

A Study of Feminist review in The Scarlet Letter

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Abstract

The paper investigates the traces of Feminism in The Scarlet Letter. Hester prynne is the main 17th century character, she displays a rich catalogue for the Feminists allowing us to apply most of the Feminist theory. The Character conceives a baby through an affair and later on struggles to have a new life of combination of regret and self-respect. The work is considered as a classic from its inception to right today. The critics describe it a marvellous piece of work.

Key words: Feminism- The Scarlet Letter- women - Puritanism.

Introduction:-

Initially, it may seem that The Scarlet Letter cannot be studied through feminist point of view and has nothing to do with the struggle for equality between males and females. In 1850 when the society was completely patriarchal, this book was written. In a male dominated society no one could even dare to think about the gender equality. No one could even talk of such a thing as gender impartiality. Right from its first publication the novel is very popular and is always considered as a marvellous work. Hester Prynne a very beautiful young girl gives birth to a baby of mysterious parentage. The society stresses to name the father of the child which she refuses at first. Then she perceives the anger of the society and among the crowd names a distorted man as her long lost husband, who has been alleged lost at sea. The story is about the Hester Prynne and Roger Chillingworth. The story is about the religion, legalism, sin and guilty. The author shows preconditions of what later turn into a full-fledged feminist movement.

Discussion:-

This story is set in a traditional and conservative Puritan community of the 1640s. An intense picture of women's place within the society, their oppressed sexuality, and therefore the attitude of the church towards women is provided to spotlight the desperate position of females at that point. Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* presents Hester as an anti-Puritan. He explains her as a symbol of individual retrieval that the Puritan avoided. In the end, Hawthorne portrays Hester's way to refurbishment as if she chose it. The characters Dimmesdale and Hester were the sufferers of the Puritan society but only Hester was able to come out of the obstacles placed upon her by the Puritans society. At first it is seen that Hester rebels openly but in the end she eventually compensates overt rebellion. Like Ann Hutchinson, Hester Prynne is not introduced because Ann was against those ill-treated women while Hester decided to live her life in normal way as if nothing immoral befell.

In order to appreciate Hester's fault within the community, Hawthorne takes pains to describe the assembled crowd surrounding the prison door. He explains the need for a prison because any idealistic value in human virtue and happiness they might originally plan. He writes that perhaps the roses symbolised the beauty in this stiff moment and to make atmosphere cool, comfortable and relax. How does this serve the question of Hester the anti-Puritan? At the very beginning of novel Hester's Stubborn nature is visible. When she emerges from the prison, Hester raised her head as if she wants to say that i do not care and standing in front of the entire town with smile of carelessness again.

According to Puritan society, her sin, social crime, immorality and the result of it should be objects of shame and result in humility. However, Hester does not show concern or a repenting attitude rather she falls back on her own abilities in order to survive. She even draws attention to the scarlet A on her body and as if she is happy with this. The narrator states that even her clothing and attire seemed to express the attitude of her soul. Hester, the anti-Puritan, arrives with astonishment and shocking behaviour to the observers with her self-assurance and confidence.

This reveals that she has no intention of obeying the Puritan magistrates nor does she dissatisfy or disappoint from this matter. When ordered to reveal the name of her child's father she lastly decides to speak and express and calls instead God as her child's father.

Hester is the conventional sign of the law. Hester has long been the limit of what representations the law can abide of its inability to prevent transgression. Though the decision makers in Boston attempt to bind Hester's independent spirit, they are unable to force her to answer. Thus, the magistrates lose control over the state of affairs and only control the situation. Hester does not care that she stands before the entire town, the magistrates view her as uncooperative and disobeying for that she suffers. She is only concerned that the identity of her lover should not be exposed. Only she and he have the power to name or not the others and for her part she will not step down to the oppressive opinions of the authorities. Moreover, she is confident that she will end up meeting him.

When Hester is set free from the prison, she holds her 3-month-old child in her arms. This baby is the result of her immoral act, child of adultery which agitates uncertain feeling in her. She blushes, but maintains a 'glance that she would not be abashed and ashamed. After that, she alienates herself from the society and hides her beauty by wearing a hat. Hester raises her daughter indifferently and singlehandedly and believes that God has blessed her with a daughter for a purpose. She devotes her time in solitude or giving help to those who need it, such as the poor or needy but in return people she helps do not show the same generosity to her. A true feminist fights for her own rights and does not allow herself be inferior and limbered by the ones surrounding her. She toiled and worked to have money for a living, she took care of her daughter like no one would do it and the most important she gain the respect and appreciation of the community.

Through the whole story of *The Scarlet Letter*, it can be known that Hester is an extremely idiosyncratic and distinct woman compared with common and traditional ones. Although suffering immensely from the pain and shame of her public disgrace and from the isolation of her punishment, she still holds her head high with honour and remains in full public view without any fear and bears every untoward bravely in order to protect and safe guard her lover Dimmesdale. Hester makes up her mind to stand alone despite all odds and against the opinion of society. In her inmost heart, she believes and trusts that her love and affection to

Dimmesdale is of dignity and grace. With her fine craft and needlework, she manages to earn a livelihood for her and her child Pearl. Hester, a woman with feminist consciousness, never falls but continually struggles against all odds and evil forces. She overwhelmingly dares to face her existence as a human being, especially as a woman.

All of her actions investigated and analysed here undoubtedly embody Hester's noble character of rebellious spirit, self-confidence, strong will and strong mind, which is exactly what feminism advocates. Along these lines the new picture of females has come out, that is, unified with the feministic approach. This kind of feminineness challenges to trust her and to believe in the possibility of a new morality in the world of male domination, thus they are able to reform the old world with a new one.

Hester accepts human weakness and the preconception of the Puritan laws. The picture of Hester plays a vibrant and appropriate role in promoting of women's movement later. Hawthorne puts forward a serious and considerable subject through her portrait vis-a vis an image of a woman their justified rights of equality and freedom and impartiality.

Conclusion:-

The patriarchal society conceded woman's intellectual development and freedom. A woman lives limited, restricted and constraint life as per the traditional rules of a society. Her role as daughter or as wife and above all as a mother is restricted. Patriarchy assumes that the father or the husband or the elder man in the family has absolute authority over the family especially over its females or women flock. Conservative society perceive this approach in the wrong way, they mingle it with religion, there by denying the justice to the fair gender and besides it is inaccurate to socialise diverse features.

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