



**Demons or Angels: A Feminist Reading of *The Crucible* and
*The Scarlet Letter***

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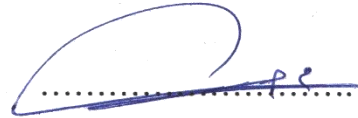
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DEDICATION

With the most sincere feelings and the kindest words emanating from a sincere heart, I extend my thanks and gratitude to those who were the reason for the continuation of my life path. Those who stood with me in the most difficult circumstances and those who defended me. I dedicate this work to my dear mother's soul, to my extended family, and to my brothers and sisters who have always been by my side. I also dedicate it to my husband, Moneer, and to my children, Mothana, Lamar, Aws, and Tamem, who supported me in my educational journey. From a heart overflowing with respect, I present to you the most beautiful expressions of thanks and gratitude.

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ABSTRACT

This work is a feminist study that examines the status of women in a Puritan society in two classical American works, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The research displays the historical presentation of the status of women in the American patriarchal society, concerning their rights and their duties. The research identifies the types of women in both works, namely “pure”, “anti-Puritan”, and “patriarchal women”. It discusses sin and punishment in Puritan society. It also compares analyses of the punishment of women to that of men, as presented in *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*. This study uses the analytical method to discuss each of the two studied works through a feminist perspective; and it uses two important feminist concepts, “Patriarchy” and the “Other”, and applies them to both works. This study criticizes the portrayal of women in a stereotypical way. It analyses the treatment of women as both demons who deserve punishment or as victims of a patriarchal society.

Keywords: *Feminist; Puritans; Patriarchal; Other; The Scarlet Letter; The Crucible.*

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Crucible (1952) by Arthur Miller and *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne are two of the most important classic American literary works that presented the most important beliefs of the Puritan society and the way women were treated in that society. This study mainly analyzes the two works through the lens of the feminist approach in general and the concept of “Other” that was founded by Simone De Beauvoir, and the concept of “Sexual politics” by Kate Millet. In addition, it highlights the oppression of women in that society and the echoes of injustice in these two literary works. It also highlights the demonic images of women in these two literary works. The study also discusses sin and punishment in both works. At another stage, it discusses the female adoption of masculine ideas and the application of these ideas to themselves and other women in society. Moreover, it analyzes the type of women who rebel against social reality to impose their personality and ideas to achieve freedom.

1.1. Background of the Study

The Crucible is a play written by the American playwright Arthur Miller in 1952. The events of this play revolve around the women of Salem village accused of witchcraft, which appeared in the village after a group of village girls, headed by Abigail, performed a pagan dance at night in the woods. Abigail wanted to practice magic to harm Elizabeth, Proctor's wife. Abigail was working in Proctor's house as a maid and then fell into the crime of adultery with him. She wants to get rid of Elizabeth to get Proctor as a husband.

Betty, the daughter of Parris, who is the priest of Salem village, got sick after the night of dancing in the woods. Her illness was diagnosed to have as a soul possessed by the devil. Accordingly, Abigail, the niece of the priest, and a group of village girls claimed that they were possessed by Satan and accused most of the village women of practicing witchcraft. Abigail falsely alleged all these accusations of witchcraft. As a result, 19 women were subjected to death by hanging in Salem village in the Massachusetts colony.

Miller used the events of *The Crucible* to display the social teachings of the Puritan era, as the minds of the people in that era became full of unreal and irrational fears. People attribute problems in society either to irrational reasons or to other people. Since women were the weakest members of the community, the whole blame was placed on them. This is what the study focuses on. Reading Miller's play makes one rethink the place of women in society. Women are always shown in their stereotypical image, being cold or negative, like the character of Elizabeth, Proctor's wife, or a whore and a cunning woman like Abigail. Or, they may be victims, by putting them in the position of the first accusation, like the women of the village, who were victims of arbitrary decisions and accusations that were not substantiated by evidence.

The second important work that is discussed in this study is *The Scarlet Letter*. It is a masterpiece of American classic literature by Nathaniel Hawthorne, who grew up in an extended family with his mother, aunts, and sisters after his father's death. They were his first and main supporters. His aunt Mary Manning was his major supporter until he became the first university graduate in his family. Hawthorne realized the unjust position of women when his mother did not receive an inheritance from her deceased husband because the law, during that era, prohibited women from receiving inheritance

“...Hawthorne was a feminist forerunner, which is largely due to the influences exerted on him by women who were close to him” (Li Guanghua, 2019, p. 2). His sympathetic thoughts toward women began to appear in his literary works, as seen clearly in *The Scarlet Letter*. The events of the novel take place in the seventeenth century in Boston, between 1642- 1649. The novel was published in 1850. It presented the most important beliefs of the Puritan society, and Puritan beliefs about women during that era. This novel presented the life of the heroine, Hester Prynne, who was married to Roger Chillingworth, an old physician. He did not appear in the events of the novel at the beginning. The action started when Hester Prynne moved to live in Massachusetts. After a long period of waiting, Roger Chillingworth did not arrive. The news came that the ship he was traveling in had sunk. Hester realized that she had become a widow and that she had complete freedom in her feelings, which she released to love Pastor Arthur Dimmesdale and fall with him in the crime of adultery. The result of this crime was Pearl, the daughter of Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester, who was first sentenced to be imprisoned for her crime. The punishment was that she had to bear the letter “A” on the top of her bosom to show her disgrace in front of everyone's eyes. Hester was punished by society, which saw her as a traitor to the Puritan religious tradition. The court tried to take possession of her daughter under the pretense that she did not have the morals and principles that would enable her to raise Pearl properly. The Court tried to ask her over and over who was the father of her daughter, but she refused to disclose it. Despite all these circumstances, Hester was a strong and steady woman who did not collapse, weaken or hide her shame. On the contrary, she faced the society and defended her right to keep her daughter. She worked as a seamstress to support herself and her daughter. Thus, Hester Prynne was a good model for feminist study.

The two studies present the ideas of the Puritan society and the state as a religious state that derives its strict laws from the religious rulings of the Church. In other words, the society was under the control of the church, so a person who did not apply the teachings of the church was guilty in front of God and in front of the law. Each of these two literary works focused on the woman as the culprit. Those who set the law were men, those who were punished were women, and those who were guilty were punished mercilessly. Accordingly, many questions will be discussed in the study: why are the punishments not equal to the crimes in both actions? Why are women the only culprits in both works? How do Puritan rules treat women? How does “sexual politics” appear clearly in these two literary works? What is meant by women as “other”? Why are women often portrayed in these two works as either demons or Angels?

1.2 Statement of The Problem

The study deals with the punishment in both works, the oppression of women in their society and the reflection of this unjust treatment in two of the most important American literary works; Hawthorn’s *The Scarlet Letter* and Miler’s *The Crucible*. It also discusses the proportion of punishment for the guilt of witchcraft, as in the case of the accused the women of Salem village in *The Crucible*, and the crime of adultery committed by Hester in *The Scarlet Letter*. The study discusses the unequal punishment of both women and men. The study also tackles the “sexual politics” of women in the two works. The main contention is that there are two types of women in the Puritan society, the Rebellious Woman as “Hester” or the “Puritan” as the Good Woman, and how they adopt masculine ideas and apply them to themselves and other women in the society.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

- 1- To focus on the women's position through a feminist study of *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*, by discussing the social and historical background of these two literary works that embody patriarchal social thoughts.
- 2- To examine the patriarchal mentality that puts itself in the position of the punisher of sins.
- 3- To shed light on the impact of social and historical ideas on the traditional image of women in both works.
- 4- To focus on the time between the two literary works, which is nearly a hundred years, and to show how that could not change the society's perception and treatment of women.

1.4 Literature Review

In her dissertation, *The Scarlet Letter: a feminist reading*, Loubna Chelouache (2016) discussed the feminist thought in the social and historical backgrounds of the Puritan history. She explored how Nathaniel Hawthorne classified women into "Good women" and "Hesterman" women, a category she named after the protagonist, Hester, as an emphatic symbol of feminist ideas. The dissertation discussed Puritan literary works and the situation of women in general, then it clarified the feminist theory and tried to apply it to *The Scarlet Letter*. But the dissertation did not show the patriarchal mentality in the Puritan society, which linked the authority of the court to that of the church and applied its provisions.

In her article, “Re (dis) Covering The Witches in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*”, Schissel (1994) tried to shed light on the sin of adultery that Abigail and John Proctor committed. The writer argued that Miller tried to place the blame for this adultery relationship on two reasons, the first being the cold wife, and the second being the sexually enthusiastic and seductive mistress. The writer maintained that in both cases Miller placed direct blame on women so the man appeared in his innocent image. The writer criticized Miller as he revealed Abigail's fate when she became a prostitute in Boston as if to say that John Proctor was a poor man whom a manipulative female and an accomplice witch unintentionally seduced. The article neglected the discussion of the patriarchal mentality, the social and political treatment of village women, and women in general as a societal issue. Also, it did not shed light on the fact that the authority of the Puritan court was glorified for any mistakes, despite the discovery of the truth at the end. But the Puritan society placed blame and responsibility on the village women. By that, the Puritan court and Puritan mentality would not be in a position of accountability.

In his article, “Pearl—Hester's Messenger of Anguish”, Lifang Chen (2019) tried to analyze the image of Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter* from a feminist point of view by using the stereotypical image of a woman either as an angel or a monster. Pearl is an angel that sends safety and reassurance to Priest Arthur and relieves him from his inner torment. The researcher discussed the way to portray Pearl as a monster rebelling against the norms of a strict society. The study criticized the stereotypical image of women through Pearl's character. But the article neglected an important aspect, which was how the patriarchal society dealt with Pearl as a child with the symbol of magic on her stomach.

In “Patriarchal Princesses and Wicked Witches: A Feminist Reading Of the Depiction Of Women In Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*”, Lindberg (2018) discussed Miller's play *The Crucible* from a feminist point of view, where the researcher criticized the patriarchal oppression apparent in the play and discussed how it debunked ideas against women by portraying it as the binary opposition of either “good girl” or “bad girl” represented by Elizabeth and Abigail. The study criticized the unbalanced appearance of women. In the end, the dissertation emphasized that whether a woman was good or bad, she is socially punished by the patriarchal authority that rejected the equality of men with women.

CHAPTER TWO

***The Crucible and The Scarlet Letter* from the Feminist Perspective; A General Approach**

2.1.1 Introduction

The Crucible and *The Scarlet Letter* are subjected to many feminist literary critiques, for women in both works are subjected to masculine and societal oppression. Numerous feminist studies criticize the injustice done to the heroines of both works. This chapter is an extension of feminist literary criticism; at the beginning, it provides a background of feminist theory. Then, Simone De Beauvoir, the concepts of “Patriarchalism” and “Other” is explained. The chapter also explains what is meant by the term “Patriarchalism” and “Other”. The two works are approached via Feminist theory. The research sheds light on the truth by posing the following questions: Do Salem Village women in both works suffer from patriarchal oppression? Do the heroines of the two works depicted in the same stereotypical image? Do women treated as the “Other”? The researcher will endeavor to find answers to these questions.

2.1.2 Feminism Theory: Background, Three Waves

What is Feminism? In fact, it cannot be specifically defined, but many references concerned with the history of Feminism focused on the idea of obtaining lost rights. What does that indicate? It indicates women's attempts to obtain rights that were denied. Women were focused on refusing marginalization on many social, political, and economic levels in male-dominated societies. In this regard, Rebecca West hints, “I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute” (West, 1982, p. 219). However, some of

these definitions can be mentioned. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines feminism as: “the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities” or “an organized activity in support of women’s rights in the economy and civil interests” (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Most societies raise the value of men over women, so there must be women's movements that demand equality between women and men to achieve their rights politically and socially (D’emilio & Freedman, 1997). Through what was suggested, a general definition of feminism might be women's movements that argued and demanded women's equality with men by women's access to political, social, and economic rights so that they do not remain marginalized in these fields and will not be treated as followers or property of men.

Literature exclusively embodies males’ thoughts and views. The portrayal of women in masculine literary works has always been stereotypical. Even women writers used to adopt masculine thoughts in writing. Elaine Showalter in her article “Toward a Feminist Poetics” (1979), pointed out that women writers should stop using the masculine style in their writing and start using their style based on their personal experiences and ideas. She called this theory “Gynocriticism” (1979). On the other hand, Feminist criticism was also criticized because women in literary works were also stereotypically depicted as angels, demons, witches, whores, or mindless housewives. (Guerin et al., 2011).

Critics liken the feminist theory to Marxism. Some have argued that their similarities stem from the fact that Marxist theory is considered political and the feminist is also considered political to some extent. This analogy stems from the fact that, males dominate politics, and since Feminism is opposed to male domination in society, then the Feminist theory is to some extent, a political theory (Guerin et al., 2011). However,

Feminism went through several stages of development, each of which was called the feminist wave; they were three in number.

The handbook of the Critical Approach To Literature mentioned that the First Feminist wave appeared in the late eighteenth century in Britain. Its main goal was to demand women's rights. Women in this stage demanded rights such as participation in political action through voting, getting the right to participate in economic business through work, and the right to education and property ownership, besides birth control. The general principle of the movement was to treat women as human beings and not as men's property (Guerin et al., 2011).

Mary Wollstonecraft was the first to publish a feminist article, "Vindication of the Women Article" (2014), which argued that women should defend their rights by rejecting the idea of the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. She added that women were denied education and treated as beautiful things or sparkling adornment owned by men. Women's lack of access to adequate education limited their critical thinking, thus stopping their role in society. This ignorance made women live a life confined to children and family, so they were unhappy (Wollstonecraft, 2014). Guerin reported that during the period of the first feminist wave, women obtained their right to work, and at the end of the wave; they gained the right to vote (Guerin et al., 2011).

The Second Wave of Feminism began after the Second World War. The wave called for the rights that were claimed in the first wave, namely, equality with men. During the war, many women went to work. At the end of the war, women were expected to return to their traditional role as housewives, but they remained in their jobs. That situation threatened male authority in society. The second wave confirmed the right of women to remain in the economic field (Guerin et al., 2011).

During the second wave, Feminist critics emerged, such as Virginia Woolf, who argued in her work *A Room of One's Own* (1929), that women were treated as inferior to men. The one who defines what it means to be female is the man, through his control over economic, literary, social, and political matters. Woolf gave an example stating: suppose that Shakespeare had a sister, she might be more genius than him, but unfortunately, in a patriarchal society, she would have neither the opportunity to educate nor develop her genius, so she couldn't display her talent, simply because she is a woman (Woolf, 2014). Woolf mentions in *Three Guineas* (1938) that her country treated her like a slave and that she was deprived of many of her rights, such as education. Therefore, she believed that she did not have a country, but her country was the whole world. She added that there was no need for her to fight over a defeated idea of obtaining a right that she would never obtain in a male world (Woolf, 1938). M.A.R. Habib, in his book *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present*, mentioned that Woolf's method of Feminist criticism stems from the modernist nature of her literature. Where her novel expresses Feminist philosophical positions (Habib, 2005).

Writers such as Kate Millett, Betty Friedan, and Simone de Beauvoir appeared in the second wave of Feminism. They discussed the theory of the "self", so they focused on the fact that the "self" means the masculine entity and the soul means masculinity. They also discussed self-concept, which had to be expanded to include the presence of women. Where the woman was portrayed to be less than the man. The model of the self that gained supremacy in Western philosophy and American popular culture was derived from the archetype of the masculine. Simone de Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex* (2015), asked about what a woman is and what differentiates her from a

man. She answered that the woman is the thesis defined by the man. Humans were defined as men only without the appearance of a woman. Thus, de Beauvoir rejected man's theory of defining a woman because in every way; men would define her not based on her as being subordinate to him, not as a human being (Beauvoir, 2015).

Kate Millett was one of the first Feminist critics to argue about the ideological characteristics of females and males. In her book *Sexual Politics* (1970), she argued that a human is born “female” and “male”, but “women” and “men” are created. She meant that the female and the male were born as human beings without any distinction between them. Still, the societal upbringing was the one that raised the female to become a woman in a position inferior to man. In contrast, the boy is raised socially to be strong, courageous, sovereign, and self-confident to be Superior in a patriarchal society (Millett, 1970). According to Habib “Millett sees patriarchy as a system of domination that is analytically independent of the capitalist or any other mode of production” (Habib, 2005, p. 694).

The Third Feminist Wave began in the early 1990s. The pioneers of that third wave were the generation of the eighties and nineties. There were no real feminist demands like those in the first and second waves. Rather, there were debates revolving around the sexual liberation of women. That movement demanded freedom of sexual transformation and defended transgender women (Guerin et al., 2011).

2.1.3 Simone de Beauvoir's Concepts; “Patriarchal” and “Other”

The French writer published her book, *The Second Sex* (2015), in which she argued that Western societies are “Patriarchal”. But what does this mean? Simone means that males were the ones who dominated their societies; they were the ones who made the decisions and the ones who ruled. She added that women were marginalized at all

levels, social and economic. Women were additional, while men were the basis of the society. For Beauvoir, “the woman is dominated, and this domination is caused by men who have both political and social powers” (Beauvoir, 2015, p. 8). She adds that women are weak and have negative elements:

The woman is referred to as “the other” this is because they lack concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit that can stand face to face with correlative unity. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own, and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat (p. 268).

In fact, Simon confirms Woolf's idea, as she believes that man is the only concept of humans, but the woman is considered as an “Other”. The meaning of the other is that what is not a man is something else. Thus, the woman was referred to as the “Other”. As de Beauvoir puts it; “Subject is the absolute, the essential while the other is the inessential, the object. A Subject is a man while the other is a woman” (Beauvoir, 2015, p. 268). She declares that what put the woman in the position of the other was the woman herself because women were not organized within an independent entity in the society.

2.2 *The Crucible* from the Feminist Perspective

In the first scene of *The Crucible*, a group of girls appears to be doing witchcraft in the woods. They are the girls of Salem Village headed by Abigail Williams, the niece of Reverend Paris. It turns out that the aim of the witchcraft is Abigail's attempt to obtain John Proctor as a husband and to get rid of his wife, Elizabeth. Miller explains that Abigail, who is 17 years old, commits the crime of adultery with Proctor after falling in love with him. She wants to take him as a husband. Throughout the play, the reader notes Miller's attempts to portray John as a hero. The author tries to win the sympathy

of the reader by showing John as a victim of Abigail's machinations. In another picture, Miller shows that John is the victim of a cold-hearted wife. Miller depicts what incited John Proctor to debauchery and adultery with women as if that is a strong justification for a man's infidelity. On the other hand, John falls into the machinations of his maid, who lures him into adultery. But he overlooks the aspect of how a 17-year-old girl with no sexual knowledge can seduce a mature man.

Miller describes Abigail as a "...strikingly beautiful girl ... with an endless capacity for dissembling" (Miller, 2000, p. 8-9). Flanagan and June Schlueter (1987) describes her as a "whore". Bernard Dukore (1989) argues that since Abigail is described as having remarkable behavior, she is the one who takes the first step to seduce John. But how would that be, since Abigail's words should not be overlooked, "...John Proctor ... took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart!" (Miller, 2000, p. 24). These words by Abigail are very sufficient to show that what happened is a man's surrender to carnal desires and does not need seduction by a woman. Therefore, Abigail is not the one who initiates the request for adultery. In fact, the researcher strongly agrees with Wendy Schissel (1994), who argues that the critics directly justify the behavior of a man inclined to adultery once he has a beautiful, mature young woman nearby and a cold wife. As Schissel puts it, "No critic has asked, though, how a seventeen-year-old girl, raised in the household of a Puritan minister, know how to seduce a man" (Schissel, 1994, p. 463).

Thus, Miller justifies the sin of his hero, "the man" John Proctor. Miller believes that these justifications are sufficient for debauchery. In both cases, Miller portrays the woman as either a whore or a cold wife and presents the man as the hero with whom the reader must sympathize.

The seducer, Abigail, makes a false claim against women. She accuses them of working with the devil. The patriarchal system knows that Abigail is not sincere, as all the accusations leveled by the court against women are based on false allegations. Thus, one can say that the patriarchal system rejects the legality of women's demands for their right to appear under a fair trial. The patriarchal system prefers that women appear under the name of crazy, "...little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law!" (Miller, 2000, p. 77) The patriarchal system scares the emergence of women and their claim of their legitimate rights. In this regard, Elaine Showalter wrote:

Hysteria is tolerated because, in fact, it has no power to effect cultural change; it is much safer for the patriarchal order to encourage and allow discontented women to express their wrongs through ... illness than to have them agitating for economic and legal rights. (p. 161)

Showalter's view seems convincing since it is not in the interest of the patriarchal government to show the woman as sane, because this will cost her recognition of her rights, and this will affect the patriarchal authority. Gagino Mato in his dissertation confirms Showalter's idea by saying: "A madwoman is a great tool for patriarchal manipulation that ensures control over women, who do not want to be stigmatized and, thus, stay within patriarchy's feminine roles" (Mato, 2021, p. 9).

In this part, the women of Salem village who have lost their life by hanging due to false accusations cannot be overlooked. One of the most prominent women is Rebecca, who works as a nurse for a long time and is a good Christian wife. However, she is falsely accused, and the court does not try to investigate the truth of the accusation but instead turned her to be hanged. In this situation, it would be good to remember the concept of

the “other” by Simone de Beauvoir, where she indicated that what is not a man is the “other”. This concept is presented in the loss of life of a large number of Salem village women, headed by Rebecca. In a patriarchal society, a woman is a man's property that can be disposed of or abandoned once she is no longer useful. In the event of the punishment, she is the first to receive the punishment; as shown in *The Crucible*, women are sacrificed for men.

In another patriarchal scene, Miller tries to show the woman as one who ensnared a man through seduction. Abigail: “...How do you call me child? (Miller, 2000, p. 23). Miller tried to show that Abigail was full of sexual knowledge. In another clip, every time he approaches Abigail, he “...sweated like a stallion” (Miller, 2000, p. 22) as he feels Abigail's temptation for him, though he repeatedly tries to control his feelings in front of her. Elizabeth Reis, in her article “The Devil, The Body, and The Feminine Soul in Puritan New England”, explained that the Puritans considered the female soul to be always hungry and could not be satiated. They also believed that Satan could easily infiltrate a woman's soul, and therefore she was always accused of giving in to her lusts (Reis, E. 1995). Miller confirms the earlier view by revealing Abigail's fate “...Legend has it that Abigail later appeared as a prostitute in Boston” (Miller, 2000, p. 146). The woman was presented as a demon who seduced the righteous man. Wendy Schissel argues, “Miller's statement of Abigail's fate resounds with implicit forgiveness for the man who is unwittingly tempted by a fatal female, a conniving witch” (Schissel, 1994, p. 465). Compared to the fate of Proctor, who is drawn heroically, he refuses to sign a confession of his dealings with the devil and prefers to sacrifice himself for truth. The tendency of his hero, Proctor, shows that he sticks to his friends. “Proctor: I have three children - how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?” (Miller, 2000, p. 143). The reality that John Proctor suffered cannot be overlooked.

However, portraying Proctor as a hero, and in contrast, portraying Abigail as a demon and a prostitute, seems to be another portrayal of Simon's idea of "Other". The man is a hero, and the woman is the other; therefore, guilt and sin can be full of the "Other".

One may ask why the accusations leveled by Abigail against women of the village were not investigated. Why didn't Abigail try to accuse men, as most of the accusations were directed against women? In fact, what Abigail did, serves the patriarchal system. Describing the woman as a witch reinforces the idea of the inferiority of the female; thus, they are subordinated to the patriarchal system, which is superior, balanced, and wise. Abigail is aware of the inferiority of women and the superiority of men in the Puritan society, so she knows that if she tries to accuse men, that will be weaken her trick. She for sure knows that the inferior class is that of women. Some may wonder why John is accused and hanged despite being a man. The Patriarchal law represented by the judges realizes that there should be a victim, John Proctor, to maintain the credibility of the patriarchal system for the Salem community. "Danforth, instantly: You have heard rebellion spoken in the town?" Hale replies: "...Better you should marvel how they do not burn your province!" (Hawthorn, 2000, p. 139) Thus, the Puritan patriarchy sacrifices John in an attempt to protect itself from falling and to maintain its place in the society.

It is possible to conclude that the Puritan society was patriarchal and that it preferred to sacrifice women under the pretext of the weakness of a woman's spirit; where the devil is able to infiltrate her soul and force her to fulfill her desires. This is what Miller tries to show in the character of Abigail when she is led to her desire to get rid of Elizabeth through witchcraft. She is led to her desire to seduce John Proctor. However, stereotyping a woman as a devil, claiming that she submits to the devil's desires, is not

fair. Because Satan will not cause women to sin and exclude men from that. John is driven by his lusts; the judges are driven by the lust for sovereignty, just as the desire for revenge drives Abigail.

2.3 The Scarlet Letter from the Feminist Perspective

Man in the Puritan society is the major element and the pivot of the formation of that society. The patriarchal society shows men as having reason, wisdom, and culture, while women lack that. Rationalism appears in Chillingworth and Arthur Dimmesdale's characters. Chillingworth is an educated man, physician, and herbalist with extensive experience, which corresponds to a calm and rational personality, but that calmness concealed malice. When he arrives in Salem and discovers his wife's betrayal, he is sober and bore the pains of his wife's betrayal. He dealt with the situation with calmness and malice. In comparison, Arthur Dimmesdale is an educated clergyman with wisdom and rationality. He advises people on what they should and should not do. People love him because he possesses rationality, wisdom, and soft-outspokenness that no other pastor possesses. On the other hand, the feminist element in the novel is presented as women being less rational housewives in the stereotypes. That is shown in women's indiscriminate and unjust judgments about Hester Prynne when she is on the scaffold, or as a whore, when Hester commits adultery, Salem society, and when the court dealt with her as a whore.

Hawthorne presents Hester's feelings for her husband, Chillingworth, as follows: “a man well stricken in years, a pale, thin, scholar-like visage, with eyes dim and bleared by the lamp-light.... slightly deformed, with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right” (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 40). Hester’s emotions are inadequate because she marries the wrong person. Hester travels alone to New England, where her husband is supposed to

join her, but he does not come, and did not hear any news about him. Since she felt emotionally inadequate in her life, when she meets Arthur Dimmesdale, she falls in love with him and commits adultery. In reality, Hester is not a whore but a woman who is the victim of her feelings.

She rebels against the patriarchy after being punished by the letter “A”. The letter is a sign of shame, but Hester turns it into a painting “...fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon her bosom” (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 38). Dr. Shumaila et al., argue that the letter, which is supposed to be a mark of infamy has become a sign of rebellion. Hester turns the scarlet letter into a symbol of honor rather than infamy (Shumaila et al., 2022). After she receives the letter “A” punishment, she is ostracized by the Puritan community, where she makes a “little straw hut”, “...which indicates that psychological exclusion from society is more harmful than exposure to scaffolding” (Shumaila et al., 2022, p. 25). Through the punishments that Hester is subjected to, the reader can see that the patriarchal society tries in various ways to humiliate Hester by stigmatizing her dress and through ostracism. Despite all the attempts of the patriarchal society to humiliate Hester, she appears in public with an arrogant laugh, as Hawthorne describes. Can't it be denied that Hester falls into a sin that is not accepted morally or religiously, but that sin is viewed through the lens of the Bible, which states that whenever there is sin, there is forgiveness and Mercy? Hester admits her guilt in her heart and finds salvation in accepting societal punishment for her guilt. “...If thou feelest it to be for thy soul's peace, and that thy earthly punishment will thereby be made more effectual to salvation...” (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 47). The Puritan judges did not deal with Hester with the mercy and forgiveness mentioned in the Bible. Rather, they try to break Hester's rebellion by subjecting her to permanent humiliation through the badge of shame.

What the Puritans do of humiliating and punishing Hester makes her fear that she is no longer acceptable to God, and with that thought, there is no salvation, “O Father in Heaven, if Thou art still my Father,—what is this being which I have brought into the world!” (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 66). In the Bible, we find, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (*Bible*, 2011, Matthew 6:14-15). It seems that the patriarchal mentality distorts Hester's and other women's concepts of repentance and forgiveness. Accordingly, it cannot be said that the judgments which fell upon Hester are based on religious principles. Her rebellion and her conversion of the letter of shame into a letter of honor are tantamount to a rebellion against the patriarchal rulings. The judges try to humiliate her so that it will not be the beginning of a woman's rebellion against a man.

The question that should be raised here is Hawthorne's question, “Had Hester sinned alone?” (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 180). Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne share the sin, but Hester bore the punishment alone. She is strong enough to bear the punishment in public and not reveal the name of her partner.

Hester and Arthur each carry punishment differently. Hester is punished with a scarlet letter on her bosom that is visible to the public as an unforgettable stain. It turns out that Arthur also had a scarlet letter, but it is carved into his chest, not shown in public “...he tore away the Ministerial band from before his breast it was revealed” (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 173). The sign of shame appears on Hester's bosom in public. She is already punished whenever anyone looks at her, based on the comparison of Hester's and Arthur's letters, revealed deficiency of women is revealed through humiliation. At the same time, the mistakes of men are hidden from the public so that they remain in the form of perfection

and sovereignty. That is exactly the goal of patriarchy. On the other hand, Arthur enjoyed a sophisticated social and religious level. By that, Arthur might be described as selfish, as he does not dare to disclose his partnership with Hester. He is satisfied to see Hester's punishment before his eyes. In this situation, Hester can be described as the "other" and Arthur as the "subject". The other is the woman who bore the punishment bravely.

It seems that the patriarchal thought does not only fall on Hester Prynne by the males, but the women of Salem also participate in issuing unjust rulings. One of the old women asks to punish Hester by putting the iron on her forehead instead of the scarlet letter on her bosom. Elbert (1990) describes these women:

They are no longer maternal and therefore have no value in a patriarchal system except what they can appropriate for themselves as faux men. They have denied their gender and their maternal power and have no recourse in a patriarchal society but to adopt masculine power (p. 175).

The researcher agrees with Elbert's idea and adds that these women knew that men were the high class in society; therefore, if the rules of that class are violated, they will be subjected to humiliation like Hester; they prefer to remain aligned with the patriarchal domination rather than to be against it and receive punishment.

Hester accepts the punishment. She carries the scarlet letter that burned her heart every time someone looks at it. She accepts to be socially exiled. But it seems that the penalties are not enough from the judge's viewpoint to break Hester's rebellion; therefore, they demand that Hester abandon her daughter, Pearl, to the church. Hester realizes that she is being humiliated by patriarchal rules. "...she felt that she possessed indefeasible rights against the world and was ready to defend them to death" (Hawthorn,

2016, p. 76). The judges seem aware of Hester's rebellious personality. Therefore, they try to defeat her pride and confidence in her but do not find a better way than taking her daughter from her. "... She is my happiness! She is my torture, nonetheless! Pearl keeps me here in life!" (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 76).

"...so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength" (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 109). Her strength is manifested in two important things. The first is her ability to admit her sin by coming to terms with herself and accepting punishment. The other thing is her ability to live in the same place that witnessed her disgrace. People began to interpret the letter "A" from the meaning of "adultery" to the meaning of "ability", "...many people refused to interpret the scarlet "A" by its original signification. They said that it meant Able..." (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 109). Zhang also argues that if it has been someone other than Hester, he will travel to another place where no one knows his shame (Zheng, 2017).

In the case of Hester's adultery, she is betrayed by both her husband and her lover. Her husband sent her to New England alone. The question is, what is the wisdom of sending a young and beautiful woman to a strange country by herself? When he returned and know about her sin, he gave up his name so that he would not be with her in the circle of shame. "...He resolved not to be pilloried beside her on her pedestal of shame" (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 81). Hester, also, is betrayed by her lover, Arthur, because she loves him; she does not mention his name in front of the court and community. On the other hand, Arthur does not try to admit that he is Hester's partner. He does not defend his love. He is content to see her punished and humiliated alone. Simon's concept of the Other is evident from Chillingworth's and Arthur's dealings with Hester. Both her lover and her husband dealt with her as something that she has value when she has a good

reputation, but when she fall victim, they abandoned her because they deal with her as “other”. They are the “subject”; therefore, their reputation is more important than Hester’s situation. She is the “other” that her feeling, life, and reputation are not important.

Although Hester was subjected to social ostracism and punishment, she does not hesitate to offer help to those who needed help around her. As Hester went through a difficult situation, she got the experience and strength to guide the lost and the oppressed, especially women wh0 “came to Hester’s cottage, demanding why they were so wretched, and what was the remedy! Hester comforted and counseled them at the best she might” (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 179). Her strength is in the ability to overcome the pain she went through and turn those pains into a bridge to help others.

CHAPTER THREE

Types of Women in *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*

Introduction

The Puritan era is one of the important eras that appeared in the settlement of New England. Those settlements had begun as small colonies governed by the laws of the state derived from the Church. This part of the chapter presents the most important historical characteristics of the Puritan era, in general, and the way women were portrayed and treated in the literary works in that important epoch, in particular. It presents types of women in the Puritan society as presented in *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*. The researcher divided the types of women in both works into: “anti-puritan women”, “pure women”, and “patriarchal women”.

3.1.1 The Puritan History

Puritanism can be described as the era of religious, traditional, and classical militancy. This section presents the most important principles of the Puritan society, especially those strict principles against women; how the Puritans treated women, What their main function in that era was, and What the rights they were denied.

Historically, the term “Puritan” dates back to 1564. Thomas Fuller, in his book *The Church History of Britain* (1845), defined “Puritanism” as a religious movement whose goal was to purify the Church of England. Unlike the “separatists” who did not believe in the principle of reform in the existing churches but rather the establishment of new churches on religious principles separate from the previous ones. However, nowadays, “Puritanism” is identified as “dogmatic strictness”. Thus, the Puritans can be considered

a reform movement for the Church. In the 17th century, the English Puritan preacher, Thomas Watson, called the persons who followed the movement “Pious”.

Erroll Hulse (1996), in his article, “The Story of the Puritans” explained that the Puritans were also referred to as hardcore religious groups, who refused to wear papal robes. After the controversy over the papal attire ended, the focus appeared on the idea of “faithfulness to the Bible”. Hulse explained in his article that the term “Puritan” was first used to describe religious people who were meticulous about their ways of life and applied the teachings of the Bible. However, society at that time described them as “joy killers”.

Errol Hulse also mentioned that the Puritan period, which came after the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, attempted to institute church reform in Britain. They made the laws of the church that governed the state, which they called “the church government”, whereas the Puritans believed in the concept of “The divine right of kings” that implied “to disobey the king is to disobey God” (Hulse, 2000, p. 35). The Hampton Court Conference was held, and the result was a new translation of the Holy Bible called the “Accredited Version” or “King James Version”, thus, the new version became the new constitution of the state. In the later period, many clergymen, judges, doctors, and a large number of people moved from Britain to America. They established colonies in New England. One of those colonies was Massachusetts, in which the events of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible* took place. The Puritans applied the teachings of the Church. “about 4000 convicted Puritans left to settle in the New England Colonies and contributed to the forming of a new nation” (Husle, 2000, p. 35). Miller emphasized that idea in *The Crucible*, “people of Salem developed a theocracy, a combine of state and religious power whose function was to keep the community together and to prevent any

kind of disunity that might open it to destruction by material or ideological enemies” (Miller, 2000, p .7). The aim was to create an ideal society that was regulated by laws of the state derived from the Church. The important question in this research is, what is the status of women, and what is the punishment for guilt for those 4000 convicted Puritans?

3.1.2 Women in the Puritan Beliefs

Women are an important part of society that cannot be ignored. However, since ancient times, women suffered from persecution and marginalization in many ancient societies. In the Puritan era, women were treated as slaves. The woman couldn't live independently away from men. Every female must be under the guardianship of a man, whether he is a father, brother, or husband. When any woman reaches puberty, she should try to get a husband. The greatest privilege for a woman was to have a husband. David Lowenthal, in “The Marriage of Choice and the Marriage Of Convenience”: A New England Puritan View Risorgimento Italy (2008), conveys the views of Caroline Crane Marsh, an American observer of the roads of the ancient world and wife of the American envoy to Italy. Such views were comparatively on the social history of the nineteenth century. Lowenthal pointed out that “Women had no rights save as appendages of fathers and husbands. Among the peasantry, they were commonly beasts of burden, almost entirely unschooled” (p.162). He adds, “Female inferiority was part and parcel of the general tyranny of class servitude” (p. 162). The social restrictions on women were tightened in that era to the point that they were not free to appear in public places and on the streets. Lowenthal argued that it was not a kind of preservation of women or a kind of application of the teachings of the Puritan church. Because those who did not adhere to religious teachings, or even did not enter the church at all, were

also dealing with their wives, sisters, and daughters in the same way. But the goal was to preserve their reputation. In the case of marriage, Lowenthal said:

Marriage and motherhood were the only acceptable female course. Any husband was better than none, the Duchess Maria Luisa of Parma told Caroline explained why she had married the Bourbon Duke Charles III of Parma, despite his notorious brutality. “[But my dear friend, what could I do? I was already 25 years old, and I would have married the devil himself rather than remain single. (p. 163).

So, the role of women in the Puritan era was confined to motherhood and wifehood. She had to be a good wife based on the complete care of her husband and the good upbringing of the children on the Puritan principles.

In *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*, J. I. Packer (1994) revealed that the most important thought that the Puritan principle of marriage sought for women was not to search for a husband she loved at this moment, but a partner she could stay with and love forever. He added that it was one of the first duties of a woman to be of goodwill, be patient, and have a clear conscience. (Packer, 1994)

In education, Tonjia Miller, in her essay “Latin Grammar School” (1996) indicated that education was limited to males, and very few females had access to basic education. Most historical studies indicate that girls were not allowed to attend Latin grammar schools, nor Harvard, where that type of education was restricted to males. (Miller, 1996)

Susan Hill Lindley (1996) mentioned in *The Story of Women and Religion in America from The Colonial Period to the Mid-1990s*, that women's role was limited to housework, raising children, or caring for the husband. The woman had no choice but to

bear the patriarchal authority. As for the economic field, she worked as a seamstress, as Hester in *The Scarlet Letter*, or as an assistant in agricultural work, as Elizabeth in *The Crucible*. Some women obtained some rights, such as working in agricultural lands and selling their products in the markets. But they were denied so many rights; they were not allowed to vote in the legislature that governed the colonies, so the power was absolute for men. The important right that women were also prevented from was the right to own land because women were less educated than men. Therefore, they should be under the guardianship of a man. One of the most important rights that women lost in that era was the right to file a divorce suit. A woman had to be a good wife and loyal to marriage, even if her husband was bad. (Lindley, 1996)

As for the duties of a woman as a wife, she must sanctify the marriage, where the husband must pay respect to the sacred husband's bond: "In an ideal situation, man and woman should take up their natural role and not transgress the area that was assigned to them" (Eeckman, 2008, p. 29). Spouses were equal in offering allegiance to marriage. In *The Puritans and Sex* (1942), Morgan, E. S. touched on the issue of marriage and adultery. He noted that the Puritans tried to prevent adultery by creating a successful marriage. They focused on the principle that spouses should respect each other and live together with a sacred bond. One of the most important actions taken by the Puritans to preserve the bond of marriage was when a husband abandoned his wife; the Puritan authorities immediately returned him to his wife (Morgan, 1942). The Puritan law rejects everything that could spoil the sacred marriage bond, such as the sin of adultery or witchcraft. The punishment for these crimes was hanging to death.

Hawthorne and Miller excelled in showing women's loss of their rights due to male domination over education, government work, and societal sovereignty. In *The Crucible*

and *The Scarlet Letter*, two institutions govern the Puritan society; the church and the government. Men were the only ones who had the power to vote and enact rules. In both works, one could observe that women were excluded from setting laws, governance, and power. In the case of punishment; they were the first to be sacrificed and laws applied to them only. In Hawthorne's novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, the full punishment was inflicted on Hester Prynne. Miller showed, in *The Crucible*, how the whole punishment fell on the women in the village and the judges were men. Male dominance was evident in both literary works.

The Puritan era (1629-1720) is important in the history of the emergence of the United States. But in that era, women were deprived of many of their rights. The greatest achievement of a woman was to have a husband, and her role was devotion to her husband and caring for her children. Women were treated as inferior to men. The good woman was the one who had to conform to be the pure woman. The one who rebelled against the patriarchal laws and demanded her rights was an anti-puritan woman.

3.2 Types of Women in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*

Reference was made to the roles of women in the Puritan society, how women were treated, and the rights that were taken away from them. The types of women in the Puritan society, who were featured in Miller and Hawthorn's work, will be highlighted. The research attempts to analyze the status of women in both works to distinguish each type of women. They can be divided into three types: "pure women", "patriarchal women", and "anti-Puritan women".

3.2.1 The "Pure Woman"

In Puritan teachings, the woman must be righteous. To reach the degree of righteousness, she must be subordinate to man. The single woman follows her father,

and the married woman follows her husband. A woman must not violate the Puritan religious teachings that urge her to be faithful to her husband. The righteous woman is the woman who does not rebel against the Puritan teachings and does not demand her rights but rather lives under the shade of man to be an obedient servant. A pure woman must show all her love and care for her children and raise them according to Puritan principles. Her task is to be the link in the creation of a new generation of Puritans. (Lindley, 1996) provided an image of women: "...women could be either good or bad, depending not only on their piety and morality but also on their acceptance and fulfillment of particular social roles" (p. 16). It is clear that the laws of masculinity governs the society, so the pure woman is the one who does not rebel against those laws.

In *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*, the women of Salem Village are subject to patriarchal law. That depicts Elizabeth's character, whose role is limited to caring for children and helping her husband in fieldwork. When her husband betrays her, she could not claim her rights. Elizabeth's personality could be described from the feminist vision as being negative, but from the Puritan view, she is a pure and righteous wife. Elizabeth struggles to apply the teachings of the Bible to be an ideal Christian woman and a good wife; that appears clearly in her conversation with Hale, "Elizabeth, without hesitation, even eagerly: I surely do. There be no mark of blame upon my life, Mr. Hale. I am a covenanted Christian woman" (Miller, 2000, p. 66).

Rebecca Nurse is another example of a pure, family-oriented woman. She is loyal to her family, loving and peaceful. However, in the end, she is subjected to hanging: "It was Edward and Jonathan Putnam who signed the first complaint against Rebecca, and Thomas Putnam's little daughter was the one who fell into a fit at the hearing and

pointed to Rebecca as her attacker” (Miller, 2000, p. 26). Although Rebecca and Elizabeth are pure women, they are accused of witchcraft. Hale is described as a sane pastor as it appears in Proctor's speech: “Proctor: I’ve heard you be a sensible man, Mr. Hale. I hope you’ll leave some of it in Salem” (Miller, 2000, p. 37). Nevertheless, Hale believes that a pure woman like Elizabeth can fall into witchcraft when Hale comes to Proctor's house to ask some religious questions about Elizabeth and Proctor in an attempt to reveal whether Elizabeth is dealing with the devil:

Elizabeth, unable to restrain herself: Mr. Hale. He turns. I do think you are suspecting me somewhat. Are you not? Hale, obviously disturbed - and evasive: Goody Proctor, I do not judge you. My duty is to add what I may to the godly (p. 67).

On the other hand, Abigail is not a pure figure in Salem's community. Her allegations against pure women are trusted. Thus, Miller shows that impure women are the most influential and powerful in the society. It is apparent that the Puritan culture betrayed both Elizabeth and Rebecca and led them to the abyss. It is clear that even in a state of purity, a woman cannot survive in a patriarchal society.

Hawthorne shows that the women of Salem village are pure, as they apply the laws of the church, they also obey the rules of their husbands and fathers, and do not fall into adultery: “...members in good repute should have the handling of such malefictresses as this Hester Prynne” (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 55). Yasmine AŞCI, in her thesis, *The Role of Woman in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Novel, The Scarlet Letter*, argues at that point, “...one of the Puritan women wants to punish Hester worse than the judges. To her, she and her friends are good wives who do not commit adultery, and they are more honorable than Hester” (Aşci, Y. 2019, p. 9). Since the nineteenth century, the viewpoint of women had been that they were either demons or angels. In *The Scarlet*

Letter, the women of Salem Village saw themselves as pure women and ideal wives who do not commit sins. They are more honorable, pure, and chaste than Hester. They see that Hester is an example of an impure woman, as she follows her psychological desires and follows the teachings of Satan. They also believe that a woman's chastity and discipline are essential in the characteristics of the Protestant woman. Since Hester is stained with the guilt of adultery, she is considered impure. Thus, it was disgraceful to deal with her.

It seems that the pure women in *The Crucible* are victims of militancy. In contrast, the pure women in *The Scarlet Letter* are persecuted, and they apply the patriarchal mentality to themselves, like the victim, Hester Prynne. It might be concluded that the purity of a woman is not an intercessor in a male-dominated society. Despite the integrity of the women in *The Crucible*, they are punished by hanging on charges they did not do.

3.2.2 Patriarchal Women

Miller and Hawthorne presented women living in a patriarchal society. The first appearance of the term “patriarchy” was by Simone de Beauvoir. In her book *The Second Sex* (2015), she argued that the French society, in particular, and Western society, in general, were patriarchal societies, meaning that they were societies dominated and controlled by men. Beauvoir attempted to rebel against the notion that men make laws that only apply to women. It is normal to see male domination over women, but it is not normal to see women supporting patriarchal thought. Some women exercise male power over themselves and other women in society. This behavior is a way of supporting and perpetuating patriarchal oppression. These women were

described by the Puritan society as “pure”. The patriarchal type of women appears more in *The Scarlet Letter* than in *The Crucible*.

The patriarchal women’s reaction is shown when Hester is on the scaffold waiting for the judges. Patriarchal women launch harsh judgments in a kind of hypothesis and suggestions as to what was the best punishment for Hester:

At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne’s forehead. Madam Hester would have winced at that; I warrant me. But she—the naughty baggage—little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown! Why look you, she may cover it with a brooch or such like heathenish adornment and so walk the streets as brave as ever! (p. 36).

The cruelty of this woman seems to be greater than that of men, for she thinks that the appropriate punishment is to be marked by burning Hester with iron and not with a letter on her breast. Another woman from the crowd gives similar remarks:

Ah, but,” interposed, more softly, a young wife, holding a child by the hand, “let her cover the mark as she will; the pang of it will always be in her heart.” This other wanted the pain of shame to eat Hester's heart (p. 36).

Another patriarchal woman said:

What do we talk of marks and brands, whether on the bodice of her gown or the flesh of her forehead?” cried another female, the ugliest as well as the most pitiless of these self-constituted judges. “This woman has brought shame upon us all and ought to die. Is there no law for it? Truly, there is, both in the Scripture and the statute book. Then let the magistrates, who have made it of no effect, thank themselves if their own wives and daughters go astray! (p. 36).

This woman does not find that burning with iron or the punishment with the letter “A” is sufficient, but rather, the most appropriate punishment for Hester is hanging. She

believes that Hester will become a role model for the rest of the women in society. She believes that if a harsh punishment overthrows Hester, it is the perfect solution to deter others from falling into the same sin. Through these provisions, the influence of the patriarchal mentality on the thoughts of these women is clear.

When the judges sentence Hester to put the letter “A” on her bosom for life, to be a permanent stigma, one of the women said: “The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful over much,—that is a truth” (p. 36). This patriarchal woman believes that Hester has not received her suitable punishment yet.

Those women who judge Hester so harshly never thought that, in fact, they were judges of themselves. Any one of them may be exposed to the same situation as Hester, but they will be punished without mercy. These women did not realize that they were strengthening the masculinity ideology against themselves. By their arbitrary judgments, they inspire the men under their power to treat them with the same darkness and tyranny they inflict on Hester. Even Hawthorne describes them as “unkindly visaged women” (p. 38).

Sylvester Mutunda, in his article “Women Subjugating Women” (2007) argues that despite the prevailing thought that women are victims of patriarchal thought, some women support the continuation of this thought. He describes them as “extremely ignorant” and “self-manipulative”, and their support of patriarchal ideology makes life difficult for other women. Although Sylvester's study was of African women, his theory of women's oppression of women was evident in the Salem women's attitude toward Hester. This is evident in what one of the old women said:

Muttered the most iron-visaged of the old dames, if we stripped Madam Hester's rich gown off her dainty shoulders, and as for the red letter, which she

hath stitched so curiously, I'll bestow a rag of mine own rheumatic flannel, to make a fitter one! (p. 38).

It seems that Mutunda's theory that most patriarchal women are old women is evident in the quoted passage in which an elderly woman tries to contribute a brighter cloth to show the letter "A" shining, thus showing the sign of shame on Hester's bosom more clearly. Women are supposed to defend and protect Hester; because they are the most vulnerable category to male oppression, but what is really surprising is the way they act. These women see themselves as pure women who are practicing Christian teachings, but they ignore one of the most important teachings, for example, tolerance and repentance. Both women and judges do not touch on the idea of repentance, which is the most important way to reach purity and God's love. Jesus said: "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (*Bible*, 2011, Matthew 9:13). A person cannot live without commenting on any sin. Jesus said: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (*Bible*, 2011, Matthew 7:12). In another verse, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (*Bible*, 2011, Matthew 7:1). Therefore, each of these women is liable to fall into sin.

The harshness of the sentences imposed on Hester by these women seems to be more and more severe than the rulings of the male judges. Those women are saturated with masculine thoughts, and they seem to see that the more they issue judgments, the more unjust and arbitrary they are; the closer they are to be considered pure.

Two types of women appear in *The Crucible*; "the pure" represented by Elizabeth and Nurse Rebecca, and the malignant represented by Abigail Williams. They all belong to the exploited and inferior class. But when they rise in status to which the court believes

them, they betray the sex to which they belong. Abigail and the teenage girls deal with the rest of the village women with the same patriarchal mentality that had been practiced on them before. Abigail uses her patriarchal authority to fulfill her desire, namely, obtaining Proctor.

Valerie Lowe, in “Unhappy Confessions in *The Crucible*: A Pragmatic Explanation”, argues that Tituba falls into the class of slaves, a class that is inferior to the class of white women. Therefore, she is in a position of weakness, and she cannot challenge Abigail, who confesses that she is dealing with the devil to escape execution. But her confession has several qualities which makes it invalid. Lowe added that a white woman, Rebecca Nurse, refused to confess and is hanged (Lowe, 2002). The patriarchal mentality appears clearly in Abigail's character when she forces Tituba to join her in her lies. Thus, Tituba and the teenage girls are under the control of Abigail, just as the males dominate women in society.

It can be concluded that; women of patriarchal thought were trying to show the cruelty and oppression they saw in males. Instead of rejecting all that cruelty and persecution, on the contrary, they encouraged and supported patriarchal thought and applied the male laws to themselves and others. So, women might be subjected to oppression, not only by men but also by other women, and that was the most severe form of oppression.

3.2.3 The Anti-Puritan Women

Laws of the Puritan society were strict in dealing with women. It was previously explained that women should be pure by following such laws. In this regard, Yasmine Aşcı States: “ In a Puritan society, women should be more disciplined and moral and also religious. In addition, purity and being innocent is important to Puritan women” (Aşcı, Y, 2019, p. 9). In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne depicts the heroine, Hester

Prynne, as a strong, educated, and independent character. After Hester fell into the crime of adultery, she is punished by placing the scarlet letter “A” on her bosom. Hester accepts her punishment and appears in front of the society with a strong personality, which is contrary to the expectations of the court and society. In the scene of Hester's exit from prison, the prison guard is behind her, putting a stick on her back and trying to push her. Hester reacts as if she refused to be treated as a criminal “She repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character” (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 37). She did not see her guilt as a crime to be treated in this harsh way. When she is released from prison, the strength of her personality seemed to radiate from her face. There are no signs of shame on her face.

Those who had before known her and had expected to behold her dimmed and obscured by a disastrous cloud were astonished, and even startled, to perceive how her beauty shone out and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped (p. 38).

Hester does not reveal her feelings of pain and shame in front of the community. Instead, she appears with the decorated scarlet letter that is supposed to be the stigma of shame and disgrace. Such a thing contradicts what a woman should feel in the same situation in the laws of Puritans, where she should feel shame for what she did, but Hester does not feel so. Based on her guilt and not feeling ashamed of it, she is considered an “anti-Puritan” woman.

Another example of Hester's strength is her struggle in front of the court when the court tries to take her daughter. The refusal of the court's decision is an important witness of Hester's rebellion against laws. Hester believes that she has the right to motherhood. She can raise Pearl on divine love. She also believes that her sin will not turn her into a demon, so the love of God is still in her heart, even if she submits to her desires. Rahal

refers to this strong emotion in his dissertation, *Symbolism in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter (1850)*. In this regard, he states: "She is a very passionate and affectionate woman whom the heart predominates. She sinned through blind passion, and her passion and affection led her to fall in love with the reverend Dimmesdale and commit her sin." (Rahal. H, 2013, p. 38).

The court and community attempt to banish Hester by negating her from Salem Village. However, the faith in Hester's heart turns the punishment into a strength, as she had the greater freedom to raise Pearl away from Puritan laws. Hester settles in a cottage outside Salem Village and supports herself and her daughter. She came to terms with herself by accepting the punishment. She finds that her acceptance of punishment is the source of salvation. In his article, "An Analysis of Symbolism in The Scarlet Letter", Zheng argues:

Hester is ashamed of her sin, but she chooses to face reality rather than escape from it. In general, people may choose the way of leaving to some other place where nobody knows their sin. However, Hester is brave enough to continue to live her life, which shows her great strength and integrity (p. 378).

Hester's refusal to reveal the name of her father's daughter was another form of rejection of Puritan laws. She tries to rebel silently, as she has no other way to refuse the punishment except through silence. The society and the court see Hester's attitude as a rebellion against Puritan laws. Zheng argues that "Hester is looked down upon as if she is some sort of demon from hell that commits a terrible crime" (Zheng, 2017, p. 378). Although the society considers her rebellious, she cannot be considered a rebel like "Ann Hutchinson," who is considered a feminist. Ann Hutchinson was described as a strong woman who demanded women's rights and rebelled against males. She

demanded that every man who harmed a woman should be punished; because of her rebellion, she was tried and exiled outside of Massachusetts (Lang, 1987). However, Hester tries to obtain her rights, not by claiming them but by creating them. She deals with guilt as a way to salvation and makes a life for herself outside the laws of Salem, where she becomes independent and supports her daughter and herself alone without the presence of a man.

At the beginning of the story, Hester feels guilty according to the law of the Bible. But when she realizes that she is being punished by the patriarchal law, which was insulting and humiliating, she chooses to search for salvation in her way. It could be concluded that Hester's rebellion resists humiliation by relying on herself. She could live independently, without a man, in contrast to the laws of the Puritans, which rejected the independence of women from men. For that, Hester is considered an anti-Puritan woman.

Comparing *The Scarlet Letter* with *The Crucible*, Miller draws the characters of women as either pure, cold, and negative women like Elizabeth and Nurse Rebecca or wicked women like Abigail. In fact, no one can say that the character of Elizabeth is rebellious because she does not try to change any reality that falls on her. Elizabeth's character is so negative that she does not even try to defend her right as a wife when her husband betrays her with Abigail. The most she does is dismiss Abigail. Elizabeth does not try to rebel against the fact that she is a Puritan woman subjected to laws of masculinity. Many times she says to Proctor: "I do not judge you". This is the truth of the Puritan woman, to be subjected to the law of masculinity. A woman cannot judge a man, even if he is guilty because the man is the one who sets the laws and the one who rules.

Rebellion can be seen in Mary Warren's behavior when she comes to tell Proctor and his wife, Elizabeth, that she is being accused of witchcraft. "Proctor, in horror, muttering in disgust at her: Go to bed. Mary Warren, with a stamp of her foot: I'll not be ordered to bed anymore, Mr. Proctor! I am eighteen and a woman, however single!" (Miller, 2000, p. 60). Mary is a servant and woman who is supposed to obey her master, Proctor. However, she refuses to comply with his request, and that is the beginning of the rebellion, which extended later with Abigail, who accused all women of the village of working with the devil.

Abigail rebels against Proctor when he asks her to withdraw her accusation of witchcraft against Elizabeth, but she refuses:

"Proctor: If you do not free my wife tomorrow, I am set and bound to ruin you, Abby.

Abigail, *her voice small, astonished*: How – ruin me? (Miller, 2000, p.151)

In fact, what Abigail does could be considered rebellious. She is supposed to comply with Proctor's request. Presumably, women should follow the orders and rules of men, but Abigail does not. She uses her power, which she derives from the Puritan laws, to reject Proctor's request and take revenge on Elizabeth.

Rocío Stevenson Muñoz (2007) in "Abigail Williams as A Femme Fatale in *The Crucible*" argues that the reason for Abigail's power that helps her rebel is "knowledge." Abigail not only opens her eyes to sexual knowledge, but she also opens them to understanding the hypocrisy of Salem's residents, "And then you burned my ignorance away. As bare as some December tree, I saw them all – walking like saints to church, running to feed the sick, and hypocrites in their hearts!" (Miller, 2000, p. 150). Rocío Stevenson Muñoz adds that was what made Abigail strong in the eyes of the

Puritans. In addition, Muñoz argues Abigail was smart in making accusations, as she did not charge men as much as she charged the weakest links in society, which were women: “She is certain of the fact that declaring witchcraft upon certain members of the community will provide her with instant power and recognition because of the internal grudges that many people hold against others” (Muñoz, 2007, p. 220). In addition to what Muñoz argues, once Abigail gained societal influence, she exercised her power against women to obtain what she wanted, which was the death of Elizabeth and marriage to Proctor. It was the same way that masculine thought used to impose power on women to get what they wanted.

Although Mary Warren and Abigail refused to obey Proctor's orders, that rebellion is not against the Puritan laws. On the contrary, Abigail's actions agreed with the laws of the judges and the church, so that rebellion did not expose them to death. The rebellion against Puritans and patriarchy could be seen in the behavior of the village's women. Led by Nurse Rebecca, they refused to admit to working with the devil. The judges tried to force women to confess to witchcraft. However, everyone who refused to confess was hanged. Compared to Mr. Paris's servant, Tituba, who chose to submit to confession to escape hanging.

Since there was sin, which was witchcraft, there was supposed to be a sinner; and since women were the weakest class in Puritan society, they were charged with that guilt. Women's refusal to confess something they did not do, was a rebellion against male laws, so they were hanged. It might be concluded that those who were not under the power of the patriarchal, like Rebecca, would be against it, and if they were against it, they would be hanged. Thus, submission to Puritan laws was salvation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sin and Punishment in the Puritan Society

4.1 Introduction

The theme of sin and punishment dominates both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*. This chapter discusses the way Puritan laws dealt with sin and how they applied punishment. The chapter also focuses on the punishment of adultery and witchcraft as unforgivable sins that must be punished in state laws that were derived from the Church. The issue that will be discussed in this part is whether the punishment applied to the offender is just. What is the unforgivable sin? What are the methods of punishment? Why is the punishment not equal to sin? This chapter discusses the method of punishment applied to women in both *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*.

The Puritan society was strict in applying the laws of the Church. Therefore, an act that violates religious teachings is a corruption of society. The Puritans aspired to build a perfect society. One of the most important rules of perfection in the Puritan society was to be free from sins, especially those sins that were related to the corruption of the family bond, which was the cornerstone of society in building New England. Based on this hard-line thought, sin can be defined as any act that violates Puritan teachings and affects the perfect structure of society since witchcraft is an evil deed that harms and corrupts society. Adultery is also a corruption of the marriage bond. It is considered a great sin that the law of the Church must punish.

“Adultery” is defined as the crime of an illegal sexual relationship between a man and a woman who is not bound by the legal sacred marriage bond. Thus, every relationship of a married or a single man with a woman who is not his wife is “adultery”. In other words, any sexual relationship between a wife and a man other than her husband is

adultery according to the Puritan laws and the “Holy Book”. Thus, it is considered a crime of betrayal committed by the wife against her husband or vice versa. But some people may wonder whether the relationship between a man separated from his wife or a wife separated from her husband and have no sacred relationship between them, but having a relationship with another person is considered a crime of adultery! Jesus said: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart”. (Bible, 2011, Matthew 5:27-28). According to the previous verse, adultery is considered one of the most reprehensible sins in the Holy Book; therefore, the harsh punishment that occurs in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible* is justified.

The other sin that will be clarified in this research is “witchcraft,” which appears in *The Crucible*. Brian P Levack, in his book, *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (2013), defines witchcraft as a pact that the magician makes with the devil by giving all loyalty and complete obedience to him: “There was a broad agreement that witches were individuals who could cause harm, misfortune, or evil by some sort of preternatural or occult means” (Levack, 2013, p. 4). Salem people believe that the magician harms people, whether they are their neighbors, people who abuse them, or people who hate them. By inflicting physical harm such as disease, or making these people have bad luck. All these evil deeds are aided by demonic power. In the Puritan laws, both adultery and witchcraft are punished by hanging to death.

4.2 Sin and Punishment in *The Scarlet Letter*

The first chapter of this research discussed ideas of Puritan reform in an attempt to reach the stage of pure societies through the Protestant reforms in New England.

The most important one of those teachings was the categorical rejection of sexual relations outside marriage, which is known as “adultery”. Hawthorne and Miller dared to display these radical ideas in their literary works. Although such teachings reject the crime of adultery, Hawthorne dared to present it in his masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter*.

Hester Prynne becomes pregnant with a child whose father is unknown. Later, the reader discovers that he is Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. Hester is imprisoned and humiliated by the Salem community and repeatedly interrogated by judges. However, she does not reveal the name of her daughter’s father, who is satisfied to see her stand alone on the base of shame. He remains silent and does not reveal his identity. In addition, he is among the judges who interrogate her:

Arthur: believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better it so; than to hide a guilty heart through life. What can thy silence do for him, except it tempts him – yea, compel him, as it were – to add hypocrisy to sin? (p.67).

In this situation, the selfishness of manhood is clear in Arthur's position. The surface meaning of his words reveals my name” is that way, he sent a message to Hester “I didn't abandon you.” This arouses Hester's sympathy for not revealing his name. If he is really honest, he would reveal his name and confess his guilt. But he is malicious; he does so to protect his face and name. Hester's silence is expected to stir Arthur's conscience and to be beside her on the base of shame. Baym surmises: “Of course, he is terrified by the social consequences of his confession. One who leans so heavily on the social structure would be almost certainly destroyed if he were cast out of it as Hester has been” (Baym, 1970, p. 227). Likewise, Fo-Koku D. Woameno (2019) comments on Arthur's position:

Therefore, while his co-sinner was being humiliated, he chose to be silent, playing the innocent before the community. The actual reader finds between these lines an expression of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy, also known as sanctimoniousness, denotes insincerity by pretending to have qualities (p. 302).

Therefore, Dimmesdale preferred silence to preserve his social and religious standing in front of the society and the church: "...though he were to step down from a high place" (p.67). By these words, he realizes that if he confesses his sin, he will be expelled from his religious position in the Senate; therefore, he will be despised socially by people.

4.2.1 Hester Prynne's Sin and Punishment

Hawthorne's feminism was clear in certain corners of the novel through his defense of his heroine, Hester Prynne. "Had Hester sinned alone?" (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 60). The punishment falls entirely on Hester, although she is not the only part of this guilt! Hester is put in a position where she takes on her guilt and that of her lover, who stood to interrogate her in front of the judges instead of telling about himself and bearing the great and heavy shame that he threw on Hester's bosom alone. Hester's silence and not revealing Arthur's name is an indirect request to Arthur's heart to move and try to stand up to the judges and society and express his strong love for her. Moreover, she wants him to be ready to defend her in the face of the society. On the other hand, Hester's non-disclosure of Arthur's name is a clear indication of intense love and deep fear for Arthur from his legal and social flogging. Arthur Dimmesdale has to be able to bear the shame and face the humiliation and moral, physical, and spiritual punishment that falls on Hester Prynne alone; while she is standing on the scaffold for three hours in front of the people of Salem. Arthur should have carried all the looks of disgust that Hester has

from the society. In his article, J. G. Ravi Kumar denounces Arthur's act in his words "Ironically, the man she is under pressure to name is her lover who happens to be [questioning her] [Dimmesdale] is weak, hypocritical, and selfish for hiding his sin from the public for fear of losing his status and position as a reputed preacher" (Kumar, 2016, p. 104). The first punishment for Hester is when she is betrayed by a man whom she trusted and loved.

Society rejected Hester Prynne after the judges ruled that she should carry the letter "A" on her bosom all along her life. The fiery letter "A" used to burn her heart whenever someone looked at her as if she were carrying disgrace wherever she went so that no one could forget her adultery. Hester Prynne's punishment is so great that it is not physically as much as it was spiritually and morally. Edmund S. Morgan reports in *The Puritan and Sex, The New England Quarterly* (1942) "Toward sexual intercourse outside marriage the Puritans were as frankly hostile as they were favorable to it in marriage. They passed laws to punish adultery with death, and fornication with whipping" (Morgan, 1942, p. 594). Debauchery was punished with flogging, and adultery was punished by hanging to death. Based on the strict law of hanging for the crime of adultery, some may see that Hester's punishment is not so severe that it led her to be hanged. Her sentence began by putting her in prison until she gave birth to her baby. The court punishes her by placing the letter "A" on her bosom for life without removing it under any circumstance or appearing in the society without it. Another punishment that Hester tastes is when the court humiliates her by holding her and her daughter, Pearl, on scaffolding for three hours in front of the Boston community. She is listening to whispers from men and women in Boston from all directions as gazes are eating her face. But she stands firm and endured the pain of that punishment. Mursalin Jahan and Syed Zaheer in "Individualism of Hester Prynne in the Seventeenth Century

Puritan Society: The Scarlet Letter” (2016) discuss the idea that the court would have used this method of punishment to intimidate the rest of the women in society from committing this crime. As if saying whoever does what Hester did will be punished on the podium in front of the whole community and will be banished, ostracized, and humiliated (Jahan, M. 2016). The researchers point out that the attempt to humiliate Hester by placing the scarlet letter on her chest does not work for Hester, as she decorates the scarlet letter with golden threads because she realizes that the letter is a lamp of right in the dark path that the militants are put in. Thus, the court uses this method to promote moral education in the society through Hester's punishment so that this punishment would motivate women and men not to make the same mistake.

But the idea of purification of the society does not mean punishing one of the parties of the crime. Rather, the punishment should be for the man and woman who commit adultery. So that together they can be an example for men and women in the society and deter them from not falling into the crime of adultery. Therefore, the researcher believes that the court's punishment of Hester in this harsh manner of humiliation reflects male domination over women, for the judges' punishment against Hester is a clear sign of the humiliation of women. Hester's pride in herself is a clear symbol of the femininity that rejects masculine thought, which does a threat to masculine authority.

Despite all the pain that Hester feels, her face appears with high audacity as she stands on the scaffold in front of society. This is a clear indication that she is not admitting sin, at least from her point of view. Hester considers herself a widow, and by assuming that her husband is dead, she does not betray the bond of sacred marriage. Her gaze shows that she is a woman who truly love and is loyal to the one she loved till the last moment. She did not mention the name of her lover to preserve his reputation and image in front

of the community. On the other hand, Hester derived her strength from her belief that the one who holds her accountable for her sin or forgives her is God, not humans. “..Heaven would show mercy” (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 133).

The Boston people saw that Hester’s punishment was simple and full of mercy: “The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch—that is a truth” (Hawthorne, 2016, p.33) added a third autumnal matron. “...they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne’s forehead” (Hawthorne, 2016, p.33) added another, “...little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown! Why, look you, she may cover it with a brooch” (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 33). But, if examining the matter from a deep angle, it was a merciless punishment, as the punishment of merciful death is less than the one with which Hester was punished because death ends her pain in an instant. It could be that her blood will wash away her shame, also she will gain the sympathy of society after her death, and after a short period, people will forget her and forget her shame. Or she may become a martyr of love, or some take her as a great symbol of sacrifice. However, her punishment was full of meanness, as if it was a categorical refusal to repent. Hawthorne hinted in his novel around the idea that the punishment that fell on Hester was not only from the patriarchal minds but also from some women’s views who adopted the male thought as well. The impact of female punishment on Hester may be the most severe. The women of Salem society saw themselves as pure and chaste, whereas Hester Prynne was not. This can be seen in the old woman’s words; “...members in good repute should have the handling of such malefictresses as this Hester Prynne” (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 55), by that she will remain a symbol of shame in front of society throughout her life. Thus, she will be a completely rejected and outcast person who cannot be approached or dealt with because dealing

with him is tantamount to disgrace. Society's rejection reached the point that she did not find anyone who would allow her to work for him to support herself and her daughter.

The fiery symbol was placed on her bosom and fed fire and sparked in her heart whenever someone looked at her with that disgusting look. Even after a long time, people cannot forget her punishment. As every time someone looks at her, her punishment will be renewed even after a long time has passed. Hawthorne explains in his novel the corruption of patriarchal society by saying: "Be it accepted as a proof that all was not corrupt in this poor victim of her frailty, and man's hard law, that Hester Prynne yet struggled to believe that no fellow-mortal was guilty like herself" (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 60). All the punishment, in this case, fell on Hester alone because she is a "woman" in the dominant male world. Jesus said, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her" (*Bible*, 2011, John 8:7). Looking at the members of this case, it will be seen that all of its members were corrupt. From the hypocritical Arthur Dimmesdale to the judges who were forced to impose unjust sentences on Hester alone move to Hester's husband, Roger Chillingworth, that person who was full of hate and revenge just like Satan, who wreaked havoc on Arthur's soul, trying to kill him by planting guilt and growing it in the darkness in Arthur's heart. Despite all the corruption surrounding Hester, the punishment falls on her alone because she is the only woman in this case in a male-dominated world.

4.2.2 Pearl's Punishment

The punishment is not limited to Hester Prynne alone but extends to include her daughter, Pearl, whom the society views as "...a demon offspring" (Hawthorn, 2016, p. 68). So, the punishment is not for Hester alone, but it crosses over to reach little Pearl. Salem society's view of that child is cruel to the extent that it describes her as the

daughter of Satan because she comes from sin. She also is ostracized by the rest of the children to the extent that when Pearl passes by them, they are afraid of her. If referred to religious teachings, it will be found that the punishment, if done, is only for the offender and not the victim. Pearl is a victim figure in this case, so what is the fault of this innocent child for the sin of the adults? The poisonous and immature ideas that people derive from the ideas and judgments of judges make them judge others with arbitrary judgments that do not have a sound logical structure. The church and the court aspired to control mistakes to achieve pure societies, but it may be that the extremist ideas in Hester's punishment affected the society negatively, by polluting its ideas and making it a ruthless one.

4.2.3 Pearl and Hester's Sin and Punishment

The punishment does not depend on Hester or Pearl alone, but both include the penalty of separating a mother from her daughter. Hester's punishment is not limited to isolation and humiliation but goes beyond that to the point where the court demands her daughter be detained and taken from her because she is an unfit mother to raise Pearl and an unfit mother to teach her correct Puritan religious principles. This is clear in Mr. Wilson's words: "...the child shall be well cared for! — far better than thou canst do it" (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 77). One of the harshest punishments a woman could go through is separating her son from her. This punishment is more severe than all that Hester has gone through before; she asks for her right to maternity "...what are a mother's rights?" (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 77). Patriarchal mentality cruelty cannot reach the extent that someone is tortured and kept alive by keeping him alive and at the same time separating his soul from him. The court realizes that Hester derives her strength from that little angel "She is my happiness!—she is my torture, nonetheless! Pearl keeps me here in

life!” (p.76). She bears difficulties and penalties for Pearl's sake, so taking Pearl from her mother is tantamount to defeating Hester in her battle.

In search of Mr. Wilson's viewpoint, Hester is not fit to raise Pearl and that she will distort her heart with sins as she did. If comparing little Pearl with the children of a Salem society in this passage: “Behold, verily, there is the woman of the scarlet letter; and, of a truth, moreover, there is the likeness of the scarlet letter running along by her side! Come, therefore, and let us fling mud at them!” (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 70). It is noticed that the amount of hatred instilled in the hearts of these innocent little ones. The mothers of these young children were certainly “pure,” so how do they instill evil and hatred in the hearts of innocent children? Hester Prynne bore unbearable pain as a result of the mistake of falling into adultery. She is tortured and punished, so it would be a priority for her to keep that pain away from her little girl by raising her with a pure upbringing away from the mistakes that will expose her to the same pain that Hester faced. Hester, who has tasted the bitterness of sin, will not like her daughter to fall into the same precipice, so raising Pearl will be purer than herself. These words by Hester explain shortly what has been discussed, “...this badge hath taught me—it daily teaches me—it is teaching me at this moment—lessons whereof my child may be the wiser and better, albeit they can profit nothing to myself” (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 75). It will be realized that Mr. Wilson's excuse for this punishment has nothing to do with righteousness. It's only cruel punishment to burn Hester's heart. A person cannot defend his right if he does not believe in them. Hester's belief in herself and her right to motherhood Pearl gave her the strength to defend her right to custody of her daughter. It gave her the strength with which she faced a predatory patriarchal society which treats Hester as a culprit.

Hester is not the only guilty, but her husband, Roger Chillingworth, when he sent her to Boston alone, is guilty too. What is the wisdom of sending a woman alone into a dark and new world that does not yet know if it is good or evil? Why didn't he accompany her and be by her side so she would not have sinned? Leaving her alone to guide the new world and suffer. When she fell into sin, he came to complete the patriarchal mentality of offering torment to the salvation of Hester's soul. Chillingworth came to be another punisher. When he came and saw that she was on the scaffold, he indicated to her not to tell anyone his real identity. He does not want to tarnish his reputation in the name of the adulterous woman. He also tries to conceal his true identity, because he is looking for revenge on Hester and her lover, whom he later discovers to be Arthur Dimmesdale.

4.2.4 Arthur Dimmesdale's Sin and Punishment

Hawthorne describes Arthur Dimmesdale as a beloved priest who has a high social standing in the Puritan community in Boston. He follows the Puritan laws and applies them and invites people to adhere to them. Despite his submission to the Puritan laws, he breaks these laws and commits adultery with Hester Prynne. Thus, he violates the system of Puritanism to which he is subjected. Since Hester and Dimmesdale are not husband and wife, what they have done is known as adultery. As mentioned previously, the crime of adultery is considered an unforgivable crime in the Puritan laws because it causes corruption in society, and the offenders of it must be subject to severe punishment. The fact that Arthur Dimmesdale, a righteous clergyman, falls into sin proves that no human being is immune to sinning and that any member of a peaceful society has committed a sin of various kinds. Since no man is without sin, Arthur can save himself, confess his sin, defend his beloved, and atone for his sin. Jesus said. "If it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for

the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering” (*Bible*, 2011, Leviticus 4:3). In Puritan laws, a person is either a good believer or a true confessor. However, Arthur is neither this nor that, and since he falls into sin, he is not innocent and does not confess his guilt, he is not honest. Arthur is the one who tortures himself and punishes his soul by not confessing his sin and by abandoning his beloved and his daughter, as Hester is suffering pain and bearing the sin alone. Arthur chooses to hide the secret of his sin with great selfishness for fear of falling from his social and religious standing in a peaceful society. In *The Influence of Puritanism on the Sin and Punishment in The Scarlet Letter* Jianying Gao et al., argue that “Dimmesdale and Hester committed the same sin; they both suffer from the same torment “A”. Because his activities violate his doctrine which causes a split personality, he suffers even more than Hester Prynne” (Jianying Gao et al., 2014, p. 187). Arthur is not subjected to legal punishment from the church for his sin as the bitter punishments that Hester faces. All the pain that Arthur suffers from is nothing but his issues of the soul and the torment of conscience. This punishment is nothing compared to the physical, moral, and spiritual torment that Hester and her daughter are facing. Hawthorne shows Dimmesdale’s character to be suffering from a separation between his apparent personality, that of a high moral priest, and the dark side of the character suffering from the pain of sin, and internal struggle between honesty, repentance, and hypocrisy to preserve the external image of his personality as a clergyman. For seven years, Dimmesdale conceals his guilt from the public, which keeps seeing him as a good priest. He tried to search for salvation in various ways but with the same hypocrisy and lack of acknowledgment of guilt. He believes that the only salvation is death, but in the end, he submits to God's salvation and confesses his sin in public.

4.3 Sin and Punishment in *The Crucible*

4.3.1 Introduction

Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* play was performed for the first time on Broadway on January 1953. The play's event is set in Massachusetts in 1692. Miller excelled in showing two sins, the sin of witchcraft and that of adultery. Both sins are defined as crimes that lead to the corruption of society, so they must be punished by Puritan law. In the first part of this chapter, the crime of adultery was defined as an illegal relationship between a man and a woman who does not have a sacred marriage bond. Witchcraft was defined as agreeing with Satan to harm people. In *The Crucible*, the crime of adultery occurs first, then the crime of witchcraft follows, but how? Sin and punishment are major themes in *The Crucible*, and they will be discussed here. Also, this part discusses the crime of adultery, how it occurs, who the culprit is, and who the victim is. The crime of witchcraft is also discussed in terms of occurrence, victims, and crimes.

The events of *The Crucible* begin with the witchcraft that is done in the wood by the girls of Salem village led by Abigail, the niece of Minister Paris. Abigail is working as a maid in John Proctor's house. Through the development of the events, it becomes clear to the reader that John Proctor has committed adultery with his maid, Abigail, who is only seventeen years old. It is her first sexual experience, but after John commits the crime, he feels guilty and abandons Abigail. She thinks of making witchcraft against Elizabeth, Proctor's wife, in an attempt to get rid of her and get Proctor as a husband. After a magical night in the wood, Minister Paris's daughter falls ill, and the priest, Hall, diagnoses that Satan has stolen her soul. Abigail and the village girls, who are with her in the woods, get scared. She tries to keep the accusation away from herself in a malicious way. She convinces everyone in the village, including court judges, that she

saw the devil and the village women who were working with him. According to the law of the Bible, whoever performs witchcraft is punished by hanging. “You shall not permit a sorceress to live” (Bible, 2011, Exodus 22:18). But, with arbitrary sentences not based on evidence, the court began to hang anyone who is suspected of working with Satan. The accusations hunted most of the village women who were working with the devil. The accusation did not exclude Elizabeth, John Proctor’s wife. Proctor tries to defend his wife and to admit to the court that all the allegations made by Abigail are because he commits crime of adultery with her. However, the court did not take into account the great confession. The events were not unveiled till John was accused of the crime of witchcraft. After Abigail's escape, it became clear to the court that what Proctor had confessed about adultery was true. The court insisted that John should choose between his confession that he worked with the devil or of arrogance. If he chose to be arrogant, he would be hanged; he chose to die by hanging.

4.3.2 Elizabeth and Village Women’s Sin and Punishment

Miller portrays Elizabeth as the cold wife who had caused her husband, Proctor, to commit adultery. Where Elizabeth pleads guilty to being a cold wife:

I have read my own heart these three months, John. I have sins of my own to count. It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery..... you take my sins upon yours, John... John, I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me! Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say, my love. It was a cold house I kept! (p. 139).

Elizabeth blames herself for being a cold wife as she does not give her husband enough love. Within this context, Miller justifies John’s adultery. In his paper, “The Quest for Identity in Arthur Miller's The Crucible”, Noorbakhsh Hooti says, “Elizabeth

recognizes not only her guilt as a wife but also her responsibility to Proctor to seek fulfillment of love through adultery” (Hooti, 2011, p. 72).

Elizabeth was accused of witchcraft, and though she is innocent of that charge, she is imprisoned and exposed to hanging, but her pregnancy interceded for her. Although Elizabeth is indeed a cold wife, as Miller describes her, does that a sufficient justification for being severely punished? Also, is that a sufficient excuse for Proctor to fall into adultery? The answer is absolute, no.

The death penalty is applied to a large part of the women of the village whenever they are accused of witchcraft, even without ascertaining the truth of the accusation. The strange thing is that the accusations are directed against women, not men. When examining the rulings of the judges in *The Crucible*, it will be found that intolerance is clear in the rulings. However, the principle of forgiveness is one of the most important principles of the “Holy Book”. The patriarchal thought of the Puritans made another mistake by applying punishment to women without trying to implement the principle of tolerance. The real problem is that judges like Danforth thought that his arbitrary and intolerant judges are correct: “Mr. Hale, as God has [sic] not empowered me like Joshua to stop the sun from rising, so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment” (Miller, 2000, p. 114). Fo-Koku Woameno comments on this regard, “So zealous were they that they tended to forget that from a psycho-sociological point of view human nature is inclined to doing good as well as bad. Religiously” (Woameno, 2019, p. 306). In fact, Woameno is right about the human nature of good and evil. God knows that humans are sinners. That is why the Bible emphasizes the virtue of forgiveness.

4.3.3 John Proctor's Sin and Punishment

Proctor's character is initially shown to be socially withdrawn. She rarely goes to church: "I have trouble enough without I come five miles to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation..." (Miller, 2000, p. 28). If Proctor did not represent personal religion and morality, his falling into adultery is an inevitable result, being not very much interested in religious teachings. "Though a respected man in the community, proctor's moral code derives from his own conscience, not from the Reverend Mr. Paris's fire- and brimstone sermons" (Hooti, 2011, p. 71). After Elizabeth is accused of witchcraft, Proctor had no choice but to intervene in an attempt to save his wife from being hanged. He believes that Elizabeth is innocent and that it is his fault that he has killed so many women until his wife is punished. He tries to confess his crime, but the court does not believe his confession. "Proctor: I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence, but it is public? God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins are! It is enough!" (Miller, 2000, p. 142). This is an attempt by John to admit the guilt of adultery openly. Before Elizabeth is accused, John does not confess the sin of adultery as manifested when confronting Abigail:

PROCTOR: Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of your mind. We never touched, Abby.

ABIGAIL: Aye, but we did

PROCTOR: Aye, but we did not" (p. 29-30).

In the previous section, the guilt of adultery is clear. Although Proctor tries to evade it one way or another, Abigail admits it spontaneously and honestly. Her heart trusts Proctor's love, who, after what he has done, evades her repeatedly for two reasons. The

first is Proctor's feeling of which hindered return; the other is just a passing whim and emptying of his dark desires. The two reasons reveal that there are two victims, and both are “women”. The first one is Abigail, who is seventeen years of age and fell victim to the fleeting whim of a “man”. The second was Elizabeth, Proctor’s wife, whose husband betrays both her and the sacred marriage bond.

What Proctor does in defending the idea that there is no witchcraft for which he bore the punishment is an attempt to atone for his first guilty adultery with Abigail, which led to Abigail’s hysteria that ended with the hanging of many women. Hooti argues, “Thus, Proctor's death is not heroic; it is emblematic of his public ‘self’ and his strong sense of social responsibility” (Hooti, 2011, p. 71). In fact, Hooti believes that Proctor's death is not so heroic as it is a kind of social sentiment. Proctor realizes that all the crimes of hanging that take place are because of his sin.

4.3.4 Abigail’s Sin

Some may see Abigail as the biggest culprit in the play, as she uses a ruse to accuse the women of the village and subject them to hanging. However, she is a young girl of no more than 17 years old whom Proctor sexually exploited.

Abigail, in tears: I look for John Proctor, that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! I never knew what pretense Salem was; I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their covenanted men! And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not. I cannot! You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is, you love me yet! He turns abruptly to go out. She rushes to him. John, pity me, pity me! (p. 24).

Abigail genuinely loves Proctor, but he let her down because he only uses her sexually. He does not know that by his action, he turns her from an innocent little girl into a

monster who wants revenge. Since she is a weak person, she uses tricks to reach her goal. At the end of the play, Miller describes her as becoming a whore in Boston. “The legend was that Abigail turned up later as a prostitute in Boston” (Miller, 2000, p. 146). Who planted knowledge in the heart of Abigail? Definitely, Proctor. Miller portrays “man” Proctor as the sacrificial hero. While the female, Abigail, is portrayed as the whore and devil. It must be admitted that what Abigail does, is malicious; it also has to be recognized that this maliciousness is based on Proctor's fault. This is not a justification for Abigail's actions; rather, it is a refusal to portray women as demons and portrays men as a hero.

4.4 Similarities and Differences of Sin and Punishment in Both Works

The Scarlet Letter and *The Crucible* are two literary works that took place during the same period, the Puritan era, and in the same place, Salem Village. Therefore, it is possible to say that they depict the principles of that era. Most of what was focused on in this research was the ethical principles in dealing with women. The theme of guilt and punishment is prominent in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*, which was discussed in the previous part of this chapter. This part explores the issue of guilt and punishment in both works in terms of similarities and differences.

The similarity in time, place, and some events is evident in the two literary works. However, Miller and Hawthorne dealt with guilt differently. Sarah Good appears to be pregnant without identifying the father of the child:

Marry Warren: But, Mr. Proctor, they will not hang them if they confess. Sarah Good will only sit in jail some time – [recalling] – and here’s a wonder for you; think on this. Goody Good is pregnant!

Elizabeth: Pregnant! Are they mad? The woman is near to sixty!

Marry Warren: They had Doctor Griggs examine her, and she is full to the brim.

And smoking a pipe all these years, and no husband either! (p. 58).

This event is similar to Hester Prynne's situation when she got pregnant and does not reveal the name of her father's child. Sarah Good would be punished with imprisonment, as mentioned in the previous section, and Hester was punished with humiliation, exile, and imprisonment. What is ironic in both of the previous cases is that the punishment is directed at one of the parties to adultery, a woman, but where is the men's position in the punishment?!

On the other hand, the hero, John Proctor, who committed the crime of adultery with Abigail, was not exposed to any legal questions about this crime, even after the judiciary confirmed the fact that he has committed adultery. The patriarchal system is clear in presenting the idea of showing Sarah Good as an immoral woman and punished her by imprisonment, in comparison to Proctor, who appeared as a man of good morals. On the other hand, Miller tries to show his hero, John Proctor, with the character of the highest morals so that the reader would sympathize with his cause. However, John fell into the crime of adultery, which is one of the biggest crimes in the Puritan era and should be punished according to the laws of the church. Miller presents Proctor as the sacrificial hero in society: "Proctor: I have three children - how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?" (Miller, 2000, p. 143).

Another comparison between Proctor's wife, Elizabeth, and Hester's husband, Chillingworth, as parties of marital infidelity. Elizabeth dismissed her maid, Abigail, who became cold with her husband, Proctor. Then, at the end of the events, she forgives him and wishes that he would return home. Chillingworth's way of dealing with infidelity, he tries every way to get revenge on Hester and Arthur Dimmesdale. Roger

gave up his real name so as not to be tarnished by Hester's shame. Then he takes advantage of his work as a doctor for Arthur. He is supposed to treat him for psychological pain, but Roger took advantage of the situation to take revenge on Arthur by digging into his soul and increasing his sense of guilt. Chillingworth: "This man (...) pure as they deem him,—all spiritual as he seems,—hath inside a strong animal nature from his father or mother. Let us dig a little farther in the direction of this vein!" (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 109).

It is clear that women are more merciful, as Elizabeth applies the principle of religious tolerance; she emphasizes that she cannot judge John, as she is also a person who made mistakes. "...I am not your judge, I cannot be..." (Miller, 2000, p. 138). With these two contrasting scenes between Roger's position and Elizabeth's position, it is clear that although women are subjected to male oppression, they believe in religious teachings more than men. Moreover, the religious teachings of the Puritans are only applies to women, as if the patriarchal society always put women in the position of accusation and ignoring the sin of men.

Arthur Dimmesdale and John Proctor commit adultery. Arthur fell into that sin as a result of his closeness and love for Hester. At the same time, John commits the crime as a result of a fleeting whim. Both of them abandoned the women they believes in. Hester and her daughter struggle on their own. Abigail turns into a demon to get what she wants. Hester is punished with humiliation, and Abigail is exiled and turns into a whore. It has been seen that woman has no choice but to defend herself, as in the case of the women of Salem Village who are accused of witchcraft, or even to choose punishment or repentance, like Hester's situation. On the other hand, it has been seen that Arthur and

Proctor have the freedom to choose the way of salvation. Arthur and Proctor believe that salvation is death, which is depicted heroically.

Both works dealt with the issue of crime and punishment. It is noted that the punishment is applied unmercifully to women, excluding men who has the freedom to choose the way of salvation. At the end of his novel, Hawthorne emphasizes this virtue by saying: "...we put only this into a sentence: "Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred!" (Hawthorne, 2016, p. 177).

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The Scarlet Letter and *The Crucible* are works of American literature. Both works conveyed a clear picture of Puritan life in general and the way Puritan laws dealt with women in particular. Reading the two works revealed male dominance in the Puritan society as noted in these works. Women did not play any major role in the society except the traditional roles of being mothers or wives. One of the biggest accomplishments of any woman is getting a husband. She is not allowed to live independently away from men. She also does not have the opportunity for education, which was restricted to men, so very few women are educated. In fact, laws were enacted and executed by men. Therefore, women are required to submit to such laws in a Puritan society under the pretext that they were derived from the Bible and should be obeyed.

Since women suffered from oppression, in many Western societies in general and Puritan Counterparts, in particular, many groups of women and critics appeared to defend and call for women's rights. Those groups were called "Feminist Waves", which were three in number. The feminist movements produced many pioneers, such as Virginia Woolf, Elaine Showalter, Simone De Beauvoir, and others. They provided many concepts that criticized male dominance in society. Some of those concepts were "Patriarchalism" and "Other". The feminist critics criticized patriarchal writing, in which women were depicted stereotypically, either as whores, mindless housewives, or witches, but men were portrayed as heroes.

The research discussed three types of women that appeared in *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*, “pure”, “anti-puritans,” and “patriarchal”, the patriarchal woman was that who embodied patriarchal thought, which they applied to themselves and other women in society. This type was typical of Salem women who issued harsh sentences and demanded various kinds of ruthless punishments be applied to Hester. The woman who obeyed the Puritan’s laws was considered “pure”, as represented by Elizabeth, Proctor's wife. Miller portrayed her as a pure Puritan woman committed to the teachings of the Bible. Although she was a good Christian, she was punished with imprisonment and would have been hanged by the Puritan court, which did not investigate the truth of the charge against her. On the other hand, the woman who rebelled against the Puritan laws was considered “anti-Puritan”, as presented by Hester Prynne. Despite her suffering from humiliation by the Puritan court and Puritan society, she appeared independent and strong. Thus, Hester did not resemble the Puritan women and could be classified as “anti-Puritan”.

The theme of guilt and punishment appeared in both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*. Miller and Hawthorne showed how the Puritans dealt with the sinners. The Puritans tried to keep the society free from sin by punishing the guilty without mercy and forcing them to accept the laws that men enacted. Thus, punishments were imposed on women as they were the weakest class. The laws were not applied justly to women and men, as seen in Hester's case, when the punishment fell entirely on her, while the court did not seriously investigate who her partner might be. As for the case of the Salem witches, accusations were leveled against women who were also punished by hanging without a fair trial. Elizabeth was imprisoned, and Rebecca was punished by hanging, while Proctor seemed to be the sacrificial hero who chose a heroic death. As for Hester's case, she was punished with imprisonment and then with the letter “A” to

be a sign of shame as a kind of humiliation, while Arthur did not receive any actual punishment. In contrast, Proctor and Arthur's fates were similar as the two chose salvation through death. In contrast, Hester thought that salvation was achieved by accepting punishment and turning that punishment into a bridge to escape from the laws of the Puritans.

Miller portrayed women in *The Crucible* in a stereotypical way, as represented by Elizabeth, the cold housewife whose coldness helped incite her husband to adultery. In another stereotype, Miller portrayed Abigail as a prostitute who seduced Proctor and lured him to sin, and when Miller revealed Abigail's fate, she became a prostitute in Boston. The last stereotype was the image of Salem women who were punished for witchcraft. Contrary to the image of men in the play, Miller presented them as occupying high positions and judges, and they were introduced as heroes like Proctor. Thus, the patriarchal society views women to be inferior to men. So the executioner can charge and punish them more freely.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne displayed the conflict between love and feelings of sin in Hester's heart, who was suffering from the sin she committed, and how she bravely withstood the consequences. Therefore, she was described as a strong woman because she bore the punishment on her own. Hester was described as rebellious because she was not like Puritan women, as she did not abide by the laws of patriarchy. Therefore, subjecting her to such laws will prevent any rebellion by other women.

Miller portrayed his heroine, Elizabeth, as "pure", but she was punished with imprisonment. She would have been hanged, but her pregnancy interceded her. Hawthorne shows his heroine, Hester, who committed the crime of adultery and was also punished. In addition, the women of Salem Village were hanged on false charges.

Contrary to that, men in both works were depicted as heroes. Finally, one could easily notice that women in patriarchal societies were presented mostly as demons but rarely as angels.

5.2 Recommendations

In light of the preceding discussion of Miller's and Hawthorne's works, the researcher would like to recommend the following:

- 1- To conduct studies of similar works that were written by British writers for the sake of comparison and contrast.
- 2- To conduct further studies on other American writers to investigate the extent to which such writers agree on the issue of living in a patriarchal society.
- 3- To elaborate on the issue by analyzing literary works written by international writers to compare the similarities and dissimilarities between them that might be attributed to cultural differences.
- 4- To conduct studies of similar works that were written by Arabic writers to compare the similarities and dissimilarities that might be attributed to cultural differences.

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شياطين أم ملانكة: قراءة نسوية للبوتقة والحرف القرمزي

أعدتها

وصال سالم البويطل

أشرف عليها

الدكتور محمد حلمي محمود الاحمد

ملخص الدراسة

يقوم البحث على استخدام المدرسة النسوية لتحليل وضع المرأة في المجتمع البيوريتاني من خلال العملين الأمريكيين الكلاسيكيين البوتقة والحرف القرمزي، ولتحقيق ذلك قامت الباحثة بالتعريف بالنسوية و بالأبوية حتى يتمكن القارئ بعد ذلك من تذوق التحليل العميق والذي تم من خلال تحليل عناصر مختلفة من مشاهد وأحداث وشخصيات، يستعرض هذا البحث الوضع التاريخي للمرأة في المجتمع الأبوي، ما هي حقوقها وما هي واجباتها، كما يعرض البحث أنواع النساء في كلا العملين حيث ظهر ثلاث أنواع من النساء في كل من البوتقة والحرف القرمزي، النوع الأول كان النساء البيوريتانيات النقيات والنوع الثاني هو النساء ذوات العقلية الابوية والنوع الثالث هو النساء المعارضات للبيوريتانية، يناقش البحث أيضا الخطيئة والعقاب في المجتمع البيوريتاني، كما يناقش البحث طريقة معاقبة النساء ويقارن بين عقوبة الرجال والنساء في كل من مسرحية البوتقة و رواية الحرف القرمزي، استخدم الباحث في هذه الدراسة المنهج التحليلي للمناقشة والتحليل والنقد لكل من العملين المختارين من خلال العدسات النسوية، حيث ناقش البحث مفهومين نسويين مهمين هما "العقلية الأبوية" و "الأخر" بوصفهما مصطلحين نسويين تم تطبيقهما على كلا العملين، تنتقد هذه الدراسة أيضا تصوير المرأة بالطريقة النمطية، تحلل هذه الدراسة طريقة معاملة النساء على أنهن شياطين تستحق العقاب، أم أنهن ضحايا للمجتمع الابوي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النسوية، البيوريتانية، الابوية، الاخر، الحرف القرمزي، البوتقة.