

# The scarlet letter: another view of hester prynne essay sample



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Within the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the narrator addresses the audience and develops the dynamics of Hester Prynne's character by illustrating her as a stereotypical maternal figure towards the people of Boston. Seven years after the protagonist's initial ignominy at the scaffold, the society's perspective of Hester transforms as her relationship with her community becomes repaired over time. During those years, Hester treats the townspeople with tenderness, kindness and perpetual charity.

The significance of the "A" which primarily represented Hester's adultery, acquires a different meaning as the narrator describes it as having "comfort in its unearthly ray" (Hawthorne 157). The light imagery of a sunlight ray depicts the letter as having a sacredness which juxtaposes its previous signification. Also, it is described as being comforting which contrasts the town's initial impression of the letter and the atmosphere surrounding it. The "A" becomes a symbol of hope for the townspeople, who, just like Hester are also sinners; it manifests the redemption society strives to acquire after sinning.

Furthermore, the narrator states that the letter is, "the taper of the sick-chamber", this metaphor illustrates Hester as the light and brightness in the lives of the sick (157). This imagery also reveals her as the sick people's primary source of hopefulness and happiness since the flame of a candle is the prominent means of having light during that era. This light imagery reflects Hester as a benevolent character since she is depicted as caring for the sick. Moreover, according to the narrator, Hester is a, "self-ordained ... Sister of Mercy" (158).

The Sisters of Mercy is a congregation of religious women who vow to serve people who suffer from poverty, sickness and lack of education. This topical allusion reinforces Hester's motherly nature as this title illustrates her as caring, kind, tender, and helpful towards the poor and the sick. The narrator uses allusions, figurative language, as well as symbolism to reveal Hester as a stereotypical maternal figure. This new description of Hester contradicts the clergymen and townspeople's presumption that she is unfit to be a mother because of her sin; however, it is as a result of her sinfulness that she chooses to live such a virtuous life.