



SIN, SELF AND SOCIETY: FREE WILL AND EXISTENTIALISM IN THE SCARLET LETTER

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Abstract

*In this research paper, the process of free thinking through the eminent existential thinking philosophy is examined in the novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) written by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1850) through the character of Hester Prynne. Through a qualitative research methods and procedures, this paper generates the research question on how the existentialist ideas of individual freedom, self-reliance, and personal accountability are transfused in the character of Hester when she fights and protests against the strict codes of morality of the Puritan New England. In her decision not to align herself with society and to keep the identity of the dad of her child to herself, Hester proves that she has a very strong sense of independence and upright character. The transformation of a social outcast to being a representation of power and independence makes her an ideal free thinker, one who is at war with the institutions of authority and a desire to be an intellectual free agent. It is concluded in the study that *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) upholds the belief that the freedom of thought resting on the principle of existentialist ideologies can enable human beings to rise above the fullness of language sanctioned moralities and live a life of self-meaning, self-choice and self-authenticity. The present paper belongs to an increasingly interdisciplinary discussion between the study of literature and the philosophy of existentialism, in which both fields have much to contribute to the other. In this way the paper can be said to open a door toward a critical resistance with regard to oppressive socio-political and religious systems through the potential of free thinking.*

Keywords: *Free thought, Existential F attitude, Hester Prynne, Self reliance, Autonomy, Puritan society, Intellectual protest, Nathaniel Hawthorne.*

1. Introduction

The literature has always been a reflection of the philosophical thought, and regardless of whether it is a creative reflection or a philosophical thought in literature, it always becomes the subject of intellectual contemplation related to such topics as human freedom, individuality, and resistance. Existentialism is one of such philosophical avenues of this most natural attribute: it focuses on the human condition, the issues of freedom, responsibility and alienation as well as choice. The main idea of existentialist thought consists in the fact that people have to create the sense of things in their life without any inner meaning that is only limited by their will and intellectual autonomy. Here, free thinking or independent thinking, exercising reason not bound by the traditional

authority, becomes a prominent form of protest and the way of defining oneself. The current paper is aimed at discussing the way existential ideas and the very notion of free thinking are nested in the *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), written by Nathaniel Hawthorne, especially in terms of the character of Hester Prynne.

The Scarlet Letter (1850) is set within the confines of the strict and theological society of the puritan times of New England and tells the story of a woman who goes against the customs of the society, gives birth to a child outside of marriage and refuses to reveal the identity of the father. Instead of yielding to social disgrace and social constraints, Hester designs her moral system in which she turns her back on exogenous commandments. Her behavior refers to the existential ideals, at least, to those of Jean-Paul Sartre who claimed that human beings were sentenced to be free and therefore, must accept the responsibility of defining their own essence by choices. Hester does not conform, stands strong even when isolated, and is both intellectually and financially independent, all of which are shown as being a radical expression of self and free will.

Hester can also be described with reference to the free thinker who has commonly been used to refer to individuals that have broken generally accepted ideological structures especially religion and politics. Her estrangement with the society leads to the fertile ground upon which her independence and intellectual daring sprout. She turns not only into a social outcast but also into a kind of rejection of the predetermined identities as an existential form. The scarlet letter A is simply a testimony to her sin at first but its definition soon shifts to her characterization that comes as a result of her own hand which accompanies the existential notion that meaning is not innate but made through human interaction with the world. The fact that it is Hester who becomes a self-sufficient and morally independent person explains the functioning of free thinking as philosophy and way of living.

This paper asserts that *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) might be viewed as a literary case study of existential free thinking, which provides important insights into the ways people can take the power in the hands of the oppressed framework. The paper introduced a new layer of Hawthorne, not just because it made Hester an existential traveler, but also because it made the examples of existentialism and free thinking paradigms even more relevant to the general socio-political debate. According to the findings, intellectual independence might produce meaningful resistance and personal growth, when it is based on ethical responsibility. This study therefore adds to the debate that has existed between literature and philosophy that the novel written by Hawthorne has been an effective story about personal freedom against the insidiousness of institutional violence.

1.1 Research Questions

1. In what ways does *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) project the ideas of existentialism in personality of Hester Prynne and her liberated thought?
2. How does the intellectual independence depicted by Hester Prynne reflect against the religious and political strength of Puritan civilization?

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To examine the profile of Hester Prynne as an epitome of existentialist concepts by stressing on the concepts of freedom, self-reliance, and personal responsibility.
2. To analyze how free thinking in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) can be viewed as a tool of resisting against the institutional oppression and as a method of enhancing individualism.



1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is literary, philosophical, and socio-cultural because it fills the gap created between existential philosophy and literary analysis in general, and even so, exercise of free thinking in Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) in particular. It becomes clear through the analysis of the existentialist ideas seen in the character of Hester Prynne that the influence of the individual will and intellectual expression in exploring how one can challenge the society of strict moral and religious regulations becomes very strong. This is not only a contribution to new understanding of Hawthorne work but also enlarging the scope of existential readings in American literature. Also the work is topical in modern times when the problems of intellectual freedom, female subordination, and struggle against ideological manipulation are acute. The story of social ostracization to self-identification of honor possessed by Hester provides an intriguing expression of how the struggles of marginalized community can express the sense of freedom of the individual and restructure his/her identity notwithstanding the social manipulations. This study therefore invites the reader to challenge conventional authority, take responsibility on individual levels, and be aware of the transformative value of the free thought both in the past and in the present times. The work also serves the feminist literary criticism because it reconsiders Hester Prynne as a proto-existentialist heroine whose self-sufficiency and upright moral character defies patriarchal social and religious conventions. She does not make a noise about it, on the contrary, her resistance is profoundly based on existential courage which sets new boundaries of rebellion and freedom among the women in the world of literature.

On the whole, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary research by incorporating the philosophy (specifically, the existential one) into the literary criticism, thus, offering the new prospect into the way in which traditional works (such as *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)) are still pertinent to modern discussions of issues of freedom and identity and the ways in which these issues can be resisted.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

This work is limited by the fact that it will present a textual and thematic analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) in regard to the use of the character of Hester Prynne as an example of free thinking through his existentialistic philosophical viewpoint. Instead of giving an in-depth introduction of all the characters and themes of the novel, the research focuses on the form in which existential issues, namely, freedom, choice, alienation, and personal responsibility are expressed in the actions and progression of Hester. Additionally, the present research is implemented with the help of qualitative design based on literary analysis, and thus it does not involve the state of empirical data, reader-response research, and studies based on the comparison of literature. What is also narrower about the research in its philosophical aspects is its being restricted to the existentialism and, in particular, the thought of such philosophers as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, as the research does not aim to combine other critical approaches into the matter, including psychoanalysis, structuralism, or post-colonialism.

2. Literature Review

Hester Prynne has been a long established character of the conflict in feminism. Nina Baym (1986), in her acclaimed article *The Scarlet Letter* (1850): A Reading, points out that silence and endurance of Hester are a form of resistance against Puritanical dispensation which judges her. According to Baym, the possibility of reclaiming the sense of agency through moral fortitude and autonomy in



the novel appears due to the evolution of Hester, who is turned out of the society and turns into the figure of veneration. Although Baym argues the resistance of Hester in a feministic manner, this paper would help in building on the context of the resistance of Hester by formulating her actions as an act of existentialism and personal responsibility and self-definition, arguing that Hester may not only be resistant due to a gendered belief, but also due to philosophical ideology of free thought.

Scholars including Walter Kaufmann (1956) discussed the role of existential themes in American literature and argued the impact of existential thinking on post-Enlightenment literature in the West. Although it is easy to relate existentialism with European philosophers such as Sartre and Camus, Kaufmann remembers that even American authors, such as Hawthorne, had explored the same concepts- especially with respect to individual freedom, moral ambivalence, and alienation of the self. The manner in which Hawthorne portrays Hester is consistent with the most important premise of the existentialism theory, which is that people have to create their own meaning in a cold, or even malevolent world, through their decisions. The paper, in its turn, represents an extension of the ideas, introduced by Kaufmann regarding Hester as the representative of existential free will since, as it is empirically determined, her choice in life predetermined her status as such an literary figure.

One of the biggest subjects in Hawthorne studies has been the conflict between institutionalized religion and the personal morality in *The Scarlet letter* (1850). In *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*, Sacvan Bercovitch (1975) contemplates the manner in which Hawthorne censures the Puritan, the judges of correct morality and their theocratic dominion. Bercovitch focuses on the symbolical meaning of the scarlet letter as both the instrument of punishment and the way of change. This study is a continuation of Bercovitch because it claims that Hester quiet rebellion is not simply reaction to religious oppression, but a deliberate reminder to existence, an intellectual political declaration of self-assertion that she is not going to be defined by the institutional power. The theme of free thinking is much deeper than the study of a literary concept, and it may well encompass a wider study of philosophical ideas and culture. In her book *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* (2004), Susan Jacoby suggests the role played by literary figures in the past who used to confront ideological monopoly of religion and politics both in characters and themes. She observes that the concept of free thought is based on reason, skepticism and moral independence of thinking, which reflects in the description of the path that Hester Prynne takes. Hester displays the traits of a free thinker by insisting to live her life the way she wishes including not disclosing the name of the father of her child. This paper uses the observations of Jacoby to point out the fact that Hawthorne makes Hester not only a rebel against society, but also a philosopher or a philosophical deviant that has bought into the practices of the secular humanists.

3. Methodology

This research study takes a qualitative research design based on a textual study. It is mainly concerned with the interpretation of the literary work, namely *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne, in the philosophical terms of the existentialism, specifically the phenomenon of free thinking. This study is interpretive in its approach which is aimed at determining the way the character of Hester prynne represents existential values of freedom, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, defiance of institutional authority and so on. This is not



statistical or empirical research, as themes, symbolisms, and philosophical overtones are to be derived out of the work through close reading and analytical research.

3.1 Data Collection Tools

Key data collection instruments of this qualitative research are:

Close Reading and Thematic Analysis: This implies the close investigation of the novel language and symbolism, development of characters and narrative construction to determine the existentialist themes.

Textual Annotation: Signals and tagging paragraphs in the novel where Hester exhibit independence, moral and intellectual opposition.

Philosophical and Literary Secondary Sources: The textual interpretation is supported by scholarly articles, books and critical essays on existentialism, free thinking, and the works of Hawthorne.

No interviews, questionnaires, and field data will be used, because the research paper is based on the article research, focused on documents found through library research.

3.2 Sample

This study has a purposive and textual sample, something that only comprises of the text of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hester Prynne is the main subject of the analysis because she lies at the focal point of concerns of thematic interest; these are existential liberation and cerebral dissent. Other characters like Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, and Pearl are brought up just for the purpose of accommodation in the existential quest of Hester and are not the main issue to be looked upon in the analysis.

3.3 Hypothetical Framework

The theoretical framework of the current work is Existentialism and more specifically the concept of free thinking as the means of resistance and self-definition. The derivation of Hester Prynne gets a charter in the existential philosophy of Jean Paul Sarte, Albert Camus and Friedrich Nietzsche. The major existential motifs like freedom of choices, being in the truth, alienation and responsibility determine the basis of study of Hester and how she moves and disturb the moral and social guidelines of the Puritan society.

The study is also based on the concept of free thought which promotes intellectual freedom and is opposed to religious and governmental imposition of rule. Such a synthesis of the ideas of both existentialism and free-thinkers offers a critical perspective through which the novel is studied to indicate how the literature is designed to exhibit and lead to philosophical revolt against oppressive systems.

4. Analysis:

The good woman Hester Prynne- the heroine of the novel *The Scarlet letter* (1850) by author Nathaniel Hawthorne is a strong woman, she is independent, self felt, her own way of doing things, her own code of ethics and her own internal forces. The salvation comes because of her free-thinking in the face of tests and tribulations of life. However, all the 24 chapters of the *Scarlet Letter* will present to us the shadows and perspectives of the existential thought that we are, most probably, going to make references to in the novel.

4.1. Prison chain of door:

It was the name of the prison door that drew the attention of the readers in the very first moment as the air of the first chapter of the novel is dull and dark.

there were the flocks of bearders in dark - coloured suits, and in hats sprinkled with gray steeple, standing in front of a timbered house, the door of which was deep crammed with oaken, and pinned with spikes of iron (50)

The diction, which is employed in the opening paragraph of his novel, is such that actually it helps us to understand that something has literally gone wrong because the circumstances here is that of a prison house and that the person here is going to be punished mercilessly because of the crime committed. The dressing code, and look of the puritans is strict and black all these have been symbolized in the appearance of the doors which has been timbered with the iron spike and the rest of the building that was hostile to this religions belief that made them be known as the puritans in the 17 th century.

black flower of civilised society (51)

This is a clear indication that there is no apparent difference between the life of the people in puritanical society and the public to enable the society to re-direct itself towards the right path because each citizen spies on another citizen and also prison house has been referred here as a black flower defining symbolically over its existence as well as its abhorring and also its ugliness because it has been endowed with black.

the more the reader goes on to read, the more, and the more immediately, doth an altered and grand scene present itself to him, and that is a bunch of wild roses; then there was a rose-bush, and then with a happy mistake hath been left to survive in history (51); whether it have been forgotten, or (because here it grew) was left over in the old wilderness of pines and oaks before which it was of old dwarfed (51)

The rigid bush con which is totally in opposition to the iron gates of the prison house has produced only roots in front of the prison as of the originating and becoming proximate to the life of survival of an individual with zeal as the red color of rose highlights that it is what is as of her own choice and writes out her own documents to decide her social existence. A hundred years of self help and independence in which one may be on his own two feet to find a niche through the stuffiness and dryness of the puritanism society.

4.2. The market place:

Puritans possess very strict and stringent moral laws towards the offenders that fall short of each of the rules that is addressed to the villains. Their codes of conduct and moral rules were imetalled in their souls and who so ever commits heinous crime according to them is an enemy of this whole sect and you have to punish him or her not only morally but physiologically and the only prerogative is to follow in that.

Whether, indeed, it were in any other people, or in a dearer age than the present in the history of New England, the fearful rigidity would have betoken some fearful negotiation aboue. It could here had denoted nothing so early as that pre-concerted murder on sentence, of an acknowledged malefactor, to whom the judgment of an accredited tribunal had only given the sanction of a social feeling. The religion and law in this new settlement is not independent and the matter of fact is that the two are interlaced much that the distinction between the two could be a difficult demand to be fulfilled. Still there were a set of tough and uncompromising rules and codes in the law; it governed behavior, moral obligation and discipline; it was the law to the Puritan. This association is not quantified on basis of age, gender, caste and creed in execution of a sinner.



Women could not live independently, their voice was stolen, knowledge and freedom were forbidden to them and in case one of the women broke the code of morality created by puritans, then a horrible punishment awaited her. Women were submissive; oppressed, forbidden and cursed by their fellow men. It is thought that females are actually the ones who present the evil since a female is easily drawn to the devilish tempts as compared to the male being; a case of a Madam Hibbins is illustrated in the first pages of the novel itself the prologue.

It is that religion and is so repressive, so tyrannical to the point that even the women become the first to warn and chastise others who strive to fight this evil and perverted society. The only thing that was all about Puritans was that cold and icy rule which was produced by those hard headed authoritarians by the law and religion.

In the opinion of Puritan women, such punishment would scare her down. But they knew that she will not give a fig one iota of the tortures and/or/insults they heaped upon her but will laugh and turn their form of shame made to her into the one of embroidered beauty (54-55).

This dialogue of these women describes the extent of sick and sour feelings that they have borne against Hester Prynne. These are the women who are afraid of the laws which were administered to her and this is what relate to crime of adultery committed by Hester and hope to achieve higher penalties which can be met by this sinner. They are hard-core on beliefs of puritan laws and this is realized in their swear words. This town beadle straddling a rod in one of his hands and the other on the shoulder of this offending Hester Pynne with her innocent self esteem and structural personality does not want to take one step further with this person now and this lady wants to rebel against crowd of puritans of her own free choice (55-56)

When Hester comes to the number in the open space, this is clearly a mark of Hester as a free thinker and the series of displays that this woman makes when she was walking and shaking off the beadle of the town chain shows that she is acting like a free thinker as she left the rules of men and is more concerned with keeping to her name as an honorable person. Hester is not a woman who will be a follower of the process of other women in her society where the second home of citizenship will be subjected to the citizens of this society. Independent and un-puritan character since Hester is self sufficient woman and self dependant and she only believes in her inner thoughts to draw any conclusion in regard to her life.

and there on the breast of the garment of Hester sat the Letter A all round about set withn round mark of smooth needle-work and jolt and shock of the gold thread. so cleverly was it work, and so much green and so pretty of an excess of stuff of fanciful, that it warmed as much as all the look of final and proper adornment the gown that she had at that time on it, and went, above to what the civil registry of the colorado had demanded (56)

Dress of Hester Prynne describes the concept of self responsibility of existentialism. This is what is developed by Sartre in the sense of the root existential where the fact of being takes place first then the fact of being to a man that it is important that he/she is a person and should act in his/her own way i.e. the course of his own actions/free will etc. than being determined by the ante-created, invented roles and ideas as well as concepts along with pre-created categories that will pre-determine the man on him or to her just like others are rationalizing on his or her behalf. The true or literal meaning of life can be achieved when one tries to apply his or her consciousness in a bid to reach to the elixir of life.



Diastern in the dressing as represented by her compared to the rest of the community where puritans are black and grey dressed but Hester has golden and red coloured that defined her as rebel and propagator of individualism. She goes as far as using and molding art to her own tastes because she is a free thinker and therefore the outfit she uses is not like those of other people and this implies that she is a mediator of some sort of an out-of-the-box kind of a character. With the help of the beautiful colours in the corner where she wants to give the puritan society a good slap on their faces with their jaded and stern moral laws she has been portrayed as a brash fellow who certainly will never give up to those harsh-nose fellows where love and affection is pronounced to be the arc sin. She is an existential figure and she does not mourn in her heart that she is guilty of what she has committed and how she has dressed up.

This, then, was the garment, which--unmasked as it must be acknowledged had been written (not, in truth, altogether according to her own fancies) in prison, by Hester,--was to be made to assume the form of her soul, the untamed and unbroken disorder of her nature by its uncouth and picturesque extravagance. This gave the impression of a kind-of magic and this is in the danger of bringing out the individual out of the ordinary state of the man and this puts an individual in his or her own world. One of the females says that she would like to admire her needle work (57)

The fate to Hester it is only at that moment when she would be discredited by the crowd and still is a blessing in disguise as that is where it is easy to tell the crowd her sensations of inner recruitment and the way Hester has been motivated there is how she has blighted her badge of shame out of this world. She must repent and that is what all the puritan society wants and needs until Hester strikes it down with her intellectual gaze and non-interested ego gaze on everyone and Hester turns into something altogether new, this monstrosity is read in her dress and the Emily post that Hester took to adorning the letter A is a sign that she never considered herself an offender and also it is a punishment on her that is quite unnecessary. The dress shows the soul of hers, thoughts and emotions of rebelling and wish to rebel. Hester is also being pictured as a deep-rooted thinker in the operation of a radical conflict with the traditional values.

The writer Hawthorne in this scene draws his heroine as a non conformist a kind of derogation towards the fascination of this writer towards American transcendental movement which had exceptional interests like civil disobedience and its influence on the nature and natural world. It is her intense love to Dimmesdale that Hester has been starred in the face in this novel just because of living in non conformist ways but the reason of her daring action and later determination that she is not going to name the name of her lover this is only then we could feel that it is her extreme love towards Dimmesdal. She is a scornful woman at work, she does not go by what puritan considers to be right but on the real sense the love of Dimondale keeps her going to an extent that she ends up standing on the back side.

Dissociation of the old and the new generation and conflict of ideas and difference in thinking and reflections and differences in approach to various issues related to life are thus observed even in this community since where the system is rotten then, they spout the seeds and the buds of a new ideology but their tender sprouts are continuously disturbed by these big trees of the old system. In 5000BC, Heraclitus revealed the phenomena of change. Nothing, all that there originally is like a painting, nothing, what ceases continually, as a moment, thinking not what one possibly had been, or would be, but what one is, but Present continued being.

The women in this settlement were extremely merciless in the kindness of treating the sinner especially when the sinner is a woman to them such a woman is a disgrace to the whole charisma of her breed and hence should be served as much as is due to her kind of ego a woman. Old women are very much bitter that they despise Hester due to ridiculing many people who would want her to put her head down, but in vain and young women are good to this criminal (58)

The dichotomy is as bright as the day when in which the old and the new women speak it is the poles and the old woman is bitter and nasty in the manner in which she treats the deviator and the new woman is very liberal and very soothing. The dame youngest demands the young women (Hester) to be the subject of the pain not elect by an exterior object; it gives the idea that their puritan society is a stale and backward religion; individuals need to reform religion but they fear the too stringent policy of the controlling religious group. It causes a significantly greater issue of whether they are going to be forced to have a true faith and a forced faith onto them. It is assumed that prayers and offerings are made so as to gratify the spiritual deities of the people with the predisposition of them becoming then and only then what is the use? To be without truth and illusion of passions, can it be seen that the place and the place of the theocrat between the creator and the person that he worships love can be hoisted upon; not otherwise than it is not the personality of Dimmesdale that of the most blind hypocrite that he presents to his congregation as and what he happens to be; the worst hypocrite.

4.3. Recognition:

In the case of Hester, however, she proves to be a deviant considering that the puritan community in the new settlements had already curbed her liberty whereby her greatest dream of loving and being loved was chained down by these ancient community of people. There were mutterings, too, on the part of the old and the preacher tenants of the terrace; and the elders in authority spoke out to the junior preacher that now that Hester was one of his sheep he must reason with her, and beg her to repent and to confess of her uncleanness (71)

She is the one who still remains in the mutinous state as he or she had had in him all through the thoughts about her and here one fact is that today she is of another faith and religion and this is not that she wants to hollow out the very foundations of the Christian religion but yes with the irrespective attitude and cold and silent approach, Hester wants to raise her voice against the crimes of this community since she is one of the woman who could not raise her hands and she could not run to some untrodden land but today since biological existence of her body is rising then it will make her more vulnerable

The young lady is Hester and Arthur Dimmesdale is using words the sayings can easily generate motion when the person is talking to sayings and who never had any excuse like this one is young lady Hester just like that she has been caught in the wind of his magic words the person who might be lurking in the darkness out of the proper people and yet no one was getting it right. Hester was cruel to the level that she will never pronounce his name even after the mob was there went to the extent of an acquittal not to pronounce his name yet she paid back. (73)

The renegade character finds expression blatantly in nature of Hester because among the religious doctrine and the law; appears to be the new mugs of iron and will not fight its war with the sword but with its silence. Her society wants to know the name of her date and besides these, the puritans are not left behind in mortifying her in all aspects by staring at her and naturally, putting her character under fire though not availed, she has maintained a cold and indifferent demeanor as had

been the case on the first of her pickups. The reason why she fails to speak is that one of the respected and sanctimonious in his congregation, Arthur Dimmesdale is a significant piece in this pillar of religion and it is him that has crumbled her. The best thing about the situation is what the irony about the situation is: Dimmesdale is called by religious society to calm her down and to get rid of the obstinacy in the nature is ironical. Well, metaphorically, the man that blackmails her saying the name of her fellow sinner, he is that man. It is deduced that when Puritans were so raging to abide by their religious traditions how could they tolerate such a spineless priest, there should be loop holes in the system. The heels of Hester are good because Hester wants him to pronounce his name himself and the fact that he is a man, a preacher of this so called religious society this poses a little of a challenge on her part to this weary system.

Hester turns into a cult heroine. She has faith in herself and in laws of her inner existence which are more real than the laws of an external world created by people. Hester comes out to be true in the inner life as compared to the existence of these hard core puritan jug heads. She also crushes under foot all the foot of men that will not be following the system and this is the reason why she is revolting. This unfortunate woman is so pressurized that she would wish to get herself out of the puritan prescriptions and into the devotee of the temple of her own nature that this is the moment of her open humiliation to that of being traumatized. She fails to adjust to the manner in which the society is organized, where she cannot afford to show her true and real self; she is an individual who cannot be like other people in her society, majority of human beings are meek and good subjects, the very traits of an independent thinker manifests in her personality.

4.4. Sketch of Hester at her Needle:

The puritanization of the soul of a sinner could take place only when he or she commits himself or herself to the benevolence of community only in this way the redemption is possible. The society who had openly stigmatized Hester publicly now insist compensation by her without having been branded openly as they had proposed by the heartless puritans bearing of the scarlet letter and the effects of the same on the soul of Hester which are used as a mere reminder to stay away of sin in future but Hester wished to be branded differently on their minds not in the content as construed to believe by the puritans of that year.

The other thing was that Hester was a daring woman and she also realized that no matter which path in advance she would follow she will be left all alone by people in her society and thus she can earn both the ends and to trust in her powers she trusts her art of needle work (88).

Self reliance and creativity are the two most vital values of the existential philosophy that are of superior nature in the heroine of this novel, the scarlet letter. Hester weiter has to believe in her possibilities and forces in order to be able to survive in the puritan society. She is conscious of issues and trials of life in the future that is why she employs what she has been endowed with by the providence and it is none other than the art of sewing and embroidery. Hester did exercise her new identity in the society with her weird needle work as well. Pearl is being fed on natural dignity and grace. This she estimates the people of her community being miraculously surprised that she being a seamstress by occupation is not only independent of mind but also financially.

Hester gave her oversupply of resources in form of gifts and who that had not been fed often did the man of offence stalk. She wasted the larger part of the time, which might with ease have been given to nobler labour of her heart, in the manufacture of coarse to clothing clothing to poor bodies. Probably covered in this sort of occupation have been the reflections of self-punishment and she



herself has sacrificed actually in the fulfillment of committing so many weeks to boorish production. (90)

The greatest thing about her being free-thinker is that it places love to all mankind on her heart and mind. She is able to achieve the status of the community altruist. Hester supports the poor and the needy of her locality and gradually, she alters the implication of the letter A (adulteress) and turns it into Able, Angel of mercy. She is spiritual and does not rely on the external impact of the society; this is the very feature of the personality, which is brought only by her love to Dimmesdale.

Hester is not yet prepared to get out of the spot where she became famous by carrying out an act of adultery because now it is her turn to clean up this bundle of shame about her life which is remaining here and working here and proving her point and her self whether it be a crime to live by her heart because so it is not. In this renaissance of characters the humanity or humanism is unveiled without ambiguities. she chose to be at the heart of puritan society in order to serve all these souls that were tormented or wallowing in suffering. To something other than woman she raises it whether action in idea or provider of individuality or a view that takes meaning in it so ambivalent and miraculous was her switch. She is the founder of another religion in which loving others is the first phrase that is preached on the loudest note.

When the Puritans think that the right religious temper must be when benevolent feelings and piety must have the highest overshooting positions hence it is all Hester is justified to be the most religious person according to this doctrine. It was a duty on the part of Hester to send her to the dark underground that keeps hovers around her soul in case she would want to be a self-righteous or sanctimony woman. And the believer should have to live and preach what he/she believes in and Hester is loyal to the reality and laws of her own nature that are not tolerant to these brutal and inhuman puritan laws. She asserts her new unity, a true one the one that is not such a one, and community is well acquainted with and all this is enabled because she is having a love affair with Dimmesdale. Having received the primacy of love, Hester may be able to possess new-fangled character. This personal identity is odd in comparison with the evident one of the community.

This unity that Hester and Dimmesdale shared according to Hester is because there exists Just one token and that is letter A in any given place where they would see or find splash of relief where Hester found this as a relief as an impression to her soul since it brings the impression that they are not separate but a single soul of experiencing the same pain. (93)

The sense of more truth and fact than puritans have belongs to Hester. It is a truer truth and it is warmth and love that Hester dedicates herself to and with this love she is assimilated to Arthur Dimmesdale. In the blessed name of love Hester as a sect conqueror that is opposed to a religious belief, which has robbed Hester of a right to love somebody and to be loved by somebody. As a real religious and moral man Hester divorces and believes that faith must work as basic code, it must reach the soul and strike the heart first, otherwise it would not in any way become of any benefit to the nature of the man in socio system rather this means that her sin is intertwined in the foremost of all the feelings, love and the harsh hogswash is how puritan civilization has been effective in misinterpreting the distinction between spectacle and real world and has not been effective in avoiding all its members.

4.5. The hall was filled with people of the plough:

These were rumors that dropped on the ears of Hester that the town officials have laid a scheme of stealing her daughter in her names so that the baby can be brought up in a safe hand (108-109).

The authority of the law and religion is once again interfering into the life of Hester Prynne with the probability of stealing the pearl as the pearl will be instrumental in the well-being of the two souls. It just accumulates to the fact that you were not able to avoid the clutches of the religious entities no matter where you decided to go, and how far you have travelled. and they are out-a-hunting you in that character as little as that any one man should be sure of his own purposes at his own calling as that you should being as you are the governor of the realm undertake to mend that torn tear that has been cut in the Latin patch-work of this shammug spiritual government. It can claim reparation of the harm done to it anytime in your life.

4.6. the child-elf, and the minister:

pearl was enforced to her mamma bosom, and by a face whereof it befell that the old puritan disciplin, fell there supra only with a furious fury. It was here only, on earth, and herewith this single share with which to keep her own heart alive in it, that she believed herself to need that by right sovereign rule against the world, and she was prepared in her last effort to claim it. She believed that it was God that sent her to bear a child. the Maker left her this child in sacrifice of everything other than what they would have otherwise afforded by her. She was her pleasure and crime to her, in her she was life and in her correction. The embodiment of scarlet letter happened to be the most suitable source of vengeance against Hester Pearl. (122)

Her name Pearl was convenient because Pearl was really a valuable asset to her mother she had bought her as the wonderful and precious possession. Hester is also bold enough to take her case before the governor Bellingham in court. Other free speeches of Hester are her redemption where Hester complains to the authority organ of Boston as she talks of the risk of losing the pearl that was removed on her at least she earns some portion of her salvation as she has her daughter by her side once again. Hester adds that without raising pearl, liberation can not be rewarded. She cannot buy her crime, when the outcome of her crime is not there. It goes without saying that emancipation as such rooted in the explanation of Hester is the reverse of the events in terms of the courts because Hester is a subject of fear in the present day. By keeping her daughter and continuing to educate her, Hester feels that she must lead pearl down the twists and turns of her hot tempered personality into a better life. However, Hester does not pay attention to the puritan concept of destiny, she does not consider her sin to be proof of her being damned but it is time to grow and change. Her visible indignation at the potential loss of pearl is manifestation of open contempt against theocracy. They do not know what is in her heart and what is a right of a mother. It is so because they care more about their variant of thinking that their version of regret is not the same as what Hester believes is best about the trend of matters.

4.7. The Leech:

It is also the desire to speculate on many things in our life when Arthur Dimmesdale is in a place with very educated and philosophically oriented Roger Chilling Worth.

The desperate joy of Arthur Dimmesdale consisted as it would be sometimes mitigated to rest in looking externally at the world by the glass of the standard of the other type of intelligence rather than those by which he has been used to speak in the world. there were new and fresh air-windows flung open to him, and felt a freer air in the closed and overly silent study, wherein life was starving



itself away, either in the lamp-glare, or thwarted thought, and the stagnant mists, whether of body and mechanism, or of soul, which are evolved by books. It was not very conveniently long gasp as the air was so cool and fresh. So the clergy man and the doctor went back into the pocket of what was orthodox to his cathedral (134)

Here indeed is a very pleasant description of what is naturally desirable in a human person, and what his place is, who shall day by day acquiesce in those principles which can only be vindicated, indeed, by those who have declared themselves already to believe them. One of the well-known priests of this community, Arthur Dimmesdale is familiar indeed with what his profession as a priest hood is and there is something oppressive that constantly assures him. The experience of the external world in case of chilling doctrines widens completely new horizons of life in front of his mind; turn to free thinking, repentance is very noticeable in Dimmesdale, he is involved in exchanging various matters of every facet of life with Roger chilling enthusiastic as he is in probing into this new world that at times, it becomes a question of ambiguity whether he is of this austere and unforgiving creed or not, which is an indication of dual standard of puritanical society or twofold standard. People apparently work on one thing and the truth is that they aspire to belong to another form altogether which is rather opposite to the earthly natures that they present and they are done so in such precise and natural form that one can be easily confused and so deceived by this false throngs of them. Even this short vacation of going to explore the unfamiliar world was something not possible to the people because their fixed up system is purchasing them back now and them.

4.8. louse and his victim:

The freedom is in the physical form of a pearl the woman does not give any respect to men created laws. She is wild of breed. pearl had known no order-giving voice, no respect of strength, no care as to human beeches or decisions right or wrong, such was the poetry of pearl, such the judgment of Arthur Dimmesdale of pearl before Roger Chilling Worth. Her ancestry is confusing one time she is the daughter of some devil, another time she is under some satanic influence, she is in the real sense the freedom of broken order of this society in this young minister of God (147)

The peculiarity of Pearl is a puzzle to the puritans since she is wild and out of control sort of a woman that it is almost impossible to keep one like this to conceal taboos on. Puritans saw some odd thing behind her strange behavior and that is her demonic nature. UNIT She is part of vulgar and maniacal emotion; whether in her primitive stuff are all these hues. Pearl is an impetuous kid, disregards the rules, is not baptized like other Christian children, she never felt the warmth of blood relations, and Hester did not limit her in any way. It has left her own instinctual potentials free to know, to feel, to seek and to find out all the realities about life. That Dimmesdale is the answer to all those questions religious and official institutions which asked about how this child came to this world, is the evidence that pearl was the action of a rebellion, she used up her life because she had killed these rules and laws of this religion. She is the ornament of freedom which is obtained at the violation of a natural and a religious code.

Pearl is childish so she sees the truth without thinking. She informs her mother that black man was a dangerous man and he had already taken the religious man, that he now wants to take her mother and little pearl but could not take the pearl because he knew that he would not manage it (147)

We should be trained to relate intuitive knowledge to free thinking and this is one of the most helpful effects of the idea of free thinking. A free thinker is a free thinker and he can not imagine

the things that are not allowed on the structures of any state. Human mind is complex the capacity of reflection is good provided that there is a free air because pressure will weaken capacity of human mind to judge and analyze things which are complex in nature. It was Pearl who did not like to obey the laws, created by people and her naive mind was never overloaded with the burden of those stupid rules, which had been created by puritans. This child consequently had much more of the power of intuition than the rest of the individuals that wanted to make up her own society, as a result of being only polluted with their unworthwhile laws due to the sole reason she was not polluted with their unworthy laws and secondly she could get things much easier because of the fact she was not obscured in her insight as well as vision due to her own secondhand notions of puritans. It is the magic fish pearl kid who showed evil impulses innately in roger chilling chilling. The very meaning of this is that, when she says that she is sure that she will be never caught by old black man, she means that persons with the highest intuitive abilities never get deceived in life. The part that this boy is consisted of is entirely new and consequently right in itself by reason of nature as it was, pearl was now law book in herself and not because of her own particularities was it referred to her as a crime (148)

Providence has allowed pearl to follow her way of life. She is liberty of law violated; this implies that pearl is composed of closed matter her existence is not of a common nature. She is a product of sexual rave end time; she simply could not be subjected to man made worldly laws. This is wrong of the puritans provided they are in need of impregnating her with Christian ideal and the time when she is to be baptized that was the period when pearl opened her eyes in the other world where only power was needed to control herself and this is her mother who grants her the freedom of speculation and create a world with her. Hester desires pearl not only to find out of the Nature, but also out of her nature.

4.9. Luminous Clashing of the novel:

‘Be true! Be true! Be true! Some thing, or to the world at least, (though, indeed, not your worst,) but some thing that can be elicited the worst is possible! (290)

The bare fact that he or she lives should be asked to come out in the open and then in the later to such an extent that your true face should come out to the world because at that time and only then will the man be able to save himself of the suffering of wearing two masks at sometime to the other in life which itself bothers the person with the two sides of his face. Man is a complex being and he is going to find he cannot live long in the false persona he is trying to live at some point in the stream of time which he would deeply regret missed the chance to be thrown aside, and not having would bring him harm to his soul. The final message consists of theme honesty, truth, courage and bravery.

He is a twofold player in the society and can never feel safe because he is unable to protect himself at both places that He has established in the same position, the circumstance of a sinner and a minister of the religion too, this duality renders him dumbfounded in the meaning that he is never in peace at all moments because his conscience will nag him at one point or the other then followed by his calling him up to face the wrath of death.

Hester brings the dawn of a new era. She is sure that there would be a time when such circumstances would be possible and then there would flow a new relation between man and woman but that time it would be peace and on equal grounds. (294)



Hester continues to criticize the cruel law in Boston. She continues- as a more educated yet a sadder individual. She sees the rift between the man and the woman and she takes the initiative to comfort them as much as possible with the two genders. Back again is Hester, a woman, who never sleeps, not to that achievement of this character, but to that achievement of the interpersonal relationships of that huge civilization.

The desire of rebelling against the preconditioned religion by the puritans is what Hester discovers. The male and female relationships are no less the same even after years that she was away. In that she is more than willing to resume the work of parenting but this time only to the members of the same sex and thereafter continuing to remind that until the relationship between the two genders is changed, there can be no fulfillment. The journey is not complete and even before metamorphosis can successfully be implanted, even before that there is an uphill task of Hester to strike a common ground where both the sexes can gain mutual respect and love. Nevertheless, the point is that now she would need some guidance and directions.

Conclusions and the End

In my analysis of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) I discovered that the main protagonist Hester Prynne is an epitome of free thinking according to the existential model; she rebels against the purported moral and religious authority of the Puritan society. The fact that she does not want to reveal who is the father of her child proves that she is an independent moral individual and she is not willing to follow the truth that is predetermined to her. Due to the process of changes, instead of the scarlet letter being regarded as the emblem of shame and stigma, Hester is eventually capable of reshaping the very term in order to match the notion of strength, compassion, and independence.

The themes of alienation, choice, freedom, and responsibility were found during the study and could be observed in the life of Hester. She does not pity, she does not deny her self-respect referring it to being punished because of the actions that she done. The symbolical decision to have abandoned the mainstream society to breed her daughter and help the need is a creation of self as one identifying with herself as a free thinker and a morally-committed individual. As it plays out, she not only economically remains free but also becomes intellectually independent in the process of making extensions to become a living critique of the oppressing institutions ready to define her. In addition, the paper has also discovered that in the novel, free thinking is directed to the authority of history namely to the religious and patriarchal orders. Hester has not been a silent rebel opposing the authorities but on the contrary, contests the established orders intellectually and existentially; she was one of the first literary prototypes of a free thinking character: one who would create the meaning, purpose and values, regardless of what the rules say.

Conclusion

To sum up, it can be concluded that *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) is a deep literary experiment on the idea of individual existence and free thought. Using the image of Hester Prynne, Nathaniel Hawthorne introduces the reader to a woman who, despite being condemned and banished at the start, becomes an influential force in her own life and ideas. The nonconformity of Hester, her moral armedness, and her intellectual liberation are all indicators of the main existentialist idea that existence precedes essence which is that people are charged with creating their own fates through the free will and conscious action.

In that way, the novel does not remain confined to its historical context, but it still speaks to present-day audiences and works as a timeless statement on the king of self-determination, about



the power that could help a voiceless, yet oppressed by institutionalized norms person regain their power. Through an existentialist, and the notion of the free thought as an analytic dimensions, this paper highlights the significance of literary works in terms of questioning authority, establishing intellectual freedom, and living an authentic life. Hester Prynne in this sense is not only a fictional character but also a philosopher of resistance and self-strength.