

THE STUDY OF CONFLICTS IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S *THE SCARLET LETTER*: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Nathaniel Hawthorne was an American writer born on July 4 1804 at Salem Massachusetts on July 4 1804. Nathaniel was an American Novelist, dark Romantic and short story writer. His work often focuses on history, morality and religion. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821. He published his first work 1828 Fanshawe. He published several short stories in periodicals which he collected in 1837. He worked at the Boston custom house and joined Brook Farm, a transcendentalist community. Much of Hawthorne's writing centres on New England many works featuring moral metaphors with an anti-puritan inspiration. His fiction works were considered as a part of the Romantic Movement and more specifically dark romanticism.

Hawthorne's works belong to romanticism or more specifically dark Romanticism. Many of his works are inspired by puritan New England combining historical romance loaded with symbolism and deep psychological themes bordering on surrealism. Critics have applied feminist approaches to Hawthorne's depictions of women. Feminist scholars were interested particularly in Hester Prynne. Mr Hawthorne's style is purity itself. His tone is singularly effective. Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* was one of the first mass produced books in America. It was popular when first published and is considered a classic work today. Critics have described it as a masterpiece and novelist D. H. Lawrence called it a perfect work of the American imagination.

Keywords: Conflicts, Identity, Society, Abuse, Hawthorne

SUMMARY

The scarlet letter begins in seventeenth century Boston. A young women Hester Prynne is led from the town prison with her infant daughter pearl in her arms and the scarlet letter “A” on her breast. Hester is punished for her adultery. Hester’s husband is a scholar much older than her she is sent her ahead to America but he never arrived in Boston. Hester has apparently had an affair as she has given birth to a child but she didn’t reveal about her lovers identity. The elderly onlooker is Hester’s missing husband who is now practicing medicine and calling himself roger Chillingworth .Hester supports herself by working as a sewer and pearl grows into a wilful, impish child. But community officials attempt to take pearl away from Hester but with the help of Arthur Dimmesdale but the mother and daughter manage to stay together.

Dimmesdale appears to be wasting away and suffers from mysterious heart trouble seemingly caused by psychological distress. Chillingworth also suspects that there may be a connection between the minister’s torments and Hester’s secret and chillingworth begins to test Dimmesdale for what he can learn from him. One afternoon when the minister sleeps Chillingworth discovers a mark on the man’s breast which convinces him that his suspicion is correct.one night when pearl and her mother attend to attend a death bed they encounter Dimmesdale at top trying to punish himself for his sins. Hester and pearl join him and three link hands. Hester can see that the minister’s condition is worsening. The former lovers plan to escape and flee to Europe where they can live pearl as a family. Both feels a sense of release and Hester removes her scarlet letter and lets down her hair. The day before the ship to sail the townspeople gather for a holiday and Dimmesdale preaches his most eloquent sermon ever.Dimmesdale confesses publically exposing a scarlet letter seared into the flesh of his chest and he falls dead. Hester and pearl leaves to Boston and no one knows what happened to them. Later pearl got married to European aristocrat and established a family of her own. Hester dies she is buried next to Dimmesdale .two share a single tombstone which bears a scarlet letter “A”.

Though sociology draws on the western tradition of rational inquiry established by the ancient Greeks it is specifically the offspring of 18th-19th century. French philosopher Auguste Comte French philosopher coined the term sociology. Darwinian evolutionary theory is developed by some earliest sociologists in their attempts to establish a scientifically based academic discipline, creative thinkers including Herbert spencer ,Benjamin Kidd, Lewis H Morgan,E.B Tylor and L t Hobhouse these people developed analogies between human society and biological organism. Biological concepts as variance is introduced by them. Sociology is a social science which studies human societies their interactions and the processes that preserve and change.

HESTERS CONFLICTS

The scarlet letter depicts the drama of Hester Prynne a young puritan women living in New England who is condemned to forever wear the label of adultery upon her clothing. The evident societal labelling of Prynne which is rendered explicit by the enforced wearing of the scarlet letter upon her breast seems to reinforce the idea as advanced by some sociologists that a community needs to self-consciously create deviant persons or outsiders to uphold its sense of order. Social labelling arises when a society wishes to define itself as essentially normal, upright or moral against so called deviant influences. The problem with applying social labelling theory to Prynne however is the idea that labelling produces inevitably more deviant behaviour.one of the foundational concepts of social labelling is that labelling is a self-fulfilling prophecy Hawthorne reflect this Marxist theory and hopes to bring about ideas of individuality into the minds of his readers through Hester Prynne's suffering and also in her triumphant journey to independence. Seven year battle of Hester Prynne's with isolation at the bottom of the social structure and Hawthorne criticizes the "grim rigidity "of not only the puritan society but also parts of his own romantic time period. Hester was condemned to be socially imprisoned by her community and shunned because of her adultery. Hawthorne utilizes the character of Hester in order to provide a model for how one can go about living in a society split apart by conflicts arising from social class and economy.

IDENTITY AND SOCIETY

After Hester is publically shamed for her adultery and she was forced to wear a badge of humiliation a scarlet letter printed on her dress. She admitted that the symbol is a shame. Dimmesdale also struggles for it but he didn't open it to anyone but at last he opened it to everyone and he died. For his sin he also marked the letter A. Pearl their daughter didn't know who her father. Hester married Chillingworth without understanding that she had committed a sin. For Pearl it is a hard time for her because she is the sin produced by the society.

CONCLUSION

Problem with applying social labelling theory to Prynne is the idea of labelling produces more deviant behaviour. Foundational concepts of social labelling is that labelling is self-fulfilling prophecy. Scarlet letter is the idea of sin and punishment. Scarlet letter is meant to be the symbol of shame, but it is a powerful symbol of identity to Hester. Scarlet letter is a narrative of female empowerment exemplified by Hester Prynne. Scarlet letter may not a work of feminist literature. According to today's view adultery is not there. People is living life as their own way. There are not bothered about other people's lives. In early life's people all look others matters and according to their view adultery is sin and any people go like this they will be punished in front of the society and they will be abandoned from the society. In scarlet letter the protagonist Hester was punished for committing adultery. She had to wear a scarlet letter on her clothes as a punishment so that others could find she committed adultery. If Hester story was happening in this generation she won't have to suffer this punishments and alienation as the current society doesn't consider adultery as a sin to a extend.

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