

The scaffold symbolism in the scarlet letter english literature essay

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In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the scaffold is a topographic point of both humiliation and rapprochement. The scaffold appears three times throughout the novel: at the beginning, in-between, and terminal. The novel's four major characters and the vermilion missive "A" are present in all scaffold scenes. The scenes maintain an outline for the narrative and stress the novel's most important themes. The scaffold is inserted into the story for its practical intents but begins to represent and embody assorted other connotations as the novel progresses.

In the first scaffold scene, Pearl and Hester are on the scaffold enduring awful civic examination, unaccompanied by Pearl's male parent, Arthur Dimmesdale. "Hester Prynne passed through this part of her ordeal, and came to a kind of scaffold" (Hawthorne 52). Dimmesdale is standing with the town's leaders, witnessing Hester's public humiliation. Hester Prynne bears the attractively embroidered Letter "A" on her thorax, while on the scaffold. This symbolizes her effort to keep on to her former ego and her pride even while she is being persecuted for it.

The scaffold is the vermilion missive, both capable Hester to constant humiliation and penalty (Bloom 1). Hester's refusal to call the male parent of her kid alludes to Christ's willingness to debase on the cross for humanity's wickedness (Campbell 2). Roger Chillingworth, Hester's partner, discovers his married woman's wickedness [matter]. When he learns of Hester's error he develops a sinister impulse and a hunger for retaliation. "His face darkened with some powerful emotion, which, however, he so outright controlled by an attempt of his will, that, salvage at

a individual minute, its look might hold passed for composure " (Hawthorne 57) . The scaffold is a topographic point of penalty. It provides a model for subject throughout the town:

This scaffold constituted a part of a penal machine, which now, for two or three coevalss past, has been simply historical and traditionary among us, but was held, in the old clip, to be as effective an agent in the publicity of good citizenship, as of all time was the closure by compartment among the terrorists of France. It was, in short, the platform of the pillory ; and above it rose the model of that instrument of subject, so fashioned as to restrict the human caput in its tight appreciation, and therefore keep it up to the public regard. The really ideal of shame was embodied and made manifest in this appliance of wood and Fe. There can be no indignation, methinks, against our common nature, — whatever be the delinquencies of the person, — no indignation more crying than to prohibit the perpetrator to conceal his face for shame ; as it was the kernel of this penalty to make. In Hester Prynne ' s case, nevertheless, as non infrequently in other instances, her sentence dullard, that she should stand a certain clip upon the platform, but without undergoing that kick about the cervix and parturiency of the caput, the proneness to which was the most diabolic feature of this ugly engine (Hawthorne 52) .

The scaffold symbolizes the foundation of Puritan society, rigorous subject and lip service (Bloom 1) .

Seven old ages after the start of the novel, the following scaffold scene takes topographic point. This scene happens at dark and focal points on Arthur Dimmesdale. Dimmesdale is being eaten by his injudiciousness and compunction. Dimmesdale is on the threshold of psychosis. This scaffold scene parodies the first one in many ways, for illustration, Dimmesdale has non revealed himself as Pearl ' s male parent and Hester still carries that load entirely. In the chapters before the 2nd scaffold scene Hester, Dimmesdale, and Pearl were segmented. However, in this scene " The three formed an electric concatenation " (Hawthorne 134) . It is in this scene that Hester learns how bad Chillingworth ' s maltreatment has been. Hester shows Dimmesdale clemency by uncovering Chillingworth ' s individuality, unlike Pearl who reveals that Dimmesdale ' s transmutation is finished. Pearl asks him if he will fall in custodies with her and her female parent during the twenty-four hours for all to see, he refuses. Sinister Roger Chillingworth is looking from afar. A The vermilion missive " A " appears in the sky as a reminder to Dimmesdale that he can non run off from his wickedness (Bloom 1) . The scaffold show windows wickedness. " On the scaffold, where evil-doers are set up to public shame " (Hawthorne 138) . In Another position of Hester Chillingworth tells Hester:

" Better had he died at one time! Never did mortal endure what this adult male has suffered. And all, all, in the sight of his worst enemy! He has been witting of me. He has felt an influence home ever upon him like a expletive. He knew, by some religious sense, -for the Creator ne'er made another being so sensitive as this, -he knew that no friendly manus was drawing at his

heart- strings, and that an oculus was looking oddly into him, which sought merely evil, and found it. But he knew non that the oculus and manus were mine! With the superstitious notion common to his brotherhood, he fancied himself given over to a monster, to be tortured with atrocious dreams, and despairing ideas, the sting of compunction, and desperation of forgiveness ; as a foretaste of what awaits him beyond the grave. But it was the changeless shadow of my presence! -the closest proximity of the adult male whom he had most vilely wronged! — and who had grown to be merely by this ageless toxicant of the direst retaliation! Yea, so! -he did non mistake! - there was a monster at his cubitus! A mortal adult male, with one time a human bosom, has become a monster for his exceptional torture! ”
(Hawthorne 150) .

It is in this chapter that Chillingworth realizes his fury. Chillingworth ‘ s ardent exclaiming marks the terminal of his transmutation from a funny bookman to a sinister maltreater (Reiss 5) .

The last scaffold scene is highly similar to the first 1. The four chief characters converge in the market place, during the twenty-four hours. This scene focuses on both Hester and Dimmesdale. Hester is at the centre of the townsfolk ‘ s examination, because of the vermilion missive. Dimmesdale on the other manus is revered like a saint or a stone star. Unlike the other scenes, Arthur Dimmesdale is diing. Those legion old ages of emphasis have caused his wellness to worsen. Dimmesdale professes his wickedness in order to deliver his psyche. Hester ‘ s strength is besides an built-in portion of this scene. Dimmesdale relies on Hester ‘ s strength. “ Come Hester,

come! Support me up yonder scaffold " (Hawthorne 219) . Since Dimmesdale revealed his wickedness, Chillingworth ' s power over him is no longer at that place. Dimmesdale dies after stating these words, " To debase this debase of exultant shame before the people " (Hawthorne 222) . Arthur Dimmesdale ' s debase liberates Pearl. Pearl goes through a transmutation. She is no longer a symbol of her parents ' injudiciousness. Dimmesdale ' s debase marks the terminal of pearl being a symbol. The vermilion missive " A " appears in the signifier of a stigmata on Dimmesdale ' s thorax. The scaffold stalled Arthur Dimmesdale ' s salvation. " There was no topographic point so secret, no high topographic point nor humble topographic point, where I couldst have escaped me, salvage on this really scaffold " (Hawthorne 219) . Hawthorne magnifies Dimmesdale ' s juvenile and feminine features in the last scaffold scene while at the same time escalating Hester ' s strength and maleness (Harper 3) .

The scaffold scenes come together in order to expose a shared subject, truth. The scaffold separates the evildoers from those who judge them (Bloom 1) . Throughout the narrative the scaffold maps as a secret plan tool in order to intensify the novel. Hawthorne ' s ability to make symbols that evolve throughout the fresh proves how complex and intricate the secret plan is. The scaffold is grounds of Nathaniel Hawthorne ' s endowment in the usage of symbolism. Throughout the novel the scaffold becomes a topographic point of embarrassment, repentance, debase, and new hope. The scaffold either causes prosperity or failure in the lives of Hester, Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, and Pearl.