

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print):2321-3108 (online)

HESTER'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT IN *THE SCARLET LETTER*: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

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Article info

Article Received: 31/01/2022

Article Accepted: 18/05/2022

Published online:28/07/2022

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.10.3.81](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.10.3.81)

Abstract

The Scarlet Letter, a famous novel, written by Nathaniel Hawthorne, a famous American author, was published in the nineteenth century having the setting of the novel in the mid-seventeenth century Boston Puritan society of New England of the United States of America. The story of the novel revolves mainly around the female protagonist Hester Prynne and her surrounding male and female characters such as Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, Pearl, Clergymen and others. The representation of women characters in literature is a very crucial issue in the field of feminist studies. Traditional patriarchal representation of women characters is severely criticized by the feminist critics, and the long established traditional patriarchal practices of portraying women characters are not a good one. Hester's sin and receiving punishment and, therefore, her self-development, without being dependent on male partners for livelihood, with ups and downs in the patriarchal society, being ostracized, have been taken into consideration for this study. In this paper, the portrayal of women characters has been regarded as a protest against the existing patriarchal traditional practices. The author's representation of Hester Prynne and Pearl has been analyzed as the violation of the traditional practices from the feminist point of view as a protest, the author's position being in the patriarchal authority.

Keywords: Patriarchal tradition, feminist point of view, author's protest, patriarchal practice, representation of women characters, politics of presentation

Introduction

The condition of women in literature as well as in society is on the rise as shown in this novel, in spite of their hard time prevailing for a long time in the society- the hard time has not yet finished all over the world- especially in the Western society let alone the other world, the third world countries, where the development comes much later than the first world countries. The representation of women

characters- Hester Prynne and Pearl- by Nathaniel Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter* has been attempted to explain from a feminist point of view in this paper. The portrayal of women in literature by the male authors is very crucial in the study of feminism, and in this writing the author's own intention has been explained as positive for the feminist point of view, violating the traditional practice to portray the female characters as weak, irrational, inferior in

quality, destructive, demonic, docile, dependent on man; and since the presentation was done much earlier, during Puritan time, done by a male author, the text has been regarded as the development document of feminism; in this study it has been called a protest to the existing patriarchal tradition in portraying women in literature. The novel is full of symbolic actions and objects; there are many symbolic actions based on which the feminist study can be done and in this piece of writing the same study has been conducted. First, the existing traditional view or practice of the patriarchal authority towards women in western society as well as in general all over the world has been discussed. Then the author's deviation from that set standards in portraying the central female characters along with the males as a protest has been illustrated with textual evidence leading to a finding that the author has violated the existing patriarchal practices of presenting women in literature. Thereby, the author's point of view has been explored as feminist.

Traditional Patriarchal Practice towards Women

The presentation of women in literature by the patriarchal tradition is not a good one which is historically proved and many critics have outlined the issue in their writings distinctively. Social systems are formed by the patriarchy. Simply, but potentially, patriarchy means 'the rules of father' and the history of patriarchy is a primitive one. Patriarchy is defined in *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* by Jeremy Hawthorn as:

Technically, government by men—either within the family or in society at large- with authority descending through the father. In recent usage the term has been used to point both to the actual exercise of power and also to the IDEOLOGICAL system- the ideas and attitudes – used to bolster, justify, and protect this power. Patriarchy thus has political, economic, social and ideological dimensions. (256)

The concept of patriarchy is primarily used in literature from the feminist point of view where it is used against the women. The women are represented in literature with some qualities that are not of sublime concepts. The patriarchal

practices of presenting women in literature and feminist arguments against those practices have been well described by Pramod K. Nayar in *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Eco-criticism* in the following words:

Feminist theory argues that the representation of women as weak, docile, innocent, seductive or irrational- sentimental is rooted in and influences actual social conditions, where she does not have power, is treated as a sex-object or a procreating machine, has fewer political and financial rights and is abused. Feminism, therefore, is a world view that refuses to delink art from existing social conditions and practices...Cultural texts naturalize the oppression of women through their stereotypical representation of women as weak/vulnerable, seductress, obstacle, sexual object or a procreating device. (83)

From the above description of Mr. Nayar, the evaluation of women by the patriarchal society and for such evaluation the feminist arguments against the existing practices have been expressed clearly. Mr. Nayar further explains the reason for subduing women in literature as a social practice and the feminist concern for women in the following lines:

The inequalities that exist between men and women are not natural but social, not pre-ordained but created by men so that they retain power. Religion, the family, education, the arts, knowledge systems are all social and cultural 'structures' that enable the perpetual reinforcement of this inequality. These structures are effective means of reinforcing male domination because they do not *appear* oppressive. They retain power because, with their ability to persuade, the structures convince the woman that she is destined to be subordinated. (*ibid*, 83-84)

So, the women's weakness is socially constructed, not biologically. The patriarchal authority tries to suppress the women to gain its supremacy over them and the women accept the subordination easily. But the subordination is not accepted by the feminist authors. One of the most

influential writers of the twentieth century on feminism Simone de Beauvoir has described elaborately the patriarchal process through which a woman is formed and grown in her famous book *The Second Sex*. From the book a reader can have a vivid picture of the dominant patriarchal tradition and the experience of the women characters both in literature and human society. As Beauvoir describes the impact of society to make a woman thus:

ONE is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. (295)

Women's subordination "could be seen as social in origin, as neither given by nature nor an accidental feature of relations between men and women" (Jackson 13). There were many obstacles in past centuries, still some of them are existing all over the world, from the patriarchal society against flourishing the women's condition in society in terms of education, culture, writing and empowerment. As Ellen Moers has described the similar condition of women and a comparison between male and female writers' facilities and predicaments to be writers in "Literary Women" thus:

Male writers have always been able to study their craft in university or coffeehouse, group themselves into movements or coterie, search out predecessors for guidance or patronage, collaborate or fight with their contemporaries. But women through most of the nineteenth century were barred from the universities, isolated in their own homes, chaperoned in travel, painfully restricted in friendship. The personal give-and-take of the literary life was closed to them. Without it, they studied with a special closeness the works written by their own sex, and developed a sense of easy, almost rude familiarity with women who wrote them. (11)

The existing discrimination in patriarchal society between masculine gender and feminine

gender has been justly pointed out by Lois Tyson in "Feminist Criticism" thus: "Traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive" (85). The outlook towards women is not in their favour. The representation of woman in literature by male authors, actually by patriarchal agents, is political-the women's stereotypical sketch is drawn by the patriarchal authors purposefully.

The politics of representation of women in literature and the long-established position of women in literature as well as in society can be further evidenced by the writings of the scholars such as Professor Roger Webster has described the historical practice of presenting women in literature as well as considering them in the society, the existing position of women, in his book *Studying Literary Theory: An Introduction*,

Historically, as with class and race, literature has arguably tended to subordinate or marginalize the position of women. This has happened in several ways. In literary texts, women usually play less significant roles than men; obviously there are exceptions in works by both male and female writers, but the dominant or normative experience represented in literature is, it has been argued by feminists from Virginia Woolf onward, male. (75)

Roger Webster has deftly described the position of women in western society and culture writing "...in western society and culture the male is regarded as the norm, as the central and neutral position from which the female is a departure" (*ibid*, 73-74). In this statement a clear inferior position of women in the existing patriarchal western society is depicted; the relationship between men and women in the society is of superiority and inferiority where the males are superior and the females are inferior. Women's existing is evaluated in relation to the male's point of view where the female suffer from identity crisis as Beauvoir has expressed this issue thus:

Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is

not regarded as an autonomous being.... She defined and differentiated with reference to men and not he with reference to her; she is the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute- she is the Other. (*ibid*, 16)

The social construction of women as inferior has been argued by the feminist writers frequently all over the world and the argument is a constant practice until the actual dignity of women is achieved in the western society and literature as well as all over the world. The traditional gender roles are created by patriarchy and this issue has been discussed by many literary figures all over the world. As Michael Ryan has described the western traditional view of patriarchy towards women in *Literary Theory: A Practical Introduction* thus:

The western cultural tradition has, through its use of binary oppositions, helped assure male rule. Men are associated with reason, objectivity, logic, and the like, while women are linked to the body, matter, emotions, an absence of logic and reason, and the like. In its misogynist form, androcentric culture equates women with castration and death. (102)

The social view towards women make more 'women' than the actual 'women' in nature. Women are not generally considered to be powerful in economy, politics and other social activities by the patriarchal society; rather, it is assumed, they fit to work at home doing the household chores. As Ryan has described, with reference to feminist theory, the traditional view about the women's role in society, economy and politics in the following words:

Men hold almost all positions of political and economic power, and economies work in such a way that women are more likely to be poor and men more likely to be rich. The assumed norm in many societies is for women to be in charge of domestic labor and childrearing while men engage in more public concerns. (*ibid*, 101)

The Author's Protest in Portrayal of Women Characters

In *The Scarlet Letter* the author has not presented his central female characters in the traditional way as stated above; rather the female characters have been glorified in a grand style. The readers of the novel cannot but go in favor of Hester Prynne and Pearl in the end. Hester and Pearl turn to be a different embodiment of traditional women in the end of the novel and they set a grand example of women's strength, independence, power and success. Rightly it can be assumed that Nathaniel Hawthorne technically has protested against the above mentioned or existing patriarchal practice over the women in literature as well as in society. His presentation of Hester Prynne and Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter* should be celebrated by the feminist thinkers as well as all the readers as not to create the weak women, dependent on the strong, the male, for development, even for survival, in life. His protest has been explored through analysis of Hester's sin and punishment leading to her and Pearl's success in life in the following parts of this paper.

Hester's Courage to Admit Sin and Receive Punishment

In literary pieces the characters are portrayed by the author and the author's characterization of the characters and representation of the characters carry a great symbolic meaning, and by that representation the author's intent can be assumed, which the critics do for judging the underlying meaning or purpose of the representation; and, of course, in case of feminist studies, the representation of female characters are taken into consideration very seriously. In this paper, the author's purpose has been tried to explore behind portrayal of Hester Prynne's character along with Pearl and other characters from a feminist perspective. In the novel, the author's description of Hester from the beginning is meaningful which clearly expresses his sympathy, affection and respect towards Hester. He has not omitted any chance to glorify Hester Prynne from every possible way. The author's grand use of words to describe her personality to make her great to the reader is

praiseworthy which establishes his support to Hester Prynne. The author describes Hester Prynne with the following words:

The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance, on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was lady-like, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days; characterised by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the delicate, evanescent, and indescribable grace, which is now recognized as its indication. (55)

Hester Prynne, being the female protagonist of the novel, appears before the public to admit her sin for trial which carries a great symbolic meaning to express her courage and strength. In the novel Hester Prynne shows her courage to face the truth in front of the society and she struggles for development in her life against the harsh reality being abandoned by the society carrying the blame for un-chastity with the sign of 'A' meaning the adultery by which her sin is publicly exposed and she is overtly charged for her sinful activity, adultery. Despite lots of problems- personal and social- she does not stop her life to put a full stop in her life by committing suicide secretly; rather she advances and develops in the end of the novel and she embodies success in her life ultimately by turning the meaning of 'A' into 'able' or 'Angel', which is a miracle. The strength of her character proves immense. She is a female protagonist and stands for the women, ultimately women power. Undoubtedly Hester Prynne can be taken into consideration as the representative of the women power or female authority. There will not be any fault for a feminist to consider Hester as the rise of female greatness or female power or women's development in the society documented in this excellent novel set up in the USA.

Hester Prynne's entry to the town scaffold for the trial was nothing but heroic as the author has described her style of entry in the following words:

...she repelled him by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air, as if by her own free-will. She bore in her arms a child, a baby of some three months old, who winked and turned aside its little face from the too vivid light of day; because its existence, heretofore, had brought it acquainted only the gray twilight of a dungeon, or other darksome apartment of the prison. (54-55)

During her entry, the people were against her and all were demanding punishment for her sin as the society was of the Puritan setting, and adultery was a big sin that time according to their religious view. Even in that hostile situation, Hester had not been afraid of her upcoming punishment, at least her activities, as per author's description, don't allow the readers to think that; rather her boldness before the public is shown which is a praiseworthy task. And from her appearance before the public, though being helpless under trial, it can be embodied that the females are not too weak to face any hard situation; on the contrary, they are also very strong to face any hostile situation.

Hester's situation was very tough on the scaffold with the baby in her arms as all the people gathered there to see the severe punishment of Hester for her adultery. As the author describes the scene of Hester's punishment at the market place of Boston thus:

Lastly, in lieu of these shifting scenes, came back the rude market place of the Puritan settlement, with all the townspeople assembled and leveling their stern regards at Hester Prynne, -yes, at herself, -who stood on the scaffold of the pillory, an infant on her arm, and the letter A, in scarlet, fantastically embroidered with gold thread, upon her bosom! (62)

But the punishment could not affect Hester too negatively to faint on the scaffold being very weak both mentally and physically-- as it is typical for a woman, as assumed by society, not to be strong enough to tolerate any hard situation; by nature the women are very soft minded and they get nervous very easily. But Hester shows the different attitude towards the punishment given to her publicly and

her behavior is highly noteworthy to prove that the women are not too weak to tolerate the hard situation- they can also be strong enough to receive any reality though the reality can be very harsh to them. The patriarchal thinking about the women is challenged automatically by Hester's bold behaviour in antagonistic environment. The typical ideas about the females, womanly characteristics, are to be broken in this situation. The attitude of Hester Prynne, obviously the bold one, after her punishment is finely fabricated by the omniscient author in the following words:

Could it be true? She clutched the child so fiercely to her breast, that it sent forth a cry; she turned her eyes downward at the scarlet letter, and even touched it with her finger, to assure herself that the infant and the shame were real. Yes! – these were her realities, – all else had vanished! (62)

Hester's Greatness towards Arthur Dimmesdale

Hester's decision, not to divulge the name of her partner, is so firm that she does not express the name even after much pressure in the form of request from the clergyman and the people with futile attempts to convince her for exposing the male partner's name publicly so that he can also be punished, not only that, but also her punishment will be lessened. As John Wilson, a clergyman, cried harshly at Hester by saying "Woman, transgress not beyond the limits of Heaven's mercy!" and he further tries to convince her for telling the name by saying the result of that "...Speak out the name! That, and thy repentance, may avail to take the scarlet letter off thy breast." Here Hester gets a great chance to remove the mark 'A' from her bosom by uttering the name of her partner, ironically Arthur Dimmesdale, who is a clergyman and respected by all and who also asks Hester to expose the name of her partner, is the partner of the adultery. But Hester shows her mercy on the man and does not divulge the name, and her activity is duly recognized by the clergyman Arthur Dimmesdale as he says "Wondrous strength and generosity of a woman's heart! She will not speak!" (72). From this comment, Hester's strength and generosity are manifested and recognized by the representative of the patriarchal

authority; besides, he holds an important position in that particular Puritan society and from his recognition Hester Prynne's supremacy in characteristics is established or accepted by the patriarchy. Symbolically it can be said that the traditional concept about women has been challenged by the novel and the supremacy of the women has been established over the patriarchal authority, the male.

Hester Prynne was hated by the society and her sin was most often reminded of her by the attitudes or behavior of the members of the community. If the female persons or males or the clergymen met with her on the road or jungle path, their comments and looks were to defame her to remind of her sin. The scarlet letter on her bosom has 'endowed her with a new sense' and gives her 'a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts' (91). Author's logic to support Hester Prynne's sinful activity is expressed here:

What were they? Could they be other than the insidious whispers of the bad angel, who would fain have persuaded the struggling woman, as yet only half his victim, that the outward guise of purity was but a lie, and that, if truth were everywhere to be shown, a scarlet letter would blaze forth on many a bosom besides Hester Prynne's? Or, must she receive those intimations-so obscure, yet so distinct-as truth? In all her miserable experience, there was nothing else so awful and so loathesome as this sense. (91)

The people's behavior and outlook towards Hester Prynne affect her multifariously leading to think herself as sinner and very mean in the society in comparison with others; even the women would frown at her for her sin and all looked at the letter to remind her sin and looked in a way as they have got sullied by the momentary glance towards Hester. Her self-honor had been almost diminished. The society makes the situation as "Hester Prynne yet struggled to believe that no fellow-mortal was guilty like herself" (92). The author praises Hester's strength to sustain in the hostile society and her situation in the society thus:

Hester Prynne came to have a part to perform in the world. With her native energy of

character and rare capacity, it could not entirely cast her off, although it had set a mark upon her, more intolerable to a woman's heart than that which branded the brow of Cain. In all her intercourse with society, however, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of human kind. (88)

Pearl's Birth and Success

Hester gives birth to a child named Pearl who later becomes a successful person in life. In the novel the child is a girl who becomes very attractive, strong and intelligent; her strong power is described in the novel and recognized by the society. The society which punishes Hester and her daughter ultimately receives them with warm wishes by recognizing their merits and qualities. Their name and fame spread all over the society and the outlook of the Puritan society changes towards positivity to accept them as important members of the society. Symbolically the female power in the society increases against the patriarchal societal barrier or authority. The patriarchal authority is beaten by the female power. Much more obstruction cannot subvert the actual merit. A boy could have been born by Hester in place of Pearl, but Pearl is born out of her parent's sinful activity and it carries a deeper meaning conveyed by the author and can be explained by the feminist writer to prove the female power. Pearl has been glorified by the author in his description not less than a boy, rather her glorification outdoes the boy's description or strength or power. Pearl as a member of women society is not hated or demeaned in her quality than a boy-- her successful life symbolically proves the strength of women.

While talking to Arthur Dimmesdale, Hester Prynne describes Pearl as more precious than the diamonds and rubies--that means Hester glorifies Pearl over all the precious jewellery; Pearl's supremacy over the invaluable things are expressed through mother's tongue to her father and there exists an ultimate

satisfaction about the child. As Hester says in Chapter 19:

"Dost thou not think her beautiful? And see with what natural skill she has made those simple flowers adorn her! Had she gathered pearls, and diamonds, and rubies, in the wood, they could not have become her better. She is a splendid child! But I know whose brow she has!" (221)

The thing could have been described in another way to demean the child as she is born out of a sin of her parents; rather she and her activities have been praised in many ways to glorify the child. From the author's description, it can be said that the birth of the child, Pearl, as a baby girl, has been a great symbol to show the development of the feminism. The female condition has been upgraded here by the girl and for her mother's activities, later the issue has been clarified fully. There is none but accept the issue that the author's description and the character's comments about Pearl will attract anybody's mind to the supremacy of the female child, Pearl, being the emblem of the women or feminine community. The feminine triumph is manifested here through the description of Pearl.

Pearl's characteristics are described by the author clearly and by that description the high quality of the girl is assumed easily by all the readers and the qualities are recognized by the Boston community. The community accepts the merits of Pearl. As a girl, she leads the social position and ultimately in the end of the novel it is seen that Pearl becomes a successful female as she gets married to a European successful person. Pearl's life becomes successful leaving all the obstacles behind her present time. Pearl and Hester leave Boston after the death of Arthur Dimmesdale. Hester returns to Boston and after her death she is buried beside Arthur Dimmesdale's grave and they both share the same tombstone that proves her recognition as the partner of Dimmesdale and at the same time, Pearl's father is acknowledged by giving her birth identity, which is a very crucial issue of a person's life. Through Pearl's success in life, though started with sheer misery and ignoble situation, it can be forecast that the improvement of the women's condition in

the society is marked very clearly. The radical change of women's condition in society has already started. The text of *The Scarlet Letter* is a great evidence of symbolizing the feminine development in the society. From the text, it is proved that the development of the feminine condition through literature is not a new one; rather it started much earlier as according to this text, from the Puritan society or the seventeenth century the writing for the women's development already started. Though especially the 1960s and 1970s are considered the more effective time for development of the movement of feminism. But by this text, the deep rooted feminism has been evidenced.

Economic phenomenon of a person is very important all over the world and where the women are deprived mostly throughout the historical development of world's feminism. Financial solvency brings power to a person from many sides and now it is seen that the women are earning outside the house and they have been decision makers in their family affairs. From this point of view, it is seen that Pearl gains economic solvency in the end of the novel and she is endowed with a lot of riches by Roger Chillingworth. Her success carries symbolic meaning to the readers as a proof of becoming strong. In author's words "So Pearl – the elf-child,-- the demon offspring, as some people, up to that epoch, persisted in considering her—became the richest heiress of her day, in the New World" (280).

Presentation of Roger Chillingworth by the Author

The portrayal of Roger Chillingworth by the author is crucial to justify the women characters' success where he is presented as a villain and an irresponsible character towards his family, wife, Hester Prynne, being a representative of the patriarchal authority. He is Hester's husband but for a long time he does not take care of his wife and after a long time he appears in the novel and since then he always stays against Hester's happiness. His activities, ill intention prove him to be the villain or anti-hero character of this novel. His disguise to hide his actual identity is mischievous by nature and he always wants to take revenge upon Mr. Dimmesdale for making love affairs with Hester. On the whole,

the total characterization of him by the author as a villain is symbolic which can be explained as to demean the power of male supremacy over the women whereas Hester possesses several great qualities of inner and outer self, where the traditional patriarchal supremacy is broken.

Another important issue should not be omitted that Hester commits a big sin by doing adultery undoubtedly, but why she has done such heinous thing deserves explanation. Her physical beauty and personal quality have been described well by the author. She is a woman of youth and her enticing beauty can attract a man easily. So, she must have some physical, biological demand what was fulfilled by her husband, but when she comes to the new place, her husband is missed and it is heard that he has died in the sea. And he does not contact with her for a long time. So, she has not committed the sin for her bad quality of character, rather for the practical necessity; for her sin, her husband is responsible. Another thing is cleared that she has committed the sin with a clergyman, holding a high position of the patriarchal society, and such mistake is not very unusual for such a beautiful lady as her husband was missing for a long time, maybe, she had a good plan to marry him someday. Her beauty and personality are so strong that she becomes successful to commit the big sin with a noble person and there is no such indication that she has entrapped him for adultery. However, her sinful activity can be regarded as to make the patriarchal society liable for her sin by the author. She could have been certainly blamed vehemently if she had committed the adultery in spite of her husband's living with her.

Hester's Success in Earning

Hester becomes successful in earning livelihood for herself and her daughter Pearl, who is her companion in struggling life, at her own and in her that struggling life her needle work becomes her income source. She serves the community by her needle work which is accepted by the Puritan society well, though the society ostracizes her as punishment for adultery. She returns the good activities to the society in lieu of harsh behavior to her. The success of her work is stated by the author:

“Her needle-work was seen on the ruff of the Governor; military men wore it on their scarfs, and the minister on his band; it decked the baby’s little cap; it was shut up, to be mildewed and moulder away, in the coffins of the dead” (87). The society’s outlook towards her is severe and very agonizing for her survival. The society makes her feel as alien to the society by the behavior of the people and such situation was very caustic to her. The author describes the situation thus:

In all her intercourse with society, however, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of human kind. (88)

In such a situation, her courage to struggle was alive: she continues with vigor to work on needle very hard to be successful in life. She ultimately attracts the society’s outlook as a praise of her activities. Not only earning, but also her good deeds are praiseworthy in the long run in that particular society where she was punished earlier by the authority for her sinful activity in the beginning part of this novel. Economic solvency helps to shape one’s identity as an individual person in a society, which is obtained by Hester Prynne meaning her ultimate success in life.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the novel is an important document for showing the development of the women in the society and the supremacy of the females over the males. Hester Prynne gets sufficient scopes to prove her strength, patience, generosity and supremacy for committing the sin of adultery in that Puritan society, which was the most rigid religious and social condition, and for the sin she is ostracized from the mainstream society as the punishment. If she were not punished by the society, she could not prove her strength and good deeds living in the main society peacefully with husband and children. Her struggle makes her perfect and she becomes the stereotype

for the women folk not to be defeated in any situation. A woman can also establish her own identity in the society even living in the hostile environment being independent of other’s pity. The women can hold the due dignity in the society; sometimes they can show pity on the male persons to save them as Hester shows on Mr. Dimmesdale to save him from public shame and she takes double burden upon her publicly - she has that much courage. The traditional concept about the women are not applicable in this novel to judge Hester Prynne; rather she is endowed with lots of good qualities as well as manly activities, so the outlook towards the women must be changed.

It seems that the novelist has tried to show the same issue by portraying Hester Prynne’s mesmerizing character, whose name can be exchanged by success. Her brilliant success sets an outstanding example before the women society to change their outlook towards themselves and before the patriarchal society not to demean the women power. The novel gives the message that the end of injustice to women has just begun; no power can subdue them anymore. Whatever is the situation, they will rise against all odds to show their talent, intellectual power— if the situation is in their favor, they can do more development with their power and will. The women are the great companions of the men and they can contribute a lot in human society by doing good things to the society—a mutual living can enhance the development of human civilizations greatly. So, the traditional presentation of women has not been practiced by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his novel *The Scarlet Letter*, rather a protest has been set up technically against the set rules of patriarchal tradition to demean women power in favor of feminism.

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