

puritan society in the scarlet letter

****Understanding Puritan Society in The Scarlet Letter****

Puritan society in the Scarlet Letter forms the very backbone of Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, shaping its characters, themes, and conflicts. Set in a 17th-century Puritan settlement in Massachusetts Bay Colony, the story delves into the rigid social structures, moral codes, and religious fervor that defined the community. To truly appreciate the depth of Hawthorne's work, it's essential to explore the historical and cultural context of Puritanism, how it influences the narrative, and the broader implications of living under such a strict societal framework.

The Historical Context of Puritan Society

Before diving into the novel's portrayal, understanding the historical Puritan society provides valuable insight. The Puritans were a group of English Protestants seeking to "purify" the Church of England from Catholic influences. They valued simplicity, piety, and a strict moral code, emphasizing community conformity and religious devotion.

In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where *The Scarlet Letter* is set, laws were deeply intertwined with religious beliefs. Sin was not just a private matter but a public concern, punishable by the community to maintain order and spiritual purity. This context is crucial for grasping the harsh treatment of Hester Prynne, the novel's protagonist, and the symbolic weight of the scarlet letter she is forced to wear.

The Puritan Moral Code and Its Impact on Characters

Puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* is characterized by an unforgiving moral code that governs behavior with little room for forgiveness or nuance. Hawthorne uses his characters to illustrate the complexities and contradictions within this system.

Hester Prynne: The Outcast and Symbol of Defiance

Hester's public shaming through the scarlet letter "A" (for adultery) epitomizes the Puritan approach to sin and punishment. The letter is meant to mark her as a sinner, yet over time, it becomes a symbol of her strength and resilience. Hester's experience highlights the harshness of Puritan judgment but also suggests the possibility of redemption and individuality within a repressive society.

Reverend Dimmesdale: The Hidden Sin

Dimmesdale's character represents the internal conflict many faced in Puritan

society—concealing sin out of fear of social and spiritual repercussions. His suffering contrasts with Hester's public shame, underscoring the themes of hypocrisy and the psychological toll of living under constant scrutiny.

Roger Chillingworth: Revenge and Corruption

Chillingworth's transformation into a figure of vengeance showcases another dark aspect of Puritan society: the obsession with moral retribution. His character warns against letting the pursuit of justice devolve into cruelty, a critique of the rigid moralism prevalent in the community.

Community and Social Control in Puritan Society

Puritan society in the *Scarlet Letter* is not just about individual morality but also about maintaining social order through communal oversight. The town functions almost like a theocratic state where religious leaders wield significant power, and conformity is enforced through public rituals and punishments.

The Role of Public Shaming

Public shaming, as seen with Hester's punishment on the scaffold, served both as a deterrent and a method of reinforcing communal values. This practice reflects the Puritans' belief that sin was a collective concern, affecting the entire community's spiritual health.

Gender Roles and Patriarchy

The strict gender roles within Puritan society are evident throughout the novel. Women were expected to be submissive, modest, and devoted to their families, with little social power. Hester's defiance of these norms by raising her child alone and supporting herself challenges the patriarchal order and exposes the limitations imposed on women.

Religious Symbolism and Puritan Beliefs

Hawthorne's narrative is rich with religious symbolism that reflects Puritan values and anxieties. The scarlet letter itself is a powerful emblem of sin, guilt, and redemption, deeply rooted in the Puritan worldview.

Sin and Redemption

In Puritan theology, sin was a serious transgression against God, but the possibility of redemption through repentance existed. The novel explores this dynamic through Hester's journey and the varying degrees of acknowledgment and concealment of sin by different characters.

Nature vs. Society

Nature in *The Scarlet Letter* often symbolizes freedom and truth, contrasting sharply with the oppressive social order of the Puritan community. This theme reflects the tension between individual desires and societal expectations, a core conflict in Puritan society.

Lasting Influence of Puritan Society on *The Scarlet Letter*

The portrayal of Puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* offers timeless commentary on the dangers of rigid moralism, the complexity of human sin, and the power of compassion and individuality. Hawthorne's critique remains relevant today as it challenges readers to consider how societies enforce norms and the impact this has on personal identity and justice.

Whether it's the oppressive atmosphere of the Massachusetts Bay Colony or the nuanced depiction of characters struggling within it, the Puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* is essential to understanding the novel's enduring significance. It invites readers not only to reflect on a historical era but also to question the balance between social order and personal freedom in any culture.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the core values of Puritan society depicted in *The Scarlet Letter*?

The core values of Puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* include strict religious adherence, moral rigidity, the importance of community conformity, and a focus on sin and redemption.

How does Nathaniel Hawthorne portray Puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter*?

Hawthorne portrays Puritan society as oppressive and judgmental, emphasizing its harsh treatment of sinners and the conflict between individual identity and societal expectations.

What role does sin play in Puritan society within *The Scarlet Letter*?

Sin is central to Puritan society in the novel; it is publicly condemned and punished, but also serves as a catalyst for personal growth and moral reflection.

How is the theme of public shaming explored in

Puritan society in The Scarlet Letter?

Public shaming is a key method of enforcing moral codes, exemplified by Hester Prynne's punishment of wearing the scarlet letter 'A' as a symbol of adultery.

In what ways does The Scarlet Letter criticize Puritan hypocrisy?

The novel exposes Puritan hypocrisy through characters who secretly sin while publicly condemning others, highlighting the gap between appearance and reality in the society.

How does Puritan society affect the characters' identities in The Scarlet Letter?

Puritan society restricts characters' identities by imposing rigid roles and moral expectations, causing internal conflict and influencing their actions and self-perceptions.

What is the significance of the scarlet letter 'A' in the context of Puritan society?

The scarlet letter 'A' symbolizes adultery and serves as a tool for public humiliation, reflecting the Puritan emphasis on visible punishment and the community's role in enforcing morality.

How does The Scarlet Letter illustrate the conflict between individual freedom and societal norms in Puritan society?

The novel illustrates this conflict through Hester Prynne's struggle to maintain her individuality and dignity while facing condemnation and ostracism from the conformist Puritan community.

What impact does Puritanism have on the concept of justice in The Scarlet Letter?

Puritanism in the novel portrays justice as intertwined with religious doctrine, often resulting in harsh, unforgiving punishments that prioritize moral conformity over compassion.

Additional Resources

****Puritan Society in The Scarlet Letter: An Analytical Exploration****

Puritan society in The Scarlet Letter serves as the haunting backdrop against which Nathaniel Hawthorne unravels themes of sin, guilt, and redemption. The 1850 novel meticulously portrays the rigid moral framework and social dynamics of a 17th-century Puritan community in colonial Massachusetts. By examining this society's strict adherence to religious doctrine and its impact on individual lives, the narrative offers a penetrating critique of

the intersections between law, morality, and human frailty.

Understanding Puritan Society in The Scarlet Letter

The Puritan society depicted in *The Scarlet Letter* is characterized by its theocratic governance, where church and state are deeply intertwined. This fusion underscores a community driven by an uncompromising moral code, derived from Calvinist theology. The citizens' lives are governed not only by civil law but also by spiritual edicts that emphasize predestination, original sin, and communal purity.

Within this framework, the novel's protagonist, Hester Prynne, becomes a symbol of transgression and resilience. Her public shaming for adultery—forced to wear the scarlet letter "A"—reflects the Puritans' approach to sin as a public offense requiring visible punishment. Hawthorne's depiction reveals both the power and the limitations of such a society in controlling human behavior.

The Role of Religion and Law in Puritan Society

In Puritan society, religious beliefs are inseparable from legal and social order. The Puritans believed in a covenant with God that demanded strict adherence to biblical laws. This belief translated into a community where moral infractions were met with harsh penalties, often of a public and humiliating nature. The scarlet letter itself is a physical manifestation of this punitive system.

Hawthorne's narrative scrutinizes this system by presenting characters who struggle under its weight. Reverend Dimmesdale, for example, embodies the conflict between personal guilt and public persona. His concealed sin contrasts with Hester's openly acknowledged crime, exposing the complexities and hypocrisies of Puritanical justice.

Social Hierarchy and Gender Roles

Puritan society's structure was rigidly hierarchical and patriarchal, with clearly defined roles for men and women. Men dominated religious, political, and familial spheres, while women were expected to be submissive, pious, and morally upright. Hester's punishment is intensified by her gender, as adultery was seen as a particularly egregious violation of female virtue.

The novel critiques this gender disparity by highlighting Hester's strength and autonomy despite societal condemnation. Her ability to endure ostracism and maintain dignity suggests a subversion of traditional gender expectations within the Puritan context.

Comparative Features of Puritan Society and

Modern Perspectives

Examining puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* through a contemporary lens reveals stark contrasts in legal and social attitudes towards morality and individual rights. Modern societies tend to separate church and state, emphasizing personal freedom and privacy, whereas Puritanism enforced conformity and communal surveillance.

- **Public Punishment vs. Privacy:** The Puritans' use of public shaming as a corrective measure contrasts sharply with current privacy protections and rehabilitative justice models.
- **Religious Law vs. Secular Law:** Puritan legal codes were deeply religious, while modern legal systems are predominantly secular, focusing on civil rights rather than religious doctrine.
- **Gender Roles:** The strict patriarchal hierarchy of Puritan society has largely been challenged and reformed in contemporary contexts, with greater emphasis on gender equality.

These differences illustrate how the novel's setting functions as a historical critique, inviting readers to reflect on the evolution of societal values.

The Psychological Impact of Puritanical Oppression

Hawthorne's exploration of puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* also delves into the psychological consequences of living under such oppressive scrutiny. The internal conflicts of characters like Dimmesdale and Hester exemplify the profound emotional toll exacted by constant moral judgment.

The novel suggests that the community's insistence on visible penance exacerbates suffering rather than alleviating it. Dimmesdale's secret guilt leads to physical and mental deterioration, while Hester's public branding isolates her socially but paradoxically allows a form of personal growth.

The Scarlet Letter as a Symbol of Puritanical Control

The scarlet letter "A" itself functions as a multifaceted symbol within the Puritan society portrayed in the novel. It represents not only Hester's sin but also the community's power to impose identity and control through shame.

Over time, the letter's meaning shifts—from "adulterer" to "able" or even "angel" in the eyes of some townspeople—indicating the fluidity of social labels and the potential for individual agency despite collective condemnation. This evolution reflects Hawthorne's nuanced critique of societal labeling and the human capacity to redefine oneself beyond imposed identities.

Pros and Cons of the Puritanical Framework in The Scarlet Letter

While the Puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* is often viewed critically, it is important to consider its historical context and the intentions behind its strict moral code.

1. Pros:

- Established social order and cohesion through shared values.
- Emphasized community responsibility and mutual accountability.
- Promoted literacy and education to enable personal Bible study.

2. Cons:

- Suppressed individual freedom and fostered hypocrisy.
- Imposed harsh, public penalties that often deepened suffering.
- Enforced rigid gender roles limiting women's autonomy.

These aspects underscore the complexity of the Puritan legacy as portrayed in Hawthorne's work.

Legacy of Puritan Society in American Literature

The themes arising from puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* have reverberated through American literature, influencing portrayals of morality, sin, and social judgment. Hawthorne's critical yet empathetic depiction paved the way for later authors to explore similar tensions between individual identity and societal norms.

His work remains a foundational text for understanding the cultural and psychological dimensions of early American communities, especially regarding how religious and social strictures shape human experience.

The exploration of puritan society in *The Scarlet Letter* ultimately invites ongoing reflection on how communities balance moral order with personal liberty, a dialogue that continues to resonate in contemporary discussions about justice, punishment, and social inclusion.

[Puritan Society In The Scarlet Letter](#)

puritan society in the scarlet letter: Nathaniel Hawthorne's Puritanism and its Representation in "The Scarlet Letter" Sebastian Nickel, 2018-10-18 Seminar paper from the year 2017 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,7, University of Potsdam, language: English, abstract: Nathaniel Hawthorne is considered as one of the most significant American novelist of romanticism of the early 19th century. The interplay between contrasting and ambiguous literary motifs can be taken as typical for the era of romanticism as well as for Hawthorne's personal style of writing. In his novels he devoted himself in exploring moral and the social issues of the American society and its roots in the Puritan heritage. Thereby, he often thematised his own deep bonds with his Puritan ancestors and created story plots that both highlighted their weaknesses and their strengths. Whereas Hawthorne himself openly showed admiration for the strengths and determination of his Puritan ancestors, he also addresses his own negative concerns for their rigid and oppressive rules of living. The *Scarlet Letter* from 1850, as a text book example of his great literary works, shows Hawthorne's attitude towards Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colonies in his portrayal of characters, his plot, and the themes of his story. This ten-page thesis paper attempts to probe into Hawthorne's contradictory religious thoughts reflected in *The Scarlet Letter*. In course of this, I vindicate the point of view that Hawthorne illustrates Puritanism as contradictory. Furthermore I claim that his critique on Puritanism is partly contradictory as well. This contradictoriness of his critique is also often accompanied by an ambiguity of his literary illustrations. The 2nd and 3rd chapter of this paper will shortly expose the major characteristics of Puritanism and Hawthorne's personal relation to it. The major focus is put on elaborating the contradictions of the depicted Puritanism and Hawthorne's attitude to it in the 4th chapter.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism George McKenna, 2008-10-01 In this absorbing book, George McKenna ranges across the entire panorama of American history to track the development of American patriotism. That patriotism—shaped by Reformation Protestantism and imbued with the American Puritan belief in a providential “errand”—has evolved over 350 years and influenced American political culture in both positive and negative ways, McKenna shows. The germ of the patriotism, an activist theology that stressed collective rather than individual salvation, began in the late 1630s in New England and traveled across the continent, eventually becoming a national phenomenon. Today, American patriotism still reflects its origins in the seventeenth century. By encouraging cohesion in a nation of diverse peoples and inspiring social reform, American patriotism has sometimes been a force for good. But the book also uncovers a darker side of the nation's patriotism—a prejudice against the South in the nineteenth century, for example, and a tendency toward nativism and anti-Catholicism. Ironically, a great reversal has occurred, and today the most fervent believers in the Puritan narrative are the former “outsiders”—Catholics and Southerners. McKenna offers an interesting new perspective on patriotism's role throughout American history, and he concludes with trenchant thoughts on its role in the post-9/11 era.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: *The Scarlet Letter* Nathaniel Hawthorne, 2023-11-08 *The Scarlet Letter* is a novel written by the American author Nathaniel Hawthorne. It was first published in 1850 and is considered one of Hawthorne's most famous and enduring works. Set in 17th-century Puritan Massachusetts, the novel tells the story of Hester Prynne, a young woman who is shunned by her community after giving birth to an illegitimate child. She is forced to wear a scarlet A on her clothing as a symbol of her adultery. As Hester grapples with the consequences of her actions and the judgment of her society, she also becomes entangled in the lives of other townspeople, including the enigmatic Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale and the vengeful Roger Chillingworth. *The Scarlet Letter* is celebrated for its exploration of themes related to sin, guilt, redemption, and the moral complexities of human behavior. It is a classic of American literature and is known for its rich symbolism and psychological depth. The novel's enduring impact on literature and its themes of individualism and societal judgment continue to make it a significant work in the canon of American literature.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Scarlet Letter Nathaniel Hawthorne, 2020-08-13
Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic American novel *The Scarlet Letter* follows Hester Prynne, a woman living in the rigid Puritan society of 17th century Boston. Condemned as an adulteress and forced to wear a scarlet A on her dress, Hester refuses to name the father of her child, born out of wedlock. Her quiet dignity in the face of persecution only serves to further enrage many of the townspeople. Separated from society, Hester begins to ask questions about the nature of sin and redemption and comes to conclusions unthinkable to her fellow Puritans. A story of perseverance in the face of ignorance and injustice, *The Scarlet Letter* enjoyed immediate and lasting success.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Visible and the Invisible Letter "A" - Puritanism and the Dualism of Confession and Concealment in Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" Christian Jacobi, 2005-02-18 Seminar paper from the year 2001 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1.5, University of Freiburg (English Department), language: English, abstract: Since its publication in 1850, Hawthorne's masterpiece romance *The Scarlet Letter* has been hailed by average readers and literary critics alike as one of the finest pieces of literature ever to have come out of the pen of an American writer. Not only regarded as "Hawthorne's most widely read and admired novel"³, *The Scarlet Letter* has also given numerous generations of critics bountiful opportunity for in-depth analysis of the novel's plot, characters, and meaning. A fair amount of scholarly attention has, for instance, been devoted to Hawthorne's "imposing splendor of portraiture"⁴. In the case of *The Scarlet Letter*, this has been evidenced by critics' particular interest in Hawthorne's portrayal of two of the novel's central characters: the Boston townswoman Hester Prynne and the pastor Arthur Dimmesdale. Against the backdrop of mid-17th century Puritan society in the newly founded American colonies, Hawthorne describes how these two characters' lives are, each in its very own way, dramatically changed by one moment of adulterous passion. It is the aim of the present paper to deliver a careful analysis of Hester and Arthur at the center of which shall be the difficult social and psychological circumstances the two characters encounter in the wake of their adultery. It will equally be shown that Hester and Arthur embrace different strategies in dealing with their situation. A plot analysis reveals a clear dilemma and duality of a confession versus concealment theme which impacts greatly on the two characters and their behavior. Having been forced to confess to adultery charges, Hester manages to reshape her life by confronting present demands while also hoping for future opportunities. By contrast, Arthur is tormented and obsessed by his moment of moral weakness in the past, wavering between revelation and dissimulation of his deed as he doubletalks his way through the novel's plot. The first chapter of this study intends to establish a framework for the ensuing character analysis. Its aim will be to portray Puritan society as shown in Hawthorne's work, so that Hester's and Arthur's situation in the novel's plot will become clear. An interpretation of the two characters will follow in chapter two. First, Hester's behavior and the role she plays in the novel shall be analyzed under the aforementioned confession theme. [...] ³ Waggoner, p. 118. ⁴ Ripley, p. 26.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Scarlet Letter Hawthorne, 2006-09

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Scarlet Letter Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1980 Story of Hester Prynne, condemned by her Puritan society to wear the scarlet letter for her sin.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: *The Scarlet Letter (Annotated)* Nathaniel Hawthorne, 2017-10-18 Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic American novel *The Scarlet Letter* follows Hester Prynne, a woman living in the rigid Puritan society of 17th century Boston. Condemned as an adulteress and forced to wear a scarlet A on her dress, Hester refuses to name the father of her child, born out of wedlock. Her quiet dignity in the face of persecution only serves to further enrage many of the townspeople. Separated from society, Hester begins to ask questions about the nature of sin and redemption and comes to conclusions unthinkable to her fellow Puritans. A story of perseverance in the face of ignorance and injustice, *The Scarlet Letter* enjoyed immediate and lasting success.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: *The Social Rebel in a Puritan Society. An Analysis of Hester Prynne in "The Scarlet Letter"*, 2023-07-20 Seminar paper from the year 2016 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 2,0, University of Duisburg-Essen

(Anglophone Studies), course: Literatur, language: English, abstract: This study provides an analysis of the protagonist, Hester Prynne, in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* as a social rebel in a puritan society. It offers a thorough examination of her actions and decisions that diverge her from societal norms and expectations of her time. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the narrator's view of women and his role as a man of his time.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Scarlet Letter Reimagined Pasquale De Marco, 2025-08-08 *The Scarlet Letter Reimagined* offers a fresh and insightful exploration of Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, delving into its enduring themes of sin, redemption, and the human condition. Through thought-provoking essays and analysis, this book examines the novel's historical context, its relevance to contemporary society, and its profound insights into human nature. Beyond the story of Hester Prynne and her scarlet letter, this book explores the Puritan society of 17th-century Boston and its impact on individuals. It examines the Puritan belief system, its emphasis on sin and punishment, and its consequences for those who transgressed its strict moral code. The book also delves into the complexities of human nature, exploring the struggle between good and evil within each individual. It examines the ways in which sin and its consequences can shape our lives and relationships, and the search for redemption and forgiveness. Furthermore, this book examines the relevance of *The Scarlet Letter* in contemporary society. It explores how the themes of sin, guilt, and redemption continue to resonate with us today, and how they can help us understand our own struggles and experiences. Written in an engaging and accessible style, *The Scarlet Letter Reimagined* is a valuable resource for students, scholars, and general readers alike. It offers a fresh perspective on a classic work of literature while providing insights into the human condition that are both timeless and timely. Through a diverse range of essays and analysis, this book invites readers to explore the enduring power of *The Scarlet Letter* and its relevance to their own lives and experiences. Whether you are a longtime admirer of the novel or encountering it for the first time, this book promises to offer new insights and a deeper understanding of this literary masterpiece. If you like this book, write a review!

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Scarlet Letter - Second Edition Nathaniel Hawthorne, 2004-10-28 Hawthorne's story of the disgraced Hester Prynne (who must wear a scarlet "A" as the mark of her adultery), of her illegitimate child, Pearl, and of the righteous minister Arthur Dimmesdale continues to resonate with modern readers. Set in mid-seventeenth-century Boston, this powerful tale of passion, Puritanism, and revenge is one of the foremost classics of American literature. This Broadview edition contains a selection of historical documents that include Hawthorne's writings on Puritanism, the historical sources of the story, and contemporary reviews of the novel. New to the second edition are an updated critical introduction and bibliography and, in the appendices, additional writings by Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Henry James, and William Dean Howells.

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of books, articles, films, and Internet sites Classic literature or modern-day treasure—you'll understand it all with expert information and insight from CliffsNotes study guides.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: *The Scarlet Letter* NATHANIEL. HAWTHORNE, A V S (Andrew Varick Stout) Anthony, Mary Hallock Foote, 2025-03-28 In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, set in Puritan colonial America, a dark tale of sin and societal judgment unfolds. Hawthorne masterfully explores themes of adultery and its consequences within the rigid framework of Puritan society. This enduring classic delves into the complexities of human nature against the backdrop of a historical Boston struggling with its own moral code. A cornerstone of American literature, *The Scarlet Letter* remains a powerful and poignant exploration of guilt, redemption, and the enduring struggle between the individual and society. This meticulously prepared print edition offers readers a timeless journey into a pivotal period of American history and a profound meditation on the human condition. This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Scarlet Letter and Other Writings (Second International Student Edition) (Norton Critical Editions) Nathaniel Hawthorne, 2017-02 This perennially popular Norton Critical Edition has been revised to reflect the most current scholarly approaches to *The Scarlet Letter*—Hawthorne's most widely read novel—as well as to the five short prose works—"Mrs. Hutchinson," "Endicott and the Red Cross," "Young Goodman Brown," "The Minister's Black Veil," and "The Birth-mark"—that closely relate to the 1850 novel. This Second Norton Critical Edition also includes: · Revised and expanded explanatory footnotes, a new preface, and a note on the text by Leland S. Person. · Key passages from Hawthorne's notebooks and letters that suggest the close relationship between his private and public writings · Seven new critical essays by Brook Thomas, Michael Ryan, Thomas R. Mitchell, Jay Grossman, Jamie Barlowe, John Ronan, and John F. Birk. · A Chronology and revised and expanded Selected Bibliography.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: *The Scarlet Letter* Nathaniel Hawthorne, 2010-10 In 17th century New England, an adulterous relation between Hester Prynne and a lover she refuses to name, results in the birth of a daughter, Pearl. To advertise Hester's sin, she is forced to wear a crimson 'A' on her bosom, and the cumulative, constant disapproval of the tightly-knit Puritan community makes life a daily torture. But worse torments beset the unnamed father, torn between love of Hester and his daughter, and a desire to maintain his position within the unforgiving Puritan society. Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel is at once a sombre, almost gothic romance, and a pungent critique of societies that seek to overly restrict human activity. The author mercilessly dissects human relationships, examining themes of shame, dread and mental anguish, in a book that has become an American Classic.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: *Hawthorne's Wilderness: Nature and Puritanism in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and "Young Goodman Brown"* Marina Boonyaprasop, 2013-06-01 Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of America's most noted and highly praised writers, and a key figure in US literature. Although, he struggled to become an acknowledged author for most parts of his life, his work "stands in the limelight of the American literary consciousness" (Graham 5). For he is a direct descendant of Massachusetts Bay colonists in the Puritan era of the 17th and 18th century, New England served as a lifelong preoccupation for Hawthorne, and inspired many of his best-known stories. Hence, in order to understand the author and his work, it is crucial to apprehend the historical background from which his stories arose. The awareness of the Puritan legacy in Hawthorne's time, and their Calvinist beliefs which contributed to the establishment of American identity, serve as a basis for fathoming the intention behind Hawthorne's writings. His forefathers'

concept of wilderness became an important part of their religious life, and in many of Hawthorne's tales, nature can be perceived as an active agent for the plot and the moral message. Therefore, it is indispensable to consider the development behind the Puritan perception, as well as the prevailing opinion on nature during the writer's lifetime. After the historical background has been depicted, the author himself is focused. His ambiguous character and non-persistent lifestyle are the source of many themes which can be retrieved from his works. Thus, understanding the man behind the stories is necessary in order to analyze the tales themselves. Seclusion, nature, and Puritanism are constantly recurring topics in the author's life and work. To become familiar with Hawthorne's relation to nature, his ancestors, and religion, it is essential to understand the vast amount of symbols his stories. His stories will be brought into focus, and will be analyzed on the basis of the historical and biographical facts, and further, his particular style and purpose will be taken into consideration. The second part of this book analyzes two of the author's most eminent and esteemed works, namely 'Young Goodman Brown' and 'The Scarlet Letter' in terms of nature symbolism and the underlying moral intention. Further, it is examined to which extent the images correspond to the formerly explained historical facts, and Hawthorne's emphasized characteristic features. The comparison of the two works focuses on the didactic purpose for in all of his works, Hawthorne's aim was to give a lesson. Thus, it will [...]

puritan society in the scarlet letter: The Pursuit of Happiness and the American Regime

Elizabeth Amato, 2018-02-28 The Declaration of Independence claims that individuals need liberty to pursue happiness, but provides little guidance on the "what" of happiness. Happiness studies and liberal theory are incomplete guides. Happiness studies offer insights into what makes people happy but happiness policy risks becoming doctrinaire. Liberal theory is better on personal liberty, but weak on the "what" of happiness. My argument is that American novelists are surer guides on the pursuit of happiness. Treated as political thinkers, my book offers a close reading of four American novelists, Tom Wolfe, Walker Percy, Edith Wharton, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and their critique of the pursuit of happiness. With a critical and friendly eye, they present the shortcomings of pursuing happiness in a liberal nation but also present alternatives and correctives possible in America. Our novelists point us toward each other in friendship as our greatest resource to guide us towards happiness.

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Robert Milder, 2013-01-04 Hawthorne's *Habitations* draws on letters, manuscripts, and the author's little studied French and Italian notebooks, to present a portrait of four fascinating locations in the middle of the nineteenth century and offer a convincing portrait of the way place informed Hawthorne's melancholy psychology and dark style.

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Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1998 When an elderly English scholar discovers his young wife in the pillory, cradling an illegitimate child and wearing a scarlet A for Adulteress, he disguises himself as a doctor and begins a cruel and destructive search for the father of the child. Set in mid-seventeenth-century Boston, this powerful tale of passion, puritanism, and revenge is one of the foremost classics of American literature. Covering the most recent developments in Hawthorne scholarship, this up-to-date edition contains full and detailed notes.

puritan society in the scarlet letter: *Gothic Elements and Religion in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Fiction* Wendy C. Graham, 1999

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