

**THE SALEM WITCH HUNT AND NATIVE AMERICANS: ANALYSIS OF THEIR  
RELATIONSHIP IN ELIZABETH GASKELL'S *LOIS THE WITCH***

de

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I, the undersigned, Leticia González Pérez, as a student of the Faculty of Humanities and Psychology at the University of Almeria, hereby declare under the penalty of perjury, and also certify with my signature below, that my Master's Thesis, titled: The Salem Witch Hunt and Native Americans: Analysis of Their Relationship in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Lois the Witch* is my own work, except where indicated by the reference to the printed and electronic sources used according to the internationally accepted rules and regulations on intellectual property rights.

*Dedication*

*I would like to dedicate this paper to the people fighting for their freedom without any fear, despite all the stepping stones and hatred in their way. For having the freedom to wholeheartedly embrace their origins and identity, freedom to love without any barriers or borders. Thank you for leading us towards a better society.*



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# Introduction

The United States is considered to be a kaleidoscope of numerous cultures. People from a diversity of backgrounds cohabit the country and for centuries now there has been a connection among a variety of them, including English, Afro-American, Asian or Indian, to name a few. One of the cultures with the richest heritage, which inhabited the country since prior to the arrival of colonisers is the Native American. Despite the number of American Indians falling at a rapid speed with the arrival of colonisers and being forced to remain in certain reservations and isolated, they still comprise a relevant number of the population, a number that has been increasing in recent years. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2020, from 2010 to 2020 the American Indian and Alaska Native population has increased by a 160%. Some of the reasons behind this increase might be found in the fact that many of them find themselves proud of their heritage, claiming their status as Indian Americans (Fesser, 2022) after being encouraged to embrace their identity as fully or multiracial people (Chavez and Kaur, 2021). This encouragement and interest in accepting one's Indian American heritage may come, among other aspects, from the increase in the interest in multiculturalism especially found in young people, mostly in social media and the internet in general. What is more, organisations and groups of people are working together encouraging to demonstrate the diversity in order to prevent entire cultures from being extinguished. Likewise, literature, art and popular culture have played a paramount role in the representation of Native Americans and other minorities, making them relevant for society in general for centuries now and attempting to reduce the stereotyping and generalization that is quite spread about them. Focusing on literature itself, many writers have paid attention to Native

Americans and have defended their identity and relevance as a community for centuries, portraying their diversity and approaching readers of any background or interest to their customs, traditions and diversity.

Among the writers who pioneered the defence of Native Americans as diverse and whole community was Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865). Gaskell is considered one of the most celebrated British writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sometimes overshadowed by other writers of her era as the Brönte sisters or George Elliot (Rosefield, 2018). However, especially in the latest decades, her realist and varied fiction has attracted more readers and a growing interest in the analysis of her works (The Gaskell Society, n.d.). Despite the main focus of her writing being realism, Elizabeth Gaskell published several ground-breaking pieces of fiction where, through a mixture of Gothic and realist literature, defenced certain minorities, especially against racism and misogyny. What is more, her characters and the harsh episodes they endure, through her striking diction, approached readers to the deepest sides of the human soul. As Edna Lyall wrote about her,

Few writers, we think, have exercised a more thoroughly wholesome influence over their readers than Mrs Gaskell. Her books, with their wide human sympathies, their tender comprehension of human frailty, their bright flashes of humour and their infinite pathos, seem to plead with us to love one another. Through them all we seem to hear the author's voice imploring us to 'seize the day' and to 'make friends' (Lyall 1897: 145)

In 1861, she published *Lois the Witch and Other Stories*, where the short story *Lois the Witch* is considered an attempt to defend American Indians against the prejudices and attacks they had had to dealt for centuries. Set in the Salem Witchcraft trials, it utilises the story of a young girl forced to move to Puritan America in the 16<sup>th</sup> century who faces the harsh side of the community as the springboard to comment on such issues. Through this story that mixes historical fiction, realism and gothic elements, readers can get in touch and learn more about the Salem Witchcraft trials –considered one of the biggest episodes of mass hysteria that took place in New England. In addition, it displays, through different characters, the strong beliefs of the Puritan society, the mistreatment of Native Americans and other minorities,

including women. Thus, it can be considered a novella that gives visibility to the victims of the Witchcraft trials, as well as an analysis of how the prejudices about certain minorities could have led to their demise in such a traditional and radical society. Furthermore, it provides readers with a glimpse of Native American culture in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and their interest in witchcraft.

The purpose of this Master's thesis is to carry out a thorough analysis of *Lois the Witch*, focusing on the Puritans, their conceptions about witchcraft and how their fear and prejudices affected their stranded relationship with Native Americans. Moreover, this story is taken as the starting point to understand how episodes such as this one could have led to the genocide suffered by this community, which persisted for centuries. Additionally, the reasons behind the choice of *Lois the Witch* as the point of departure for this paper is twofold: first, this novella is not as highly recognised as others of Gaskell's works, providing the opportunity to analyse it from a different perspective with an original or different perspective. Second, the portrayal of Native Americans and their harsh relationship with colonisers shall be useful to analyse the evolution of the status of Native Americans since the colonisation era until present times, observing their gradual inclusion in society and the aspects still to develop.

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical framework, which serves as the basis for a better understanding of the following chapters. It provides background on several topics: first, the Salem Witchcraft trials of 1692, as it is the setting of *Lois the Witch*. Second, the historical background of Native Americans since the arrival of colonisers in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, paying attention to certain elements that contributed to their status in the society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, e.g. their interest and belief in witchcraft or the stereotyping that is somehow still inherent in society. A subchapter shall be dedicated to Tituba, the first convicted of witchcraft in Salem and who is represented in *Lois the Witch*. Furthermore, a brief subchapter will be dedicated to Elizabeth Gaskell as well, to get to know especially the origins of her interest in Gothic fiction.

In Chapter 2, the emphasis shall be put in the thorough analysis of *Lois the Witch*. After a brief introduction to the novel and its plot, an examination will be

carried out on the different perspectives towards Native Americans displayed in the novella. First, the point of view of the Puritans of Salem, whose prejudices, warfare and fear towards Native Americans played an essential role in their condemnation of Indian Americans. Second, from a subtler and more unbiased perspective, especially of the protagonist and other characters who share similar views to hers. A special subchapter shall be dedicated to Tituba and how Gaskell introduced her story through the Native American characters in the novella. Likewise, as the novel condemns how hysteria and radical beliefs may have a negative impact on any minority, a brief analysis will be carried out on the rejection of Lois, on the grounds of being a woman, but especially a foreigner, as it occurred with Native Americans.

In Chapter 3, an overview of the Native American community nowadays shall be delivered. Some of the elements introduced in this chapter include their growing inclusion in the American society and increasing interest towards their culture worldwide. Besides, some of their traditions and customs that date back to early centuries will be explained with the aim of advocating for their rich and diverse culture. A brief subchapter shall put emphasis on the status of Native American women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, their status and role, due to their paramount role in *Lois the Witch* as both being women and indigenous.

# Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework

## 1.1. Salem Witchcraft trials

The Salem witchcraft trials that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have been heavily theorised and analysed for centuries in an attempt to shed some light into the origins and reasons behind this episode. With regards to the origins and actual events that took place in 1692, as Marta M. Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2012: 14-15) explains, there is still no clear evidence that demonstrates what actually happened in Salem, only the fact that it is considered a remarkable historical event for American history and culture, especially of the city of Salem. In general terms and according to the common factors of the different versions of the story, the Salem witchcraft trials can be described as a witch hunt that took place in colonial North America in 1692. It is said that a group of girls named Sarah Parris and Abigail Williams, respectively daughter and niece of the Reverend Samuel Parris, started showing unusual symptoms, at the time considered possession by an “evil hand” (Vetere, 2003: 97). According to Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2012: 12-13), the girls were practising magic to guess about their future husbands, but since their un-Puritan actions would come with great consequences and punishment, they eventually accused people of bewitching them, resulting in nineteen people who were hanged, four people died in prison and a farmer, Giles Corey, was pressed to death; moreover, around 150 people spent some months in prison. Studies on the aftermath of the episode observe two different reactions to the trials: those of the victims and those of whom were somehow involved in the prosecution of the accused. On the one hand, focusing on the families of the victims, they wanted compensation for their losses and

specially to restore the innocence of their related ones who had lost their lives or reputations. On the other, it is said different actions were taken. Some moved away from Salem, others wanted to make amends and apologised and certain people even changed their last names (Baker, 2014: 230). What is clear is that, despite other episodes of witchcraft across the country and even in Europe, Salem's was utterly different from the others. According to Ray (2010: 40), some of the main differences between the Salem witchcraft episode and any other outbreak in New England include the following,

It lasted longer, jailed more suspects, condemned and executed more people, ranged over more territory, and afterwards was quickly repudiated by the government as a colossal mistake - a great delusion. In the end, the fifteen-month affair, across twenty-four different communities, resulted in 162 arrests, fifty-four confessions, twenty-eight convictions, twenty executions, and five deaths in jail due to poor conditions. Some 1,600 people are named in approximately 950 extant court records.

As outrageous or implausible as it may seem for a modern society, as Nevins advises (1892: 236-237), it is important to look at the events from the perspective of the era, "we must first put ourselves in the place of the men and women of 1692. They believed in witchcraft; that there was such thing, no one doubted". Moreover, as it occurs with any other belief that has died out with the passage of time, as a result of developments in science or in society in general, it is undeniable that witchcraft was part of the collective thought that led to one of the most remarkable episodes in New England history. Its transcendence made the episode become a hallmark of the city of Salem, which became "the Witch city", Halloween capital of the world (Baker, 2014: 256). In fact, popular culture, with TV series such as *Bewitched*, *Charmed*, *The Vampire Chronicles* or *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* or even the latest *Salem* have contributed to making the city and this episode more popular worldwide, a trend that continues to this day. Likewise, the city has been built up with a converging group of witchcraft attractions that attract tourists from all over the world due to, among other aspects, the economic benefits they entail. One may be surprised when visiting it, since almost every aspect of the city includes witches as a sign, such as police cars or the mascots of some high schools (Crowley, 2015).

Literature played another relevant role in making the witchcraft trials of Salem a hallmark of the city and an essential cultural element of America. It can be classified into two types: fiction and non-fiction. Fiction literature has represented the Salem witchcraft trials and its origins through different perspectives, characters and topics. One of the works with more repercussion in the literature that came afterwards on the episode is John Neal's *Rachel Dyer* (1828). The novel is loosely based in the persecution and execution of Mary Dyer in Boston, Massachusetts, for being an American Puritan turned Quaker (Carlson, 2007: 408). From this event, Neal invented that Dyer had two daughters and connected them to the trials, probably with the aim to criticise Puritans, as he was born a Quaker himself (Carlson, 2007: 408). Nathaniel Hawthorne played a significant role in portraying Salem and is reckoned to have established Salem in the American imagination (Baker, 2014: 268). In fact, as Baker (2014: 269) comments, the history of his ancestors connects him with the persecution of witches and treatment of Native Americans. Among his most remarkable novels that contemplate to a lesser or greater extent this issue we may find *Young Goodman Brown* (1846), which deals with a man –whose name is the same of the title of the story–, who is taken aback when he discovers his entire town has been lost to Satan. *The House of the Seven Gables* is another novel where he introduces his ancestors and their role in the witch trials, especially Judge John Hathorne. The subplot related to the Indians, where they grant the colonel their land, may evidence Hawthorne's knowledge about their mistreatment of Native Americans (Baker, 2014: 270). Louisa May Alcott is another writer who made references to witches as well in her novel *Little Women* (1868-9), especially when the girls are rehearsing a play called *The Witch's Curse*. The main reason behind the introduction of this play in the novel is considered to make references to her direct relation with Judge Samuel Sewall (Baker, 2014: 271), one of the judges of the trials who condemned at least twenty people (N.E. Historical Society, 2022). Of course, it is worth mentioning the main work under discussion in this dissertation, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Lois the Witch*, which explores the extents to which religious persecution and racial stereotypes can get, especially in the context of nineteenth century colonial America (Hafaele-Thomas, 2012: 51), introducing such themes as feminism, racism and religion.



In the twentieth century, Arthur Miller's widely acclaimed drama *The Crucible* took readers back to Salem and its witchcraft trials. However, despite being set in the nineteenth century's trials, it is actually a commentary and criticism towards America in his own era (Popkin, 1964: 139) but shaped the collective perception on the events. In fact, as Sarah E. Junod (2020: 116) explains, it established "a moral lesson for the nation about the importance of individual action against repression" which could be extended to any injustice. The play is also considered to have contributed to the generalisation of the trials and the afflicted by them. For instance, as Junod (2020: 357) condemns, several tourist attractions in Salem include information with direct references to *The Crucible*, such as the afflicted girls being sexualised teenagers who sought revenge against not corresponded loves. Furthermore, not only did he influence tourism, but also the collective thinking towards Salem and the trials, which, as Junod explains, transcended even into popular culture.

Non-fiction can be subdivided, according to Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2012: 13-14), into two different types of recollections of the events: historical interpretations and collections of original documents. Within the former subtype, Deodat Lawson's *A True and Brief Narrative* (1692) is an example. Narrated by Lawson, a former minister of Salem village, he claimed that one of the reasons Satan was attacking the village and trying to establish his kingdom by meeting with a number of witches was because of the village's dispute over the choice of a minister (Ray, 2010: p.49). The latter subtype includes such examples as the first compilation of the events, *Records of Salem Witchcraft, Copied from the Original Documents*, by W. Elliot Woodward and published in 1864, which started a trend of collections that continues nowadays, including *Death in Salem: The Private Lives Behind the 1692 Witch Hunt* (2010), by Diane E. Foulds which, as its name indicates, explores and examines the lives of most trials' participants to understand how it led to those outcomes (Foulds, 2010).

In addition, these events have been studied by such disciplines as sociology, psychology or medicine. Medical fields have also analysed the episode, some concluding that people's strange attitudes could have been caused either by LSD present in rye, used to make bread; *encephalitis lethargica* or Lyme disease (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2012: 14).

From a sociological and psychological perspective, studies explore how these accusations could have come from social pressure from the community, as most of them confessed their crimes to be discharged, whilst the ones who did not were eventually convicted and executed (Nevins, 1892: 246). For instance, according to Nevins (1892: 236) it was a common practice in Christian countries to arrest and execute people for these alleged crimes and, in fact, witchcraft trials were practised across Europe as well as in America. Other sociological studies provide a feminist perspective to the events and focus on the role of women in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In her study, Vetere (2003) implied how witchcraft probably came from the harshness and vicissitudes these women had to endure throughout their lives in such a patriarchal society (Vetere, 2003: 104). The author pays attention to the figure of Anne Putnam, one of the afflicted who is said to have accused around 62 people. She was especially studied in Charles W. Upham's work *Salem Witchcraft, Volumes I and II* (1969), which explores the same feminist theory and further. According to these theories, Ann Putnam, her ghost stories and the spiritual circle she had before delusions began could have constituted a safety valve for women. Through these practices, they were able to "articulate domestic griefs and grievances: to talk about the unbearable and supposedly unspeakable pain in their lives—of dead children, siblings, mothers or abusive fathers, mothers, or masters" (Vetere, 2003: 103). This might have been originated in Protestantism, which could have added further pressure on women and motherhood as it sacralised family as the "primary unit of spiritual authority" (Vetere, 2003: 165). Not only did these women have to carry the weight of taking care of their homes, but also of being the moral backbone of their families, tossing out any emotion and hardships they might have felt, leading probably to psychological traumas.

## **1.2. Native Americans. History and colonisation**

The origins of Native Americans remain unknown and has been subject of study for over decades and centuries from genetic, linguistic and archaeological fields (Reich, 2012: 1), as well as from artistic, literary and feminist perspectives (Ramírez, 2007:

24-27). Before 1492, scholars have concluded that most of them descend from Asian and Canadian groups, but it was further complicated to analyse after the mixture it suffered with African and European immigrants when colonisations began.

With the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century onwards, the population of Native Americans plummeted by the effects of epidemic diseases, conquest, violence, war, as well as the discrimination they suffered in political and legal fields (Pauls, n.d.). As Pearce (1965: 58) explains, Puritans viewed Indians as direct descendants of Cain or God's tools to punish civilised people for not completing their mission. Therefore, a common thought that persevered before and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the depiction of Indians as despicable and vicious, with a need to fight them in accordance to their divine mission (Pittet, 2001: 37-38). Some of the most renowned events that took place and led to their demise include the following: First, in the different wars that took place in American history, Indians were also participants of them, most of the times in the losing side. One example is the American War for Independence (1775-1783). Indians siding with the British, they exchanged fur for European goods, as they did with other colonisers, and actively participated in the war but still lost (Ural, 2010: 187). In the American Civil War (1861-1865) a similar fate awaited them. Furthermore, there were some attacks and massacres that contributed to the decrease of their population and variety of tribes. Sand Creek Massacre (1864), for instance, was a surprise attack on a camp of Cheyenne and Arapaho people after a truce had been negotiated. It is estimated that more than 230 Native Americans were assassinated (Britannica, n.d.). The Battle of Little Big Horn (1876) constitutes another relevant event in the history of warfare between white settlers and Indians and one of the opportunities where Native Americans could demonstrate their power during the nineteenth century, which was led by one of the greatest figures in Native American history: Sitting Bull (Urwin, n.d.) Despite this victory, the constant warfare and factors as the above-mentioned led to their downfall. Throughout decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Acts were implemented, which diminished their identity and independence, e.g. the Indian Removal Act of 1830 granted the President authority to relocate eastern Indians to lands in the west of the Mississippi river (Bowes, 2014: 65), so that Europeans could accommodate across the country whilst Native Americans were slaughtered and cornered in a side

of the country, the commonly known as *Trail of Death* and *Trail of Tears* (Bowes, 2014: 72). One of the final events eventually led to the great diminution in population was Wounded Knee Massacre (1890). This massacre, as Hudson (n.d.) explains, “broke any organized resistance to reservation life and assimilation to white American culture, although American Indian activists renewed public attention to the massacre during a 1973 occupation of the site”, this latest element constituting a positive aspect in the fight for their independence, individuality and equality with white settlers. As a result, and with an attempt to preserve their traditions and identity and prevent white colonisers from forcing Christianity and trying to “civilise” them, the Indian reservations created by the federal government with the Indian Appropriations Act in 1851 were augmented at the end of the nineteenth century and the population has been increasing with the passing of time. Notwithstanding, as it shall be addressed in chapter 3, despite their conditions improving and a gradual inclusion within the society, numerous changes are still required to achieve an utter equality in comparison to white American citizens. This aspect, in fact, may be generalised to any minority living in the US.

#### 1.2.a. Native Americans: their depiction in literature and mass media

Stereotypes on Native Americans started with the first settlers, who conceived them as “savages”, and despite some literary and political movements trying to change those depictions, as Katrina Brown (2019: 43) claims, these stereotypes are to this day still inherent and harmful for this group.

According to Brown (2019: 44), perceptions of Native Americans were carried out by colonisers based on two European cultural frameworks: Christianity and civilisation. Following these two ideologies, settlers developed two main descriptions of this group: the natives were a gentle or naïve people, as Adam and Eve who lived in nature as children of god, or they were savage cannibals, who lived separated from the realms of god (Brown, 2019: 44). Thus, Native Americans were judged since the arrival of the first settlers by European standards, especially based on their culture and beliefs.

One of the first works focusing on Native Americans entirely, Michel de Montaigne’s *Of the Cannibals*, criticises the European perception of them, describing

thus Indians not as savages, but different (Brown, 2019: 45). Furthermore, Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2012: 18) compiles the topics included in fiction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century about the Salem Witchcraft trials, concluding that around 40% of the literary works studied mention Native Americans. Some examples include *Rachel Dyer* by John Neal (1828), *The Salem Belle* (1842), *South Meadows* by T. Disosway (1874), or B. Mackie's *Ye Lyttle Salem Maide* (1898). In such works, the influence of the settler's depiction of Native Americans is tangible, as they are seen as "as faithful friends and as the dark enemies who lived in the woods and attacked villages and killed their inhabitants" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2012: 24). However, it is worth mentioning that certain works of the nineteenth century focused on the perspective of Native Americans, advocating for their rights as citizens of America. One example can be found in *Yamoyden: a Tale of the Wars of King Phillip, in Six Cantos* (1820) by J. W. Eastburn and Robert C. Sands, which is said to have started the wave of stories that incorporated Native Americans into the mainstream of American literature (Nakamura, 2014: 129). Another interesting look-out at Native Americans' perspective is C.M. Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827). This novel approaches the Pequot war and its aftermath from the perspective of both sides, but is considered a ground-breaking novel with respect to its support of Native Americans and advocating for female equality in the patriarchal Puritan era of the seventeenth century.

Other studies focus on the portrayal of Native Americans in more recent literary fiction, as they usually reflect the stereotypes imbedded in popular belief. For instance, focusing on children's literature, a study based on 1950's children literature concluded that the vast majority of the books analysed included stereotypes and offensive language, such as "primitive", "battles" being won by whites and "massacres" carried out by Indians, "dirty" or "untrustworthy", opposite to adjectives that refer to white people, or more specifically, men, such as "clean" "heroic" or "courageous" (Abington-Pitre, 1999:79-80). This juxtaposition evidences the duality and prejudices against Native Americans were still present in the society of the 1950s and is said to have originated in the preconceived and misinterpreted ideas of Thanksgiving. In the words Michael A. Dorris (2011), it is imbedded, especially in Americans' minds, how colonisers saved the Indians from their savagery, as he claims,

Native Americans have more than one thing not to be thankful about on Thanksgiving. Pilgrim Day, and its antecedent feast Halloween, represent the annual twin peaks of Indian stereotyping . . . smeared with lipstick and rouge, decked out in an assortment of 'Indian suits' composed of everything from old clothes to fringed paper bags, little trick-or-treaters and school pageant extras mindlessly sport and cavort (...) virtually none of the standard fare surrounding either Halloween or Thanksgiving contains an ounce of authenticity, historical accuracy, or cross-cultural perception (p.19)

Furthermore, even in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, stereotypes and generalised ideas about American Native people persisted, usually placing them as one single culture, contrary to the reality of their tremendous diversity. Thus, the differences among them are not completely recognised (Bos, 2002: 71). In fact, this generalisation spread to many forms of mass media, and people across the US have been flooded for decades with these stereotypes rather than actual information about them, hence the increase of that popular belief. What is more, indigenous people, their origins and traditions have even been used for questionable purposes, for instance, sports teams taking advantage of their appearances, clothing or other hallmarks to represent mascots or for any other cultural exploitation or appropriation. For instance, *Redskins* is the name a famous American football team that has caused great controversy over recent years (Kanke: 2017).

Notwithstanding, throughout decades there has been a rise in literature that reclaims the identity, customs and cultural elements of Native Americans. *The Birchbark House* (1999) or *The Night Watchman* (2020) by Louise Erdrich, the latter of which was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 2021 (Italie and Kennedy, 2021), are clear examples where Native Americans are given full humanity, the ability to have their flaws and experience their lives as human beings, not as an entity from which colonisers or white people in general can learn from or fear (Brown, 2019:53). Poet Joy Harjo is another noteworthy example, whose autobiographical memoir *Crazy Brave: A Memoir* (2013) and poetry, aim at establishing an identity for herself as well as giving visibility to Native American people and their culture (García Navarro, 2019: p.64). Moreover, the defence of Native women's experiences and their portrayal in

the arts is also asserted by writers as Tessie Naranjo and her narratives (Mithlo, 2009: p. 5 and 27).

### 1.2.b. Native Americans and the Salem Witchcraft trials

As implied by d'Errico (1999: 13) America was never a new world or a "virgin" location when the colonists arrived for the first time. In fact, there was not a triumph of colonisation over savagery but a cultural union between Native Americans and colonists. Nonetheless, the former lost a great part of its identity as a cause of new diseases and especially the genocide that took place for centuries, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

It can be argued that the rejection and racism suffered by Native Americans and other racial groups have suffered for centuries and that continues to this day started with colonialism. As Junod (2020: 82) explains, racism gradually increased as the English established contact with Africans and Native Americans through colonialism and trade. Influenced by their cultural origins, Europeans started to associate lightness and darkness of skin with the moral juxtaposition between light and dark, good and evil, which probably served as an excuse for them justify that supremacist power and violence. It may come as no surprise to understand that the beliefs, customs and traditions of Native Americans added up to that juxtaposition and culture clash and created a sense of reciprocal fear and rejection, being increased due to the "constant warfare between them" (McMillan, 1994: 113). In fact, English settlers tended to associate Indians and black people as "devil worshippers", regarding their shamans.

Focusing on Native Americans and their relationship to witchcraft, as Dennis (2003: 21) explains, despite the cultural differences between European colonisers and Native Americans, they still shared several common grounds: their desire to keep their land and their belief in witchcraft. Therefore, since Native Americans believed in witchcraft and practised it indeed, European settlers considered Indian supernatural practices as diabolical, which probably led to that fear and persecution,

Indian supernaturalism, particularly claims of direct, personal revelation, made Natives suspect in the eyes of colonists and helped persuade

English settlers that Indians liber ally practiced the dark arts. Hostile colonists characterized the Natives' homeland as "wilderness," a "devil's den." They saw the Indians' natural religion as diabolical, understood Native shamans as witches, and demeaned Native practitioners as slaves of Satan (Dennis, 2003: 21).

In fact, New Englanders tended to associate Indians and black people with the devil, and Puritans believed themselves to be the chosen ones by god "to bring his word to a previously heathen land" (Norton, 2002: 58). As a result, the afflicted misconduct of people in Salem could have been understood by Puritans as a sign to remove evil and introduce the word of god in this new land. This idea could have had an influence over the posterior slavery and mistreatment of both communities, including their genocide and the slavery endured by black people from more than hundred years since the arrival of colonisers in the seventeenth century (McMillan 1994: 100). Focusing on black people, McMillan (1994: 113) points out how interesting it is that Satan was never depicted as a Native American but as a black man. The reasons behind this portrayal might be in the constant warfare between white settlers and Native Americans. The mixture of wariness, superstition and lack of scientific knowledge could have originated certain fear in European colonisers, thus portraying Satan as a black man in order to prevent any unbeknownst danger led by Native Americans. In fact, studies establish a correlation between the witchcraft trials and the socio-economic change endured at the time, which once again point out at the establishment of Puritans at a higher social level, whereas black people, Native Americans or other minorities were among the accused (Hafaele- Thomas, 2012: 56). As explained by Boyer and Nissebaum (1977: 12) comment:

A good candidate for an accusation of witchcraft was some impoverished person who had appealed to the traditional code of communal responsibility by requesting a favour (...) In this model, the accuser was an individual who had denied the beggar's request, thus failing to conform to the traditional code of behaviour (...) This accusation itself took the form of



a claim that it was really the beggar (now the alleged witch) who was morally culpable in the incident.

Native Americans' witchcraft was rooted in most tribes and it is said to continue in some of the most traditional ones as well. As Dennis (2003: 22) explains, it usually helps, as it occurs with Christian tradition, to understand why difficult and bad episodes take place in the world and attempt to avoid misfortune. In his work, he takes the example of the Iroquois tribe, who actually believed their misfortunes, diseases and even the suffering and extermination brought by colonialism was a result of witchery (Dennis, 2003: 22). This idea might be paralleled to how Puritans believed the odd behaviour of Salem girls came from witchery instead of any other medical or psychological origin. It is also worth pointing out that, in contrast to Puritan and colonial perception, witchery was believed to have no genre, "it was a male as well as a female art" (Dennis, 2003: 22- 23)<sup>1</sup>, however, it mingled over time with the colonisers' perceptions of being mainly a female practise.

### *1.2.b.1 Tituba, the Salem slave*

Tituba is considered a key element to understand how the fear of witchcraft led to this episode of mass hysteria (Porterfield, 1997: 1372). Plenty of literature explores her influence on the trials and how the perception, dread and rejection of settlers towards Native Americans and African American slaves could have marked her role in the trials as well as further rejection towards these groups and the desire to establish a hegemonic white American culture across the country (Junod, 2020: 80).

According to many versions of these trials, Tituba was the Parris family slave, who allegedly taught the girls folk magic (Vetere, 2003: 3). Her origins have been a constant object of interpretation and analysis, portraying her mainly as black and

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<sup>1</sup> As Dennis (2003: 23) comments, the no-genre conception of Indians started to mingle with the Colonial perspective especially during the nineteenth century, believing that it was women who tended to be witches, thus partaking a more misogynistic perspective.

Indian (Hansen, 1974: 3)<sup>2</sup>. Notwithstanding, some evidence supports that she was probably an enslaved indigenous woman from South America. As Junod (2020: 79-80) explains, Tituba was enslaved with her husband, John Indian, by Samuel Parris and both were brought to Massachusetts from his plantation in Barbados. It is argued that she was the scapegoat of the trials, being accused of having brought superstitious magic and having bewitched the Parris girls. The girls accused Tituba, Sarah Osborne and Sara Good of witchcraft on the grounds of their position as outsiders –which would therefore hinder their own defence–. As stated by various sources, Tituba confessed to witchcraft, probably after being beaten and forced by Samuel Parris. Afterwards, Tituba was imprisoned, but eventually “recanted her confession, admitting that she had lied to protect herself” (Breslaw, 1997: 172).

Literature on Indian Americans and their relationship with Puritans evidence there existed a popular rejection, fear and prejudice against this group, as Breslaw (1997: 157) describes, “The image of the deceitful Indian, born of mistaken notions about native American cultures, was a common stereotype throughout the colonial era. Indian words were usually suspect in most courts of law”. For that reason, it certainly was considered odd that Puritans did not doubt Tituba’s confession and accusations, however, they probably did as it underpinned their beliefs on witchcraft and the supernatural.

As Junod explains, Tituba is an example of how colonialists used African Americans, Native Americans or any other indigenous group to foster fear and consequently, rejection and racism towards these groups, further determining that juxtaposition between white people who equal goodness vs. other origins, *i.e.* Native Americans or blacks as evilness. In fact, Tituba becoming the scapegoat shifted “blame for the witchcraft panic from Anglo-American culture and intellectualism to an unruly woman of colour extrinsic to New England” (Junod, 2020: iv). What is more, this perception of her as a scapegoat and the source of the bewitchment of the girls has remained in touristic sites across Salem and in the collective imagination,

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<sup>2</sup> Numerous studies point out at the fact that depending on the historical events and racial anxieties of each certain era, Tituba was discussed to be either one race or another, especially in fiction literature (Junod 2020: 80).

especially due to her portrayal in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, which, as aforementioned, influenced general audience's imaginations on the trials and its participants.

### 1.3. Elizabeth Gaskell, witchcraft and Colonial America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century

Elizabeth Gaskell's early years as a writer are mainly characterised by realist and romance fiction, including such works as *Mary Barton*. Notwithstanding, within these years she already claimed her interest in Gothic fiction, turning to Gothic fiction in the 1850s. According to McCord Chavez (p.62), two main events led to her writing this genre,

1) a meeting with Charlotte Brontë, whose biography Gaskell would later be asked to write and (2) an invitation by Dickens to contribute to *Household Words*, publishing most of her short gothic fiction in the Victorian periodical *All the Year Round* –where *Lois the Witch* was published in 1859–, founded and owned by Charles Dickens as well (McCord Chavez, 2015: p. 62).

Gothic tradition is mainly characterised by stories on forgotten curses, figures of the past who come for vengeance or prophecies of doom. It usually includes characters such as absent parents, suffering women or paranormal entities (Kranzler: 2006: 54). In the case of Elizabeth Gaskell, her gothic works are characterised by the overlapping of two elements: the aforementioned alongside the concern of male persecution and oppression for women. As Kranzler (2006: 47) explains, it is likely that Elizabeth Gaskell used Gothic literature –with its foreign settings or imaginary worlds–, to present an analysis and criticism of men's violence against vulnerable women, with this settings helping her to put forward her ideas without offending anyone. Further to this, it could be implied that not only did she present a critique towards misogyny, but to any other form of repression, as it occurs with Native Americans in *Lois the Witch*. Whilst most Gothic fiction of the time focused on fostering sympathy for the victims and rejection towards otherness, Gaskell introduced characters that were usually demonised, attempting to make readers feel

compassion for them. Some examples include, as Hafaee-Thomas (2012: 49) mentions, “the American Indian ‘witch’, the transgender figure, the young woman refusing to enter into the heterosexual economy and the polygamous wife”. Therefore, through these changes and combinations, Elizabeth Gaskell developed a ground-breaking mixture between Gothic literature and realism whilst she tried to involve as well different types of people into society and criticised their oppression and alienation.

Another interesting feature of Gaskell’s Gothic fiction includes the setting. As McCord Chavez (2015: p. 65) comments, whilst most Gothic short stories and novels take place in “exotic wilds of Catholic countries”, Gaskell’s works occur in more realistic settings, as is the case of *Lois the Witch*, which takes place in Colonial New England, adding up to her characteristic Gothic-realist type of literature. As Denenholz (2010: 85) describes, Elizabeth Gaskell used the English Civil War and its aftermath as the historical framework for stories that include intolerance, domestic violence and especially oppressed and exploited women, as are the cases of *Morton Hall* and *Lois the Witch* (p. 86). In the case of the latter, the English Civil War was also useful for Gaskell in order to conceive the Salem Witchcraft Trials, for instance, the conflicts between Royalists and Parliamentarists within this war were useful to make the Puritan characters that Lois encounters in Salem be suspicious of her and eventually, execute her. In fact, the beginning of the story itself induces the consequences of the English Civil War in Lois’ family and foreshadows her future downfall when Lois’ mother in her deathbed tells her how Lois’ father is an Anglican, and her own brother, with whom they had some strifes on the grounds of religion, separated from the Church of England and moved to a Puritan community in America. Lois is afterwards sent to live with her family’s enemies, who eventually accuse her of witchcraft and take her life (Denenholz, 2010: 93). With this story, Elizabeth Gaskell probably aimed at implying how the English Civil War was rooted in people’s mind to the point of being suspicious and harming even one’s own family members. Elizabeth Gaskell’s interest for witchcraft, Colonial America and Salem are evidenced in the correspondences that she shared with other authors. In fact, she was in touch with Charles Norton, an American friend, with whom she wanted to publish *Lois the Witch*. Moreover, she is said to have shared correspondences with

Nathaniel Hawthorne and John Gorham Palfrey (Hafaele- Thomas, 2012: 51), from whom she may have acquired a vast amount of information for her novella. In all, as Hafaele- Thomas (2012: 51) explains, she probably spent several years researching prior to publishing the novella, however, “the most influential text in her research came to be the 1831 book entitled *Lectures on Witchcraft, Comprising a History of the Delusion in Salem in 1692* written by Charles Wentworth Upham, an American Unitarian minister”.

Notwithstanding, as it will be explored in following chapters, one of the most striking elements of Gaskell's *Lois the Witch* is that it is not a Gothic short story that attracts readers to the witchcraft trials in Salem, but tries to advise her readers, of any time and place, of the dangers that presented racial and religious persecution at such an era as colonial America in the seventeenth century. She introduced, thus, a ground-breaking element that was still relevant in Victorian England and could have surprised her readers: Indian Americans were neither the devil nor the dangers to be wary of, on the contrary, Puritans' radical ideas could indeed be dangerous. As Hafaele-Thomas (2012: 50) points out,

Lois the Witch can be read as a classic Imperial Gothic narrative where a Briton wanders out to the 'savage' and dangerous colonies only to be killed there. Yet Lois's murderers are not the American Indians (the 'Other') but her own flesh and blood. One might wonder what Elizabeth Gaskell was 'up to' when she wrote *Lois the Witch*.

## Chapter 2. *Lois the Witch*: The Salem Witch Hunt and Native Americans

### 2.1. Introduction to *Lois the Witch*

*Lois the Witch*, a novella by Elizabeth Gaskell published in 1859 and divided in three chapters, focuses on the story of Lois Barclay, a poised and beautiful young girl from England who, after the death of both her parents is sent to live with her maternal uncle, Ralph Hickson, in Salem, Massachusetts, with the hope of coming back and getting married to Hugh Lucy, her loved one whose parents do not accept Lois as she is of a lower social status. Chapter I begins with her background story and her journey to Salem accompanied by Captain Holderness, whom she befriends along the journey. By the time they arrive in New England, Lois is especially taken aback by customs and words shared by its inhabitants, for instance, she begins to learn about Puritans, their traditions and their attitudes towards Indian Americans and witchcraft.

Chapter II begins with her arrival to Hickson's house. Unfortunately, by the time she arrives, his uncle, the only one who displays some affection to her, is in his deathbed, hence Lois being left in the care of his uncle's wife, Grace Hickson, an aloof woman clearly against Lois' religious and political ideas. Moreover, she has to live with Grace's three children: Mannasseh, the son who suffers from mental disorders, Faith, the shy and jealous elder sister, and Prudence, a cruel girl who relentlessly seeks attention. One night, Lois tells Faith stories about England and the customs in Halloween in an attempt to cheer her up for her suffering on the grounds of

her love for the minister Mr. Nolan. Unluckily for Lois, Prudence overhears the conversation and claims,

Cousin Lois may go out and meet Satan by the brookside, if she will; but, if thou goest, Faith, I will tell mother--ay, and I will tell Pastor Tappau, too. Hold thy stories, Cousin Lois; I am afeared of my very life. I would rather never be wed at all, than feel the touch of the creature that would take the apple out of my hand, as I held it over my left shoulder. (pp. 37- 38)

The events take a turn for the worse after her uncle's death, for example, Mannasseh asks for her hand in marriage despite his mother's disapproval, a proposal Lois refuses and which he does not take well, worsening his insanity; in addition, rumours and fear about witchcraft and the devil continue spreading over Salem. In chapter III, people within the community start displaying unusual behaviours, e.g. Pastor Tappau's daughter falls into convulsions in the middle of a prayer. His servant, Hota, takes the blame by confessing she is a witch, which marks the beginning of the trials. Eventually, Lois is accused by most members of her family: Prudence on the grounds of her innocence and yearning for attention; Faith as she mistakenly believes Lois is getting close to Mr. Nolan; and Grace takes the premeditated action of accusing Lois of bewitching Mannasseh in order to preserve his status in the community despite his mental disease. No one taking her side, Lois is accused and locked in a cell with other accused, such as Nattee. She is given the opportunity to confess but she does not as it is against her moral values. Several months after her execution, Captain Holderness and Hugh Lucy, Lois' beloved, arrive in Salem to take her body back home. The novella ends with the repentance of the Salem community and especially of the Hickson family, apologies Hugh Lucy never accepts.

One of the main topics covered in the novella is the mistreatment of Native Americans and the use of the indigenous characters as some of the scapegoats for witchcraft, an aforementioned topic that will be discussed in depth in the following chapters of this dissertation. Notwithstanding, there is another striking element that characterises *Lois the Witch* and Gaskell's narration, which is her use of words to infer certain conclusions on readers. Besides indirectly displaying the rejection and

fear towards Native Americans by the Puritan community, which leads to their accusation and execution, Gaskell also suggests that most female characters who suffer those convulsions might be originated in some medical condition (Styler, 2007: 83). These illnesses might probably be related to their mental health issues on the grounds of women at the time being subjected to the patriarchal traditions of the post-colonial era. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, during this time, women were relegated to the household and were prevented from freely expressing themselves either through art or any form of manifestation. As their main role was related to bearing children and being the backbone of their household, they had to fulfill the goals expected of them without questioning anything, and that essential need not being achieved could have had catastrophic consequences on their mental health, hence the convulsions or odd behaviours. Thus, with *Lois the Witch*, Gaskell might have explored the concept that being a minority, *i.e.* either a Native American, a foreigner or even a woman, may have led to a suffering of some kind, in this case mental health issues or being accused of witchcraft (Wynne, 2005: 92). In accordance with this idea, the following sections include a description and analysis of the portrayal of these types minorities in the novella and the different perspectives towards them according to various groups. More specifically, the perspective of Puritans towards these minorities, based off their traditional and religious beliefs, will be taken more into account and thoroughly analysed. The main reason behind the focus on this community's mindset resides in the fact that Puritans held great power over Salem. Furthermore, Gaskell hints at the idea that those beliefs and extreme measures, accompanied by their strong power, led to the downfall of the characters belonging to these minorities, especially of Native Americans.

## **2.2. Native Americans in *Lois the Witch***

As Patrick Brantlinger illustrates with regards to British Literature and Imperialism, fiction in India prior to 1857 was mainly racist, but "frequently admitted the possibility that Indians might be helped to progress in the scale of civilisation" (Brantlinger, 1988: 200). However, after the Victorian Mutiny of 1857, most literature became



extreme with the action towards Native Americans and Indians, either calling to colonise them entirely or exterminating them, as Bratlinguer (1998: 200) claimed,

Victorian accounts of the mutiny display extreme forms of extropunitive projection, the racist pattern of blaming the victim expressed in terms of an absolute polarisation of good and evil, innocence and guilt, justice and injustice, moral restraint and sexual depravity, civilisation and barbarism. These categories are perceived as racially determined attributes in an imperialist allegory.

Within this literary context, Elizabeth Gaskell, who even suffered the death of several family members as a consequence of this event (Gaskell, 1997: 369) is said to have taken a different, more unbiased perspective on the Indian mutiny, in fact, she presents two different types of characters to portray various points of view towards the Indian Americans in *Lois the Witch*: Puritans, on the one hand, and Lois, Captain Holderness and the narrator, who could be considered Gaskell herself, on the other.

#### 2.2.a. Puritans perspective on Indian Americans in *Lois the Witch*

When Lois arrives in New England and stays in the lodging of widow Smith, she first learns about Indian Americans from the point of view of Puritans, who consider them wild and dangerous. To set an example, widow Smith describes them using mainly negative connotations that incite fear towards the unknown in Lois,

In county of Essex the folk are ordered to keep four scouts (...) to be on the look-out for the wild Indians, who are for ever stirring about in the woods, stealthy brutes as they are! (...) I go on dreaming, now near twenty years after Lothrop's business, of painted Indians, with their shaven scalps and their war-streaks, lurking behind the trees, and coming nearer and nearer with their noiseless steps (p. 11).

Puritan's negative claims against Indian Americans are displayed several times throughout the novella, especially at the beginning, with Lois and Captain Holderness's first encounters with the inhabitants of New England. Such characters

as Widow Smith or Elder Hawkings, an old sailor, believe in the evilness of Indian Americans,

I myself believe that these Red Indians are indeed the evil creatures of whom we read in Holy Scripture; and there is no doubt that they are in league with those abominable Papists, the French people in Canada. I have heard tell, that the French pay the Indians so much gold for every dozen scalps of Englishmen's heads" (p. 14)

As observed in the above-mentioned fragment, Puritans establish a connection between Indian Americans and the French, especially because they shared land and had to coexist in the northern lands of America. New Englanders struggled with warfare and attempted to conquer land from the Indians or lands already conquered by the French, thus, both were seen as the enemy. As Little (2007: 56) comments, "the English waged wars out of rivalry with the French as well as out of a lust for Indian lands". In addition, a connection between witchcraft, Satan and both of these groups is established in chapter I of the novella, again with the words of Widow Smith and Elder Hawkings; words that set a bitter tone against the Indians for the rest of the story, which culminate with the accusations of several Indian characters of witchcraft in the following chapters. Another example of these remarks is found in page 15,

And folk do say the Indian creatures rise up out of the very ground to waylay the English! and then others affirm they are all in league with Satan to affright the Christians out of the heathen country, over which he has reigned so long" (...) 'Holy Scripture speaks of witches and wizards, and of the power of the Evil One in desert places'" (p. 15)

This viewpoint, where Puritans are represented as virtuous, civilised people with the need to defend themselves from Indians, parallels with some of the earliest historical accounts on the witchcraft trials, such as Charles W. Upham's *Salem Witchcraft* (1867) and John Neal's *Rachel Dyer* (1828), a historiography and novel respectively. In the former, Upham, in an attempt to shed some light into the events with an unbiased viewpoint, explains how Puritans viewed themselves as the bearers

of civilisation and that they actually believed in witchcraft and its adverse effects, praising especially the men who fought in this witch-hunt (Upham, 1867: 263). In *Rachel Dyer*, the author takes a similar outlook at the events, for instance, he considers the Puritan Minister George Burroughs a “sort of superhero –battling Indians, hunting animals...” (Vetere, 2003: 212). Both have in common their consideration of Indians as barbarians and the enemy, which may induce Gaskell could have taken some inspiration in order to display this point of view.

A similar comparison to Indian Americans and French is also made between Lois and Indian Americans. The hatred towards her for being an Anglican is pointed out in her arrival in the Hickson's family. As Denenholz (2010: p. 95) explains, Grace Hickson hates Lois not only for her Anglican origins but also for her Englishness, and this is extended to the rest of the family and most of the community when fear is spread through Salem. This rejection may be considered to have been kindled after Lois talks with Faith and Prudence about old customs in England, especially with the selflessness that characterises her in order to cheer up Faith, but which, unfortunately, turns against her,

As she told of tricks she had often played, of the apple eaten facing a mirror, of the dripping sheet, of the basins of water, of the nuts burning side by side, and many other such innocent ways of divination, by which laughing, trembling English maidens sought to see the form of their future husbands, if husbands they were to have (p. 37-38).

In *Lois the Witch*, the fear and rejection towards Indian Americans and their witchcraft are intensified, not only by the words of Puritans, but also by Indian American character's actions and words, which, alongside the events that take place, *i.e.* when girls start suffering convulsions and fear starts to spread, create an added fear towards this group. This is exemplified in the figure of Nattee, whose comforting words in chapter III for Faith's heartbroken feelings, for instance, may add up to that rejection and fear towards them, “Hush thee, hush thee, prairie-bird! How can he build a nest, when the old bird has got all the moss and the feathers?' Wait till the Indian has found means to send the old bird flying far away.' This was the mysterious comfort Nattee gave” (p. 60). What is more, Indian Americans do not have a

paramount role within the community in spite of their help or participation in it, in fact, they are either enemies or slaves. Such is the case of the accusation of Hota, who despite being promised to be released after confessing to witchcraft, is eventually condemned to death, quite an unfair situation about which the narrator implies that it not that important on the grounds of her origins, “she was an Indian, a heathen, whose life would be no great loss to the community” (p. 76).

#### 2.2.b. Lois and other characters' viewpoint on Native Americans

Whilst Puritans share a common belief of rejection and otherness against Native Americans due to their fear rooted in their religious customs and warfare, Elizabeth Gaskell tries to present different viewpoints, as aforementioned, to present an unbiased work, probably with the aim of approaching readers of any time to the events with comprehension and even empathy for the victims and even the oppressing group, as they were marked by the events and knowledge of their era. Accordingly, one of the main characters whose behaviour and perspective are to analyse is Captain Holderness's. As mentioned in chapter 2.1., he is the captain that takes Lois to New England; his first words about Puritans display his suspicions on their beliefs, “They are a queer set, these New Englanders,” said Captain Holderness. “They are rare chaps for praying; down on their knees at every turn of their life” (p. 6). Despite him not giving his opinion about Native Americans, his words towards Puritans set a sceptical tone towards this community from the perspective of Lois and the narrator, probably in order to emphasise the juxtaposition between the Puritans' and their more modern, unbiased perception on the events and witchcraft. In fact, he subtly tries to invite Lois to question the Puritans' words and not believe everything she hears, as he argues “the devil is not so black as he is painted” (p. 14), implying, with an ironic touch, that evilness does not necessarily need to be displayed in the form of Native Americans, but in many types of people.

Despite her fears influenced by the Puritans, Lois' approach to Native Americans develops throughout the novella, from a starting fear to empathy and closeness to them. As mentioned in chapter 2.2.1., her first encounter with Native Americans come from the opinions shared by widow Smith and Elder Hawkings, on

whose words of fear and rejection she asks Captain Holderness for reassurance (p.14). Scanty mentions are made from her viewpoints in chapter I, as she is probably sinking in every piece of information, especially expressed by the Puritans; however, it is at the beginning of chapter II when the narrator expresses the influence of Salem's inhabitants on her,

Lois did not often walk out for the mere sake of walking (...) but once or twice she had caught glimpses of the dreary, dark wood (...) this old forest, girdling round the settlement, was full of dreaded and mysterious beasts, and still more to be dreaded Indians, stealing in and out among the shadows, intent on bloody schemes against the Christian people: panther-streaked, shaven Indians, in league by their own confession, as well as by the popular belief, with evil powers (p. 30).

This fear is even increased when she starts bonding with Nattee, the old Indian servant, who tells the girls stories on wizardry, evilness and possessions, which, together with the rising collective fear on witchcraft, fosters an uneasy feeling on her. The narration hints at some scepticism on her part as she questions most of Pastor Nolan's claims on witchcraft and she even expresses her doubts on it, e.g. when they talk about Mr. Tappau's supernatural experiences, she innocently compares them to the stories she had heard in England, or when Pastor Nolan complains about a member of the community losing his horse, she questions whether the horse might have died of natural causes (p.64). Notwithstanding, at the beginning of chapter III, when mass fear is spreading with great speed within the community, Lois' frightened words display an internal conflict between her empathy, anti-racist beliefs, and the constant flow of negative remarks against Native Americans, especially blaming them about witchcraft,

Lois sat spinning with Faith. Both were silent, pondering over the stories that were abroad. Lois spoke first (...) 'I grow frightened of every one, I think. I even get afeared sometimes of Nattee!' (...) 'Oh! I am ashamed of my fear as soon as it arises in my mind. But, you know, her look and colour were strange to me when I first came; and she is not a christened woman; and they tell stories of Indian wizards (...) (p. 68).

This bittersweet feeling is recurrent in Lois several times in chapter III, for instance, when the Indian servant, Hota, is condemned to death, Lois' inner thoughts through the narration imply she has an uneasy feeling about her and once again, an internal conflict for empathising with the woman's situation but fearing she might be showing sympathy to someone working against Christian values, "Occasionally she found herself wandering off into sympathetic thought for the woman who was to die, abhorred of all men (...) but Lois almost shrank from sympathising with so loathsome an accomplice of Satan, and prayed for forgiveness for her charitable thought" (p. 77). As Styler (2007: 78) argues, the "spiritual and narrowness of the Salem community is in complete contrast to Lois' expansive sympathies (...) Lois extends grace to the Indian woman Hota who is the first convicted, even more of an outsider than herself". Nonetheless, when Lois is wrongfully condemned and encounters Nattee in the cell days prior to be executed, her sympathy and unprejudiced against Native Americans is made even more clear. She hugs and tries to comfort Nattee without second-guessing her, and the words used by the narrator demonstrate her compassionate and empathetic nature,

Lois held her in her arms, and softly wiped the old brown wrinkled face with her apron, crying over it, as she had hardly yet cried over her own sorrows (...) And then Lois went on, saying all the blessed words she could remember, and comforting the helpless Indian woman with the sense of the presence of a Heavenly Friend (p. 118).

The narrator in *Lois the Witch* is an omniscient one, and, as Styler (2007: 78) comments, Gaskell utilises the narrator to present history as material for readers to interpret and induce how the environmental factors, *i.e.* religion, fear and rejection of the distinctive, beliefs... led to the mentality developed in Salem and eventually to the fatal events of 1692. Therefore, the narrative continuously builds up by introducing events, exchanges of information and actions of the characters that may seem harmless but eventually play a paramount role in the accusations and fear of Indian Americans, from introducing Native Americans from the perspective of Widow Smith and Elder Hawkings, Lois' cautiousness and bittersweet feelings about them to eventually the final accusation and execution of the two Indian characters. As

mentioned in chapter 1.2.b., Native Americans believed in witchcraft and practised it, and several references are made to this historical fact so as to lead readers to understand how the everything escalated from seemingly innocent fear towards otherness to accusations and the wrongful death of people. To set an example, Nattee, who is very protective and fond of Faith, implies to Lois she has summoned Mr. Nolan and attempted for him and Faith to share an intimate moment, words that may seem innocent but which eventually are important in the unravelling of the fatal events that ends up with her death,

'Old Indian woman great mystery (...) go where she is told, where she hears with her cars. But old Indian woman'--and here she drew herself up, and the expression of her face quite changed--'know how to call, and then white man must come; and old Indian woman have spoken never a word, and white man have heard nothing with his cars.' So the old crone muttered (p. 53)

In addition, being an omniscient narrator, Elizabeth Gaskell presents every character's inner world and thoughts, including their viewpoints on Native Americans. It is to be deduced, therefore, that her words take different perspective towards this community depending on the character. An example is found in chapter I, after Lois' stay in Widow Smith's lodging and constantly receiving negative remarks on the dangers of Native Americans, the narrator explains her wary arrival in Salem, "The deep green forest (...) came within a few yards of the road all the way, though efforts were regularly made (...) to keep a certain space clear on each side, for fear of the lurking Indians, who might otherwise come upon them unawares" (p. 18). What is more, Gaskell adds an interesting element: the metafiction. Accordingly, she addresses readers several times throughout the novel, especially, as Krueger (2010: 30) explains, to invite them to "understand the conditions under which cruelty and prejudice can be made to appear acceptable", which can foster a more understanding attitude from any reader, as she invites her audience to put themselves in these people's shoes despite their despicable actions,

We can afford to smile at them now; but our English ancestors entertained superstitions of much the same character at the same period, (...) and, as

cowardice makes us all cruel, men who were blameless in many of the relations of life, and even praiseworthy in some, became, from superstition, cruel persecutors about this time, showing no mercy towards any one whom they believed to be in league with the Evil One (p. 32).

Therefore, Lois – despite sometimes being influenced by other people’s words–, Captain Holderness and the narrator share different, more positive perspectives towards Native Americans, which are points of view that reinforce their defence. Likewise, the support towards the community is suggested by the narrator with the progression and evolution of the plot, where it is made clear that it was mostly innocent victims who were executed. In fact, all of them, at least in this novella, were foreigners. One example is found moments prior to Nattee’s execution, where her excruciating fear demonstrates to Lois and the readers the Indian is just another victim of this episode led by Puritans, neither a witch nor a puppet of the devil,

As long as she [Lois] spoke, the Indian woman's terror seemed lulled; but, the instant she paused for weariness, Nattee cried out afresh, as if some wild beast were following her close through the 'dense forests in which she had dwelt in her youth. And then Lois went on, saying all the blessed words she could remember, and comforting the helpless Indian woman with the sense of the presence of a Heavenly Friend. And, in comforting her, Lois was comforted; in strengthening her, Lois was strengthened (p. 119).

### **2.3. The portrayal of Tituba in *Lois the Witch***

As introduced in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, Tituba’s role in the Salem Witchcraft trials is considered of paramount importance on the grounds of her confession to witchcraft being among the causes that led to the mass fear and eventual execution of a group of people. Several researchers point out at the



resemblance between Tituba and the two main female Indian American characters of the novella, Nattee and especially Hota (Hafaele- Thomas, 2012: p. 58 and Wallace, 2014, p.88). As most researches point out, Tituba was an indigenous slave woman working as a servant for the reverend Samuel Parris and her family. Accordingly, Elizabeth Gaskell created Nattee and Hota, characterised at first sight by the same features that defined Tituba: both are Indian – although Tituba's actual origin is still a topic of research–, and slaves to different families, the Hickson family and Pastor Tappau respectively. The only description of them is focused on Nattee, who is described as “an old Indian woman, of a greenish-brown colour, shrivelled-up and bent with apparent age”, (p. 20), as Hodgson (2010: 197-198) explains, an unflattering description that might imply her status as a waste of some kind to society that has been relegated to the domestic sphere and hidden in it. Moreover, the numerous times they are addressed or spoken to the term “Indian” is used, probably evidencing how at the time Tituba's origin was also believed to be indigenous. Focusing on Nattee, it might be deduced that through her interventions and actions Gaskell probably wanted to portray the events that led to Tituba being scapegoated by the community. Her first appearance in the novella is described by her being incessantly attacked and mocked at by Prudence at the insensitivity of the rest of the members of the household, Nattee feeling forced to repress her anger as, due to her unequal status compared to the Hicksons, she has everything to lose, “Nattee appeared to be in a state of strong irritation, which she tried in vain to suppress; as, whenever she showed any sign of it, Prudence only seemed excited to greater mischief” (p.26). With the portrayal of these types of ordinary scenes, Elizabeth Gaskell probably wanted to imply the mistreatment and the little relevance Tituba had in the Puritan community, being the target of any type of abuse, a slave, and eventually becoming the one blamed for practising witchcraft, an idea that can be further applied to any oppressed minority, as the same outcome was suffered by African American slaves or even women in the case of the witchcraft trials.

In addition, Elizabeth Gaskell makes use of Nattee to make constant references to Indian traditions, especially when she interacts with the Hickson family or Lois. To set some examples, she calls herself “a great mystery” (p. 53), or claims she does not need to speak a word, only to use magic. It might be deduced these

words and actions intend to present readers with ideas on how Puritans' beliefs and ignorance mingled with indigenous' traditions, hence the trials and executions. Notwithstanding, there might be another hidden agenda: to give more power to the Native Americans despite their lower status in the community. For instance, Nattee creates a sort of 'love potion' in order to trick Pastor Nolan into falling in love with Faith. This seemingly innocent action of hers might also display that despite her subjugated role to the Puritans, she can control them following her practices. As Hodgson (2010: 198) comments, "Nattee's witchcraft involves subverting the laws of nature and Puritan politics: not only can she summon without making any audible sounds, but she can also move beyond her allocated social designation and directly influence the actions of a white man". Her influence over her masters is also evidenced in the stories she constantly tells the girls. What is more, according to Hodgson (2010: 199), Elizabeth Gaskell tries to develop through Nattee especially an alternate story to the American colonisation, where the enslaved Indian Americans can have some power over their colonisers, "Gaskell positions Nattee's native witchcraft as a story of victimisation transformed into a self-affirming narrative". Furthermore, in relation to Nattee's beliefs and magic, it is implied that the Hickson family is accustomed to her talking about rituals or exhibiting an odd behaviour, they even believe her rituals are helpful to keep evil away,

Occasionally, she heard a strange chant of the old Indian woman's--half in her own language, half in broken English--droned over some simmering pipkin, from which the smell was, to say the least, unearthly (...) Grace Hickson suddenly exclaimed—' Nattee is at her heathen ways again; we shall have some mischief unless she is stayed (pp. 50- 51).

However, this state changes when the events unravel: her words and actions get back at her due to the fear and ignorance of the community, demonstrating that despite Native Americans trying to hold some power over their colonisers, the latter still had more control over them.

Hota, the character that holds most resemblance to Tituba due to her story, is Pastor Tappau's servant –who, at the same time, was created after the actual reverend Samuel Parris –. She makes her first appearance in chapter III in a scene

that summarises how the events took place in Salem, including convulsions and being possessed by Satan. In the following extract, where one of the first girls, Hester, suffers from those convulsions, Hota is taken aback by hearing her name by Hester's mouth, who accuses the Indian servant of manipulating and attacking her. With such a narration, Gaskell approaches her readers to the sudden fear and bewilderment Tituba might have felt when she was abruptly accused of bewitching others,

Hester turned wearily and uneasily, and moaned out the name of Hota, her father's Indian servant. Hota was present, apparently as much interested as any one; indeed, she had been busying herself much in bringing remedies to the suffering child. But now she stood aghast transfixed, while her name was caught up and shouted out in tones of reprobation and hatred by all the crowd around her. Another moment, and they would have fallen upon the trembling creature and torn her limb from limb--pale, dusky, shivering Hota, half guilty-looking from her very bewilderment (p. 71).

It is briefly afterwards when the narrator explains Hota has confessed to the sins she has been accused for, who spreads more fear within the Hickson family and other citizens of Salem. Additionally, as evidenced in the manuscripts of the era, Gaskell also implies in the novella how Hota confesses to witchcraft after being beaten up endlessly, but as it is expressed by Prudence quoting Manasseh, who most of his family distrusts as a result of his disconcerting behaviour, the matter is quickly forgotten, "Manasseh says Hota was well whipped by Pastor Tappau ere she was brought to confession,' said Prudence (...) His mother made haste to speak— (...) What evil thought has got hold of thee?" (p. 78). Gaskell probably took this approach with respect to this event to insinuate how insignificant Tituba was at the time for the community; she could have prevented further accusations but was probably forced to plead guilty. It is likely that her confession helped to continue the narration of European colonisers fighting against the devil, which comprised Native Americans, African Americans or anyone considered their enemy; in fact, it might

have reinforced the sentiment initiated by John Winthrop which stated that God's plan involved colonisers creating their colony in America.

Another interesting element that Elizabeth Gaskell adds is giving a voice to both Hota and Nattee, through the omnipresent narrator or their own interventions, especially to give them and Tituba, in a sense, an opportunity to express themselves in an environment of oppression and censorship towards them. One example is found in chapter II, when it is explained that Tituba shares stories about Indian wizards with Lois and Faith, which usually makes Lois frightened of her. What is more, the narrator adds about Nattee,

It was often in the kitchen, in the darkening evening, while some cooking process was going on, that the old Indian crone, sitting on her haunches by the bright red wood embers which sent up no flame, but a lurid light reversing the shadows of all the faces around, told her weird stories [...] [T]he poor old creature [...] took a strange unconscious pleasure in the power over her young hearers – young girls of the oppressing race, which had brought her down into a state little differing from slavery, and reduced her people to outcasts on the hunting grounds which had belonged to her fathers (p. 31)

According to Styler (2007: pp. 82- 83), the introduction of these types of comments and inner thoughts of the Native American characters notes the Indians' resentment of colonisers. Likewise, Styler (2007: 83- 84) also implies how Hota's confession includes a resentful agenda towards white colonisers. Despite having a smaller role than Nattee, both characters are given a small voice that leads readers to reflect on how the Puritans' beliefs and fears of Native Americans led to the accusations and executions.

Finally, in the novel, both Hota and Nattee are executed, contrary to Tituba who was actually released after confessing her crimes. This change might have been introduced to emphasise the idea of how insignificant the lives of some people were considered in contrast to others *i.e.* the lives of Indian Americans, outcasts and other minorities in contrast to whites, colonisers and Puritans. Nattee suffers the same

outcome, despite playing a more relevant role in the story and supposedly being more appreciated and loved by the Hickson family, who are the central characters of the story, and especially by Faith, with whom she shares a special bond until her accusation. In fact, Faith even defends her once when Lois talks about feeling scared by the Indian woman's words, "If Nattee has powers beyond what you and I have, she will not use them for evil; at least not evil to those whom she loves." (p.69). Nonetheless, she does not doubt of Nattee, Hota and Lois being witches, especially after her rage and jealousy take over her sanity. Therefore, through Hota and Nattee's execution, including the rest as well, Gaskell demonstrates how the trials affected people of any background, especially those condemned to be outcasts in such a constrained Puritan society *i.e.* foreigners, slaves...

#### **2.4. Rejection of the foreigner. The case of Lois.**

*Lois the Witch* displays a great number of female characters, each with their own backgrounds, personalities and beliefs. Notwithstanding, it is Lois the only one who is mistreated –in addition to Nattee and Hota, on their conditions of them being slaves besides women. When explaining Lois' backstory, it is implied Lois enjoyed the same conditions as any European in England, she was free young woman with hopes for a better future with Hugh Lucy, however, her arrival to Salem reverses her status from being welcome to being an unreliable, untrustworthy foreigner, especially to the eyes of her own relatives. This is especially hinted at her arrival in Salem, when her cousin Manasseh gives her a disheartening look and her aunt, Grace Hickson, grumbles at her, explaining from their first encounter how she loathes her for her English and Anglican origins (McCord Chávez, 2014: 70). Therefore, it can be induced Lois is tormented and alienated on the grounds of her being a foreigner and a woman.

As per her English origin, several elements point out at the rejection of Puritans towards English people, especially evidenced by Grace Hickson's words at Lois' arrival in Salem *e.g.* she speaks ill of the English, especially of Lois' parents, who stayed in the country whilst "godly men" left for America (p.22), a statement to which Lois retorts defending her origins, which creates more distance between them.

Likewise, a similar rejection is exposed through Pastor Tappau's narration of his own experiences with witchcraft: After killing Hota, he retells the story of the "Irish witch". Her story can be originally found in Cotton Mather's *Memorable providences relating to witchcrafts and possession* (1689) about a woman called Goody Glover. It is in this book where Glover's background story is told: she could not speak English properly, was old and scandalous, and especially had problems with a family who claimed her daughter was a thief. However, as Hogson (2010: 194-195) comments, Gaskell removes Goody Glover's origins, probably to emphasise that the factor that actually leads to both 'The Irish witch' and Lois being condemned and executed is their foreignness, to the British and Americans respectively. In fact, Pastor Tappau frightens the population of Salem when narrating the terrifying deeds of this 'foreign' woman, once again, to indirectly manipulate the population into believing what he believes in,

Let us beseech Him that their power may be restrained, (...) four years ago in the city of Boston, where I was the humble means, under God, of loosing from the power of Satan the four children of that religious and blessed man, Mr Goodwin. These (...) were bewitched by an Irish witch (...) by the hellish devices of the woman who had bewitched them, they could not stir without limping; (...) she hampered their limbs, or sometimes, by means of a noose, almost choked them. (p. 92)

Another factor contributing to Lois being pronounced a witch is her being an innocent and beautiful young woman, especially in such a traditional and patriarchal society as Salem's community in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the way others perceive and act with Lois lead to her downfall despite her not being responsible at all. As Wynne (2005: 93) points out, the Puritan community is characterised by both social and an unhealthy sexual oppression, which is more likely to lead characters to act insanely, and both factors together influence on Lois' accusations. First, Manasseh suffers from troubled visions, he is obsessed with the idea of marrying Lois to the point of believing she is bewitching him, especially due to his mentally ill condition; accordingly, the words he tells his mother are among the reasons the family eventually accuse her of being a witch,

Take her away, mother! Lead me not into temptation! She brings me evil and sinful thoughts. She overshadows me, even in the presence of God. She is no angel of light, or she would not do this. She troubles me with the sound of a voice bidding me marry her, even when I am at my prayers. Avaunt! Take her away!' (p. 81).

In relation to Manasseh's troubled mind, it is also worth mentioning that Gaskell introduces a hidden agenda related to incest when it comes to his suffering as, after this brief episode, Grace Hickson claims the young man was afflicted by Faith's presence in the same way before Lois' arrival (Wynne, 2005: 93). As it is said, "His mother, although equally dismayed, was not affrighted. She had seen him thus before, and understood the management of his paroxysm. 'Go, Lois! the sight of thee irritates him, as once that of Faith did. Leave him to me!' as she claims" (p. 81). This indicates Manasseh might have felt a similar attraction to her own sister, further emphasising his mental issues; however, it is Lois the one who is blamed for his actions and the community actually believes she is capable of beguiling him rather than him having a mental disorder.

Secondly, the relation between misogyny and witchcraft is also emphasised through the story of Pastor Nolan and Faith and how her obsession for him plays a role in Lois' accusations for several reasons. To begin with, the narration of Pastor Nolan's first sight of Lois suggests she is different from the rest of her family, "Formerly he had seen only grave, solemn, rigid, or heavy faces, and had been received with a stiff form of welcome, very different from the blushing, smiling, dimpled looks that innocently met him with the greeting of an old acquaintance" (p. 52). This description suggests he might feel more at ease with her than with other members of the household, especially as he is also othered by the members of the community<sup>3</sup>. It is not clearly specified whether their relationship is platonic or he really

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<sup>3</sup> As Ciobanu (2014:146) explains, Pastor Nolan represents the Other, as Lois does, as he had previously been forced to leave town due to his differences with Pastor Tappau, who led a more patriarchal and violent party. Thus, Pastor Nolan feels more connected with Lois for having that feeling in common, leading to Faith's misinterpretation.

feels attracted to her, but their last encounter still triggers Faith's jealousy and rage towards Lois,

He put his hand on her shoulder, with an action half paternal — although the difference in their age was not above a dozen years — and, 'bending a little towards her, whispered, half to himself, "Mistress Barclay, you have done me good." "I!" said Lois, half-affrighted; 'I done you good! How?" "By being what you are. But, perhaps, I should rather thank God, who sent you at the very moment when my soul was so disquieted.' At this instant, they were aware of Faith standing in front of them, with a countenance of thunder. Her angry look made Lois feel guilty. (pp. 84-85)

As Ciobanu (2014: 146) comments, Faith is another victim of the sexual repression of the time, she suffers from her unrequited love and her oppression, which eventually becomes another reason for Lois' downfall. Therefore, both Mannasseh's obsession and Faith's jealousy, both rooted in their repressed sexual desires, become among the reasons why they choose Lois as another scapegoat for the witchcraft trials. Therefore, as Wynne (2005: 93) says, "Lois's entrapment and execution as a witch serve as examples of the fatal consequences of repression and social tyranny", leading as well to a reflection on how women were affected by patriarchal societies both in the private and public sphere.

Finally, by observing the roles of the rest of female characters besides Nattee, Hota and Lois, it can be concluded that apart from being women, what actually condemns the three characters to death is being outcasts and othered by the community. The girls making the accusations, *i.e.* Hester Tappan or Prudence Hickson, belong to the oppressors, but could be considered as well victims of the traditional mindset of the era. According to Wynne (2005: 93), their state of hysteria and fear comes from a latent rebellion they have actually against their own oppressors, which are the leaders of the patriarchal society of the time that isolated and separated women from the community, repressing their desires and passions. Therefore, it could be induced that the emphasis of the witchcraft trials in *Lois the Witch* is put on the idea that any minority or outsider became a victim, either as an



affected girl or as a witch: “the figure of the witch is symptomatic of any outsider, which is why all of those accused of witchcraft in *Lois the Witch*, as well as those who exhibit signs of possession, are those on the margins of the community” (Wynne, 2005: 93).

## Chapter 3. Native Americans nowadays: their inclusion in the American society

### 3.1. Native American increasing inclusion in the American society

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was considered a time of great tumult for Native Americans, as genocide strategies were rampant across America. As a result, a combination of kidnapping, epidemics, or mass killings led to the nearly extermination of this community (Jones, 2006: 221). In spite of this, the social fight for equality led by Native Americans and sympathisers have gradually led to their inclusion in society, as well as the recognition and preservation of their cultural and historical diversity. It is noteworthy that part of the accomplishments, which are still in process, were achieved with their representation and advocations in numerous forms of art. First, literature played a paramount role in the defense of their identity and integration in the American society. Focusing on the novella analysed in this paper, as mentioned in chapter 2.2., Elizabeth Gaskell used the *Lois the Witch* to comment on the Indian mutiny as well as forstanding up for Native Americans' integration in society at a time of great fear, opposition and hostilities towards them. Vindications such as hers are likely to have had a great impact in the Victorian society and an influence over the perspective towards the community in times that came afterwards. Prior to her novel, the work of Catherine M. Sedgwick is worth mentioning on the grounds of the controversy her novel *Hope Leslie* (1827) had at the time. However, it also held great power over the fight for equality of indigenous people and that was probably influential on the literature that came afterwards, such as Gaskell's or Nathaniel Hawthorne's. In this novel, she even introduced an interracial marriage, a ground-

breaking element to represent a plausible political tolerance between European Americans and Native Americans. This vindication was reinforced with the works of fiction that followed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even with the introduction of Native American authors who explored, and still do, the diversity of Indian American cultures and addressed the difficulties faced by the community on a great deal of aspects within the American society. One example is found in Joy Harjo's poetry, whose works are considered a sort of compendium of feminist indigenous texts in which she tackles the multiple difficulties faced by American Native people and their fight towards equality (García Navarro, 2019: 63).

Second, the beginning of the world of cinema is to be considered another cultural factor that contributed to the defense of the inclusion of Native Americans, which would get their traditions, customs and problems closer to even more people from any corner of the world. One of the most renowned actions with a rampant impact in popular culture and which is considered to have had a positive effect for the reinvigoration of Native Americans' inclusion was Marlon Brando's rejection of the Oscar's prize in 1973. Instead of accepting his prize for his role in *The Godfather*, Shasheen Littlefeather, a Native American media activist, accepted it on his behalf. Her speech was viewed worldwide and had a paramount took a toll on Native American's rights, since it evidenced the struggles this community was still suffering even in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In her brief speech and between boos of the audience and the press, she addressed the injustices endured by this community—such as the wounded knee massacre. As she expressed,

I'm representing Marlon Brando this evening (...) he cannot accept this generous award. And the reasons for this being are the treatment of American Indians today by the film industry (rumbling in audience) ... excuse me (boos exceeded by applause) ... and on television, in movie reruns, and also with recent happenings at Wounded Knee. I beg at this time that I have not intruded upon this evening and that we will in the future, our hearts and our understandings will meet with love and generosity ("Marlon Brando Oscar", n.d.)

Events and cultural manifestations such as the aforementioned, as well as the evolution of the United States in terms of its legislation and social rights, led to certain improvements in the life conditions of Native American citizens. This inclusion was achieved in spite of the numerous factors that had tried to contribute to the assimilation of the white American culture.

To begin with, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, data on population demonstrates that Native Americans have started to recover from the great losses they endured throughout the devastation of previous centuries, *i.e.* the great number of massacres, wars or diseases brought by colonisers. One of the reasons behind this growth might be in the freedoms American Native people currently enjoy in terms of religion, marriage, cultural interest and economic development in general (Pauls, n.d.). According to Braun (2021), it is estimated that the population of indigenous people in the United States of America resides between 2.5 and 6 million. As he claims, “around 20% live in American Indian areas or Alaska Native villages”. In relation to this aspect, it is also worth mentioning that the number of people who self-identify as Native American has risen between 2010 to 2020 from 5.2 million to 9.7 million people, probably due to the increase in the social movements that encourage people to acknowledge their origins despite fears of being rejected or othered (Fesser, 2022). To better understand this idea, Weaver’s words (2001: 244) on this matter are worth mentioning,

Choice [of self-identification] may also be influenced by social, economic, and political factors. For example, a climate filled with discrimination may lead an individual to reject a Native identity, whereas a climate in which a Native identity is seen as fashionable and perhaps financially profitable may lead an individual to assert an indigenous identity.

Nonetheless, despite numerous citizens with Native American heritage (at least one-fourth ancestry) self-identifying themselves as indigenous, they are sometimes prevented from officially belonging to a tribe on the grounds of the strict requirements imposed. Some of the strict conditions include “tribal blood quantum, tribal residency, or continued contact with the tribe” (U.S. Department of Interior, n.d.). Even so, the U.S. government has a total of 564 Indian tribes officially

recognised in the states and Alaska (USA Gov.). This entails they have certain rights for self-government, to be eligible to receive the services and protection of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (U.S. Department of Justice) among other rights. However, as Paul (n.d.) comments, recognition is usually a long and difficult process. As a result, the exact number about tribes and Native American citizens is quite difficult to draw, but data still evidences a positive rise towards their, at least partial, recovery (see table 1):

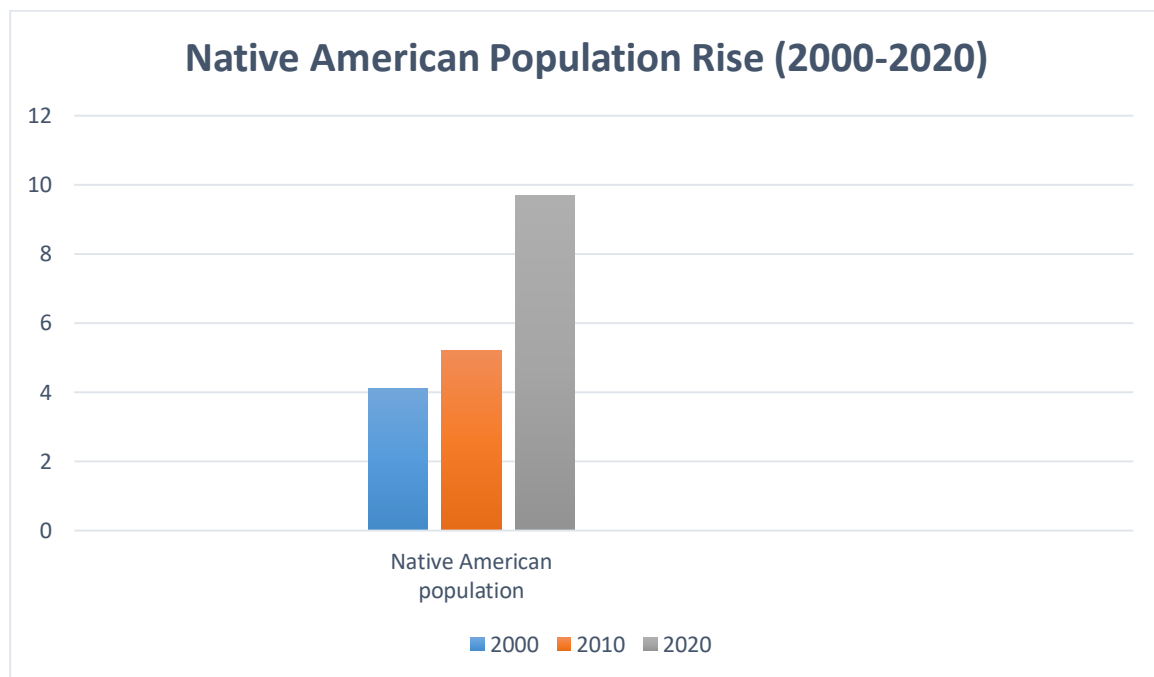


Table 1. Native American Population Rise (2000-2020) (US Census Bureau, 2021)

In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012) it is estimated by 2060 for the American Native and Alaskan Native population to rise to ten million people, approximately 2.4. % of the U.S. population.

With regards to reservations, especially since the Indian Appropriations Act in 1851 and the consequential increasing of reservations, the total number is said to have risen up to more than three hundred across the country (Foster, 2022). However, as Foster (2020) displays, the majority of Indian Americans live outside them and most tribes do not even have one. Furthermore, despite having tribal sovereignty and the right to pass certain laws, some of them do not seem to contribute to the development of their wellbeing and economy. To set an example, some reservations are highly visited as they have the right to put up casinos even in

states when gambling is prohibited. According to Gorman (2003), the flooding of tourists is beneficial as more people move to reservations and employment escalates. Notwithstanding, it comes with an increase in violent crimes, thefts and bankruptcy and employees are not usually Native Americans, hence the growth in non-American population in reservations. In addition, data also evidences certain Indian Americans still live in greater poverty than other groups. As Williams (2013) states,

Regardless of where they live, a greater proportion of Indians live in poverty than any other group, at a rate that is nearly double the national average. Census data show that 27 percent of all Native Americans live in poverty, compared with 25.8 percent of African-Americans, who are the next highest group, and 14.3 percent of Americans over all.

As a consequence, there is an ongoing debate of whether reservations are helpful or contribute to their isolation and poverty, especially since many non-Native Americans live there as well and greater groups of Native Americans have been moving to bigger cities in the past decades (Williams, 2013), since data as the above-mentioned evidences otherwise. Additionally, the difficulties faced by people residing in reservations were even worsened due to COVID-19, as the access to healthcare is scanty in resources in comparison to other places outside reservations (Braun, 2021). Therefore, it may come as no surprise, as Braun states, that mortality rate was higher for Native American population than for white Americans. As Arrazola *et al.* (2020) stated,

Long-standing inequities in public funding; infrastructure; and access to health care, education, stable housing, healthy foods, and insurance coverage have contributed to health disparities (including higher prevalences of smoking, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease) that put indigenous peoples at higher risk for severe COVID-19-associated illness (4). The lack of consistent and complete collection of underlying health conditions prevented the workgroup from assessing the contributions of these conditions to the observed disparity in mortality. As

with influenza mortality rates, differences in socioeconomic factors might have contributed to elevated COVID-19 mortality.

However, national government programs such as *All of Us* research program is considered to be helping in the process towards a better healthcare, not only for Native Americans, but also for the great cultural diversity existing in the United States. This program aims at studying and creating a database on a variety of health conditions, for instance, to know the risk factors for specific diseases in a specific group. In 2021 tribal participation in the program was encouraged, either from officially recognised or self-identified people in order to foster their inclusion and make more personalised and specific health researches (NIH, 2021).

In the field of education, the elimination of Indian boarding schools was indeed a step forward towards the acceptance and equality of Native Americans. To put it briefly, these schools, which ceased to exist at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, aimed at the 'Americanisation' of children and carried out several actions to achieve their purpose. Some of these actions included the separation from parents, prohibiting children from speaking their native language or a requirement to dress and have a hairstyle in accordance to the American style (Elliot, 2020). After the Indian Reorganisation Act of 1934, which gave tribes and reservations more self-government, Indian boarding schools were in decline. The remaining Indian boarding schools existing across America – a total of seven in the year 2020– are under the sovereignty of the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) or tribally controlled (Elliot, 2020). For instance, as Elliot explains, such schools as the Santa Fe Indian school, started in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to teach students about Native American traditions and culture, being nowadays "tribally managed". Unfortunately, numerous studies point out at the direct drawbacks these boarding schools had for the population attending those years, leading to mental health problems, suicide, domestic violence or substance abuse (Manson, 1989: 609). To emphasise the issue even more, the interest of utterly destroying Native American culture was made clear in the words of the Civil War Veteran who set up the first school for Native children in Pennsylvania. As he claimed, "kill the Indian in him and save the man" ("Sec. Haaland onhealing from the indoctrination", 2021). This was an atrocious time for the education and

wellbeing of Native Americans. As Native American Secretary Cabinet Deb Halaand pointed out in an interview with PBS,

It [was] a tragic era in our history, in American history. The boarding school era, I think about it as a sort of one of the last-ditch efforts to get Native Americans out of their communities and put them into mainstream society, after genocide, after the killing off of vast Native folks, so that [white settlers] could take their lands. It was tragic, after everything that had happened as well. They took Indians from their communities and their families, so they could indoctrinate them, to take away their clothing, to brutally take away their languages and their cultures. (...) Many children never made it back home. I am grateful that my grandparents made it back home. I would not be here today ("Sec. Halaand on healing from the indoctrination", 2021).

Despite this dark side and negative aspects of the Native American education, approaches are being taken towards the improvement of the education for this community. For instance, the number of American Indians / Alaska Native people enrolled in universities and with bachelors' and masters' degrees has doubled with respect to thirty years ago, despite the number still being quite low in comparison to white students (American Indian College Fund, n.d.). Additionally, according to the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI, n.d.), nineteen percent of Native Americans attend public schools, whereas an eight percent go to schools of the Bureau of Indian Education. Despite the negative results observed in comparison to white students and a very small number of people enrolling in universities, associations such as the above-mentioned work to give Indian Americans an education of quality. Especially after COVID-19 and the need of reliable access to internet which was not accessible for most Native American / Alaskan Native students, educators and scholars are addressing the issue and the importance of providing them with essential materials to improve their education. What is more, recommendations are being put forward to adapt the curriculum and include and promote indigenous identities in public schools (Cai, 2020). Actions such as these ones would be definitely a step forward towards equality and more tolerant society in the country. As Cai (2020) comments,



Many scholars and Native American educators recommend that schools serving AI/AN communities, regardless of public traditional or public charter, should promote Indigenous identities in the classroom. They also should design curriculum intended to include AI/AN cultures and languages. (...) As described by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2019, "American Indian and Alaska Native communities are looking for high-quality educational opportunities that also reflect their languages and cultures."

Languages constitute another hallmark of the Native American population, which evidence their cultural diversity as well. It is undeniable that the number of people speaking an indigenous language has decreased over the centuries as a result of the decline in the Indian population. Nonetheless, studies demonstrate a number of citizens still speak aboriginal languages. A census study indicated that around 372,000 people spoke Native American languages in the US in 2010, the most common language being Navajo, with 170,000 people able to speak it; followed by Yupik and Dakota, each with around 19,000 speakers across the country. The following image demonstrates the locations where most Native-speaking citizens reside, being mainly in the Apache reservation in Arizona (37,000) and in New Mexico (33,000) (Language Studies, n.d.),

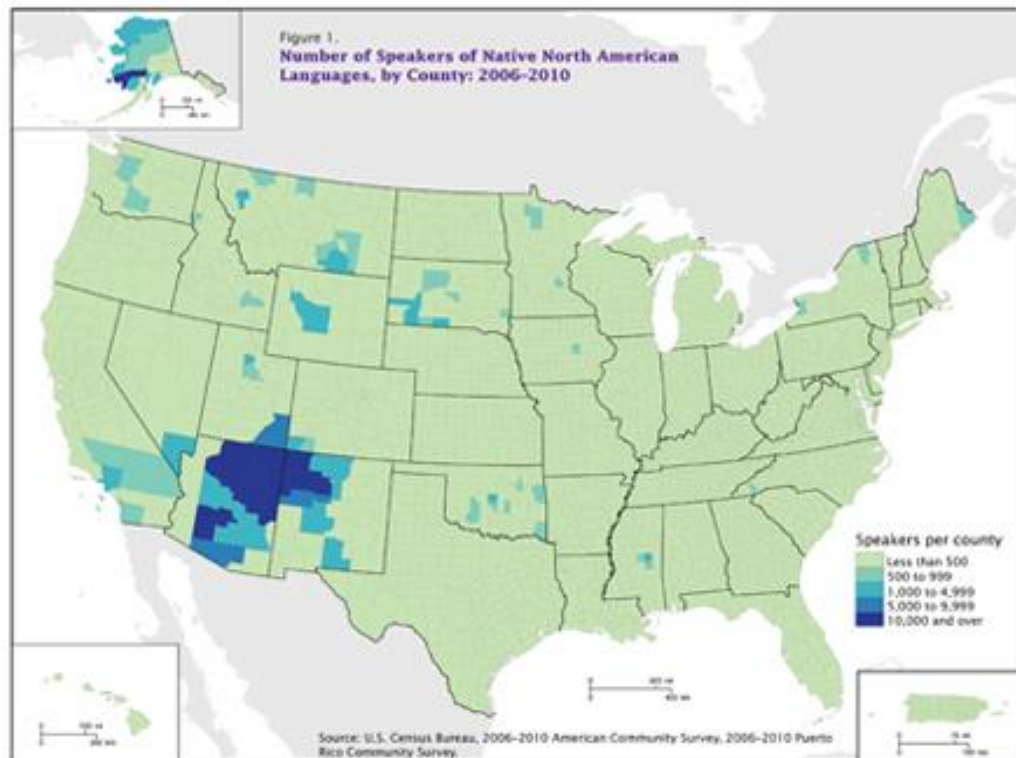


Fig 1. Language Magazine. *Number of Speakers of Native North American Languages, by County: 2006- 2010.*

In order to preserve Native American languages, programs are held to encourage both Indian Americans and non-speakers of the language to pursue their learning and acquisition. Accordingly, the Native American Language Program was put forward by the U.S. Department of Education, supporting schools that use Native languages and “to promote the rights and freedoms (...) to use, practice, maintain, and revitalize their languages” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Even universities include programs to learn languages and phone apps have been developed to motivate people to learn some of the most common languages e.g. Cherokee or Chickasaw (G, 2011).

Their economy is also on the rise. Whereas it was inconceivable for colonisers until the nineteenth century that Native Americans would have rights to own their own businesses and being in control of their own economy, the changes in legislation towards a more equal society has benefited their inclusion in economy as well. According to the NCAI (n.d.), “American Indian and Alaska Native businesses had an estimated buying power of \$115 billion in 2018, larger than many countries”. The

states with most businesses run by Native Americans include Oklahoma –where they constitute a 12.9% of the jobs, followed by Washington, Minnesota or Idaho, among others. The NCAI states that most jobs come from operations in farms, including crops, livestock and poultry. Nonetheless, there is still a great disparity in wealth and life conditions with white Americans, many of Native Americans of rural areas still living below the poverty line (Pauls, n.d.)

One of the greatest achievements for the Native American population is their inclusion in the US government, which was achieved in 2021. Deb Haaland became the first Native American to become Cabinet Secretary in the US when she was selected by a vote of 51 to 40 (Cabral, 2021). For many Native American people, her introduction in the US government has increased hopes and constituted a definite step forward towards the integration of Native American citizens and the maintenance of their cultural features and traditions. Some of her goals include the helping and finding reconciliation for those indigenous people afflicted by Indian boarding schools of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bendery, 2022). Other ones involve drawing attention to the issue of more missing and murdered Native American (Cabral, 2021) or encouraging the consultation to Native Americans when making decisions meant to impact them in diverse aspects (Fonseca and Montoya, 2022). In the words of Deb Haaland, Secretary Cabinet,

“With our initiative, we can work on healing. (...) The federal government has a trust obligation to Indian tribes (...) in exchange for all the land that essentially became the United States. I want the era where tribes have been on the back burner to be over, and I want to make sure that they have real opportunities to have a seat at the table (...)” (“Sec. Haaland on healing from the indoctrination”, 2021).

### **3.2. Customs and traditions of Native Americans that persist nowadays**

Despite the loss of countless traditions and cultural manifestations that define the Native American community as a result of genocide and destruction of their identity, a good portion of their traditions are still practised and appreciated. Their inclusion in

society increased especially after the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978) was passed. This law no longer prohibited Native Americans from practising religious ceremonies and celebrations of their culture (NPS, 2017). Furthermore, people from other ethnicities are getting more attracted to their customs, most of them approaching these traditions with respect and tolerance, which is re-establishing their status as other hallmarks of the cultural diversity that defines Native American tribes and America in general. Some of the customs most held dear and practised include the following:

*Powwows'* earliest sources date back to the 1800s. It consists of a celebration in which numerous indigenous tribes gather together to dance, sing and honour their traditions (Browner, n.d.). Its origins, according to Browner, can be found in businesspeople who travelled across the country to sell medicine, who used local Indians to dance and attract potential customers. However, over time, Native Americans made this tradition their own and today several *powwows* are held throughout the year in numerous places across the States. Additionally, they are considered opportunities to bring people together and celebrate life, their heritage and connect with the earth (Alvarez, 2022).



Figure 2. *Powwow*. (Graham-Becker: 2021)

The Stomp dance is another traditional dance still inherent in the Native American community and practised in numerous events held throughout the year. This tradition is associated with such tribes as the Cherokees, Muscogee Creeks and many others. It consists of a spiritual, meditative dance carried out in groups forming a circle, which may last an entire night (The Cherokee Registry, n.d). Often times they may include as well a fire in the center, which symbolises the sun. In some places, such as the Chickasaw Cultural Centre of Oklahoma they are performed every day for public visits (Chickasaw Nation, n.d.).

One of the festivities that celebrate Native American heritage and advocates for their rights and equality is the Indigenous People's day, held every year since first recognised in South Dakota in 1989. Prior considered Columbus day until 1992, this celebration started as a parallel and opposite festivity that celebrated the opposite: not the discovery of America, but the celebration of its Native American diversity. Over time, the name was changed as a symbol to protest against the genocide towards the community (National Today, 2022). Being adopted by different states for years, president Joe Biden decided formally declare it a national festivity in 2021 (Delkic, 2021). Alanna Hurley, executive director of United Tribes of Bristol Bay, a consortium of indigenous communities, comments about this day,

It really recognises that Indigenous people are still here (...) We just have been struggling for so long for the vast majority of mainstream America and culture to recognize that — that we are not just in history book (...) We're still fighting for our lands and our waters and our way of life. That visibility is huge, because we have struggled for so long with being made invisible by mainstream society (Delkic, 2021).

Music is another hallmark of the Native American culture. One of the most celebrated instruments that still play an important role in the Native American community and is portrayed in media is the drum. This instrument constitutes an essential element of rituals, celebrations and numerous festivals. According to NativeNet (n.d.), these instruments are considered to have their own entity, they create a special bond with their owners and are said to include thunders and lightning in the sound they emit. As Rusty Cozad, a Kiowa, veteran of the Native American

circle points out, “If you take care of the drum, it will take care of you. It’s like going to church. You sit down and pray to God, the creator (...) whatever we are going to sing, he is control, not us”, moreover, it is usually men who play this instruments, with women chanting alongside (“The Native American Drum”, 2015).

Finally, smudging is a ritual of Native American origin that is still inherent in the indigenous community and even increasingly getting introduced in the popular culture. It is considered a ceremonial ritual carried out to purify, spiritually cleanse and eliminate negative energies. The tools employed include smudge sticks, palo santo sticks, crystals and herbs, including sage, tobacco or sweetgrass (PowWow, 2021). However, numerous articles and people considered its introduction in popular culture a form of cultural appropriation, as commodification of smudging is generalising and stereotyping the ritual, approaching it to a wider audience but removing the traditional side of the practice. In fact, its malpractice, especially with kits sold in any non-specialised shops, is said to have consequences for the environment (GaneshSpace, 2021), for instance, the white sage is in danger for overconsumption (Timbrook, 2022). Consequently, might be considered another form of simplification, elimination and disrespect of a tradition originally found in Native American tribes, actions that should not be tolerated if equality and respect is aimed.

### **3.3. The current situation of the Native American woman**

As developed in chapter 2, the main victims of witchcraft and the hysteria that afflicted the Salem community were women, especially Native American women and other minorities, and Elizabeth Gaskell’s portrayal of the harsh violence endured by them was not far from the truth. It is undeniable that the criminal justice of the US, even after several centuries, still target minorities of colour, the news flooded with police brutality, racism or even exploitation. As Smith (2000) comments, numerous organisations advocate against violence on the grounds of racism and many others address violence against women, however, scanty target both issues simultaneously. Violence towards indigenous women has been considered a particular type of oppression, having started with the arrival and settlement of European colonisers during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries onwards. It is worth mentioning that their

suffering and demise is considered a direct consequence of colonisation. As Smith (2000) explains, since the beginning of colonisation, indigenous women were one of the main targets because they could have descendants. Accordingly, they were sexually mutilated and raped to prevent them from bearing more children.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, these forms of violence now seem archaic, but data and studies demonstrate indigenous women still suffer different numerous types of violence, including domestic or sexual abuse, which is twice the rate of other women (Ramírez, 2007: 23), (Rosay, 2016). To set an example, in 2019, California was estimated to have one of the highest numbers of cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in comparison to other US regions (Levin, 2019). Similarly, in relation to women's rights, the overruling of the *Roe V. Wade* law on June 24, 2022, by which women cannot longer freely choose to have an abortion, has brought up the underdeveloped conditions of the healthcare system in reservations. In fact, the Hyde Amendments, passed in 1976 and amended in 1993, have prevented Native American women from receiving care in Indian facilities, which contradicts the *Roe V. Wade* law since, as US citizens, Native American women should be entitled to choose. Regardless of this contradiction, the truth can be observed in data. For example, it evidences that 46% of Native American women are younger than twenty years old when they have their first child. What is more, numerous surveys suggest they are at a higher risk of sexual assault (Arnold, 2014: 1892). To make matters even worse, Arnold (2014: 1892-1893) adds about their odds of being sexually abused and left out by the system,

One in 3 Native American women will be assaulted in her lifetime, a risk 3.5 times higher than that of other ethnic groups in the United States. The majority of perpetrators are non-native and, thus, cannot be prosecuted under tribal law, leaving Native American women vulnerable to continued attacks from these individuals. It is critical that public health and legislative interventions to reduce sexual assault and intimate partner violence target non-native perpetrators of sexual violence.

With the overruling of *Roe V. Wade* law, as Adler (2022) comments, reservations can still perform abortions, as they have their own jurisdiction. However,

the lack of resources and of information, the situation is likely to get worse, for women in general and for Native American women in particular. As Adler claims, for instance, “federal prosecutors could enforce state laws that allow the federal government to prosecute under state law “major crimes” such as murder on reservations”, considering abortions as murders. Therefore, these actions put at risk both women and doctors who perform abortions, making the situation even more difficult.

Amidst this harsh situation for Native American women, it is worth taking a look at the treatment of women within their own tribes, which in some cases, it is completely opposite to what they live in white American territory. In fact, literature demonstrates that, since early and traditional tribes, it was likely for women to be considered essential, the backbones of the communities on the grounds of being the providers of life. Sometimes, they even had a leadership role (Baskyn, 2020: 2084). However, the arrival of colonisers relegated their role to becoming slaves and unworthy of even bearing children. The difference between the role of women prior and after colonisation is striking, as J. Dallaire (2017) comments,

The roles of a woman and grandmother were to bring ceremonies forward into the community, to train other women to do them and to watch out and support our men. The grandmothers taught the women that when the men were going through healing or going out to battle or going out hunting that we stand around them in a circle of protection and care to watch over them. They also taught them about the importance of when family members were going out fasting, that the women were to take care of them by spiritually offering them water and food every day, so that they stayed strong. These important teachings were about making a family whole and strong through community and ceremonies.

Injustices such as the above-mentioned have led to an increasing demand of support and equal access for healthcare for any woman regardless of their backgrounds, but especially for Native American or African American women, who have tended to suffer greater forms of oppression for centuries now. In the words of Lorelei Means, founder of an association for Native American women’s rights,



We are American Indian women in that order. We are oppressed first and foremost as American Indians, as peoples colonized by the United States, not as women. As Indians we can never forget that. Our survival, the survival of every one of us—man, woman and child—as Indians depends on it. Decolonization is the agenda, the whole agenda, until it is accomplished (Jaimes and Halsey, 1992: 314)

Deb Haaland even published an article where she demanded more actions towards justice for victims of these crimes. As she commented, by 2019, reports had identified 506 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women across 71 state cities. As she claimed,

The epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women has been overlooked for far too long, but we're finally giving a voice to this silent crisis. When your community is at risk – when it could be your daughter, your sister or your mom – the issue demands urgency. The attention this issue has received wouldn't have been possible without the women in Indian country saying, "enough is enough, we deserve to feel safe too". It was a call for Congress to direct real resources to the problem." (Haaland, 2019).

Finally, the introduction of this issue in literature and other artistic manifestation has also helped to address this concerning matter and encourage more action to further prevent it, as well as to reach and help other women who might have endured the same fate. Joy Harjo's poetry, for instance, constitutes a great representation of these topics. After suffering and witnessing domestic violence for many years from her own father and white stepfather, with the long-term psychological consequences it entailed (García Navarro, 2019: 55- 56), she turned to poetry. Her revisiting of the torment and affliction she underwent reinforced her resilience and encouraged women to move forward towards change and strength, whilst addressing Native American women's problems and giving them visibility (García Navarro, 2019: 55-56), especially against the still present patriarchal society of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the difficulties faced for being both a Native American and a woman.

## Conclusions

As previously stated, this Master's thesis has attempted to analyse the representation and defence of the Native American population as displayed in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Lois the Witch*. Likewise, a correlation has been established between Gaskell's portrayal of Native Americans and how vindications such as hers, in literature and other manifestations of art, could have influenced in their increasing and gradual inclusion in society. As a result, it shall be concluded that Gaskell's works, as well as her contemporaries and following writers could have influenced in the encouragement to fight for Native American people as rightful citizens of America. It is also worth mentioning that preceding vindications in other forms of art, such as cinema, poetry or even music had also an impactful role in their inclusion.

Focusing on *Lois the Witch*, by analysing her writing style and narration, it may be deduced that Gaskell wanted to display the harsh realities that some people had to endure as a result of fanatic and radical beliefs. Moreover, by focusing the story on Salem and the Witchcraft trials, it is concluded that she may also have attempted to provide audiences with actual facts on the origins, including the reasons, the episode itself and the aftermath of the mass hysteria that ended with the life of many people. As Hafaale-Thomas (2012: 61) suggests, through the use of an omnipresent narrator, Gaskell's works accomplish even leading readers' mindset towards characters and the progression of the stories she tells. In the case of *Lois the Witch*, it might be common to feel rejection towards Native Americans first, as most Puritan characters do. Nonetheless, we are eventually steered towards understanding, feeling pity and tolerance towards this community, especially thanks to Gaskell's remarkable diction. In the words of Hafaale-Thomas (2012: 61),

With her publication of *Lois the Witch* in 1859, Elizabeth Gaskell chooses not to exploit the commercial wave of Indian hysteria; rather, she has placed her audience in Lois's shoes and has walked them from prejudice to understanding. The American Indian woman who rejected the colonizer's religion and the English woman who refused the heteronormative economy are the heroes of this Gothic tale.

One of the most important elements of *Lois the Witch* is definitely the moral of the story. Any prejudice and hate directed towards a minority may lead to their isolation and even worse: their genocide. This can not only be aimed at Native Americans, but at black people's slavery or any form of genocide.

As aforementioned, Nattee and Hota are slaves of Puritan families, they endure their mistreatment and are eventually accepted by them to, in the blink of an eye, being condemned and executed without having actual evidence to blame them. Moreover, their executions are not considered a great loss for Salem's citizens. Episodes such as the portrayed in *Lois the Witch* might remind us of the insignificant role that Native Americans, black people and other minorities had for European colonisers, who did not even consider them as equal human beings and enslaved them to benefit from their exploitation and mistreatment. What is more, it might be noticeable that most of the actions carried out by colonisers and whites Americans were based on their strong religious beliefs, attempting to civilise the world according to god's plan. Accordingly, as explored throughout this Master's paper, it shall be concluded, as above-mentioned, that Gaskell's words of advice about religious fanaticism could be extended to almost every action taken through colonisation for the sake of religion or making the world a more civilised place. An example is found in her words about the ideals of Puritans in relation to witchcraft,

The gravest divines not only believed stories similar to that of the double-headed serpent, and other tales of witchcraft, but they made such narrations the subjects of preaching and prayer; and, as Cowardice makes us all cruel, men who were blameless in many of the relations of life, and even praiseworthy in some, became, from superstition, cruel persecutors

about this time, showing no mercy towards any one whom they believed to be in league with the Evil One.” (p. 32)

These words not only may pertain to witchcraft, but also to the atrocious and cruel genocide that lasted centuries and almost led to a complete eradication the Native American population, alongside with their richness in culture, languages and traditions, which are still trying to be recovered. As aforementioned, these ideas could even be related to the mistreatment and slavery of African American people, who were taken from their households, sold as slaves and forced to work under inhumane and heartless conditions.

Despite the devastating effects of the genocide Native Americans endured for centuries, numerous studies and manifestations evidence they are still inherent in the American society. As explored in chapter 3, Indian Americans are increasingly getting included in society. After numerous attempts to assimilate them into the white American society or their alienation –for instance, with the creation of reservations or the Indian boarding schools–, they are finally being able to advocate for their rightful choice of preserving their identity. Furthermore, it can be observed how over time a great number of people, from United States and other countries, are picking up the courage to finally claim their identity as Native Americans, Latino, or any other origins, as they do with other types of identifications, such as their gender or sexual orientations. As far as I am concerned, some of the reasons behind these courageous movements reside, among numerous aspects as the mentioned in previous chapters, in the positive representation in media. As a society flooded with television, social media and now streaming platforms, people are likely to be highly influenced by the TV series, films and posts what they watch and come across every day. The increasing inclusion of Native Americans, Latinos, or Asians, to name a few, as well as different genders or sexual orientations in these platforms might make people feel included and represented. Thus, it is more common to see people being gradually less afraid to demonstrate who they really are and fighting for their rights and freedoms, and that definitely constitutes a step forward as a society towards the multicultural and diverse society we actually deserve.

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