



Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages
Letters and Foreign Languages
English Language
Literature and Civilization

MASTERTHESIS

The concept of alienation in the Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Submitted and Defended by:

BEN FERDJALLAH ZAKARIA

Board of Examiners:

Mme.Sakhri Hadjira	MAB	University of Biskra	Supervisor
Mr. Harhoura Kamal	MAB	University of Biskra	Examiner
Mr. Lamjed Elhamel	MAB	University of Biskra	Examiner

AcademicYear:2020 -2021

Dedication

This dissertation is devoted to the soul of my dead father, I wish he was alive to witness my graduation and see me reaching this stage of academic success.

This dissertation is also devoted to all members of my family and also my friends.

Thanks also goes to the person who helped me more than anyone, of course after God, which is my lovely teacher and supervisor miss Sekhri Hadjira

Acknowledgement

In the process of preparing this dissertation, I received a great deal of help and guidance. First of all, I want to thank God who made me reach this stage of academic success, and who helped me in writing this dissertation. Then, I want to thank my mom who always stood by me, and also my brothers and my sister, thanks also goes to my brother's wives who always supported me.

I would also to acknowledge my wonderful supervisor, Miss, Sekhri Hadjira, who after God, if she did not help me, I would not have written this memo, the role of my supervisor cannot be described, she was always there for me every time I needed her, without boredom or tireless. Since the first time she taught me in my second year, I wished her to be my supervisor, so thanks to Allah who made this happen. In other words, Miss Sekhri Hadjira, it is really an honor to be my supervisor.

In addition, I want to thank my friends who encouraged me, especially Imams: Makaoui Nasser, Nachad Mohamed, and Zayn Samir.

Abstract

The Puritan ethic is discussed in light of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*. It is about Hester Prynne, a common woman, and Arthur Dimmesdale, a puritan priest, who are placed in a socio-cultural environment. Through his main characters Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale, as well as puritan society, Hawthorne tackled issues of contradictions and aberrations. Within New England society, stringent Puritan moral ideals spawned certain questionable conceptions that ran counter to Puritan ideology. On the one hand, society admired puritan views, while on the other, they condemned them. This research aims to analyze the alienation of the main characters of the novel, as well as, analyzing the puritan patriarch in relation to the religious deviation... A qualitative method will be used to accomplish these objects

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General Introduction

From the ancient countries and civilizations is well known is that countries are ruled by a well-founded system, in turn this system must be build according to the customs and traditions of that time and place. The most important thing about this system is that after its foundation, it must be applied to all people equally without any prejudice; it must be applied with neutrality on men as well as women, and this for granting a happy strict life far away from any corruption and disorders, yet the opposite used to happen during the puritan era, where the system and rules were applied unequally between men and women within the puritan society.

Women in the puritan society were treated as weak subjects for the men, in turn men were seen a superior to women and this is highlighted by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his novel "The Scarlet Letter"

The Scarlet Letter is a famous literary work that Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote in the mid of the nineteenth century, the novel's story is about a married woman who committed adultery with a foreign man, which resulted later on in an illegitimate child. As result; the woman was physically and psychologically punished, I, the other hand, in a surprising situation and because of the puritan norms and traditions that preaches men to women, the second partner in the sin of adultery which was the man, was not punished.

In the novel, Hawthorne tries to highlight the contradictions of the puritan leaders and the society's members with their own traditions and norms. On other words; Hawthorne attempts to show the religious deviation that was happening in the puritan community. .

The sphere of the study will be bound to the idea of alienation of the novel's main characters, and the concept of patriarch in the puritan society. The study will focus on some major questions that deals with the presented themes as an attempt to create an explanation of Hawthorne's key character's actions and the puritan societies' reaction to their sin.

Moreover, the research aims at demonstrating the repression and contradictions of puritan society concerning their beliefs and behaviors that led to this religious deviation.

In this research we will try to answer our main question which is; does the alienation affected Hester Prynne and the other characters positively or negatively

In order to accomplish all this, the research will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will present the history of puritan history, from the moment they were deported from England, until immigrating, and finally, establishing their own community. The second chapter will be devoted to the Scarlet letter, in this chapter; we will analyze one of the main themes of the novel, which is alienation. The third chapter will be devoted to the patriarchy in the puritan society, in this chapter; we will examine the puritan leader's patriarch towards women, and whether Hester Prynne is alienated because of her sin, or because of her gender.

Chapter One: The History Of Puritan Society

Introduction:

Historically, New England, is located in the northeastern United States. It almost made up of a group of separated colonies that created by the members of the puritan society during their flight from their homeland. The puritans are group of protesters who refused the arbitrary rule of the king of England, as a result, some of them were killed and some were deported from their home country, the group who were deported chose to immigrate to New England where they could practice their religious beliefs more freely.

1-1-Definitions:

The roots of Puritanism are found with the beginning of the English reformation. The name “puritans” (they were then and now called “precisionists”) was a disdain relegated to the movement by its counter parts. In spite of that, the title emerged in the 1560s; the movement started within the 1530s when king VII denied Papal authority and changed the Church of Rome into a state church of England. To puritans the Church of England held as well as much of the sacraments and customs of the Roman Catholicism (“Theme of Self Isolation in the Scarlet Letter”)

Moreover, one can trace back puritanism to distinct periods in the history of the English church. Puritans have frequently been given numerous definitions and assumptions. Kay Kizer gave a rich and precise definition which infers that puritans are reformist Protestants who tried to comply with the sacred writing in a real sense. It is mainly known for its attempt to convince the Church of England to return to the Bible’s respective practices, instead of sticking to Roman Catholic procedures (Kizer 100). In addition, G.B. Tatham wrote a book on puritan’s history, titled “Puritans in Power”. Where he expressed that their purification concerned the church’s remarkable religious and moral reforms, rather than reforms in their individual lives and personal practices (Tatham.2). All in all, The Puritans were members of a religious reform movement known as Puritanism that emerged inside the Church of Britain within the late 16th century. They believed the Church of England was too similar to the Catholic Church and should eliminate ceremonies that were not rooted in the Bible.

1-2-Historical Background:

After the relationship between King Henry and the Catholic Pope was tainted because the king's marriage that was rejected by the Pope, the King decided to stop the relations and separated from the Catholic Church. Later on, Henry decided to establish his own Church and named it "The Church of England", yet unlike the Catholic Church, Henry made the Church attendees mandatory, another problem is that the Church of England was similar to the Catholic Church in its appearance, construction, and internal symbols. This made a group of unusual attendees protest, this group was called "The Puritans", because they wanted to purify the Church of England from this symbols for having a Church completely different from the Catholic one, later on, this group of protesters started a big movement, it was called "The Puritan Movement".

In reaction to this movement and these protesters, King Henry, banished some clerics from the state and, while others were killed to make an example and to be intimidated by others. Despite this, the movement continued to grow and spread faster. Some puritans favored a different form of Church organization whereas others, which were more radical, began to claim autonomy form of Church organization. Still, others preferred to stay within the Church's national system while rebelling against catholic and Episcopal authority.

The puritans opposed state interference in the affairs of religion and royal control over the Church. As they gained strength, puritans were depicted by their enemies as hairsplitters who slavishly followed their bibles as regular guides, or hypocrites who cheated their Christian neighbors as their numbers grew. However; the puritan's attack on the establish church gained popularity. That, resulted in the movement's wide spread support.

In the church's view, puritans represented a national security threat because of their demands for cultural, social, and religious reforms that undermines the king's authority and also their attempt to spread their puritan ideas. So many of them were deported to the Netherlands where they established their rites and beliefs before some decided to leave for the new world early ("Politics and Native Relations in the New England Colonies")

1-3-The Puritan Migration to the New England:

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the leading cause of Puritans' exile and immigration from England to its colonies was a religious cause. The latter is due to the religious intolerance and persecution of Puritans in England. Hence, the generally unjustifiable and scandalous religious practices done towards the puritans, instilled in them an urge to establish their own community (The Editors). In other words, they have determined to found a community where they can feel secure, accepted, and embraced.

Presumably, their first step of migration took the name of "The Great Migration" it was a mass migration with some puritan members with their families, its campaign continued for about Ten years, the reason for its wide glorification is that it was not like the other migrations that seek for economic purposes. Their effort seemed to be religiously driven because they longed for their own free religious puritan community, instead of only enjoying economic prosperity in England (Bouzenag, 2020). They aimed to set up their colony that will maybe be the safe house for their individual puritans and their evidently another eras.

1-3-1- The Establishment of the Plymouth colony:

When the puritan arrived at Plymouth plantation in 1620, they began what was called the great migration. Great not because of the large number of people who arrived, yet because of the puritan's purpose. They came to America to live moral and spiritual life, not to make money, another interesting thing about this migration is that the regular migrations has mostly poor people with a lack of work and craft who tries to escape their miserable life in search of a better life, but it is different for the puritan migration, where it involved members from different classes, where high-class and middle-class members had migrated. It also witnessed the migration of crafts people and talented members whom were skilful and could read. The puritans, also known as the "Extremists" established schools for their children in the colony they had reached since 1630, as well as women's schools for their daughters. They were known as the most literate societies in the world at that time, they established the "Harvard" college years after they arrived and took the name from the title of cleric John Harvard

(Abdullah)

The puritan immigration to New England had a huge impact in the two decades between 1620 and 1640, the term “great immigration” usually linked to the migration of English puritans to Massachusetts and the West Indies. During this time period, they came in family groups rather than as individuals, and were mostly inspired by a desire to find a better life, where they can exercise their puritan religious freely (Wikipedia). In September of 1620, the puritans traveled to the new world on a ship called “The Mayflower” and landed off the coast of Massachusetts in November of the same year, where they established the Plymouth Colony, the first colony under the command of puritans in new England. The great puritan immigration officially began with this occurrence (Brooks)

1-3-2- Establishing the Massachusetts Bay colony:

In the 1630s, there was a new migration movement, this time led by puritan lawyer, John Winthrop, when he led a fleet of 11 ships to Massachusetts. He took 800 people with him to New England, and 20.000 followed him over the next 10 years. They arrived in New England in June where they settled in what is now modern day Boston and established the Massachusetts Bay colony later on, the colony became the largest colony in New England and was hugely successful.

1-3-2-1- Puritan Life in Massachusetts Bay colony:

An ordinary Puritan family lived modestly in a small one-room house. The room had a fireplace that provided cooking and heat, all family members slept in an improvised pillow near to the fire. Finding and transporting wood was the most important task during the winter season. In order to avoid the cold, puritans used to sleep in heavy blankets. Puritan parents had kids to help them change their jobs, and such children learned the various jobs they needed at a very young age. For the puritan parents, education and Bible were the most important. Puritans were hard-working people and everything in the house was hand-made including clothing, farming, repairing things in the house, and looking for cattle was the duty of the men. While women were responsible of cooking, gardening and taking care of

their homes. Public whips and insults were commonplace for criminals. Puritans were diligent and highly religious, but sometimes attended festivals and celebrations, sang and played, and drank wine and beer.

The puritans, also known as the "extremists," established schools for their children in the colonies they had reached since 1630, as well as women's schools for their daughters, they known as one of the most literate societies in the world at the time, and established a "Harvard College" years after they arrived in America and took its name from the title of cleric John Harvard. (Abdullah).

1-4- The Puritan Literature:

It is believed that literature had a place in all emerging civilizations. Consequently, the Puritans had their fair share of literature in its various forms, such as prose and poetry, or the study of the Bible and the instruction of renowned priests like Winthrop. It is assumed that, despite their penchant for a simple and direct literary style, the Puritans seem to have been predisposed to use figurative and metaphorical language as well (Bouzenag 23) , they were highly interested in art and literature.

According to *the Cambridge History of American Literature*, Puritan literature does not include general literary documents such as "History, Poetry, and Prisoner's Statements only," but also "Sermons, Diaries, Letters, Copies, Religious places, and Broadcasts" However, despite their artistic knowledge, Puritans were intolerant of literary compositions that did not include religiously influential material. Their mission is to offer literary and aesthetic tools in the service of their preachers and their sermons. Moreover; according to G. R. Teresa, the common genres for the puritan people were sermons, biographies, diaries and autobiographies. Their style was protestant; plain and against ornamentation, they depicted this style as a mirror to their puritan life and their belief that one should not call attention to one self.

The main purpose behind the puritan writing was to glorify God; in their writing, the puritan reinforced their religious mission by using the language of the old testament, which

was adopted to the realities of the new world, in the same time puritan texts reflected the scope of their readers, who were well-grounded in religious. In the early puritan writing there were two common themes: A-Idealism, in bout aspects, religious and aspect and B-Pragmatism, in the sense of their duty towards their mission (glorifying the God) (Teresa).

1-5-The Puritan Religiosity:

Historically, the United States is characterized by religious pluralism and diversity, starting with the diver's beliefs of Native Americans in the Pre -colonial period. In the colonial period, Anglicans, Catholics, Protestants, as well as Jews from Europe arrived, and Eastern Orthodoxy has existed since the Russians colonized the lands that now make up Alaska. The diverse English dissidents who left the English Church contributed to the divarication of the religious landscape. (Wikipedia).

. As it is mentioned earlier, the main reason and motivation for the puritan migration is mainly religious and to a lesser extent economic. The puritans felt religiously depressed in England, as a result they migrated with large groups and established their own home, beliefs, and religious, so that they can practice their religion freely, and this is what shows the great status and importance that puritan society holds for the religion. Moreover, the latter is considered to be as an important part of the puritan's daily life. In a puritan community, religion reflected each step, from daily routine to moral philosophy of an individual and the society. Naturally, religious leaders in the puritan community are highly praised and people looked upon them for guidance.

During the Puritan era, one had to live strictly through the Word of God. People were expected to live honestly to set a good example for those around them. Hopefully they will persuade others to change their sins. Hence, Puritans believed that God had his own covenant or agreement with them. They believed that God expected them to live according to the Bible, reform the Anglican Church, and set a good example for those who remained in England to change their sinful path(Puritans in America: Beliefs, Religion & History 2015).

Like any other society, members of the puritan society suffered from the problem of differences in faith, but that did not prevent them from having the same understanding of valuable and intuitive concepts such as; nature, God, human sin, and the relationship between God and human creatures. In other words; they believed that all their beliefs should be based on the Bible, which they thought was inspired by God.

The doctrine of puritanism focused on the view of the Bible as a sole source of religion, without regard to the words of saints and Churchgoers, it included a combination of social, political, and theological ideas (Abdullah).

The concept of predestination was widely believed by the population; it claims that God had already chose the chosen people who would survive Hell and go to Heaven before even they born, it also claims that their actions whether were good or bad actions, will not change this inevitable fate.

Concerning the church, the latter played a significant role in the life of the puritan community. Church attendance was compulsory in Puritan communities, yet not all church attendees were considered full members of the church. To become full members of the church, they had to show that they had experienced conversion and that they were part of a predetermined elect, a group that guaranteed entry into heaven path(Puritans in America: Beliefs, Religion & History, 2015). For the Puritans, religious and political life was closely intertwined. Each Puritan city had assemblies to determine how the city should be run and only male church members were allowed to vote on issues affecting the city. One of the puritan's wide spread ideas was that males were considered dominant, held positions of power, and were superior to women..

1-5-1-Dissent in Puritan Religiosity:

One of the main problems that the Puritans faced was how to deal with disagreements within beliefs, a famous puritan minister named Roger Williams, began causing troubles a year after the formation of the Massachusetts Bay colony. He believed that the puritan settlers would be doomed in the eyes of God as long as they are associated with the Anglican Church. He also claimed that everyone has the right to practice their own belief. One of Roger main

radical ideas that he was trying to spread later on, was that he insisted that women should wear the Veil when going abroad, especially in the Church services. Another question was raised by Roger was the suitability of the ST. George Red Cross as a symbol on the English Flag, he recognized that it was unfair for the King to charter to Massachusetts because the King had no legitimate claim over the country he was distributing. Finally, in the 1636, colonial officials deported Williams and a group of his followers from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They eventually established their own colony in Rhode Island. (Puritans in America: Beliefs, Religion & History).

In 1634, another Puritan dissident named Anne Hutchinson appeared. Hutchinson was the daughter of a Puritan, after immigrating with her family to Boston, she criticized the religious views of the puritan minister (Puritans in America: Beliefs, Religion & History, 2015). She was religiously educated and familiar with the Bible and its various laws. She claimed that the ministers of Massachusetts had lost their way and deviated from the traditional beliefs, and that their actions toward the Church members conflicted with the doctrine of the predestination.

Hutchinson attracted many followers with her message of the word of God. Eventually, the ministers of the Church brought Hutchinson to justice for heresy. Although she presented a strong and convincing defense at the trial, this did not prevent the puritan ministers from deporting her and her family to Rhode Island. At the time of her exile, Hutchinson was very pregnant and the arduous journey caused her to lose her baby. In 1642, after the death of her husband, Hutchinson and her youngest children moved to the Dutch colony of New Netherlands. A year later, The Siwanoy Indians on Long Island launched a retaliatory raid against several outlying settlements there a year later and killed Hutchinson and all but one of her children. (“Anne Hutchinson and Religious Dissent”)

1-6- Isolation and Alienation in the Puritan Society:

Many consider alienation and isolation to be similar concepts. These terms are often used interchangeably when describing people who are separated from the society. However,

alienation and isolation are two different concepts. Alienation is the separation that is caused by the others (when the society makes the alienated person feel like he is foreign and not one of them), while the isolation is the person's own choice and desire to be alone from society.

In a puritan society, alienation is used as kind of psychological punishment for those who are found guilty and those who do not follow the society's common traditional and religious beliefs.

Throughout history, the Puritan community makes many different punishments that offenders must accept to live in the community. According to Michael J. Colacurcio, in 1695, the Salem Colony enacts a law requires women who commit adultery to stitch a "capital A" on their clothing to point them out as adulterers (331). The Puritan colonies of the New World create a physical separation for those who commit both heinous and moral crimes against the colony. Their strict belief structures make them punish all crimes almost equally, which led to the isolation of the colonies by other people who do not want to be associated with their actions. ("Theme of Self Isolation in the Scarlet Letter")

1-7- Adultery during Puritan Society:

Adultery is a sexual relationship or encounter between someone who is married and someone to whom they are not married (who may or may not be married to another person). In other words, it can be between two people who are married to other people. Generally, to be considered as adultery, one of the couples must be married.(dictionary.com, n.d.). Adultery is considered a sin in some countries. In Western countries, only married people are called adulterers, and if both parties get married (but not each other), they both commit adultery separately.

All religions in this world also prohibit adultery. It is said in their own holy books, and the same with the puritan society in their holly book. "The Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old testament) prohibits adultery in the seventh of the Ten Commandments" (Exodus 20:14). Puritan's Laws were heavily based on traditional religious beliefs that could be described as basic Christianity in today's context. Puritan believed that adultery was a serious sin that

had to be punished in public. According to the puritan belief, the most appropriate punishment for adultery, is death. However; there have been other punishments during the 1700s such as; whipping, head shaving, flogging, and parading the adulteress through the streets.

1-8- The Feminist Approach:

Historically, women suffered from persecution, lack of employment opportunities, and inequality with men, but later on, under the leadership of some leading and influential women in different societies and countries, a feminist movement that denounced gender equality emerged.

It seeks to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations, and sexuality. While providing critiques of these social and political relationships, much of the feminist theory also focuses on promoting women's rights and interests.(Wikipedia).

A feminist is any one (despite his gender, man he was or woman) who support the idea that women should enjoy the same opportunities and rights as men. In other words, Feminism is concerned with the way patriarchal societies inevitably have an impact on the personal lives of women and men (Chamberlain 109)

1-8-1- Historical Background of Feminism:

Historians around the world, has divided the feminist movement into four (4) waves. What is special about this movement is that each wave had its own characteristics, requirements, leaders, and results.

1-8-1-1- The First Wave:

It started in the (US) and in the (UK) in the mid of the ninetieth and twentieth century it similar to the other nineteenth-century political movements.

The first American wave was marked by “The Seneca Falls Convention “in 1848, whose participants included many abolitionists as well (Krall). The movement started by focusing on legal rights such as property and divorce rights and abolishment rights, but by the end of the 19th century, the focus shifted to demand equality in voting rights. This latter, became the fundamental claim of the campaign. In the United States, men’s rights that were outlined in

the declaration of independence represented a starting point for defending women's rights. In 1869, a 'National Women's Suffrage Association' was established to promote these rights (Harrison & Boyd 297). This wave, ended with the passage of the 19th amendment to the (US) constitution in 1919, granting women voting rights (Drucker). Similarly, the movement in Britain ended around 1920, when some white women (with certain economic background and over the age of 30) were granted the right to vote.

1-8-1-2- The Second Wave:

It started in 1963, it was as continuation for the first wave, it was inspired by such writers as Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1953), Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (1970). The publishing of Betty Friedman's "The Feminine Mystique", a work that has seen notable success in the United States (Krall), prompted it. Betty Friedan played a major role in the second-wave feminism. She criticized the idea that women can only realize themselves by raising children and taking care of home and husbands. Friedan claimed that women are victims of misconceptions that need to be identified in their lives by husbands and children. This led to the fact that women lose their identity in the family.

Women at that time realized that if they want free themselves from men's oppression and getting better job opportunities, they need radical, social changes and political liberation to improve the status of women. The themes of sexual harassment and sexual violence was a central theme for the second wave, and many demonstrations have taken place in the two countries (US) and (UK) to achieve these requirements.

As result, a large number of laws have been enacted in the UK to advance the cause of greater gender equality: the Abortion Act Reform (1967), the Divorce Act Reform (1969), the Equal Pay Act (1970), the Sex Discrimination Law (1975).), The Employment Protection Act (1975) and the Domestic Violence Act (1977). (Harrison & Boyd 298). Despite the large number of legislations that were enacted, there has been very limited progress in addressing the forces of structural gender inequality in society and implementation was

weak. All in all, this wave was characterized by its shifting from what was seen a political to the psychological, cultural and anthropological fields.

1-8-1-3- The Third Wave:

The third wave of feminism is said to be emerged in the mid-1990s, led by what was called the **Generation Xers**, who born in the 1960s, 1970s, in the developed world. They came in a time when the media had a huge influence on the world and on the ears of the society.([Brunell](#)).

The third wave or as it was called “New Feminism” was an attempt to consolidate what had been already achieved through the first and second wave. Although, the female’s principle of equality is now widely accepted and supported by legislation. However; women in modern societies are still disadvantaged in many aspects of life, one of the main remaining issues during that time, was the problem of wage.

In Britain, female pay remains on average, around 75 per cent of men’s wages, women are found paid less than men (Harrison & Boyd 299). Moreover, women are working in part-time jobs, with low grades, and in an unsafe work conditions. Only few women are holding a high job positions in law, education, medicine, and media. In 2001, 40 per cent of **FTSE**(*Financial Times Stock Exchange*) companies, had no women in their administrations, and the shares of other leading companies with women on the board decreased from 69 per cent in 1999 to 57 per cent in 2001(Harrison & Boyd 299).The third wave of feminism witnessed an expansion in the scope of interest. It was marked by its focus on privileged women, white, western, Christian, well educated, and even middle class women.

1-8-1-4- The Fourth Wave:

Although its origin date is not well known, yet it is argued that the fourth wave of feminism began about 2012. According to feminist scholar Prudence Chamberlain, the fourth wave focuses on justice for women and the fight against sexual harassment and violence against women.

Issues that fourth-wave feminist were focusing on include harassment on the

streets and at work, sexual abuse on campus, and a culture of rape; a major example of these issues was the 2012 Delhi Gang Rape; A young woman was brutally raped and murdered in Delhi, India in December 2012, that led to the sparking of local protests and international outrage (Burnell). This wave is characterized by the use of a fundamental factor, which was the use of social media to address these issues. Hence, the fourth wave was defined by technology, according to Prudence Chamberlain, the technology is not only a tool of communication, but instead we can use it to let the public opinion hear our concerns and voices (Chamberlain 109).

One major example of the fourth wave campaigns, was the “*women’s march*” it was after the U.S presidential elections between **Donald Trump** and **Hillary Clinton** in 2016. After winning against Hillary, Trump delivered a motivational speech, where he said some inflammatory remarks about women in general. A grandmother from the Audience upset from the remarks of Trump about women, so in the next day and through Facebook, she called for a march on Washington. D. C, as an expression of her indignation. Her request, quickly received wide traction and grew to include different demonstrations not in the United States only, but even across the world. The protests took place on January 21, 2017, the second day of Trump's inauguration, and were attended by about 4.6 million people in various American events, this made the women’s march perhaps the largest one-day demonstration in the history of the United States. (Burnell).

Conclusion:

We conclude from this chapter that purgatory society is a community of principles, where they migrated from their home country to several alien countries only to establish their own religion and practice their beliefs in freedom. In addition, the puritan community is a society in which people are governed and laws enacted in accordance with customary religious traditions, yet it remains a masculine society, where women are not treated equally as men and men are superior to women. Moreover; another fact about the puritan community is that it is a non-tolerant population regarding other religions

Chapter Two: The Scarlet Letter

Introduction:

The story of the scarlet letter is set in the 1600s, in puritan Boston. At that time Boston was a part of the Massachusetts Bay colony, which was established by the first English settlers. The book is written by one of the most famous American novelists Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1850 (he began in September 1849, and finished it in February 1850).

Hawthorne was a writer during the romantic period in American literature, which endured from 1830 till 1856. He depicted Puritanism as set of strict rules and norms that the person must follow. Despite the fact that his ancestors were puritans and grew in a puritan family and environment, he was not convinced with the set of Puritan values and norms. He deeply criticized the New England puritans and investigated the consequences of their beliefs and actions.

Although it was written nearly 150 years ago, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, featured topics that are still pertinent to today's readers; many teenagers may be familiar with the problems of alienation and breaking the society's rules. As a result, the scarlet letter is both a historical and romantic story, set 200 years before Hawthorne's time.

After it was released in 1850, the book did not have much success, but a few years later on, it started to gain the popularity and success that it deserved as an American masterpiece. In addition, for many historians, the scarlet letter can be viewed as an essential piece of American literature, and this is due to many reasons; the exposition of the American Renaissance literary time, American history, American culture. All these factors contributed in making the book a truly American masterpiece.

2-1-An overview about the book:

The book takes place during the seventeenth century, in a strict village in Boston, (then known as Massachusetts Bay colony), when a young ordinary woman, named Hester Prynne, is forced to stand in the town square exposed to public humiliation because of

committing adultery and having illegitimate child. As result of her sin, Hester, is obliged to wear a scarlet letter "A" on her dress as sign of shame and punishment, "A" is for adultery. Meanwhile, an old stranger man arrives to the village and witnesses the punishment of the woman, when the man sees the women's shame, he asks a man in the crowd about her, and is told about the woman's adultery.

Despite the numerous attempts by the tribe's leaders to know the father of the illegitimate child, which included being threatened with hanging, yet Hester, refused to reveal her lover's identity, so she was send back to jail. When she was in prison, Hester, received a visit from the old stranger man, who impersonated the character of a physician and gave himself the name Roger Chillingworth. Hester recognized him as her old lost husband, who has been presumed to be died in the sea. Chillingworth, wanted Hester to tell him the child's name, because he believed that he must be punished the same as Hester, but she refused. So he decided to discover it alone. He stipulated Hester to not reveal the fact that he is her husband, and in case she did the opposite, he will hurt her lover when he knows him. Hoping that he will not success in revealing her lover's identity, Hester agrees on the request of Chillingworth.

After she was released from prison, Hester lived in cottage alone with her illegitimate daughter, Pearl, she completely isolated herself from the rest of the society. As she grows up, pearl was affected by the consequences of the scarlet letter, and became an unruly child, which led the members of the town to demand that she must be taken away from her mother's care. After hearing the rumors that she may lose her daughter, Hester went to the governor Bellingham, who ruled in her favor and decided to let Pearl remain in her mother's care, and that was due to the intervention of the town's popular minister, Arthur Dimmesdale, who supported Hester.

Later, the famous, beloved, and respected town's minister, Arthur Dimmesdale, began

to suffer from health problems, and day after day, his condition was getting worse, this because of some personal secrets he was hiding inside him. In meantime, the village's people were thrilled by the arrival of physician Chillingworth. Because he was assigned to take care of the minister, Chillingworth shared the same room with minister Dimmesdale. Due to that they were in close contact, Chillingworth started to think that the minister illness has connection with a hidden guilt, he went as far as to suspect that Dimmesdale is Pearl's father, until one evening, Chillingworth took advantage of the minister's sleep, and pulls his vestment aside where he sees a dark scarlet A.

Later on, Dimmesdale is out walking, he goes to the square were Hester was punished before, there he sees her and Pearl, and invites them, at that moment he confesses to Pearl that he is her father, and apologizes that he cannot admit it in public. A few days later, Hester met Dimmesdale in the forest, she convinced him to leave the town on a ship to Europe, he agreed to the plan. After conversation, Dimmesdale's psychology changed, he seems to gain new energy, the same with Hester who removed the scarlet letter from her dress. Later, Dimmesdale gives one of his most inspired sermons, as soon as the attendees leaves the Church, his physical condition deteriorated. As he looks out over the crowd, he sees Hester and Pearl watching the festival outside, he climbs upon the scaffold and confessed his sin in front everyone, and dies in Hester's arms.

After losing his chance of revenge, Chillingworth dies soon after, he leaves Pearl a great wealth, which enables her to leave to Europe with her mother. Hester returns to Boston several years later, where she becomes a role model citizen whom the other women turn to, at their time of intensity, she dies few years later, and buried alongside Dimmesdale's grave.

2-2- The Significance of the Letter “A” in the Scarlet Letter:

Throughout the novel “*Scarlet Letter*” there are many symbols that can be found, the scarlet letter “A” that Hester Prynne is compelled to wear when she committed adultery, is undoubtedly one of the most important carried symbols throughout the novel, from the beginning to the end, the novel is centralized around the first letter in the alphabet; ”A”. The confusing thing about the letter A is that its meaning is not the same for all the characters, but it differs among the characters, the scarlet letter is a single but very moving story in which four people are involved in and affected in different ways by the sin of adultery.

2-2-1- The Significance of the Letter “A” for Hester:

In all the book, the letter “A” for Hester, has no fixed significance. The meaning changes from the beginning to middle to the end. At the beginning, the letter is given by the council of the leaders to signify Hester’s sin; to let everyone know what she did; it initially symbolizes the immoral act done by Hester. Therefore; the letter “A” stands for A-adultery, the sin Hester has committed.

Apart from being living in a patriarchal society, yet **Hester did not even respect and follow the teachings of her Catholic religion; in the Ten Commandments, God shows to his people that it is wrong to commit adultery; however, Hester broke the seventh commandment which states that “you shall not commit adultery”.** (“Catholicism and the Ten Commandments”)

During the sermon, Jesus exhorted his followers to be even more righteous than the Ten Commandments required. He stated that simply obeying the Ten Commandments was insufficient for salvation. Not only is it forbidden to kill, but it is also forbidden to have furious thoughts; not only is it forbidden to commit adultery, but it is also forbidden to have lusty ideas; not only is it forbidden to steal, but it is also forbidden to think about one's material necessities. Only God's teachings, not those of rabbis, should be followed by Jesus'

followers, as God was the only one perfect enough to enlighten them. (Mohamed and Yahya 32).

Therefore; the letter A represents a warning for the rest of the community to follow the principles of the Bible.

In the middle, the significance of the letter has dramatically changed. Back to the beginning of the punishment, the town's people believed that Hester's punishment was insufficient, and they sought to punish her as severely as possible; they claimed that she deserves to die for what she did. They did not refer to their holy puritan doctrine when they said "this woman brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there no law for it? Truly, there is, both in the scripture and the statute-book" (Hawthorne 44). However; coming to the middle of the book, they changed their perception of the scarlet A; due to that Hester was there for them when they were in need, and because of helping them in making Sewing stuff. The town's people no longer interpreted the scarlet letter A by its known signification. They said it meant "Able"; Hawthorne *wrote* "Able so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength" (The Scarlet Letter 137). She was "able" to deal with a town that neglected her and then a town that praised her for her accomplishments. The letter is transformed into symbol of friendliness and respect; Hester is now able to communicate with the town's people, and they in turn, appear to forgive her for everything she has done, as if it did not happen or did not matter.

Later on; another meaning for the letter scarlet was suggested by the town's people, when they saw a red A in the sky, they said it meant "Angel"; Hawthorne wrote: "A great red letter in the sky, the letter A- which we interpret to stand for Angel" (The Scarlet Letter 134).

In truth, the puritan society's various interpretations of the scarlet A, summed up the contradiction and deviation they were experiencing because they interpreted according to their own personal interest (Helmet 23).

2-2-2- The Significance of the Letter A for Arthur Dimmesdale:

With Arthur Dimmesdale, the letter A represents a symbol of hypocrisy and self-centered intellectualism. Even though, he knows that he is a partner in the crime, just like Hester, and that he has to confess his sin in order to get his punishment as any other sinner, and that is what the puritan law says, yet Dimmesdale refuses to confess his guilt because of his ego and pride. He was not brave and man enough to confess his guilt and save his lover, and this is due to his love for his position. He truly, was in pain for Hester, the letter on Hester's bosom has offended him. It continuously reminds him of his mistakes, yet his fear of losing his consideration in the town, made him dare not to reveal his sin due to that he was consider to be the highest example of the Puritan faith.

The letter signifies another symbol for Dimmesdale, which is “The Secret Sinner”. No one knew that he was Pearl’s father; he secretly kept a hidden dark A in his chest and hides it from every one.

The town’s people did not notice, but Pearl has noticed. When Hester tells her that her scarlet letter is the mark of the Black Man of the forest, the girl comes to the following concerning Dimmesdale: “He has his hand over his heart! Is it because, when the minister wrote his name in the book, the Black Man set his mark in that place? But why does he not wear it outside his bosom, as thou dost, mother?” (Hawthorne 159).The minister's situation is becoming more difficult, he could not confess his guilt on the scaffold like Hester did because he is popular with the public and still representing the law. The truth is that Reverend Dimmesdale is going through a double suffering; he is torturing himself because of the guilt and in the same time he is being tormented by Chillingworth. This suggests that his suffering will last a long time and that his life will come to a slow end.He, unlike Hester, is unable to change the meaning of his letter through confession or other means of purification, so he decided to play the role of “The Secret Sinner”, until eventually, he decided to confess it

publicly in the end of the novel right before he died.

2-2-3- The Significance of the Letter A for Pearl:

The letter significance's for Pearl is considered to be a mixture of images. Pearl is seen by Dimmesdale as the "liberty of a broken law," and by Hester as "the living hieroglyphic" of their adultery, and by the society as the product of the devil's work. (Van Kirk 36). Despite the fact that she is a complicated character, however; Pearl's principle role in the novel is that of a symbol. Pearl embodies her mother's scarlet letter in a living form; Hawthorne wrote: "was the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed in in life" (The Scarlet letter 85).

Hester is a natural law in its purest form, the freedom of the unfettered wilderness, and the outcome of a suppressed passion (Van Kirk 36). She is the physical manifestation of a sexual sin as well as a sign of a transgression.

Pearl's obsession with the letter on her mother's breast began when she was a child, when her eyes were drawn to it. Pearl then displays a curiosity with the letter as a small child, repeatedly touching it and throwing wild flowers at it; Hawthorne wrote: "In the afternoon of a certain summer's day, after Pearl grew big enough to run about, she amused herself with gathering handfuls of wild flowers, and flinging them, one by one, at her mother's bosom" (The Scarlet letter 82). The best example of Pearl's attachment to the scarlet letter is when Arthur and Hester agreed to move to Europe, immediately after which Hester removed the letter, Pearl becomes angry and agitated and will not calm down until Hester put the letter back on her clothes. She has never seen her mother without the scarlet A, so it has become "an object of identification" to her. (Gerbe 08).

In addition, although it was an outcome of illegal sexual affair, yet Pearl is more than a punishment to her mother, even as a reminder of Hester's "sin": she is also a godsend. She embodies not only the word "sin," but also the vivid spirit and passion that gave birth to it. As

a result, Pearl's existence provides her mother a purpose to live, boosting her spirits when she feels like giving up.

2-3- The Notion of Alienation in the Scarlet Letter:

The Scarlet Letter is a novel about a society that excludes people with unjust and arbitrary decisions, In the case of the heroine, Hester; she spends years in alienation, ostracized by puritan community for bearing a kid out of wedlock. Because of her alienation, Hester is now able to see her society in different manner, and to think beyond the box

2-3-1- The Alienation of Hester Prynne:

The notion of alienation is one of the most prominent themes of The Scarlet Letter. We knew right away that Hester Prynne has been alienated by her husband Roger Chillingworth, before even the novel begins. Another form of Hester's alienation is The Scarlet Letter "A"; from the beginning of the novel, when Hester is forced to wear the letter "A" on her bosom for committing the unforgivable sin of infidelity in puritan society, the issue of alienation is explored then.

Hester and her daughter were alienated from the village, they were deported outside of town in small cottage, this led Hester to focus only on her daughter, and in the same time trying to make herself invisible and unnoticeable. "Hester's appearance has entirely changed, her hairstyle, and attire went from being elegant to being ordinary" (Hester's Isolation and Alienation in The Scarlet Letter). This make her an outsider in her village, and an alien in the society, she will have to carry this shame for the rest of her life. "Hester could not walk through town without a child making a disrespectful gesture or a stranger looking at her". (Hester's Isolation and Alienation in The Scarlet Letter).

Hester never felt accepted by society after the adultery was revealed. It seems to her as if "Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished" (Hawthorne 78).

Another reason for Hester's alienation by the society is her refusal to identify her partner in the adultery. When she was released from prison, Hester was asked to give the identity of the person whom she committed the sin with, yet she chose to wear the Scarlet "A" rather than revealing her lover's name because of her love. The embroidered "A" on her bosom is also a symbol for alienation. Because of that mark, she stands out from the rest of the society and will never be able to live a normal life "Let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will be always in her heart" (Hawthorne 38).

One major example of the society's isolation for Hester is their lack of appreciation for Hester's talent of sewing and handicrafts. "Despite the fact that Hester was probably Boston's best seamstress, she was unable to embroider a bridal veil for any bride; the white veil meant purity, and Hester's hands are not pure". This was one area where society has alienated Hester. (Hester's Isolation and Alienation in *The Scarlet Letter*). Hester is physically isolated because she lives on the outskirts of town, morally because she has committed adultery, and socially because she is an outcast at least for the first half of the novel (Lepore).

2-3-2- The Alienation of Arthur Dimmesdale:

The character of the priest, Arthur Dimmesdale, is perhaps one of the weird examples of alienation in the work. Unlike Hester and Pearl, who are forced to live in isolation by society, Dimmesdale is the one who alienated the society, and because he wants to keep his secret and guilt far away from the society.

He was seen as the supreme pyramid of the puritan faith, so his reputation and career would be ruined if it became known that he is the father of Hester's child. He would almost certainly be subjected to a harsh and rapid punishment, maybe even more severe than that which Hester is subjected to.

Because his immorality is hidden from the public, Reverend Dimmesdale's experience with the dangers of isolation differs from Hester's. Dimmesdale's physical condition is ruined

by the fake physician Roger Chillingworth, and in the same time his mental and psychological state is ruined by his guilty conscience. .

2-3-3- The Alienation of Pearl:

Pearl, Hester Prynne's daughter, is another character in the narrative who is alienated, Pearl is very curious in the situation in which she and her mother found themselves when she is young. She has a lot of questions, and she's particularly interested in the meaning of the scarlet letter "A." For her age, she is extremely smart and perceptive.

Pearl is a free spirit who despises being tethered to anything. This is her alienation. She is a lonely child who plays with inanimate objects or animals. People looked down on Pearl and referred to her as the "Devil's Child." When she arrived in town, the other kids were prejudiced towards her and refused to play with her. The other children would make fun of her and her mother, throwing stones at them. Pearl was separated from her father as well (another form of alienation). When she, her mother, and Arthur held hands on the scaffold one night, she realized who it was. Hester wants to watch her child interact with other children, but Pearl will grow up just interacting with her mother because she is not allowed in the community.

Because of her isolation, Pearl is a strong-willed, defiant youngster. Hester see her own self in her daughter Pearl “wild, desperate, defiant mood, the flightiness of her temper, and even some of the very cloud shapes of gloom and despondency that had brooded in her heart” in Pearl (Hawthorne 82). Pearl’s “singularity lay in the hostile feelings with which the child regarded all these offspring of her own heart and mind. She never created a friend,” (Hawthorne 85).

Hawthorne’s use of the word “created” suggests that Pearl's refusal to establish acquaintances could be interpreted as a conscious decision. Because she was born into isolation, Pearl did not know the meaning of interaction and did not experience the felling of

friendship, if she had been raised in a family and a community where there is communication with others, it would have missed that communication with people, but as it is mentioned before; since she never tested the feeling of communication and friendship and her only interactions with the community consist of condemnation, rage, and ridicule, she never felt the difference, so Pearl does not want to be a friend with the other children of the village.

2-3-4- The Alienation of Roger Chillingworth:

Roger Chillingworth, who has lived a life of alienation because of his malicious purpose, is perhaps the most alienated and set apart from his peers. As an elderly man seeking vengeance on the minister, he sacrifices both his real identity and his humanity. He is the novel's impious villain, who seeks for revenge, suffers from the most hidden and opaque sort of alienation. He is not only physically separated from his partner, Hester, and from the locals of the village because of his disguise, yet he is also mentally isolated. To demonstrate this transition, Hawthorne portrays Chillingworth mostly through quiet reflection; Chillingworth only reveals his actual self through his thoughts. With the exception of Hester, Chillingworth never tells anybody else about his plans to find Hester's lover.

He became obsessed with finding his wife's lover. Chillingworth started living a lie in order to accomplish that and in order to regain his self-consideration, he made it his life's goal to find the man who slept with his wife, first for the crime of treason and second for his cowardice, fear, and lack of support for Hester in front of the rulers and inhabitants of the tribe. In order to accomplish this, Chillingworth lost himself and soul for the devil.

Chillingworth gradually loses his human identity to the devil on his quest for vengeance he also gradually withdraws from his previous life and isolates himself to live in a wood because of his hate and ambition for revenge. He has done two sins: one against nature and the other a grave transgression against man's soul and God Himself (Mwestwood). The first transgression against Nature happens when Roger Chillingworth marries Hester despite

the fact that he knows his youthful and passionate wife does not love him and that he is unfit to be her husband "Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth into a false and unnatural relation with my decay"(The Scarlet Letter 15). His second heinous sin comes at the first scaffold scene, when he commits what Hawthorne call the "unpardonable sin," (The Scarlet Letter), the sin that denies human nature and God. It is the sin of submitting one's heart to one's mind. Chillingworth becomes willing to sacrifice Dimmesdale in order to satisfy his own vengeful desires. Of course, this is a sin against God, because for the puritans, vengeance is for God only. By impersonating the character of Physician and playing the role of God, and eventually, destroying Dimmesdale's soul, Chillingworth transformed into a virtual devil.

2-4- The Concept of Feminism in the Scarlet Letter:

The definition of feminism in The Scarlet Letter is mostly determined by the characters Hester and Pearl's determination and independence. Hester raises a child, handles her finances, and maintains her dignity despite her spirit being broken. She portrays female power and independence. Hester, through her struggles with ignominy and isolation, most exemplifies women's tenacity and ability to persevere even in their lowest stages of debasement. Hester appears to be a wonderful example of Feminism because she is a female character who reflects all the paradoxes of Puritan society. Despite the fact that she is a sinner, she overcomes her concerns and opposes the patriarchal white Puritan society's set laws. We can detect Hester's feminist consciousness in her defiant behavior.

Pearl and Hester depict dignified, bold women who did not want or desire the services of a man to meet their basic needs. The new sort of femininity that Hester (and subsequently Pearl) come to embody is the wild-natured strength that the two develops as a result of their rejection of patriarchal authority, which is inaccessible to males and even women living under this authority. In other words, they contributed to the novel's feminism topic by embodying

women's strength.

A good example about Hester's strength, is explored in the beginning of the novel, it is evident with her husband and lover; when Chillingworth came to interview her in the jail, he asked her about the name of Pearl's father, yet Hester was brave and strong enough to not tell him.

Another example of her strength is evident in the scene of the forest, even Dimmesdale knew that Hester has the strength that he as man lacks, he calls her to give him the power to overcome his fear twice, firstly in the forest and secondly in the confession of the Election Day "Theme Of Self Isolation In The Scarlet Letter".

Prynne draws strength from her role as a stay-at-home mother. She obtains recognition by employing generally recognized social paradigms of women's work. Prynne is in need of money to feed her family, so she turns to needlepoint for help. According to Hawthorne, it may have been "her life's passion."

Furthermore, the concept of a single mother, which was formerly unaccepted and rejected, can be modified and adapted to match current feminist criticism. Hester, like so many other single mothers before her, supports herself, fights attempts by community leaders to take Pearl away, and most importantly, teaches her daughter that no amount of public shame can erase what is inside you. "This badge hath taught me, it daily teaches me, it is teaching me at this moment, whereof my child may be the wiser and the better" Hester says (The Scarlet Letter 165).

Rather than being a symbol of humiliation, the scarlet "A" on her chest sparkles with her workmanship as an expression of her feminine. Her talent has become so well-known that the community has begun to value her work. Prynne adjusts the meaning of the scarlet letter throughout the book, corresponding to her redefining of conventional women's work "Many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant

Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength" (Hawthorne 137).

Hester is a Feminist character because she has a rebellious spirit, is self-reliant, self-assured, and has a strong mind. She embodies a whole feminist consciousness that allows women to survive and live in dignity, regardless of their actions. Her heart is glad as she marches from prison to the scaffold, holding her head high and remaining in full public view without crying a tear. Her expression reveals no regret or fear. With her noble attitude, she distinguishes herself from traditional women who are always obedient to men's unjust standards.

Hester makes the decision to keep the Scarlett letter. It is her choice to do so the letter is transformed from a symbol of shame and punishment to one of pride, bravery, and distinction. The A becomes a distinguishing mark for Hester, as if she was a single woman in a patriarchal society.

Conclusion:

In the Scarlet Letter, alienation is one of the most significant themes of the novel, it deals with the alienation of the novel's main characters because of the sin of adultery. Alienation is not bad symbol for all the characters. It can be a good one, like in the case of Hester. The Scarlet Letter separates her from the rest of the world. It does, however, become like a help to her moral and mental development. She overcomes her social isolation with nice deeds and the company of poor needy people. To conclude, alienation can be both positive and negative, it depends on the mentality and the manner of the alienated person.

Chapter Three: Patriarchy in Puritan Society

Introduction:

Patriarchy is a social and intellectual framework that places men above women (Rawat 43) Patriarchy, according to Walby (1990), is a social order in which men dominate women. Men are in charge of women, children, and property. Male leadership, male dominance, and male power are all encouraged under patriarchy. It is a system in which women are subjected to economic reliance, abuse, domestication, and decision-making on the periphery. It imposes frameworks that classify some sorts of work as "men's work" while others are classified as "women's job." (Reardon).

Patriarchy implies that authority is concentrated in the hands of a small number of people. As the family's patriarch, the male is vested. This means he is in charge of the family's property and earnings, as well as the family's employment, pleasure, and overall affairs. Male dominance and power over females are recognized in a patriarchal society. This could be why Sultana (2011) identified patriarchy as the primary impediment to the progress and development of women. Patriarchal ideologists frequently exaggerate the biological distinctions between men and women, saying that men possess the manly, powerful, and authoritative traits that women do not. As a result, men always have dominant positions, whereas women always have submissive or feminine roles. This mentality is so powerful that it allows men to obtain the apparent assent of the very women they mistreat. (3)

Throughout history, women were expected to submit fully and completely to men. They were seen as weak creatures, because they heart In thinking as opposed to men who were rational and efficient at work, This subservient mindset persisted in the 17th and 8th century, expanding the differences between men and women and making it mandatory to separate them in the workplace.

The puritan laws and norms of duty and obedience are reflected in these obligations imposed on early New England women. To sustain the patriarchy, Puritan legislation and social attitudes

toward gender in marriage used economic and psychological methods. To push Puritan women to “accept their dependence on men, many women were psychologically, not just materially, handcuffed to vain hopes that their husband’s behavior would improve.” (Cited in, Siebert)

Women's duties in colonial America were limited to motherhood and wifehood, with their husbands and children taking precedence. Women's lives were defined by decoration, fetishism, and external accomplishments. Jean Boydston admitted that “performing their (women) labor within the household reinforced the perception of women as secondary earners and kept their wages artificially low” (quoted in Matson 358). As a result, they were denied the right to assimilate into the public sphere, such as participating in the government activities.

Even now, women are subjected to male domination and subordination. Men have always been seen as the high pyramid of the family, they see themselves as the most important element of the family, ignoring the big and affective role of the wife, and they had the full right to control the lives of their wives and children and also the right to hold senior positions in the state

By promoting the development of both racial and sexual hierarchies, patriarchy had a significant impact on social connections and people's daily lives in early America. Men should govern women according to patriarchal principles, and men should have economic, sexual, legal, and political power. The government's control over the family sexual lives led to the extension of patriarchal attitudes and behaviors.

3-1- Patriarchy in Puritan Society:

Puritan authority enjoyed unlimited, unrestrained influence over Puritan colonists in America and with the English government across the Atlantic. “The church joined the government in enforcing [...] standards of behavior on everyone,” As the authorities became

more aware of their potential to manage and dominate the colonists, they prioritized their own thirst for power over the colony's larger benefit, ushering the colony into patriarchy. (Berkin 55)

The cultural notion of women's principal duty in early New England was largely apparent in the Puritan society's legally specified role for women. Women's roles in society, which included home cleaning, preparing the dinner, teaching their children the Puritan norms and tradition, whereas; men were responsible for material matters like providing the food and different necessities of life. In the end, women were seen as second-class citizens by the men of the house. In other words, "women are completely wretched"; they were thought to be psychologically, physically, and emotionally ill. (Cited in, Siebert)



Men in Puritan society, on the other hand, regard themselves as the house's leaders or decision makers. This quote demonstrates how guys are expected to behave: "I am perpetually taken up giving out orders, in prescribing duties, in hearing parties [disputes], in administering justice, and in distributing rewards and punishments... In short, I look upon my family as a patriarch sovereign in which I am myself both king and priest," (Gender Roles and Sexuality in Colonial America).

Puritan men and women had to work together to attain their aims, despite of that, women still seen inferior to men although they are very important component in the family. The Massachusetts Bay Colony's community revolves around its men. Women are prohibited from voting in town meetings or making decisions in the church. They were spotted looking like: "keeper of home and hearth" (cited in, Gerbe). It means that: "Once a woman was married, her legal rights were bound to her husband" (cited in, Gerbe). All women, including the women to whom they were married, were inferior to the men. Men are held to high standards in Puritan society; they desired social power, a family, property ownership, an education, and a voice in community decisions.

Even in the case of inheritance, women were seen from the perspective of weak, husbands tried to teach their children the foundations of life and commerce in order to prepare them to receive inheritance and property, thus ignoring their wives, so as to ensure that their revolutions continued from generation to generation. As a result, “the legal authority of naming, owning, and commanding is a male domain that God has given to him”. (Cited in, Siebert)

The roles men accepted of women in Colonial America in the early eighteenth century followed a tight rule. Those rules restricted women's movements and kept them inside specified parameters. Patriarchy in puritan society can be understood as in the eyes of a Puritan man, a woman must be subservient, and if she isn't, she is a Satan worshipper. Whether they are owned only by their husbands, or they are considered slaves and they are owned by the devil.

Men and women were thought to belong in different realms in the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony. These spheres were thought to be created by God and so natural, static, and unchanging; the puritan society believed that god had arranged every relationship in a way, , making one party submissive to the other, implying that a wife is subordinate to her husband and should assist him. (cited in, Siebert), During the ceremony the wife promised to be “a loving, faithful and obedient wife”, as Davies quotes Peter Hall’s *The Parliamentary Directory* (cited in, Siebert), The word "obedient" in particular suggested that a wife had to accept her husband as the superior partner in their marriage and accept her lesser status.

Women's most common roles were that of wives and mothers. They were the ones in control of the domestic environment. It demonstrates that husbands were responsible for legal decisions, but women had the same legal standing as children. William Blackstone wrote: “By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage” (cited in, Siebert).

3-2- Patriarchy in the Scarlet Letter:

We start by delving more into the novel's portrayal of the patriarchal side of the historical New England community. The political system of the Massachusetts colony is clearly patriarchal from the start. Those in positions of power may have been elected, but these “fathers and founders of the commonwealth – the statesman, the priest, and the soldier” are essentially male (Hawthorne 201).

Puritan restrictions governing women's life were centered on promoting piety and preventing sexual misconduct. This is demonstrated by the fact that women were tried more frequently than men for two offences. : “absence from church and sexual offenses.” (Hemphill 165). As a result, Puritan society's legal emphasis on women in the spheres of religion and sex appears to show a desire to tailor their laws and legal choices to a supposed "natural weakness" in women.

The Scarlet Letter tries to portray Puritanism in the 17th century as accurately as possible. For this reason, Hawthorne develops in the community an immovable patriarchal power structure. Male elite controls legal decisions such as evaluating and punishing criminal activity, as well as drafting laws and determining social order. Women do not have the same legal status or responsibilities as males. As a result of the legal disparity, there is also a social disparity. The plot portrays men in public roles as honorable sorts such as the governor and the reverend, while the female characters are not depicted in a positive way. In other words, women were thought to have more powerful and uncontrollable sexual impulses. (Herbert 70).

For their wives, men were legally responsible and liable. They became the wife's defender and the family's provider in this role, Furthermore, he was responsible for guiding the wife in the same way as he was for children and servants. (Cited in, Gerbe) To be more specific, according to Benstock, it became a Puritan effort to control female sexuality within

religious, legal, and economic frameworks. (Cited in, Siebert)

The female sex continues to be completely unrepresented, and patriarchy's formidable grasp is maintained by an exclusively male government, it is notable in the novel and exactly in the chapter of the market place, that women want to have more consideration by men and having as more right as men, including being a members in Church;

“Goodwives,” said a hard-featured dame of fifty, “I’ll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church members in good repute, should have the handling of such maleactresses as this Hester Prynne. What think ye, gossips? If the hussy stood up for judgment before us five, that are now in a knot together, would she come off with such a sentence as the worshipful magistrates have awarded? Marry, I think not!” (The Scarlett Letter 48).

As they look down on Hester from their superior “position of rigid righteousness” and made her sin visible to the all (Schwartz 199). The men who effectively control New England society are probably more compassionate, but surely not more benevolent.

During this time, religion was the law despite the fact that everyone bears the stain of original sin. Due to the Old Testament's description of Eve's deeds in the Garden of Eden, women bear a higher weight. Her activities were a form of corruption that affected all women. (davidglensmith.com).

Infidelity and adultery are treated differently in Puritan times, and this is a major theme in the novel. If a wife committed infidelity, it was considered the worst crime. The rationale for this is because of the expected outcome. Men would simply embarrass themselves and their families. Women, on the other hand, may become pregnant and bring an illegitimate kid into the family (cited in, Siebert). The child would be a financial burden on the spouse, depriving the legitimate children of a portion of their inheritance. (Cited in,

Siebert).

The person who passes judgment on Hester appears to have no idea what he's talking about. Even Boston's elder clergyman and a distinguished scholar, John Wilson, is described as unfamiliar to actual life and unfit to discharge his duties :

There he stood [...] while his gray eyes accustomed to the shaded light of his study, were winking, like those of Hester's infant, in the unadulterated sunshine. He looked like the darkly engraved portraits which we see prefixed to old volumes of sermons; and had no more right than one of those portraits would have, to step forth, as he now did, and meddle with a question of human guilt, passion and anguish (Hawthorne 60).

It is ironic that Hester's secret accomplice is a minister, one of the community's most powerful members, to whom others turned for religious support: "His was the profession, at that era, in which intellectual ability displayed itself far more than in political life [...] it offered inducements powerful enough, in the almost worshipping respect of the community, to win the most aspiring ambition into its service. Even political power [...] was within the grasp of a successful priest" (Hawthorne 207). Because Dimmesdale's does not bear the burden of doming people in the eyes of the Bible, if he had confessed, Hester might have received a fate worse than the Scarlet Letter.

By eroding Dimmesdale's reputation and moral authority, Hawthorne implicitly critiques the Puritan system. The suggested author ensures that the self-deluded minister loses all respect and sympathy from the reader by demonstrating the absurdity of his moral standards. However, this does not negate the patriarchy's presence or impact in *The Scarlet Letter*. To be more specific, Hawthorne's censure is centered on the founding fathers' brutal severity, rather than their male domination, which is portrayed as a natural position.

One major example of puritan patriarchy within the *Scarlet Letter* is Hester's punishment;

under Puritan law, Hester Prynne's sentence for adultery should be either banishment or death "This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly there is, both in the scripture and the statute-book" (Hawthorne 49), She would be portrayed as the temptress, corrupted by wickedness, just as Eve enticed Adam in the Old Testament to eat the forbidden fruit. Adultery was considered a capital offense at the time. "The most common penalty was death" (cited in, Siebert). However, while the town's wives demand that Hester be put to death for her transgression, the town's men argue for mercy, which is granted to her by the magistrates. It's remarkable that the male Puritan authorities, who are known for their harsh punishment of sin, spare Hester's life. The men recognize that Hester's death would sow terror in the hearts of the population for a few moments only, but punishing her alive would serve as vivid example for anyone thinks to commit adultery, so the survive of Hester and being tortured for the rest of her life serves the interest of the men of the tribe more than her death.

As punishment, Hester spent several hours on the scaffold while wearing the red "A" on her chest and being taken to the outskirts of town. "Her physical body, the child in her arms, and the "A" on her chest all become symbols symbolizing Puritan leaders' authority and control over the colonies" (Hawthorne 51) as Hester sits on the scaffold wearing the "SCARLET LETTER" for her crime of adultery.

Conclusion:

The idea of women atoning for man kinds in itself misdeeds encourages masculine hegemony. Many people, on the other hand, see women as the redeemer of humanity, because their moral attributes are similar to those of a Christ figure. Hawthorne portrays women in such a way that their strength and determination reflect their purity and sanctity.

Despite individual transgressions and a decline in socially-perceived morality, women continue to have the moral sense to care for children: Hester continues to care intensely about

Pearl, despite Pearl being the entity of Hester's sin, which has isolated her completely.

Women have the morals to care for people in any condition, and they have the power to save humanity from sin and instill a sense of purity and morality in society. Women, in the same time, should not be the sole bearers of that burden.

General Conclusion:

The research aimed to analyze the alienation of the novel's main characters and as well as to analyze whether the punishment of Hester Prynne is due to her sin, or because of something else. Based on a qualitative analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, it can be concluded that the isolation of the four characters (Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, and Pearl) is not due to the sin of adultery, but because of the unfair laws and principles of the puritan society, which themselves are contradictory.

The punishment of Hester Prynne also has nothing to do with her sin, yet because of the puritan's patriarchal system that punished Hester depending on her female gender. One major evidence on the patriarchal system in puritan society is showed in the case of Arthur Dimmesdale, who even when he eventually confessed his guilt in public, he was not punished or alienated like what happened with Hester. And this is obviously because of his reputation and position as both minister and priest.

Hester Prynne, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, and Hester's daughter, Pearl, who are center on them by Hawthorne are four important characters in the novel that are not historical individuals but whose views and actions are influenced by the culture around them. Each of these people is torn between self- and public perceptions when it comes to concerns of identity. Hawthorne explores how identity grows and how individuals create public personae to fit their own purposes through their connections and the patterns of concealment and reveal that emerge from them.

In his own way, Hawthorne saw the examination of puritan society's past as an opportunity to analyze how that past formed the character and culture of America. He could also explore topics that were vital to mid-nineteenth-century America, such as the individual-community interaction, the impact of a society's codes and ideals on its members, the status of women in American culture, and so on, via this interpretation of the past.

To conclude, each feature we examined indicated that the majority of puritan society was

deviated, but in different ways: some people chose to publicly commit sin, while others chose to keep their vice hidden and act religiously. Hypocrisy and depravity spread among them as a result.

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ملخص

تُناقش الأخلاق البوريتية في ضوء رواية ناثانيلهاوثورن (رسالة سكارليت). ويتعلق الأمر بهيستربرين ، وهي امرأة شائعة ، وأرثر ديميسديل ، الكاهن البيوريتاني ، الذين يوضعون في بيئة اجتماعية ثقافية. من خلال شخصياته الرئيسية هيستر برين وأرثر ديميسديل ، فضلا عن المجتمع البيوريتاني ، عالج هاوثورن قضايا التناقضات والانحرافات. وفي مجتمع نيو إنجلاند ، أفرزت المثل الأخلاقية البيورويتارية الصارمة بعض المفاهيم المشكوك فيها والتي تعارض الأيديولوجية البيورويتارية. فمن ناحية ، أبدى المجتمع إعجابه بالأراء البحتة ، بينما أدانوها من ناحية أخرى. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل نفور الشخصيات الرئيسية للرواية ، وكذلك تحليل النظام الذكوري فيما يتعلق بالانحراف الديني... سيتم استخدام طريقة نوعية لتحقيق هذه الأهداف