

The scarlet letter topics essay

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



The Scarlet Letter, written by Nathaniel Hawthorne, has characters that each bring different feelings and emotions to the story. While reading the novel, I noticed that Pearl, Hester daughter, was very different from the other main characters, though at the same time, she was almost a second Hester. With the addition of Pearl, Hawthorne's story comes to a completely different level. Around the first part of the book, Hawthorne doesn't talk much about Pearl or describe her in any way, but this changes further into the book.

Hawthorne immediately makes it clear of how Hester feels about Pearl: Pearl is Hester only erasure, but also her biggest dread.

As Hawthorne writes, " But she named the Infant ' Pearl', as being of great price - purchased with all she had, - her mother's only treasure Day after day, she looked fearfully into the child's expanding nature; ever dreading to detect some dark arid wild peculiarity, that should correspond with the guiltiness to which she owed her being. (Hawthorne 82) This clearly shows that, since adultery is considered a serious crime in the time period she is living, Hester believes that whatever comes from her act of sin will not be good. However, Hester can't help but love Pearl. This makes the reader think of Pearl as a human with two personalities. In one way, she can be a wonderful and pleasant child, but in other ways, you are always skeptical about what she will grow up to be. Hawthorne also portrays Pearl's beauty, both her physical attributes and the way she presents herself. Hawthorne writes, " She seemed rather an airy sprite, which, after playing its fantastic sports for a little while upon the cottage-floor, would flit away with a mocking smile.

Whenever that look appeared in her wild, bright, deeply black eyes. It invested her with a strange remoteness and intangibility. " (Hawthorne 85)

When I first read this, I immediately made a connection between Pearl's eyes and Hester eyes. In the beginning, Hawthorne had said that Hester eyes were also deep and black. Since Pearl had always seemed so much more fairytale-like than Hester, this makes Pearl seem more connected to Hester and the story as a whole. I believe that if he hadn't made this connection, Pearl's character would have seemed too "out of it" for the story. Also, when he adds "she seemed rather an airy sprite", Pearl suddenly becomes a fantastic and enchanting character, almost like she was out of a fairytale book.

This gives a really good visualization and brings the reader to imagine Pearl acting with witchcraft. Most other children in the book, besides Pearl, live normal lives with their family and make friends. However, Nathaniel Hawthorne chose her to play a very different part in society, right along with her mother's social standing. As he wrote: "Pearl was a born outcast of the infantile world.

An imp of evil, emblem and product of sin, she had no right among christened infants. Nothing was more remarkable than the instinct, as it seemed, with which the child comprehended her loneliness; the destiny that had drawn an inviolable circle round about her; the whole peculiarity, in short, of her position in respect to other children...If children [would gather] around her, as they sometimes did, Pearl would grow positively terrible in her puny wrath, snatching up stones to fling at them, with shrill, incoherent

exclamations that made her mother unknown tongue. ” (Hawthorne 86)

These statements changed my view of Pearl from the beginning as a whole.

When he first states that she was a “ born outcast”, the reader can’t help but feel sorry for her, since she is a child and this is the age that she should be interacting with other kids. Since her mother had been subjected to the lowest social status and was looked down upon by the rest of the town, the same thing happened to Pearl, who was in fact, the result of Hester sin. Also, when Hawthorne writes about how Pearl would grow very violent against the other children “ hen they gathered around her and her mother, this shapes Pearl into a sad, yet dignified character. As a reader, I felt like she was content with who she is and how she’s living, but she acts the way she does towards the other children because she doesn’t know what it’s like to be considered “ normal” in society. Most importantly, Pearl is a very important symbol in this story. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne does a considerable amount of work to make sure Pearl is portrayed as more observant than the older characters.

She is constantly catching the attention of the older characters in the book, despite her age, and is almost always asking them questions. For example, after Hester tells Pearl that the Heavenly Father sent her to earth, Pearl says, “ He did not send me! I have no Heavenly Father! (Hawthorne 91) This takes Hester aback slightly, who is surprised by her answer, since she is only a child. However, the statements and questions that she poses throughout the book, also grab the attention of the reader, not only the other characters. Even though all of the characters were unique and helped the readers

understand the story, I believe that Pearl was the most carefully shaped and created by Nathaniel Hawthorne. She often has perceptive critiques of the other characters and has very strong symbolic meaning, which is what the other characters lack.