



*Nathaniel Hawthorne's Ambivalent Gender Bias in the  
Manifestation of Sin and Regeneration: a Comparative Analysis  
of Hester Prynne and Reverend Mr. Hooper*

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**Abstract:**

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1806-1864) is set to be considered one of the American novelists who mastered the item of symbolism in the depiction of the psychological dilemma of isolation as a result of sin within Puritan society. The novel of *the Scarlet Letter* (1850) reveals a female protagonist who suffered from alienation and struggled for regeneration confronting the symbol of sin; the letter A she was compelled to wear. On the other hand, the short story of *the Minister's Black Veil* (1832) demonstrates the process of regeneration that the male protagonist the Reverend Hooper went through; facing the emblem of black veil he willingly put on face. Both characters stand for a serious situation of isolation within puritanical society, and represent Hawthorne's obsession with sin. However, both reveal the possibility to regain salvation and regeneration from the state of judgmental sinfulness.

**Keywords:** *The Scarlet Letter, The Minister's Black Veil, Sin, Symbol, Puritan, Isolation, Regeneration.*

## INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1806-1864) is one of the American classics whose works still raise a controversial analysis. The novel of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and the short story of *The Minister's Black Veil* (1832) are relevant examples.

The debate over Hawthorne's works lies in the mode of personification of Hester Prynne (*The Scarlet Letter*), a common female protagonist who was held a symbol of A after she had been accused of committing sin. On the other hand, it lies again in the characterization of the Rev. Hooper (*The Minister's Black Veil*), a prestigious male who held himself a veil to seemingly confess his sinful state. Both characters live in a puritan community, had been charged sinful, and in consequence, both suffered from the agony of isolation. Therefore, how did each character regenerate from the state of sinfulness? Does gender (male / female) make any influence in the making of Nathaniel Hawthorne's attitude towards the sinful character?

### 1. Female Sinfulness and Regeneration in *the Scarlet Letter*

The story of *the Scarlet Letter* (1850) takes place in the mid of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in the Puritan town of Boston. It tells about a common woman, Hester Prynne, who had been officially charged of adultery. As she insists in keeping the child's father's name in secret, she was punished of wearing a scarlet letter A as a badge of shame and humiliation.

*The Scarlet Letter* is crammed of symbols, yet the whole tale revolves around a single symbol, the letter A that Nathaniel Hawthorne linked with much attention to a female character, Hester Prynne. Having a range of social and psychological functions, this aesthetic symbol becomes a powerful iconic device, having a deep value and multiple meanings for all parts, including Hawthorne's readers who are left to decide what may be literary true. Therefore, as the initially considered a sign of adultery becomes a positive symbol by the end of the story, it is paramount to understand every possible meaning of the symbol A ; before to denote Hester's attitude of sinfulness and regeneration.

#### 1.1. Hester Prynne Amidst a State of Sinfulness and Isolation

In fact, Nathaniel Hawthorne deals with the subjects of isolation and seclusion in many of his works. In his greatest romance, *the Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne stresses on man's tendency to become estranged from the society which surrounds him. In the story, there is a female protagonist, Hester Prynne, who falls in a deep situation of sinfulness and isolation.

Hester Prynne has a particularly close beautiful and feminine association with nature. The young woman, Hawthorne describes: "was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance, on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes" (*the Scarlet Letter* 59).

In parallel, the human inward sphere 'the heart' was Hawthorne's highest and most constant theme of study and portrayal. He saw and described its innocence, its purity, its loveliness, its noble hopes, its truest triumphs, its temptations, its sinful tendency, its desperate struggles, its downward motions, its malignity and depravity (Matilde 215). As Hester's attitude was extremely emotional, Hawthorne views that she committed a

sin of heart. Consequently, her total dependence on the heart puts her in a severe sense of pariah.

The author perceives nature as an item of beauty, and an effect of a dangerous loss and seclusion, though. He even mixes up Hester's state of beauty with her attitude of rebellion that causes isolation from the beginning. Nature (the forest) is the original locale where Hester's and Dimmesdale's wild and rebellious affair took place. That wild, heathen nature of the forest, Hawthorne thinks: "never subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth could mislead men by allowing them to be ruled by their hearts alone" (the *Scarlet Letter* 250). So, there is an ominous threat of an intense seclusion in the story, and a menace of falling in dire danger and loss of morality as long as human contact is cut. Hester and Dimmesdale mould an emblematic relation with nature that welcomed their loveliness as much as it trapped them in a lawless morality.

Indeed, Hester fell in a lawless immorality when she defied the puritan social strictures of law and punishment. From the puritan point of view, Hester's silent rebellion, her unspoken demand for privacy, her refusal to bend under civil law and announce the name of her child's father, all are sinful acts and attitudes which alienate her from the purifying effects of her society (Adams 44).

As a result of her lawless passion, she was condemned from her first appearance in front of puritan townspeople among whom a woman harshly suggested: "at the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead" (Hawthorne 56). Since thenceforth, she is to be thrust in a social alienation to protect puritan society from her rebellious contamination.

In opposition, Hester steadfastly remains loyal to her attitude of rebellion against the puritan society, as a loving woman and mother after an official move to take her child away from her. Being a passionate, impulsive and unpredictable woman, Hester lets her deep emotions govern her sincere behavior without even thinking about any sort of logical consequences. When she was asked about her daughter, she faithfully cried: "God gave me the child! ... He gave her in requital of all things else, which ye had taken from me. She is my happiness! ... She is my torture, nonetheless!" (Hawthorne the *Scarlet Letter* 134).

Hester's behavioral attitude, notwithstanding the painful suffering of outcast, may bring out various interpretations. For some Hester sinned, and while her sin is less than that of Dimmesdale (who hides his sin) or Chillingworth (who seeks to destroy), it is still sin. For others, Hester appears as a lawless romantic heroine, and there is no real sin except in the eyes of the oppressive community of Puritans. For still others, Hester manifests a conflict of values that only a change in her life can resolve (Strong 127-128). Hester's natural scarlet letter is endowed with beauty that provides her character with impulsive and passionate energy that makes her alien in the dispassionate society.

In *the Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne presents a detailed criticism of the puritan way of life to show that sin in all its forms has a devastating effect on sinners who seek salvation. However, in *the Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne is not overly concerned with the sin itself that has been committed; he is more concerned with the effects of the sin of the sinful themselves, particularly isolation. In showing a lonely woman suffering from public shame and contempt, bearing the absence of her lover minister who conceals his participation and the madness of her former husband who seeks revenge, Hester Prynne's considered act of sinfulness caused her a tragic experience of ban from living social life as well as from enjoying her loving life.

## 1.2. Hester Prynne : From a State of Sinfulness into a Process of Regeneration

*The Scarlet Letter* attempts to project the puritan belief in sin. Once man sins, he transgresses a divine law and breaks the bound with God's commands. In consequence, the sinner falls in estrangement from God and alienation from his fellowmen. Nathaniel Hawthorne puts the adulterous sinful Hester Prynne in a severe experience of alienation after she was puritanically punished. Yet, as there is always a way to salvation through sincere repentance, Hester Prynne followed her own path of regeneration.

Basically, Hester accepted her isolation, as she "was quick to acknowledge her sisterhood with the face of a man" (Hawthorne the *Scarlet Letter* 195). Despite the individual and social calamity and the state of loneliness she was in, Hester strives to maintain a fragile and superficial relationship with her society to find her place; not as a stranger guest, but as a full citizen. She remains in Boston, living in a small cottage on the edges of the town where she started to earn her living by herself and keeping a soft relation with people.

The anguish of Hester's isolation produces contradictory results. Outwardly, she appears to accept her punishment with shame and humility. Her behavior implies that she is truly repentant, but her looks belie her emotional state. She remains in the town of Boston and stoically receives all the insults which the townspeople throw her way.

More importantly, as the puritans revere the culture of work and self-dependence, Hester relied on herself for living. Working hard, she sews what is ordered; she gives much of her earnings to the poor; she helps the sick and suffering, and asks for nothing in return (Adams 49-50).

Instead of revenge and out of her noble attitude, Hawthorne devotes another view of Hester with a higher morality in her behavior towards the puritan surrounding, as "she never battled with the public, but submitted uncomplainingly to its worst usage; she made no claim upon it, in requital for what she had suffered" (the *Scarlet Letter* 194). She got her position back through acceptance and sincere work for others who rejected her. Even though the harsh situation she is in, Hester's nobility of behavior shows the author's view vis-à-vis sin. Hawthorne points out the meaning of sin via the sinner's behavior. Sin is a source of freedom of minds and spirits of those who confess and bring them a peaceful transformation in life. In contrast, sin becomes a deadly cause of anguish and self-destruction for those who keep bearing it in concealment. For that, the puritan priest Dimmesdale who teaches people regeneration is lost in degeneration. Hester, in contrast, is on the process of self-rebirth.

Interestingly, Hawthorne tends to provide sin a role of social re-foundation, in a form of a promise that; "at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness" (the *Scarlet Letter* 322). The 'A', then, is used purposefully by the author as an axial point that may stand for multiple readings of a potential social reform of the puritan mind. Hawthorne tends precisely to seek the integration of Hester Prynne within the rejecting community to manifest a hopeful change ahead. The letter allows Hester to develop her own philosophical attitude of life on the basis of a simultaneous relation between love to others and a soft rejection to puritan expectations. The letter A means no longer *Adultery*. Instead, it means *Able* to live and love.

Effectively, Hester's success to regeneration comes out of her character that Hawthorne links to nature and emotions. Hawthorne minutely describes her:

She had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness; her intellect and heart had their home, as it were, in desert places, where she roamed as freely ... for years past she had looked from this estranged point of view at human institutions, and whatever priests or legislators had established ... Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers ...

stern and wild ones, ... and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss" (the Scarlet Letter 245-246)

Fundamentally, Hester regenerated herself from sinfulness by a constant attempt of control of her emotions. When Hester begins to doubt the true morality of society, she relies much on her natural passions and free thoughts, the fact that was possible solely through a complete isolation.

In effect, Hester Prynne became *Able* to create a source of comfort and soothing for people's isolation and suffering. By the end end of the story :

"people brought all their sorrows and perplexities, and besought her counsel, as one who had herself gone through a mighty trouble. Women, more especially - in the continually recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring and sinful passion -or the dreary burden of a heart unyielded, because unvalued and unsought - came to Hester's cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what the remedy!" (321-322).

Hester has achieved what Hawthorne had set himself to, she raised social consciousness and recalls for reform. He intelligently masters the psyche of a woman whose qualities of passion, warmth and behaviour that relies on nature and heart ; opposes the ordely rational of the surrounding. In consequence, Hester implies a sense of proving the self versus the denial and suppression of the puritan community.

Therefore, *the Scarlet Letter* is about the manifestation of the symbol *A* that recalls human sin. What the letter first does is to separate Hester from the community—when imposed by the town on Hester, it cannot do 'its office.' It is in her embroidering it and wearing it openly and proudly on her chest that she can only then move to become who she is (Strong 139). At the end, Hester voluntarily decided to take up the symbol '*A*' again, when she returned from England to the puritan Boston, as here, Hawthorne describes : "had been her sin; here, her sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence. She had returned, therefore, and resumed of her own free will" (the Scarlet Letter 321). Hawthorne made the ending of the story much more religiously didactic to distinguish between the secret sin that destroys the self and the acknowledged sin that liberates the sinner into a window of salvation that lies on truth. In all things else, Hester declares: "I have striven to be true! Truth was the one virtue which I might have held fast, and did not hold through all extremity" (236).

Despite the shame of sinfulness and atrocious isolation she had been through, Hester Prynne, relying on her very natural and passionate character could provide a recipe of regeneration for herself, as well as a decent thoughtful lesson of salvation to her puritan society. From the beginning, Hester stood truthfully alone facing the judgmental puritan seclusion that she invested to transform her suffering into not only a source of passion and strength, but also into a practice of social change and reform.

## 2. Male Sinfulness and Regeneration in *the Minister's Black Veil*

The story of *The Minister's Black Veil* was first published in the 1832 edition of *The Token of Atlantic Souvenir* and later appeared in *Twice-Told Tales*. It tells of a puritan community (Milford / New England) where the meetinghouse was the center of the social life. Used for both religious and civil gatherings, meetinghouses were simple and plain, with no obviously religious decorations. Families did not sit together during religious services, which lasted most of the day on Sundays. Men and women sat on opposite sides, and worshipers were seated according to their age and social standing. The oldest and most distinguished citizens were rewarded with seats closest to the pulpit, the raised platform from which the pastor delivered his sermons. As services began, all eyes turned expectantly toward the pulpit, awaiting the pastor's entrance

(Think Central 470). Unexpectedly, the meetinghouse is utterly flabbergasted when their knowledgeable and respected minister Mr. Hooper returns one day with a somber black veil covering his face. Despite of his constant gentle behavior, people started to speculate, wonder in malice the aim behind the veil that denotes the sin he must have committed. As Mr. Hooper refuses to take it off, they started to avoid meeting his figure of terror, isolating his presence and ironically contemplating their own sinful state. Therefore, it is within this typical puritan social context that Nathaniel Hawthorne inserts the meaning of sin through a painful locomotive of isolation that burdens the character Reverend Mr. Hooper. Since the act of wearing the veil has a strong symbolic role to manifest, Mr. Hooper became isolated from society, aiming to be reborn following his own way of regeneration. Hawthorne infiltrates into puritan society through a very symbolic character of a minister whose value is highly reverential for puritans. For the author, though, the minister Hooper is an artistic item to understand how a sinful can regenerate.

### 2.1. The Veil: Hooper's Source of Alienation

In fact, *the Minister's Black Veil* dramatically presents one of Hawthorne's philosophical obsessions that is man's keen require for regeneration. He refers to a visible concrete image of the veil to truly illustrate a total separation of the sinner Mr. Hooper; physically and psychologically.

Since the very beginning, once first seen with the black veil, parishioners burst in wonder and fear of their minister who might have "gone mad" after he "has changed himself into something awful only by hiding his face" (Hawthorne *Twice Told Tales* 24). For an abnormally mad person has no place among a normal society, people's wonder, fear and rejecting attitudes put their minister utterly alone in a multi-dimensional isolation. The interpretation of the veil, therefore, can be accurately grasped solely by a critical reading of Hooper's state of mind and spirit.

First, the minister Hooper was isolated from God, the fact that can be denoted by the understanding of his Calvinist background; of being a puritan religious man who strongly believes in the divine decree of predestination; that God has destined an elect people to access to heaven; and the others – in opposition - who are destined to remain in eternal damnation. For no man can change his fate, surrender to God's divine destiny is the solely the only way to salvation.

The veil tinges Hooper's view of both worldly and spiritual things. The veil "threw its obscurity between him and the holy page as he read the Scripture; and while he prayed the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance" (Hawthorne *Twice Told Tales* 24-25). Symbolically, the veil blocks the puritan minister's access to God's heaven, as he is doomed in doubt and uncertainty of his destiny as elected Christian or damned sinner. Still, it seems again vague whether the puritan minister is already isolated once wearing the veil or he willingly does seek isolation from God, as Hawthorne suggests asking: "Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?" (25). In both cases, Hooper wears his veil not in order to gain a social and spiritual prestige. He wears it, though, in an attempt to sweep the internal moral doubt about his salvation that changed completely his attitude.

Concurrently, the veil renders a delicate state of isolation from the self alongside the puritan society that seems to be as sinful as Hooper. Analyzing the effects the minister bore after wearing the veil is a key to understanding the reasons of the author's use of this particular symbol.

The story of *The Minister's Black Veil* shows how Hawthorne's vision of the 'symbol' or the 'image' that is so central to his own process of writing and imagining highlights two dynamics: one psychological and one verbal. The central character in the story is an

artistic emblem-maker who selects a visual image (a veil) that hardens into an unchanging, mysterious, opaque sign. The result of this visual fixation is that it takes over his life; it separates him from sympathetic social interaction with other humans (Gibian 3). Therefore, once the minister puts on his black veil, there is no more usual social interaction, neither in habitual discussion nor in ceremonies of marriage or funeral. The absence of communication with the surrounding manifests a loss of the minister prestigious presence and intensifies the ambiguity of his willingness and acceptance of this loss.

Additionally, the impossibility to decipher the meaning of the symbol sparkles much more the tension of social isolation. However, it is to admit that the only one who can decipher the meaning of the veil is the wearer who merrily stated: “if I hide my face for sorry, there is cause enough ... and if I cover it for secret sin, what modern might not do the same? (Hawthorne *Twice Told Tales* 30). Hooper’s statement reveals that the veil might be a bright mirror that reflects all hidden sins that people might commit. Hooper is implicitly saying that he is just one of these people who must realize they are born guilty and must confess to the world and God.

That is how the author is presenting the minister suspected of sin because of his appearance but he is acting righteous while the hypocrite villagers are the ones who are acting guilty and curious about the secret horrible sin behind Hooper’s covering veil. The minister is intentionally secluding himself from his social surrounding to deliver a didactic lesson that lies behind the veil. Out of persistent conviction, even as the minister was sick in bed, he makes sure the veil is still on face. When asked about the hiding veil that is menacing his reputation, Father Hooper raises to reply: “I look around me, and, lo! On every visage a Black Veil” (Hawthorne *Twice Told Tales* 35).

Ambivalently, Hooper’s projection of the veil on all people’s faces raises another possible interpretation; that he wears the veil in an attempt to accept everyone else’s sin for them. Hawthorne’s story about the misery of this self-divided minister expresses the author’s own ambivalences through the double nature of its conclusions; as it leaves readers with two contradictory perspectives on the final position of the veiled Reverend Hooper. On the one hand, Hooper’s obsession with this ‘mysterious emblem,’ a single, fixed imagistic figure, is seen to wall him in, allowing him a life of cloistered, monastic purity—denying the possibility of marriage, cutting off worldly relations. At the same time, though, his symbolist arts also have the effect of permanently separating him from social life. With the veil as his only intimate relation, he becomes a ghost, dead to this world, losing his humanity (Gibian 4). The author, then, seeks to universalize Hooper’s state of mind and spirit. Hawthorne projects Hooper’s isolation on everyman whose existence is a combination of both black evil and white good and whose behavior is stained with the estranging sin that they ought to accept before to regenerate. Therefore, Nathaniel Hawthorne is offering the Reverend Mr. Hooper in a manner of consciousness and morality as the minister is acting in a sense of sacrifice. The minister wears the veil in a public fashion to remind people of their guilty nature, and even keeps listening to their sins; the fact that gives them a sort of an uncomfortable relief. They finally found someone on whom to vent out their judgmental instinct and who – ironically - accepts explicitly their depravity and confesses their sins by proxy.

Conclusively, Hawthorne puts Mr. Hooper falling in a deep self-isolation as he became no longer himself once covered by a fragile black veil that imposed unbreakable barriers between the minister and the puritan society. Once wearing the veil, Mr. Hooper seems to distance himself from both God and society, for the purpose to get closer to the truth of sin, though!

## **2.2. The Veil : Hooper’s Bridge to Regeneration**

In truth, the veil puts the minister in such a severe alienation that it becomes his sole self-identity. As the minister imposes on himself a barrier of intercommunication, the veil produces an increasing degree of a painful isolation and a constant suffering which is well embodied from beneath the black veil through which, “there rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him” (Hawthorne *Twice Told Tales* 32).

So, the veil that he places permanently over his face —or that descends, through a movement of over-determining destiny, over his face— becomes, literally and figuratively, the image of man-made mediation, the visual symbol of the symbolic nature of all language. But this veil also remains the only language available to the minister with which he might gesture toward his ideal; the desired state of final, fully-unveiled revelation (Gibian 4). Indeed, in the eyes of his surrounding, he becomes a mere veil as it is all what they can see. Despite of leaving him in a monastic isolation, the veil signifies his presence and provides the only language the minister can verbalize towards his congregations. Paradoxically, the veil is a tool of self-isolation as much it becomes a way of communication with the minister’s social nearby.

Interestingly, thanks to the fearful veil, an upside down effective change is coming ahead. Though the minister sacrifices his private life to exist only as an image, and bears all sorts of denial, the veil gave him a positive centrality as a public figure who seeks reform. Effectively, “By the aid of his mysterious emblem,” Hawthorne reveals that the minister “became a man of awful power over souls that were in agony for sin” (*Twice Told Tales* 32). Ultimately, Mr. Hooper gained a profound awareness of human sinfulness and promoted to a better efficient Father of the sinners. He is transformed into a source refuge of crowds of people who came back to him travelling to listen to his preaching, after they used to avoid him. This step of recognition is the best manifestation of regeneration.

Intelligently, Hawthorne tends to divulge the buried message of regeneration via succinct dialogues the interlocutors of which are purposely chosen. For the aim of a literary exclusivity, only one, Mr. Hooper’s betrothed Elizabeth (who left him before), dares to speak of it to him. Believing all he must wear it until all men cast aside their veils, Hooper insists that: “No mortal eye will see it withdrawn ... this dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!” (Hawthorne *Twice Told Tales* 30). Hooper, thus, accepts not the suggestion to be declared innocent by putting off the veil. He insists to keep the veil on face till the end; he fully believes in his isolation and declares his intention of regeneration to inspire the world to reveal what is beneath their own veils.

Most importantly, Hawthorne makes the ending in favor to the protagonist’s regeneration out of a harvest of suffering he had been through all his life because of that:

“piece of crape had hung between him and the world and had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman’s love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity” (*Twice Told Tales* 33-34).

Paradoxically, sometimes, the cure may be extracted from the core of disease. Hooper’s gloomy and murky intention of isolation is a way to repent and regenerate. Mr. Hooper willingly accepts darkness of necessity and loving service to humanity to find his authentic personal self that has become split in between a diabolical upper half of the veil and the lower part under which an enigmatic smile glows. Mr. Hooper is looking to people and “A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil and flickered about



his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared” (26). This recurrent contrast between the dark veil and the faint smile on the minister’s face indicates a symbolic incongruity of a presence of both a sorrow of a gloomy isolation and a shining hope of rebirth and salvation.

In essence, *the Minister’s Black Veil* is an emblematic story that turns around a contentious symbol. If the veil were meant to represent a projection of any kind of sin that cannot be hidden from God’s omniscient knowledge, what is hidden from Hooper is what would matter most to be revealed on earth as well as in judgment day. Therefore, through this artistic work that aims to reveal human sin, Hawthorne vicariously portrays a serious concern and preoccupation over the blindness of religious rigidity and manifests the power of dark metaphorical mirror to humanity to stimulate readers to ask themselves if they have black veils that must be unveiled.

In sum, both stories, *the Scarlet Letter* and *the Minister’s Black Veil*, are set in 17<sup>th</sup> century New England, during the puritanical ruling of the place. Hawthorne insists on the judgmental behavioral of the puritan society on someone for a suspected sin that no one is beyond the potential commitment. The author scrutinizes the puritan claim of monopoly of righteousness in the way of putting a suspected sinful in a state of ban and rejection. Hence, through the presence of the sinful woman Hester and the sinful man Hooper, Hawthorne aimed to convey a message that no one is untouched by sin or guilt. When he presents the Reverend Hooper under a black veil, the author triggers people who were not so ready to admit their sins; and were attracted to reading about their minister’s. Beyond the infallible purity, Hawthorne allegorizes the sinful nature of everyman who is both good and evil, and who can be outwardly moral, but inwardly sinful.

## **Conclusion**

Nathaniel Hawthorne’s artistic works contain a relevant presence of characters who dwell in a state of sinfulness, and who strive for regeneration. Hawthorne’s Hester Prynne, embroidered by the symbol A on chest, tends to accept the state of isolation before to save herself through her genuine natural character. Covered by a black veil on face, Hawthorne’s Reverend Mr. Hooper, tends to maintain the ambiguity behind wearing the veil, for the purpose to assert the fact of sinfulness that everyone may fall in. The ending of both stories is what matters most.

The female Hester Prynne was forced to wear the badge of shame, yet chose to fully accept it and remain in the town. She succeeded to regenerate herself through keeping a beautiful natural behavior that she became a Sister of Mercy for the puritan people. In parallel, the male Reverend Mr. Hooper’s choice by own will to wear the veil on face; raises a controversial meaning of sin that he or others might commit. Eventually, as he persisted wearing it till he was buried in grave, he kept smiling behind the veil, and remained a source of comfort and solace ; that he made the puritan people accept him just as he is.

Nathaniel Hawthorne transcended the issue of gender, only to reveal that all human beings, man and woman, sin and beyond any judgmental attitude, Hawthorne is simply reminding the puritans what their Bible dictates that “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.”

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