel, his guilt and shame ostensibly derive from his secret sin. In the play, as I have highlighted, Nagy hints at a wider reading of his sin, specifically his inability to be “masculine” enough in a heteronormative world. He denies the

⁵⁷² In the act one scene between Hibbins and Pearl in the graveyard examined earlier in this chapter, Pearl bites Hibbins’s hand after Hibbins picks a weed from a grave and gives it to Pearl. Hibbins “nonchalantly” asks Pearl if “[she] always bites [her] friends.” Pearl replies, “I’m odd. You said so. Do witches bleed?” Pearl goes on later in the scene to ask Dimmesdale if witches bleed. *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁵⁷³ Dyer, *White*: 207.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

“reproduction of whiteness” not just in his failure to claim Hester and Pearl, as in the novel, but in his confessions to Chillingworth in the play that he is not fond of children as well as his incredible reluctance to take a wife.

While Dimmesdale is obsessed with death and possibly struggling to identify his own sexuality, Chillingworth is obsessed with revenge on both Hester and Dimmesdale, through shaming her and torturing him. Like in the novel, Chillingworth is significantly older than Hester and physically deformed with a humpback.⁵⁷⁵ In both novel and play, his physical deformity serves to symbolize his moral depravity and cuckoldedness. When Hester and Chillingworth first meet face-to-face after the first scaffold scene at the beginning of the play, they demonstrate the psychic consequences of an ill-conceived marriage. Hester tries to fight Chillingworth’s cruelty with verbal insults and innuendos: “You’re remarkably unattractive. (*A beat*) And your hump. It’s grown;” and “I never loved you.” Yet it is still Chillingworth who controls the situation. Hester repeatedly tries to touch his hump, perhaps to caress him or perhaps to patronize him. He stops her each time until he decides he will control her movements. After “trac[ing] the outline of the scarlet letter” on her breast, he “places Hester’s hand on his hump” and “moves [her] hand along his back” before “remov[ing] [her] hand” completely.⁵⁷⁶

Though Chillingworth was always cruel to Hester in the novel, Nagy exacerbates this cruelty and viscerally represents the physical and psychological violence he brings to Hester. When Hester confronts Chillingworth about his treatment of Dimmesdale in act two, seven years after their first encounter in Boston, she offers to pay any price for Chillingworth to forgive Dimmesdale. This is the first time that Hester has begged

⁵⁷⁵ In novel, he is described as “small in stature, with a furrowed visage, which, as yet, could hardly be termed aged...it was sufficiently evident to Hester Prynne, that one of this man’s shoulders rose higher than the other.” Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 53.

⁵⁷⁶ Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 25.

anyone to forgive her sin and she does it, like in the novel, for Dimmesdale and not for Pearl. Chillingworth demands that she kneel and crawl to him. Chillingworth makes her kiss his feet and, still not satisfied, lick his boots. As Hester recites all the things she loves about Dimmesdale,

Chillingworth forces dirt into Hester's mouth. Hester does not resist.

CHILLINGWORTH (*Forcing the dirt into her mouth*): This is his touch, Hester. Touch him. This is his taste. Taste him. You are my wife, Hester. I have seen you as no other sees you and I...will...not...I WILL NOT...LET. HIM. GO.⁵⁷⁷

At no point in the novel is Chillingworth and Hester's relationship as sadomasochistically charged. In the play, this exchange amplifies the physical violence Chillingworth taunted Hester with in their first encounter in the play. By stuffing dirt into her mouth, he associates her body, her sexuality, and their marriage with filth. As white Puritan bodies, again, this association with filth draws further attention to the material effects of whiteness as symbolic purity.

As a cuckolded husband aware of his own "ugliness," Hester's beauty, and their thirty-year or so age difference, Chillingworth is humiliated by Hester. Dov Cohen explains that humiliations "follows actions by the self, or more often by others, that show that the self is not what it was pretending to be. It is less about moral failings or failings in basic human competencies and more about getting down or cut down to size."⁵⁷⁸ Hester's actions in combination with her youth and beauty make even more visible his own inability to please her and make her love him before they were separated in the journey to Boston. Reunited now, their relationship has been antagonistic throughout the play. Asserting such physical control over her is only possible by the knowledge he holds

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁵⁷⁸ Cohen, "The American National Conversation about (Everything but) Shame," 1075-76.

over her, which she does not want the town to know: that he is her husband and Dimmesdale is Pearl's father.

Yet in the next moment after forcing dirt in her mouth, Hester sincerely shares with him for the first time what initially attracted him to her and subsequently hints at what drove them apart:

HESTER: My father was a fisherman who hated the sea. I left home to find land. I found Amsterdam. Canals visible through every window. I bought curtains and spent time in libraries. Met you in the stacks. My interest was music. I learned to sew and meant to write home. Tried to make love with my eyes open. You said: The possibilities are infinite. Later, you sent me here. I got off the boat and retched.

CHILLINGWORTH: The day we met, I told you a joke. You laughed. You took my hand and I recognized something which I can no longer recall.

Hester rises.

HESTER: It was gratitude. Not love. Never love.

*Chillingworth begins to cry. He reaches out to her.*⁵⁷⁹

It is here that we learn that what drove them together was something they both searched for but could not find in themselves. In their case, however, marriage was more poisonous than simply being alone, another critique of the strictures of heteronormativity. In many ways, the need for an imagined heteronormative stability, Hester traveling from her father to Chillingworth and Chillingworth's need of affection and a caretaker, betrayed them both. This is also the first time that we see remorse and perhaps even shame in Chillingworth, recognizing young Hester's naivety and this Hester's turmoil. Hester's confession is not enough, however, to quench his quest for vengeance against Dimmesdale.

⁵⁷⁹ Nagy, "The Scarlet Letter," 34.

CONCLUSION

At the end of Nagy's play, Dimmesdale makes his confession to the entire town during the Election Day events while standing on the same scaffold where Hester first presented her scarlet letter and illegitimate infant years ago. As his life fades, Dimmesdale "bares his chest to Chillingworth, Hibbins, Brackett and Bellingham," a further act of confession. Making himself visible as father and cleansed through his confession, he dies, almost, as Hester holds him in a *pietà*-like pose, his limp body in her arms.⁵⁸⁰ As in the novel, the eyewitnesses cannot agree on what they saw when Dimmesdale ascended the scaffold. The inability to witness within the context of this play speaks even further to the individuals' failings towards each other. Perhaps it is also that Dimmesdale, their spiritual and moral role model, had something so monumental to be ashamed of that disallows them from actually seeing his moral transgressions.

From then on, Pearl narrates to the present audience what happened to each of the characters after Dimmesdale's confession. As an adult actor who has already been established as a go-between in the present of a given scene and the present of the live audience, it is now unclear from what time Pearl speaks: as a young woman in the seventeenth-century? In the time of the twentieth/twenty-first-century audience, an immortal reminder of this tragedy? She relates that the Governor "lives long enough" to see Hibbins "hanged as a witch." Master Brackett, who expressed much doubt on the ethics of Hester's punishment at the beginning of the play, "drinks himself to death." Chillingworth dies within the year, but before doing so, writes a will and leaves all the money to Pearl, ensuring a (heterosexual) generational legacy of wealth. Pearl shares, "I develop a fondness for water and sail away from Boston forever. I keep watch for solid ground, but can't seem to find it."

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 38.

Unlike in the novel, where Pearl goes abroad with Hester to one day marry and, Hawthorne leads us to believe, have children,⁵⁸¹ there is no “happy” ending for Pearl—or really any ending, for here she is 300 years later telling us this story again, whether she realizes the extent of time that has passed or not. She explains that Hester left Boston with Pearl, but “one day, [...], Hester returns to her cottage and reclaims the scarlet letter. [...] When finally she dies, Boston cannot recall why it was she wore the scarlet letter in the first place. She is buried [...] next to a man called Dimmesdale, who nobody remembers, and for whom nobody cares to mourn.” Though Hester does not die with Dimmesdale in Pearl’s narration, she never again speaks in the play. With Pearl’s narrated epilogue complete, Dimmesdale rises from his death to ask, “Hester. Are we there yet?”⁵⁸²

Dimmesdale’s question ending the play implies that the “there” Nagy refers to has not been reached “yet” for Nagy’s twentieth-century audience. But what “there” does she refer to? Is it heterosexual culture’s acceptance of the “potent sexuality” of Hester, Pearl, and Hibbins or the effeminate tendencies of Dimmesdale? Is it a return to shame? Is it a break from heteronormative families? The play replays and reconnects Puritans to the late twentieth century, but with enough mediators to turn the moral questions of the nineteenth-century novel back onto the twentieth-century audience rather than passively blaming the Puritans for the US’s heteronormativity and conservative attitudes concerning gender, sexuality, and shame. In removing Hawthorne’s problematic and racist representations of Native American and African American Others, the play makes whiteness the norm for discussions of heteronormativity and shame, creating a different but still problematic representation of race. Yet in scripturally representing the Puritans

⁵⁸¹ In the novel, we see Hester return to Boston and knit baby’s things, presumably for Pearl’s children. Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*: 226-27.

⁵⁸² Nagy, “The Scarlet Letter,” 38.

as an isolated white community, the play also demonstrates how the structures of whiteness, more so than even the Puritans, haunt and construct the US's gender and sexual ideologies.

As a haunt herself, adult Pearl negotiates and mediates various time registers (seventeenth-century setting, nineteenth-century novel, twentieth/twenty-first century audience) living simultaneously outside and within the same structures of power that punish her mother and ruin the individuals in the community. The play raises more questions than it answers, pointing backwards and forwards to the ways in which this novel is so popular in the US and why so many artists want to make performed adaptations. As the discourse of shame is used to justify and regulate heteronormativity as well as the move toward privatized citizenship in the twenty-first century, the impetus to blame the individual rather than the structures of power that seek to shame them all, most especially people of color, women, and LGBTQ people, becomes even greater. If anything, this play creates the possibility to make visible the detrimental effects of a hegemonic idealization of unadulterated (pun intended) heteronormative whiteness to twenty-first century bodies more so than to blame the legacy of the Puritans imagined by a nineteenth-century author.

Conclusion

In the midst of covering the 2016 Republican National Convention (RNC), the satirical comedy news show *The Daily Show* asked several RNC attendees the lingering question on the minds of many historically disenfranchised US citizens: “So when was American last great?” The question was in response to Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump’s campaign slogan, emblazoned upon thousands of red baseball caps, “Make America Great Again.” The answers to *The Daily Show’s* question ranged from 1913 when the seventeenth amendment was adopted, to 1776 and the (Colonial-era) founding fathers, to post-World War II, and finally to the 1980s. To each of these answers, the various correspondents asked in clarifying, rather than denunciatory, tones: “So like, back when women couldn’t vote?” “Except for the slavery stuff.” “Yeah, I think the ‘50s were great, other than, you know, segregation and women’s rights.” “That was awesome. Other than the slavery, obviously, that was totally...”

To such questions and clarifying comments, the interviewees, all of whom appeared to be white, remained unfazed and continued to participate in the interview. To some extent, this is unsurprising. This interview segment encapsulates the satirical interview style of “unsuspecting” conservative interviewees for which *The Daily Show* has become famous.⁵⁸³ So when *Daily Show* correspondent Ronny Chieng observed that “segregation and [a lack of] women’s rights” were not so great in the 1950s, the interviewee very earnestly pointed out that “we can sit here and paint negative faces of all

⁵⁸³ Over the years, it has been clear that many such conservative interviewees did not realize who was interviewing them (a liberal/progressive comedy show) and/or have tried to respond to questions as if they were on a legitimate news show. Furthermore, *The Daily Show* tends to edit interviews with a distinct bias towards making its liberal audiences laugh *at* interviewees.

times in America.”⁵⁸⁴ Rather than seeming defensive, the white man interviewed appeared to use this comment to point out an inconsequential fact.

With his words left hanging in the air, the segment immediately cut to another interviewee; yet his words and attitude succinctly captured much of the rhetoric conservatives have used in arguing for representations of US exceptionalism in history courses over the last decade: the US has had a few bumps in the road—slavery, segregation, women’s rights, etc.—but overly focusing on these issues creates a negative and cynical portrayal of the US and minimizes its greatness.⁵⁸⁵ My point is not to determine when (or whether) “America” was great, but instead to point out that it is very hard to locate a “great” time in the history of the nation if you also adhere to its core value of “equality and justice for all.” That is why there will always be “negative faces”

⁵⁸⁴ "When Was America Great?: The Daily Show," The Daily Show, July 22, 2016, Mar. 10, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVQvWwHM5kM>.

⁵⁸⁵ While US history textbooks have often been at the center of debates over national identity throughout the twentieth century, the conservative narrative in the last ten years or so has focused on the elision of “bumpy” points in US history so as not to create an overly negative view of the US. Conservative critics of what they consider “liberal” and/or “multicultural” textbooks often argue that textbooks should “reflect not America as the bad guy, but America as an exceptional nation.” In August 2014, the “Republican National Committee condemned the new [AP U.S. history] framework...criticizing the guidelines for emphasizing negative aspects of U.S. history and minimizing, if not ignoring, the positive.” “Rewriting History? Texas Tackles Textbook Debate,” CBS News, Sep. 16, 2014, Mar. 20, 2017, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/rewriting-history-texas-tackles-textbook-debate/>; Jacoba Urist, “Who Should Decide How Students Learn About America’s Past?,” The Atlantic, Feb. 24, 2015, Mar. 18, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/02/who-should-decide-how-students-learn-about-americas-past/385928/>; Also see, Laura Isensee, “How Textbooks Can Teach Different Versions of History,” NPR, July 13, 2015, Mar. 18, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/07/13/421744763/how-textbooks-can-teach-different-versions-of-history>. For examples of scholarship on the history of US history textbooks, see for example Thomas Bender, “Can National History be De-Provincialized? U.S. History Textbook Controversies in the 1940s and 1990s,” *Contexts: The Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 6, no. 1 (2009): 25-38; Elaine Lewinnek, “Social Studies Controversies in 1960s Los Angeles: Lands of the Free, Public Memory, and the Rise of the New Right,” *Pacific Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (2015): 48-84; Adam Wesley Dean, “‘Who Controls the Past Controls the Future’: The Virginia History Textbook Controversy,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 117, no.4 (2009): 318-355; Keith A. Erikson, ed., *Politics and the History Curriculum: The Struggle Over Standards in Texas and the Nation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., Annis N. Shaver, Manuel Bello, eds., *The Textbook as Discourse: Sociocultural Dimensions of American Schoolbooks* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Joseph Moreau, *School Book Nation: Conflicts Over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

to US history. Moreover, and more importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, at no point in the discussion to “Make America Great Again” has anyone mentioned the Puritans.

Indeed, *The Daily Show* was not the only media outlet to ask when “America was great.”⁵⁸⁶ For example, in a 2016 interview with *The New York Times*, Trump’s answer to the question of “when he thought American power had been at its peak” focused on the turn of the twentieth century when the US’s industrial and corporate “machinery” was being built and the 1940s and 1950s when “we [America] were not pushed around, we were respected by everybody, we had just won a war, we were pretty much doing what we had to do.”⁵⁸⁷ In another 2016 example, the “digital media and polling company Morning Consult” conducted a survey that asked registered voters to “select America’s greatest year.”⁵⁸⁸ In terms of aggregate data, the “plurality of people born in the 1930s and 1940s thought the 1950s were America’s best years; people born in the 1960s and the

⁵⁸⁶ See for example Ester Bloom, "When America Was 'Great,' Taxes Were High, Unions Were Strong, and Government Was Big," *The Atlantic*, Sep. 28, 2015, Mar. 21, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/when-america-was-great-taxes-were-high-unions-were-strong-and-government-was-big/407284/>; Ann Brenoff, "3 Things That Really Didn't Make 1950s' America 'Great'," *Huffington Post*, Nov. 17, 2016, Mar. 10, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/3-things-that-really-didnt-make-1950s-america-great_us_5825f4b9e4b02d21bbc86798; Tom Engelhardt, "What Trump Really Means When He Says He'll Make America Great Again," *The Nation*, Apr. 26, 2016, Mar. 21, 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/what-trump-really-means-when-he-says-hell-make-america-great-again/>; Ira Glasser, "When Exactly Was America Great, Donald?," *Huffington Post*, Sep. 28, 2016, Mar. 10, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/when-exactly-was-america-great-donald_us_57ec1496e4b024a52d2c58ee; P. Gorden Lippy, "So, Mr. Trump, Exactly When Was America Great?," *Daily Kos*, Sep. 7, 2015, Mar. 10, 2017, <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/9/7/1419125/-So-Mr-Trump-exactly-when-was-america-great>; Jay Newton-Small, "When Was America Last Great? Here's What Republican Delegates Said," *Time*, Jul. 24, 2016, Mar. 10, 2017, <http://time.com/4416421/republican-convention-delegates-great-america/>.

⁵⁸⁷ Trump quoted in Maggie Haberman and David E. Sanger, "Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views," *The New York Times*, Mar. 26, 2016, Mar. 21, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-transcript.html?action=click&contentCollection=Politics&module=RelatedCoverage®ion=EndOfArticle&pgtype=article>.

⁵⁸⁸ Margot Sanger-Katz, "When Was America Greatest?," *The New York Times*, April 26, 2016, Mar. 10, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/26/upshot/when-was-america-greatest.html>.

1970s had a similar affinity for the 1980s.”⁵⁸⁹ Divided by political party, the most popular years Trump supporters voted for were 2000, 1955, 1960, 1970, and 1985. Nearly half of these respondents, 44 percent, answered that “America’s greatest years were ahead of it.” For democrats, the majority of years picked were “in the 1990s, or since 2000.”⁵⁹⁰ Despite a lack of consensus for when “America was great” both in this poll and Trump’s own comments, it seems that the media and the national imaginary have largely picked up on the decade immediately following World War II as a central time in the US’s greatness.

The fact that no one mentions the Puritans, even when they mention examples prior to the twentieth century, makes a certain amount of sense.⁵⁹¹ If the last time the US was “great” was 400 years ago, then a national narrative of “progress” is negated. As stated in the introduction, the invention of the Puritans as proto-Americans created a falsely linear national origin story, which helped to promote a clear, linear, and forward-thinking sense of national past, present, and future. On the other hand, this dissertation specifically located moments in the twentieth century where the ideal citizen as white, male, Protestant, and heterosexual was threatened as moments that also corresponded with the re-emergence of specific types of Puritan formations in performance and popular culture. The 2016 presidential election cycle and, in all probability, the duration of

⁵⁸⁹ Andrew McGill, “Just When was America Great?,” *The Atlantic*, May 4, 2016, Mar. 10, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/make-the-sixties-great-again/481167/>. By running a “multiple linear regression analysis, which attempts to calculate how much a collection of independent factors influence an outcome,” McGill found a weak correlation for how independent factors may influence a person’s choice for America’s greatest year. That is, the poll results only demonstrate a weak correlation between a respondent’s age, race, or party and their choice of year. Therefore, the poll suggests that the choice of when America was greatest “is more personal than generational.” McGill also suggests that it is not the 1950s that Trump wants to restore but the 1980s based on “his comments on manufacturing, China and Japan.”

⁵⁹⁰ Sanger-Katz, “When Was America Greatest?”

⁵⁹¹ The Morning Consult poll did include a few outliers prior to 1930 as did the informal *Daily Show* segment. McGill, “Just When was America Great?”; Sanger-Katz, “When Was America Greatest?”; “When Was America Great?: The Daily Show”.

Trump's presidency represent, arguably, one of the greatest crises in white heterosexual masculinity that the US has ever seen.

In the midst of writing within this historical moment, I do not yet know how the scope of this crisis will be documented alongside the periods studied in this dissertation: the massive European immigration in the early 20th century, the Cold War and red scare in the 1950s, and the debates and controversies over shame, sexuality, race, and gender in the 1990s. But unlike the periods studied here, the current historical national identity crisis, still invoking the idealized citizen as white, male, heterosexual, and Protestant, does not seem to be pulling upon the Puritans of the national imaginary. Moreover, since beginning this project five years ago there have been relatively few appearances of the Puritans in popular culture.⁵⁹²

My point is not to wax nostalgically for the Puritan formations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but to suggest that the narrative is beginning to change as we enter the twenty-first century. Much of my analyses of Puritan formations involved the overarching questions: How does the US past circulate in the national imaginary and how is it used to support or critique the sociohistorical moment in which it is invoked? How is it used to imagine a national future? Who can claim ownership and/or participation in the past? What bodies in the present moment can the national imaginary's past include? While the Puritans are certainly still part of a US national origin story, a Puritan formation holdover from the nineteenth century as discussed in the introduction, their presence in the national imaginary seems to be in the process of becoming eclipsed by a

⁵⁹² Most of the examples that have appeared are about the Salem witch trials, Puritan witches, and/or *The Crucible*: "Crucible Cast Party [feat. Lin-Manuel Miranda]"; Robert Eggers, "The Witch," (A24, 2015); "Salem," in *Salem* (WGN America, 2014--); Schiff, *The Witches: Salem, 1692*; "Miracle Whip: Witch Hunt," mcgerrybowen 2012, May 5, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TbSQeNh0mE>.

nostalgic yearning and/or focused ambivalence for the 1950s represented in such shows as *Leave It To Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*.

When I began to work with representations of the Puritans in the national imaginary in 2012, I was surprised at the ways in which my students and colleagues framed the Puritans in the terminology of the 1950s nuclear family. For example, one of my first encounters with the Puritans in the twenty-first national imaginary occurred during a poster dialogue session I led during an early rehearsal for a 2012 workshop production of *The Scarlet Letter* at the University of Texas at Austin (also discussed at the beginning of chapter three). I created several posters with titles such as “Role of Puritan Men,” “Role of Puritan Women,” and “Puritan Relationship to Native Americans.” I invited the actors to write words and phrases that they associated with each title. The “Role of Puritan Men” included such phrases as “patriarchal,” “protector and moral compass,” “making the rules,” “ownership,” and “head of household.” For the “Role of Puritan Women,” they wrote such words as “cooking,” “cleaning,” “baby-birthing,” “obedient,” “stay at home mom,” “subservient,” “speak when spoken to,” and “property.” At the time, I noted that from the collective words on the various posters they essentially broke down the Puritan family structure into a slightly more austere and religious version of the stereotypical white, middle-class 1950s nuclear family. A racially diverse group at one of the most liberal universities in Texas, their stereotypes for both the Puritans and the perhaps unconsciously referenced 1950s nuclear family were framed as negative. There was also a clear sense of progress from the time of the Puritans to now (2012).

As I write in the sociohistorical context of 2017, I now wonder if this example represents a new form of Puritan formations that silently elides the naming of “Puritans.” That is, I wonder if the conservative nostalgia for the 1950s as white, middle-class, and

Protestant with clear, patriarchal gender roles and (white) economic prosperity conflates and/or replaces the ways in which the Puritans were activated and (mis)remembered in the twentieth century. Have the attributes of the Puritans to US culture, history, and nationhood now been applied to a new sociohistorical racial formation that references the twentieth instead of seventeenth century? If so, what kinds of invented traditions will this create and/or change? And if the imagined community of the nation is changing, what new groups of people are being included or excluded in the story of US citizenship?

Like the Protestant legacy often invoked by many Puritan formations as foundational to US culture and politics, the 1950s represented a moment of renewed religiosity in US history implicitly understood as Christian. The 1950s included a renewed effort by politicians to emphasize what sociologist Robert N. Bellah most famously theorized as America's "civil religion." Rather than arguing whether or not "Christianity is the national faith," Bellah argues that "there exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America."⁵⁹³ Civil religion is a "public religious dimension" that encompasses the "whole fabric of American life" rather than an individual's (such as a president's) private religious (and denominational) beliefs.⁵⁹⁴

While, as Bellah observes, the concept of civil religion has been around since at least the founding of the US, the 1950s brought with it what US religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom calls "a new form of patriotic piety that was closely linked to the 'cold war.'"⁵⁹⁵ In the early Cold War, as US religious historian Mark A. Noll suggests, it became especially important for the US to differentiate the "virtues of the West's

⁵⁹³ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 134, no. 4 (2005): 40.[1967]

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁹⁵ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 954.

divinely inspired liberties” from the “evils of godless Communism.”⁵⁹⁶ Thus, within these contexts the phrase “under God” was added to the pledge of allegiance in 1954 and in 1956 the phrase “In God We Trust” became the country’s official motto.⁵⁹⁷ Moreover, as Noll points out, “major Protestant denominations as well as the Catholic church benefited” from the post-World War II economic boom and “were able to construct more church buildings than in any other comparable period in the nation’s history.”⁵⁹⁸

Some of the most cited reasons for returning the US to the “greatness” of the 1950s seem to be the US’s newly dominant position in world politics after winning World War II, including the economic prosperity that helped build so many churches. In addition to citing that the US “had just won a war” as one reason for the US’s greatness in the late 1940s and 1950s in his 2016 *New York Times* interview, Trump also named two of his favorite US figures as mid-twentieth century Generals Douglas MacArthur and George Patton. Trump surmised that “if we had Douglas MacArthur today or if we had George Patton today and if we had a president that would let them do their thing you wouldn’t have ISIS, O.K.?”⁵⁹⁹

Furthermore, other reasons cited for the nostalgia of the 1950s in the 2016 Morning Consult poll, discussed above, include phrases like “[l]ife was simpler” and “[s]trong family values.”⁶⁰⁰ There are some important differences in these types of answers and the Puritan formations examined in this dissertation. For example, the narrative forming around a nostalgic 1950s past includes a through line of military and economic prosperity that is not seen in the Puritan formations discussed. Moreover, the

⁵⁹⁶ Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 159.

⁵⁹⁷ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*: 954.

⁵⁹⁸ Noll, *The Old Religion in A New World*: 159.

⁵⁹⁹ Trump quoted in Haberman and Sanger, "Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views".

⁶⁰⁰ Both of these were reasons given in the 2016 Morning Consult poll and were in reference to the “late 1950s and the mid-1980s.” Sanger-Katz, "When Was America Greatest?".

assertion of “[s]trong family values” is now being used in reference to the 1950s rather than the Puritans or representations of them such as *The Scarlet Letter*. As I discussed in chapter three, the conservative discourse around gender, sexuality, shame, and, by extension, family values in the 1990s often looked back to Puritans as represented in *The Scarlet Letter* as a positive example of how shame morally regulates heteronormative society.

Clearly, as numerous op-eds as well as my second chapter demonstrated, the 1950s were not “great” for all Americans just as the Puritans were never dreaming of building a future democratic US nation built on civil and religious liberty.⁶⁰¹ In addition to Jim Crow laws, HUAC and the punishment of US citizens based on political beliefs, and inequality for women, one of the biggest factors in post-war economic growth was the GI bill. Despite the presence of soldiers of color, the GI bill primarily helped only white families achieve the middle-class American Dream.⁶⁰² This dissertation traced the inequalities US citizens suffered throughout the twentieth century, marking a line between the idealized citizen and the socially unequal citizen, as represented in Puritan formations.

A similar formation process is currently happening in the suggestion that an historical moment of the US’s past, very strongly suggested as being in the 1950s, should be emulated without critically examining the sociohistorical implications of the time (2017) in which the past is being evoked and for whom it benefits. (Not to mention the elision of historical facts about the period nostalgized.) This dissertation provided both a

⁶⁰¹ Articles that attempt to debunk the myth that the 1950s were “great” include, Bloom, “When America Was ‘Great,’ Taxes Were High, Unions Were Strong, and Government Was Big”; Brenoff, “3 Things That Really Didn’t Make 1950s’ America ‘Great’”; Glasser, “When Exactly Was America Great, Donald?”; Kim Soffen and Denise Lu, “When Was America Great? It Depends on Who You Are,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 7, 2016, Mar. 21, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/2016-election/when-was-america-great/>.

⁶⁰² Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement,” 1241.

methodology and extended analysis of how to think more critically about how and why these stories circulate in the national imaginary, who they include and exclude, and why they are chosen to elicit patriotism or critique the nation at given historical moments.

Meanwhile, as the nation continues to grapple with when “America was great,” Thanksgiving pageants and curricular units on *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter* continue unabated in public education. In all but perhaps the First Thanksgiving myth, the uses of these Puritan formations continue to elide the foundational importance and presence of people of color to the Puritans-as-founding-myth. In a 2014 article for *Indian Country Media Network*, journalist Alysa Landry observes that a “staggering 87 percent of references to American Indians in all 50 states’ academic standards portray them in a pre-1900 context.” The article begins with a colorful illustration, presumably from an elementary school textbook, of “[f]riendly Indians” showing a Pilgrim family how to “plant corn, beans, and pumpkins.” Indeed, as the article documents, what most students learn about Native Americans occur in lessons about Thanksgiving and Columbus Day.⁶⁰³ In focusing on Native Americans within the context of Thanksgiving, the public schools continue an unquestioned recycling of Puritan formations that simultaneously reinforce an elision of the continued contributions of people of color to US culture and its founders in the national imaginary.

During the process of writing this dissertation, I have witnessed the #BlackLivesMatter movement develop and the US government continue a legacy of Native American dispossession in the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). In a case of almost double dispossession, the mainstream media only began covering the protests at Standing Rock in July 2016, nearly five months after they began in January 2016. As journalist Tristan Ahtone writes in *Al Jazeera English*, “it took

⁶⁰³ Landry, “All Indians Are Dead?” At Least That’s What Most Schools Teach Children”.

nearly five months for mainstream outlets to recognise that a few thousand Native Americans physically resisting the construction of an oil pipeline was newsworthy.” By not covering these protests, the media only reinforced a national forgetting of living Native Americans and their dispossession in what continues to be a settler colonial nation.

Meanwhile, the development of the Black Lives Matter movement as well as the events that created and sustain the need for it have severely disrupted the (largely white-held) notions of a colorblind and/or post-racial US society.⁶⁰⁴ For many (white) Americans, the narrative of the classic Civil Rights movement—from *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965)—perpetuated a myth of national identity that had finally risen above racism and reached equality, a concept I noted in chapter two. Yet as historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall demonstrates in delineating the long civil rights movement, the process to integrate public schools continued well into the 1980s.⁶⁰⁵ Furthermore, the continued use of such tactics as redlining, voter suppression via racially-informed gerrymandering, strict voter ID laws, and the school-to-prison pipeline remain largely invisible or nonexistent to white Americans, making the civil rights work of groups like Black Lives Matter even more important.

When the national imaginary activates the past in the process of adapting Puritan, racial, and/or (fill-in-the-blank) formations, it only does so in order to make sense of the present moment’s relationship to the past in order to enact the future. Performed in various bodies across the twentieth century, Puritan formations often added little to an

⁶⁰⁴ For more the concept of colorblindness as it began to develop in the neoliberalism of the 1990s and the concept of a post-racial society following President Barack Obama’s 2008 election see, Omi and Winant, *Racial Formations in the United States*: 211-45.

⁶⁰⁵ Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement."

historical understanding of the seventeenth-century Puritans but instead taught performing bodies and witnessing audiences what it meant to be a US citizen, what bodies could better claim this national past, and the ways in which present moments could improve upon the democratic and moral legacies of the Puritans, as well as their mistakes and shortsightedness. In their various incarnations, they became at once an allegory to warn, sustain, challenge, and move the US forward.

Yet, it may be that as the US moves further into the twenty-first century many of the uses of Puritan formations will be further adapted and transferred to the more recent 1950s nostalgic past of white, religious, and middle-class nuclear families. Perhaps this stems from a sense that the US has truly proved its exceptionalism and manifest destiny in the national imaginary in ways that were not quite as assured when Progressive-era civic elites sought to assimilate Southern and Eastern European immigrant children. By the end of the twentieth century, perhaps the US could finally claim the full legacy of being a “city upon a hill” with its defeat of European fascism in World War II, the symbolic dominance over Russian communism at the end of the Cold War, the discourse of colorblindness masquerading as racial equality, and the visibility of women in the (intimate) public sphere. As such, it may be that the narrative use of a nationally imagined past is shifting to imagine the US as the greatest world power (1950s military and economic strength) while subsuming the narrative of the US as the world’s moral and democratic center (the proto-American Puritans-as-national-origin-story). Whatever reasons and meanings for this change, the primary uses will (probably) remain the same: to unite the nation with a common story, creating an imagined community that sets the boundaries of nationhood and citizenship and which continues to support the idealized US citizen as white, Protestant/Christian, middle-class, heterosexual, and male.

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