

# Hester prynne in "the scarlet letter" by nathaniel hawthorne

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In modern day life, strong emotions tend to guide the actions individuals make on a daily basis. Having such an intense emotion can lead an individual to believe a deceitful or unlawful action is one of good. Nathaniel Hawthorne is an American novelist who writes romantic stories because he was a part of the Romanticism Movement.

The novel *The Scarlet Letter* shows the story about a woman named Hester Prynne who has sinned and has been forced to wear an embroiled A on her for the whole community to see. Hester is living in a strict puritan society where she cant allow her emotions or senses to dictate her actions even when there is no intention of committing such an unlawful deed. The people in the society can say any hurtful or cruel words about Hester and her sin because she is now an outcast in her own world among everyone else. The only place where she can be forgiven is in nature, so that is where Hester and Dimmesdale can be honest about what they have done. Hester doesnt allow the A that identifies her sin control how she should act or how she lives her daily life as a normal human being.

Nathaniel Hawthorne emphasized on emotions and senses that a typical human would face during the American Romanticism Movement. Hester Prynne is put in front of the eyes of the whole puritan community as she is forced to face her unlawful deed which resulted into her having an embroiled A put on her bosom. As Hester Prynne is facing her reality, she is being criticized for not being able to control her emotions and natural senses. The A that is embroidered onto Hesters bosom shows the community that there are consequences that come with emotions, whether they can be controlled

or not. Hester is now in an untamed natural world where the community can say whatever they want about her and her daughter just because of the actions that she chose to take. As stated in the book, On the other hand, a penalty which in our days would infer a degree of mocking infamy and ridicule might then be invested with almost as stern a dignity as the punishment of death itself (page 48) shows connection to the definition of the Romanticism movement. Hester has the A permanently to her name and identity now and it will never go away because she is in an untamed world where her unlawful deed follows her everywhere she goes. She feels the shame and agony as she takes each step past the stern-browed men and unkindly visaged women without being able to cover her face. Hester found it almost intolerable to be standing there in front of the public staring at her child and bosom taking the stings and stabs that were thrown her way. Hester Prynne is in an untamed world where the women and man can say cruel and awful words about her because of a blatantly obvious A embroidered on her bosom. The men and women are saying if we stripped Madam Hesters rich gown off her sanity shoulders; and as for the red letter, which she hath stitched so curiously, Ill bestow a rag of mine own rheumatic flannel, to make a flutter one. (page 52). The women and men can say degrading words behind her back or as she walks past them and there is no way of stopping them from expressing their emotions because of the untamed world that they have been placed in.

Throughout the book, Hester Prynne, though being the female lead in the story, is not the only individual being affected mentally by the world that is

the new Eden. The book makes it known that Dimmesdale does not receive community negativity; him being a Minister, always having his hand over his heart, not showcasing his embroidered A to the public. Having this character that should be sharing fault for the crime committed, but not sharing the consequences, shows that men may not be as invincible as they may seem. As stated by Roger Chillingworth, husband of Hester Prynne, these men deceive themselves, they fear to take up the shame that rightfully belongs to them. Their love for man, their zeal for Gods service these holy impulses may or may not coexist in their hearts with the evil inmates to which their guilt has unbarred the door, and which must needs propagate a hellish breed within them. (page 129). The previously stated quote sheds light on the fact that men should share shame for a crime committed with a woman (adultery). In nature, men are seen as more dominant, stronger, worthier than women. Dimmesdale, knowing that if his A was showcased for the community to see would jeopardize his reputation, chooses to cover up his embroidered letter on his chest. Until one day Dimmesdale gets the courage to confess his sin as an adulterer in a grand gesture and once he does this Chillingworth power over him is officially lost. All in all, this book perfectly shows that in nature, all sorts of emotions dominate an individual day in and day out.

While the whole book itself connects to the definition of the Romanticism Movement by proving that strong emotions rule all actions, at the same time, Hester takes on a new future with her perfectly embroidered A on her bosom. Instead of choosing to be diminished by the letter, she showcases

her independence and faces her new reality with a strong head. As stated in chapter 2 it was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that the apparel which she wore; and which was of the splendor accordance with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony. (page 51). The community has never seen Hester Prynne look so lady like as she is walking out of the prison door with a perfectly embroidered A on her bosom. People that knew her before this day were astonished to see that there wasnt a cloud of gray over her, but beauty was shining through her for the people to see. The A had a different effect upon Hester because it took her out of the normal relation of humanity and put her in a sphere of her own as being different. A woman of the community who was one of Hesters spectators felt that she did a impeccable job of embroidering the A and wondered if any woman before her had the same way of showing of her unlawful deed. As the book continues Hester Prynne doest allow the A on her bosom to dictate her punishment. Hester Prynne alters the meaning of the letter A with her hard work and not letting the A determine what she can and cant do just because of her sin that she did. Years have passed since the people of the community has last seen Hester Prynne and she has returned by herself without pearl to take up her long-forsaken shame of the scarlet letter. As stated in the book but, through the remainder of Hesters life, there were indications that the recluse of the scarlet letter was the object of love and interest with some inhabitant of another land. (page 256-257). Hester changes the meaning of the scarlet letter to able meaning she is an able women who didnt let the letter define her and her actions for the rest of her life.

The puritan community has a very strict society where an individual can't allow themselves to let their emotions and senses control the actions they take throughout life. A rose bush has continually been at the prison since Ann Hutchinson entered and the flowers have been kept alive ever since. As stated in the book it may serve, let us hope, to symbolize some sweet moral blossom that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow. (page 46). The rose bush is hoping to give the prisoners some relief and reassure that nature could have pity and be kind to the errand-prisoner as they enter their doom. The black flower punishes in while the rose bush shows that there is forgiveness to those who are being sentenced to their death. Hester and Dimmesdale meet in the dark forest where is the only place that they have felt safe to interact with each other. As stated in the book oh, I have much to tell thee about her! But, in very much truth, she is right as regards this hateful token. I must bear its torture yet a little longer-only a few days longer- until we shall have left this region and look back hither as to a land which we have dreamed of. The forest cannot hide it. (page 207) Hester and Dimmesdale only talked about their escapement from the society in the forest because that's where they feel comfort and protection. No where else in the society can make them feel that way except the forest because when they are surrounded by other people of the society they don't talk about what happens in the forest. Nature is forgiving and since both of them have either guilt or shame following them because they committed adultery that this is the only place where they can be themselves with each other. Nature gives them a break from a society where you can't be human and allow any emotions or senses to surface.

The Scarlet Letter is a great representation of the American Romanticism movement that Nathaniel Hawthorne was a part of. Hester Prynne is forced into a cruel world where she gets criticized for her emotions and the actions that happen because of them. She is surrounded by people who just see the A on her bosom and not see her for anything else because the society is so untamed. The society is trying to be established so that there is no evil to be seen and to make sure that if people follow their emotions there will be consequences. Hester can't control what the men and women of the society say about her or her child or that her child can't play with the other children. Hester Prynne is portrayed as an attempt of society to correct sin through the struggle of an individual by placing shame upon her that everyone sees. The society has made her an outcast because of her sin, but she has survived it and has become a stronger person through the whole experience. She was humiliated and was all by herself with no one else feeling the way she was, but was able to overcome it and handle whatever they threw at her. The society was so against Hester for the sin she has committed that it was her who was her biggest enemy it was the society itself and what they were doing to her to make her feel that way. Chillingworth committed a terrible sin when he tries to take revenge on Dimmesdale when he knows that it is the worst sin and will tear him and his soul apart. Nature also plays an important role in Hester's life because it is not like the society and how nature helped her gain wisdom to overcome her sin even though she was in the public eye constantly. The Scarlet Letter really showed the connection between the natural world and human emotions through Hester and Dimmesdale finally feeling comfort and protection from the society. Nature allowed Hester to

feel human and feel like her emotions and senses were allowed to happen even though the cruel society made her feel humiliated, she still found a place where she could be herself.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was apart of the Romanticism Movement and wrote a novel called The Scarlet Letter. Hester Prynne is in an untamed natural world where she has committed a sin and has to deal with all the criticism that comes with it. She has an embroiled A put on her and she has to wear it everywhere she goes with the shame and agony following her. Hester doesnt allow the A to define her by making sure it is perfectly embroiled into her clothing to allow for a different meaning to surface. She has no way to escape from the strict society except in nature where she feels secure from the outside world where all they see is her sin. Hester Prynne isnt the only who is facing the wrath from the public eye because Arthur Dimmesdale has guilt flooding inside of him from the sin. The Puritan society doesnt allow the individuals to feel their true emotions or senses or else they will sin and be an outcast with shame following them everywhere they turn.