

Scarlet letter analysis

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In *The Scarlet Letter* Hester Prynne changes because of the plight she faced both mentally and physically. Nathaniel Hawthorne feels pity towards Hester and women in Puritan society because of how their demeanor is changed after harsh situations.

He also explains how women who go through harsh circumstances lose their femininity. Hawthorne conveys his attitude through his language and rhetorical devices. In the passage Hawthorne emphasizes the physical and mental change in Hester and other Puritan women went through because of being involved in a strenuous state of affairs through diction. For instance, Hawthorne states “all the light and graceful foliage of her character had been withered up” to demonstrate the effect the symbol had on Hester (4-5). This diction compares Hester to a rose and something that is delicate and frail.

A rose cannot take care of itself and could easily be damaged similarly to how Hester was. Moreover, in lines 18-24 Hawthorne personifies the emotions of love and affection. This illustrates the importance of these emotions because people in our society are of the utmost importance more so animals and plants. Personification of emotion also makes the reader sympathize with Hester over her loneliness. Finally, though Hester seems “majestic and statue-like” she will never find passion or love in her life (23).

This exemplifies the uplifted and respected character with an underlying cold hardness like a statue. Because of Hester’s circumstances the once feminine and flowering woman she once was has been damaged beyond repair in Hawthorne’s opinion. Hawthorne shows through detail that he has pity for

the women whose femininity is tarnished when they go through difficult circumstances. For example, Hester's "sad transformation" is about her beauty and is directed towards her lack of femininity. In Hawthorne's perspective women are transformed into something unrecognizable because they lack physical beauty.

He states that women's femininity can be "crushed so deeply into her heart that it can never show itself more" (32-34). Hawthorne supports the stereotypes the essential key to be a woman is physical beauty and a tender, compassionate nature. Women thrown into tough situations lose these attributes and are no longer considered women sadly. In conclusion, Hawthorne believes that only the "magic touch" of a man's affection can restore a woman's femininity and then she will be considered a woman again (37). Hawthorne believes that women should be respected, but they lose the femininity that makes them women when faced with obstacles in life.