

The Radical Fminism revealed in the Novel *The Scarlet Letter* and the Impacts of Radical Vews in Relation to Today's Life

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Received: 27 Oktober 2024

Accepted: 14 November 2024

Published: 17 November 2024

Abstract : *Background of the Problem: The novel "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, published in 1850, depicts issues of gender and morality that are relevant today. The concept of radical feminism that appears in this text invites readers to understand patriarchal structures and the role of women in society. Research Objectives: This research aims to examine how radical feminism is expressed in "The Scarlet Letter" and to analyze the impact of this radical view on contemporary life, especially in the context of the struggle for women's rights. Research Method: This research uses a qualitative approach with literary text analysis. Data was collected through in-depth exploration of the novel, followed by a review of literature on feminism and relevant social theories. Research Results: The results of the analysis show that the character of Hester Prynne reflects resistance to patriarchal norms, showing how the emphasis on women's autonomy can be connected to the current feminist movement. This research also identifies the relevance of these radical views in modern issues, such as gender equality and social stigma.*

Keywords: *Radical feminism, The Scarlet Letter, Hester Prynne, patriarchy, women's rights, literary analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Radicalism is a belief or a form of expression of the belief that there must be a major or extreme social or political changes, and the aim of radicalism is to bring about change to its roots and to realize the effort they always use violent methods and oppose the existing structure of society. Actions of radicalism appear due to the attitude of not accepting differences. Differences that appear in the society are considered a threat to the existence of radicals.

The *Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne was created to display how life during the Puritanism period in seventeenth century and has setting in New England. This novel has representation of the Puritan culture because it shows how the characters are expected to live by the word of God, specifically, and if anyone deterred, then they would be punished severely by an unforgiving society. In the *Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne used the main principle, hypocrisy in the Puritan culture, punishment to display the Puritan beliefs in the novel. The Puritan era during which the action of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* takes place embodied a society in which the individual and his or her actions were often pitted against a social order determined to stamp out behaviours it considered immoral. The Puritans believed that devil was behind every evil deed. That is why the researcher found a thought of radicalism in this novel, about how the Puritans lived, and also those who opposed it.

Radicalism can happen to anyone, anytime and anywhere. It does not matter whether they are children, teenagers, or adults, whether they are poor or rich, they are neither elite nor common people. Radicalism is mostly caused by an understanding or narrow thinking of a phenomenon. Because humans will try their best to fulfil their needs, including spreading an ideology by means of violence. Radicalism can emerge and develop when a group of people feel that the state government is unfair to its people or only pays attention to a few groups. Radical ideas in this novel is such an interesting idea to be researched, and that is the reason why the researcher interested to analyse this

idea to do the research with the title "An Analysis of Radical Ideas in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*".

Radical feminism, which seeks to completely change society to end male dominance, is powerfully shown in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. This form of feminism aims to break down systems that keep women oppressed. The novel, set in the strict Puritan society of 17th-century Massachusetts, features Hester Prynne as a character who stands up against the harsh rules of her time. Her act of adultery, which leads to severe punishment, is a bold challenge to the oppressive social norms. The scarlet letter "A," meant to shame her, becomes a symbol of both her supposed sin and her strength, showing her journey from disgrace to resilience.

Hester's transformation is central to the novel's feminist themes. Despite being shunned and humiliated, she supports herself and her daughter, Pearl, through her sewing skills, demonstrating remarkable independence in a society that severely limits women's roles. This independence challenges the community's views on what women can do. Through Hester, the novel criticizes the patriarchal systems trying to confine her.

Symbols in the novel highlight these feminist ideas. The scarlet letter changes in meaning, representing not just Hester's sin but also her strength. Pearl symbolizes nonconformity and resistance to societal norms, while the forest represents freedom, contrasting with the oppressive Puritan society.

Hawthorne uses Hester's story to critique the Puritanical patriarchy, showing how one woman's defiance and strength can challenge social norms. Hester's journey from shame to empowerment and her impact on her community underscore the novel's feminist themes. This story not only criticizes gender inequalities in Puritan society but also resonates with modern feminist discussions. By portraying Hester's strength and independence, **The Scarlet Letter** offers a powerful exploration of radical feminist ideas that remain relevant today.

This novel was about the punishment of sin of a young woman which breaks the unwritten rules of Puritan. However, the problems that was discussed in this research was the radical ideas between the characters, and also the situation in the novel *The Scarlet Letter*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Definition of Literature

Literature is an expression of thoughts, feeling, emotion and culture (Wantah, et al. 182). Moreover, literature is a product of creativity (Wellek and Warren, 1948). Furthermore, literature is a result of what human have thought that is poured into interesting work (Dengah, Maru and Lolowang, 2019). As per Maru (2009), literature represents genuine material. It's acknowledged that literary texts aren't primarily crafted to cater to the requirements of foreign language learners. From the definitions it can be concluded that literature is an art of creativity that is created from human's thought.

Novel

Novel is one of artistic work which is a Fiction that has a place with a huge classification of correspondence called account. Account is the recounting a story, a relating of occasions on schedule. The distinctive trait of story is the presence of a teller, a storyteller. (Griffith, 39) There are some fundamental components in novel, like topic, plot, characters and settings. Those components are significant part in original that organized the story. Abstract work as its item and essential hotspots for its examination it is believed to be significant to apply scholarly move toward It helps to uncover the importance from the novel (Maru, 2014). The novel is a story text illuminating regarding exposition with a long shape that including a few figures and fiction occasion. The characteristic components of the novel are topic, plot, setting, portrayal, perspective, and so forth (Nurgiyantoro; 10). Moreover, Wallek and Warren (75-135) expressed that as an

inherent component, the component likewise includes various extraneous components. The outward component incorporates creator history and brain science, Attitudes, convictions, and point of view of a creator will influence the work that he composed. To put it plainly, the creator's history decides the example works it produces. While brain science, the brain science of the writer additionally shapes the peruser's brain research, just as the use of mental standards underway. Novel serves as one of the mediums for writing. In both life and literature, we often encounter a variety of characters that evoke feelings of empathy or identification, as noted by Hohary, Maru, and Lolowang (2020). Furthermore, another perspective defines literature as a complex array, encompassing all written materials. This expansive category includes a wide array of materials such as history books, philosophical works, novels, poems, plays, scientific articles, dictionaries, magazines, textbooks, and more. This scholar divides this extensive collection into two main categories. The novel falls under the broader umbrella of narrative communication within the fiction genre. Narratives involve the chronological recounting of events and are distinguished by the presence of a narrator, as highlighted by Griffith (2010). Essential elements like themes, plots, characters, and settings play crucial roles in structuring the narrative within a novel. Literary analysis is pivotal in uncovering the deeper meanings embedded in the novel, shedding light on its significance. A novel is a form of narrative text characterized by an extended exposition involving various fictional events and characters.

Elements of Novel

a. Theme

Theme, according to (Griffith 2011: 49): Theme is central idea in the work-whether fiction, poetry, or drama. It is the comment the work makes on the human experience; the nature of humanity, the nature of society, the nature of humankind's relationship to the world, and the nature of ethical responsibilities.

From the definition above, the researcher thinks that theme is important in creating literary work, since it become the subject or idea of literature. The theme in a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the author's underlying meaning or main idea that one is trying to convey. The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of life, human nature. The title of the story usually points to what the author is saying and he may use various figures of speech to emphasize the theme.

b. Plot

As indicated by (Griffith, 50) Plot is an occasion are things that occur in an account activities, explanations, considerations, and sentiments. From an overall perspective, the word plot implies occasions of an account. At the point when somebody requests that individuals let them know the plot of a work, they normally need individuals to express how happened plot is comparative in affecting the term storyline.

A plot is one of the most important parts of the story and has many different purposes. Firstly, the plot focuses attention on the important characters and their roles in the story. It motivates the characters to affect the story and connect the event in an orderly manner. Plot, as stated by Kelly Griffith, is "what happens in the narrative. Plot is a pattern of carefully selected, casually related events that contain conflict." (2011:43). The plot of a novel is a synthesis of all elements that make up the material it is not the same as the story. This is an essential component of the plot. The story provides the framework in the form of a sequence of events related because of reality.

c. Characters

As per Griffith "Characters are individuals in accounts, and portrayal is the creator's show and improvement of the characteristics of characters. Now and again, as in dream fiction, the characters are not individuals. They might be creatures, robots, or animals from space, yet the creator invests them with human capacities and human mental attributes. They truly are individuals in everything except outward structure."

(Griffith,60). We asses them based on what the creator informs us concerning them and based on what they do and say. One more highlight recall is that the characters are essential for a more extensive example. They are citizenry, and the creator's unmistakable perspective on who individuals identify with society will be reflected in the introduction of each character. The characters in the story can be separated into certain classes dependent on the perspective taken; major and minor person, hero and enemy character, round and level person, dynamic and static person, run of the mill and unbiased person (Nurgiyantoro, 2007).

- Major Character

The significant characters are the entertainers who seem the most in the story and consistently have an association with different entertainers. The significant characters are the most prevailing recounted in the story either do an activity. These are the main characters in the story. As per Griffith (2011) "Significant person is quite often round or three-dimensional characters. They have great and terrible characteristics. Their objectives, aspirations and qualities change. A round character changes because of what befalls that person. A person whose changes inside because of what befalls him is alluded to in writing as a powerful person. A unique person develops or advances to a more significant level of comprehension throughout the story." (Griffith, 2011).

- Minor Character

These are the other characters in a story. They are not as important as the major characters, but still, play a large part in the story. Their actions help drive the story forward. They may impact the decisions the protagonist or antagonist make, either helping or interfering with the conflict. Characters can have different traits. Major characters will usually be more dynamic, changing and growing through the story while minor characters may be more static.

d. Setting

Setting incorporates a few firmly related parts of a work of fiction. To start with, setting is the physical, erotic universe of the work. Second, it is the time where the move of the work makes place. Also, third, it is the social climate of the characters like the manners, custom, and virtues that oversee the characters society. A fourth perspective "climate" is to a great extent, yet not completely, an impact of setting. (Griffith:2011)

Puritanism

Puritanism, is a group of religious people that doctrines people by using worships. Puritan, according to Abou El Fadl (2006), is a community that is authentic about living within God. The Puritans believe that their people is given the privilege to organize the rules of the community. It is believed that the Puritans have the power to understand the laws by God's guidance. It is said that the Puritans exist in the era where there was an economy crisis which made them blame the community as the cause of the crisis. (Maru in Ika, 2013). Moreover, the Puritans are believed to have the missionary fighting spirit in which they used to fight for what they believed. Furthermore, according to McGoldrick (2010), Puritanism is not only a doctrine of religion but also a doctrine of education.

Puritanism first begun in England in 16th century, but as it is not really welcomed in England, they move to North America in 17th century (Berghe, 2018). The migration of the Puritans from England to North America is believed to cause a mix of culture between England's and North America's resulting the Puritans we know nowadays (Joshua, 2018)

According to Yuliati (2015), the desire of the Puritans to apply their believes in the whole England became the main cause of the civil war that happened in 1641-1651. It started with the Interregnum where the parliament fought King Charles I.

Radicalism

Radicalism is said as a tendency of doing something different that is so extreme. Radicalism came from *radix* which means root, source or origin. Moreover radicalism can be said as a drastic change using violence. Furthermore, radicalism is a movement that

changes a certain condition to become a permanent condition using conflict (Fathani, et.al, 2020). Another definition about radicalism is uttered by Irsyadullah (2022) whom said that radicalism is defined as an action of wanting something to happen based on one's will without considering others. According to Alfadlal (2005), radicalism is a fundamental form where the people get back to the root of a religion itself. It is when the beliefs that is already exist at a time is taken back to where it was in the first place by looking back to the past. Furthermore, he said that when radicalism occurs it will come along with violence, resulting loss on maybe not only one side but both. Moreover, the reason of radicalism to happen is that the believers are challenged by something or someone outside their circle or by certain situation that cornered them. Another reason for the radicalism to happen is because of different side of believe that happens between two groups, either between person or group of people.

According to Alfadlal (2005), there are three factors that could trigger radicalism in a society, they are:

1. Norm and teaching variation

Norm and teaching variation could trigger radicalism in a society as they caused different interpretation of a single thing in a society.

2. Attitude and understanding variation

Attitude and understanding variation comes as a result of an interpretation in norm and teaching variation.

3. Sociological condition variation

Sociological condition variation comes when the teaching has been interpreted and applied in the community. The application differences between each teaching may result in radicalism.

Feminism

Feminism, according to Hariani (2015), represents a recognition of systematic injustices faced by women globally. Moreover, Bashin & Khan in Hariani (2015), stated

that feminism involves recognizing the systematic suppression and exploitation of women in society, the workplace, and within the family unit. In line with them, Mulyana (1999) also said that the portrayal of women embodies specific aspects of femininity. Feminine values encompass attributes like tenderness, emotional awareness, physical attractiveness, domestic responsibilities, and maternal qualities. These traits are typically linked with women as a whole. Women frequently appear in diverse advertisements, often depicted in roles limited to domestic responsibilities like cooking, caring for children, husbands, and various household tasks.

Broadly speaking, feminism engages in conversations about the dynamics of relationships between men and women in society, as well as the rights, standing, and position of women in both the private and public spheres. Beyond just a social movement, feminism also offers a viewpoint for evaluating the role of women in society and their interpersonal connections.

Furthermore, Muslikhati (2004), presented that, from a feminist standpoint, the assignment of societal roles to both men and women is perceived as unequal. The existing social structures are observed to strongly benefit men while concurrently placing women in marginalized positions. Multiple factors are seen as detrimental to women. Initially, women are placed in subordinate roles relative to men, particularly in terms of decision-making. Secondly, women are marginalized through the devaluation of their activities as unproductive and of lesser importance. Thirdly, women undergo oppression due to enduring longer and more burdensome workloads. Lastly, instances of violence and abuse against women, encompassing both physical and psychological harm, are prevalent.

There are 4 types of feminism, namely; Radical Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Liberal Feminism and Cultural Feminism.

Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is a movement that focuses on the position of women and men where women stand out rather than men. It is supported by Dwijowijoto (2008) which

said that radical feminist emphasizes the structural differences between women and men by assigning a more positive evaluation to feminine characteristics over masculine ones.

In the concept of radical feminism, according to Ollenburger & Moore (1996), the body and sexuality play an exceptionally important role. Acts of violence and intimidation towards women by men exemplify the patriarchal system's objective to strip women of their autonomy over their bodies and existence.

Jaggar & Rothanberg (1993), said that Radical feminism highlights that the fundamental attributes of the oppression of women are greater than other forms of oppression (such as race or class) in various aspects:

1. Historically, women were the first group to experience oppression.
2. Oppression of women exists everywhere, in all societies.
3. Oppression of women is the most difficult to eradicate and cannot be eliminated through other social changes, such as the abolition of social classes.
4. The oppression of women causes the most severe suffering for its victims, even though this suffering may often go unnoticed.

The oppression of women provides a conceptual model for understanding all other forms of oppression.

Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism according to Hooks B. (2000), rooted in the theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, analyzes the ways in which capitalism and class structures intersect with gender oppression. It highlights the exploitation of women's labor within capitalist systems and aims to dismantle both patriarchy and capitalism to achieve gender equality and social justice

Marxist feminism is a movement that began in the late 19th century focused on liberating by improving their material condition (Halim, 2017). This movement revolved around taking the "burden" off women in regards to housework, cooking, and other

traditional female domestic jobs. It indicates that women's oppression. Capitalism is the cause of women's oppression.

The aim of socialist/marxist feminism is to achieve a socialist society, starting with the family. It posits that if an egalitarian system can be established within the family, it will also manifest in social life. The primary site where capitalism originates is the family with its patriarchal system. Therefore, the nuclear family must be replaced by a collective family, including in carrying out functions traditionally dominated by women. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels assert that women, positioned as proletarian class in Western capitalist society, aim to abolish class distinctions, including the role of the family (Maulidina, 2020).

Liberal Feminism

According to Halim (2017), liberal feminism is a way that can accommodate the women interest. They urge that men will not give a chance to women if women themselves do not take part in both politic and education. As result, women feel that men are enemy and they have to be fought. Liberal Feminism is an individualistic form of feminism theory, which primarily focuses on women's ability to show and maintain their equality though their own actions and choices. This movement aims to fight for equal right, politic, law, education, freedom, and social-culture.

Furthermore, liberal feminism advocates for gender equality through legal and political reform within existing societal structures. It focuses on issues such as women's suffrage, equal pay, and reproductive rights, seeking to address gender discrimination through legislation and policy changes (De Beauvoir, 2016).

Cultural Feminism

According to Brooks (2000), cultural feminism emphasizes the unique qualities and contributions of women to society, often focusing on nurturing, empathy, and interconnectedness. It seeks to transform societal values and norms to appreciate and

elevate traditionally feminine traits and activities, advocating for women's rights through celebrating and reclaiming these aspects of femininity."

Cultural feminism is a feminist perspective that emphasizes the importance of women's unique qualities and contributions to society, often focusing on aspects such as nurturing, empathy, and interconnectedness. Unlike other branches of feminism that prioritize equality in legal and political spheres, cultural feminism seeks to transform societal values and norms to appreciate and elevate traditionally feminine traits and activities.

This perspective often critiques traditional patriarchal structures for devaluing qualities associated with femininity, such as caregiving and emotional expression, and argues for their recognition and inclusion in all aspects of life. Cultural feminists advocate for women's rights and empowerment through celebrating and reclaiming traditionally feminine roles, arts, and cultural practices.

However, cultural feminism has also faced criticism for potentially reinforcing gender stereotypes and essentializing femininity, overlooking the diversity of women's experiences and identities. Some feminists argue that while acknowledging and valuing feminine traits is important, it should not limit women's opportunities or perpetuate restrictive gender roles

Summary of the Novel

The novel unfolds in a village situated in Puritan New England, where the central figure is Hester Prynne, a young woman who has given birth to a child out of wedlock. Despite believing herself a widow, her husband, Roger Chillingworth, unexpectedly appears in New England and hides his true identity. As punishment for her adultery, Hester is compelled to wear the scarlet letter A upon her dress. Refusing to disclose the identity of her lover, Hester faces Chillingworth's relentless pursuit to uncover the truth. Upon discovering that the man in question is Arthur Dimmesdale, a revered young

minister who advocates for revealing the child's father, Chillingworth begins to torment him. Dimmesdale, burdened by guilt, deteriorates in health. Hester emerges as a resilient heroine, unrepentant for her affair with the minister, believing their love sanctified their actions. Despite initial disdain, her compassion and dignity eventually silence many critics.

2.7. Biography of the Author

Nathaniel Hawthorne, born on July 4, 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts was an American short story writer and romance novelist who experimented with a broad range of styles and genres. He is best known for his short stories and two widely read novels: *The Scarlet Letter* (mid-March 1850) and *The House of Seven Gables* (1851). *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance* is a work of historical fiction by American author Nathaniel Hawthorne, published in 1850. Set in the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony during the years 1642 to 1649, the novel tells the story of Hester Prynne, who conceives a daughter with a man to whom she is not married and then struggles to create a new life of repentance and dignity. Containing a number of religious and historic allusions, the book explores themes of legalism, sin, and guilt.

2.8. Previous Studies

The first previous study comes from Nazavia which conducted a research in 2023 with the title "Radikalisme dalam Novel *Le Fabuleux et Triste Destin D'Ivan et D'Ivana Karya Marsye Conde*" which was done qualitatively and was aiming to discover the form of radicalism and its process in becoming a terrorist. The result of the research showed that there are four types of radicalism; religion, political, economic and radical radicalism.

The second previous study comes from Anggi Kartika Putri in 2016 whom conducted a research with the title "*Representasi Feminisme Radikal dalam Karya Sastra*". The research was done qualitatively and has the purpose of analyzing radical feminism in the novel *Pengakuan Eks Parasit Lajang*. The result showed that radicalism existed as the repression of women against patriarchy.

Another previous study comes from Simangunsong in 2022 with the title "*Analisis Feminisme Radikal dalam Novel Isinga Roman Papua Karya Dorothea Rosa Herlian'*". The research was done qualitatively and has the purpose of describing radical feminism, social class, ethnics and religions adhered to the people in Papua and the image of life of the women in the novel. The result showed that there were 56 data about radical feminism in the novel and the most dominant data is about radical feminism happened in the form of oppression to the women.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research. As stated by (Creswell, 2009) a qualitative research is a study to investigate and understand the meaning individuals or groups assume to be a social or a human problem. It is an exploration where the approach to gathering information taken from different written works. Literary works implied here are the novel, yet in addition materials taken from diary, magazines, papers, web, and so on. The research design in this study can be described as an arrangement condition for collecting and analyzing data which are taken from the novel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. The researcher analyzed the radical ideas in this novel. It could be described that radical ideas was belong to intrinsic element of the novel.

Data Collection

In this study, the author uses the primary source is the novel from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and the secondary sources are books and the internet related to the topic and other sources such as dictionaries.

According to Sari(2015), the work procedures in this research were:

1. Data was analysed by reading thoroughly and repeatedly the novel based on the social phenomenon from the literary work.
2. Data grouping in this research was done by classifying the data based on the social aspects that are told in novel and those that are contained in another related studies.
3. Grouping data by correlating each data with a formulizing the condition and discussion from the object of research. Furthermore, it is described in detail, accompanied by evidence, reasons and exact examples through quotations. Data analysis in this study was carried out after the data was collected and selected, data processing is done by drawing conclusions inductively.

Data Analysis

In examining the novel, the researcher utilizes the sociological approach which proposed by Alan Swingewood (1972). The researcher expects that sociological methodology is appropriate for the investigation Swingewood and Laurensen (1972) in *Theory of Literature* book, the specialist zeroed in on the human science of the general public. It implies the humanism of the general public was reflected in friendly marvels where she resided. In another word, crafted by the creator and their general public could not be isolated in light of the fact that they got roused by the general public life. In sociology, there are many concepts that live as a theory for the major principles in sociology approach. The theory is introduced by Laurensen and Swingewood. One from some approaches which was used in this research namely: *Literary work as a mirror to the age*, this approach deals with the time when the literary works are created. Swingewood and Laurensen (1972:13) state that "literature as the mirror to age. It is indicating that the readers can discuss the social phenomenon which happens to the society in a certain period and certain place through the literary work". It means that literary work reflects the situation and condition of social life in the society.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As described in Chapter II, there are 4 types of feminism; Marxist, Cultural, Liberal and Radical, but in this chapter, the researcher only focused on finding the evidences of radical feminism that happened to Hester in the novel *Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

In this chapter, the researcher showed the findings and the explanation about radical feminism that were found in the novel. Radical feminism, as mentioned above in the review of literature section, is a kind of fundamental oppression of women over their body and acts by men (Ollenburger & Moore, 1996). Radical feminism means that the fighting that is done by women in order to gain their own rights to be equal as men.

Radical Feminism

In this novel, radical feminism occurred several times, the occurrences are divided into three sections; the first one is Hester defending her rights to raise her own daughter, the second one is offending society's negative judgement. Then it is also about the impact of Hester's resistance against the community of Puritan. So, those are the things that are to be described as below

Defending her rights to raise her own baby/ daughter

The first reason she had to offend the social sanction in the society of Puritan is because of her own baby. She wanted to be able to raise her own child without intervention from any other party, except herself. The evidences can be seen below.

"Hester Prynne responded, "I can share the knowledge I've gained with my little Pearl!" as she touched the scarlet letter. "Each day, it imparts lessons to me, which I then pass on to my daughter. She will grow to be wiser and better than I ever was." " (p.20)

In this quotation, Hester Prynne's resolve to educate Pearl from her own experiences with the scarlet letter highlights her radical feminist stance. By turning her symbol of shame into a teaching tool, Hester subverts the punishment meant to marginalize her and instead uses it to empower her daughter. This act of using personal adversity as a source of strength and knowledge demonstrates Hester's defiance of the patriarchal society that seeks to control and define her. Her commitment to making Pearl "a better and wiser person" underscores her intention to equip her daughter with the wisdom to navigate and challenge the same oppressive structures. This protective and proactive approach in raising Pearl is a radical feminist act, as it focuses on breaking the cycle of female oppression by fostering a new generation that is more aware and resilient.

' Hester smiled and replied, "No, thank you! If they ever took Pearl from me, I'd join you and sign my name in the Devil's book, even in blood! But since Pearl is still with me, I have to stay home and look after her." (p24)

This passage powerfully illustrates Hester's radical feminist defiance through her fierce protection of Pearl. Her willingness to "sign her name in the Devil's book, even in blood" signifies the extreme lengths she would go to ensure her daughter's safety and well-being. This declaration is a direct challenge to the authority and judgment of the patriarchal society that seeks to separate her from Pearl. Hester's readiness to embrace damnation rather than lose Pearl highlights her rejection of societal norms and the community's moral codes. By asserting her maternal rights so vehemently, Hester embodies radical feminism, prioritizing her bond with Pearl over societal expectations. This act of defiance not only protects Pearl but also serves as a statement against the oppressive structures that aim to control women's lives and decisions. Hester's determination to "keep watch over" Pearl reinforces her commitment to shield her daughter from the same injustices she has faced, thereby fostering a sense of agency and resistance that is central to radical feminist ideology.

Offending society's negative judgement

Apart from defending her rights to raise her own children, Hester also has to receive the negative judgement of the society, this happened as she offended the social sanction of the community of Puritan because she wanted to defend others, especially Dimmesdale, because she knew that Dimmesdale is the father of her daughter. The evidences of Hester offending the society's negative judgement can be seen below.

"The woman's face flushed pink as the crowd stared at her, but she held her head high with a proud smile, glancing around at her neighbors and the townspeople."(p.4)

In this quotation, Hester Prynne's reaction to the public shaming demonstrates her defiance against society's negative judgment. Despite the intense scrutiny and shame intended by the crowd's stares, Hester's ability to smile proudly reveals her inner strength and resilience. Her reaction is a radical feminist act of reclaiming her dignity in the face of societal condemnation. By smiling and looking around at her neighbors, she challenges the community's attempt to demean her, asserting her own worth and identity. This act of pride and defiance undermines the intended effect of the public humiliation, showing that Hester refuses to be diminished by society's harsh judgments. Instead, she confronts her accusers with a sense of self-respect, signaling her resistance to the oppressive norms that seek to control and shame her.

***"Hester Prynne accepted her punishment bravely. She walked up the wooden steps to the platform, and turned to face the stares of the crowd."
(p.6)***

Hester's acceptance of her punishment with bravery highlights her resistance to societal condemnation. Walking up the steps to the platform and facing the crowd's stares directly, she exhibits a courageous defiance. Her willingness to confront the community that seeks to shame her illustrates her rejection of their moral authority over her. This act of facing the crowd bravely is a powerful statement against the society that judges her. By meeting their gazes, Hester asserts her own strength and refuses to be cowed by their disapproval. This moment encapsulates her radical feminist stance, as she challenges the patriarchal society's attempt to control and punish her. Her bravery in accepting her punishment while maintaining her dignity shows her determination to defend her own sense of self and her right to raise her child, despite the community's efforts to undermine her.

Furthermore, in the further explanation below about Hester offending society's negative judgement, the evidence shows that, even though the physical body of women

are considered to be weak, but with the power of words and act that is shown by Hester, she had the power to fight others. Some evidences showed that, not only her child, she was also showing her power that even though she was a woman, but she was able to protect Dimmesdale, the evidences can be seen below.

"Are you denying him the same chance – a chance he might be too afraid to take for himself?" Hester, now as pale as the young priest, shook her head.

"I will not reveal his name," she said firmly. "My child must find her father in heaven, for she will never know one on earth."

Despite being asked again, she remained silent. The eldest priest then addressed the crowd, speaking at length about the evils of the world and the sin symbolized by the scarlet letter. His sermon lasted over an hour, but Hester stood alone on the platform of shame.

When her punishment was finally over, she was escorted back to the prison. Some whispered that as she passed through, the scarlet letter cast a haunting glow into the darkness behind the prison doors." (p.10)

In this passage, Hester's refusal to name Dimmesdale as the father of her child is a profound act of defiance against societal judgment. By protecting Dimmesdale's identity, she rejects the community's pressure to conform to their demands for complete confession and further punishment. Her determination to shield him, despite her own suffering, highlights her strength and integrity. Hester's statement that her child "must find a father in heaven" reinforces her rejection of the community's authority over her and her daughter. This act of defiance is a clear indication of her radical feminist stance, as she chooses to bear the burden of shame alone rather than subject Dimmesdale to the same punishment. Her resilience in maintaining this stance throughout the prolonged public shaming, despite the priest's moralizing and the crowd's scrutiny, underscores her courage and resistance. The whispering about the scarlet letter's "terrible, ghostly light"

symbolizes the unsettling impact of her defiance on the community, suggesting that her strength and refusal to submit to their judgment continue to haunt them.

'When we last spoke together, seven years ago,' Hester said, 'you made me promise not to tell anyone that we once lived as husband and wife. I agreed to be silent because, as you said then, his position and his life were in your hands. But I see now that I was wrong to keep silent. Since that day, you have been beside him, sleeping and waking. You search his thoughts and his heart, and each day you cause him to die a living death! And it is I who have allowed this to happen!'

'What else can you do?' asked Chillingworth. 'A word from me, and this man would be thrown from his church into a prison - and from there, to the scaffold!'

'Perhaps that would be better!' said Hester. 'Haven't you had your revenge? Hasn't he suffered enough for his sins?'

'No!' answered the doctor. 'Do you remember me, Hester, as I was nine years ago? You thought I was cold, perhaps, but was I not kind and true, and a good friend to others?'

'Yes,' said Hester. 'All that, and more.'

'And what am I now?' he asked, and his face showed the evil that was in him. 'A devil! And who made me this?'

'It was me,' said Hester, trembling. 'Me, as much as he. So why didn't you punish me?'

'You had the scarlet letter,' he said. 'That was enough revenge for me.' He put his finger on it with a smile. 'Now, what do you want to say about this man?'

***'I must tell him the truth about you,' said Hester. 'He must know who you are, and why you are doing this to him. 'What the result will be, I do not know. Do what you want with him. But there is no good for him, no good for me, no good for you, no good for little Pearl. There is no path to guide any of us out of this misery.'"* (p.41-43)**

In this passage, Hester's confrontation with Chillingworth demonstrates her willingness to challenge and expose societal hypocrisy and cruelty. By insisting that Dimmesdale must know the truth about Chillingworth's identity and motives, Hester defies the societal expectation of silence and submission. Her acknowledgment of her mistake in keeping silent and her resolve to correct it show her commitment to truth and justice, even at great personal risk. This act of revealing Chillingworth's true nature is a radical feminist assertion of her agency and moral authority. Hester's willingness to provoke Chillingworth, despite the potential consequences, highlights her defiance against the societal forces that seek to control and silence her. Her declaration that there is "no good for him, no good for me, no good for you, no good for little Pearl" underlines the pervasive harm caused by societal judgment and vengeance, suggesting that only through honesty and resistance can they hope to find any resolution. This moment illustrates Hester's courage in confronting the oppressive forces around her, reinforcing her role as a radical feminist figure who challenges and exposes the injustices perpetuated by her society.

"Arthur Dimmesdale gazed at Hester, his face reflecting a mixture of hope, joy, and fear. He had secretly considered the same thing, but only Hester had the courage to express it aloud. In that moment, he realized that he longed for the better life she spoke of and that he couldn't imagine living without her. "God, will you forgive me?" he wondered to himself."

This quotation reveals the impact of Hester's bravery on Dimmesdale, highlighting her role in challenging societal norms and inspiring others to do the same. Hester's courage to voice what Dimmesdale had only dared to think reflects her defiance against

the oppressive societal expectations that constrain them both. Her ability to articulate a vision of a "better life" underscores her radical feminist stance, as she dares to imagine and pursue a future free from the societal judgments that have plagued them. Dimmesdale's reaction, marked by hope, joy, and fear, illustrates the transformative power of Hester's defiance. Her bravery not only defends her own dignity but also empowers Dimmesdale to confront his own fears and desires. This moment underscores the profound impact of Hester's radical defiance, showing how her actions challenge and potentially transform the oppressive societal structures that seek to control and define them. By inspiring Dimmesdale to consider a life beyond societal judgment, Hester exemplifies the radical feminist ideal of challenging and changing oppressive norms, highlighting the potential for personal and societal transformation through acts of courage and defiance.

with Hester dismantles the community's one-sided judgment, highlighting the hypocrisy and double standards that Hester has long resisted. Through this act, Hester ensures that Pearl's lineage and her own sacrifices are publicly recognized, securing a measure of respect and legitimacy for her daughter. Dimmesdale's ultimate act of contrition underscores the transformative power of Hester's maternal love and her relentless fight for her daughter's human rights, affirming her role as a radical feminist icon who confronts and changes societal norms.

Impact of Radical Feminism

In the section below, the researcher elaborated the effect of Hester's radical feminism in defending her rights, which resulted in the social acceptance of the society of Puritan.

Social acceptance

The result of what Hester had done was shown at the end of the novel, in which it impacted the society of Puritan.

"Hester Prynne's life remained tied to New England. It was here she had sinned, and here she chose to live out the rest of her days. She returned of her own accord and once more donned the scarlet letter, which never left her chest. Over time, however, it no longer symbolized shame, but sorrow. It served as a reminder that she had made a grave mistake but had endured her punishment. People, especially women, sought her out for guidance, wise counsel, and comfort in their moments of hardship, pain, and suffering.

***."* (p.72)**

From the quotation above, it highlights a significant transformation in Hester Prynne's social acceptance and underscores radical feminist themes. Initially, the scarlet letter "A" is a symbol of Hester's adultery and a mark of shame imposed by the patriarchal Puritan society to publicly humiliate her. Over time, the meaning of the scarlet letter evolves from shame to sadness and wisdom, reflecting Hester's personal growth and changing societal perceptions. Hester's reclamation of the scarlet letter is an act of defiance against patriarchal attempts to control and define her identity, demonstrating her agency and autonomy. By willingly returning to New England and continuing to wear the scarlet letter, she confronts and redefines her identity on her own terms, showing strength and determination. Hester's new role as a source of advice and comfort, especially for women, signifies her empowerment and the empowerment of other women, challenging male-dominated structures. Her transformation into a respected figure who offers wisdom and comfort demonstrates that women can possess power and influence equal to or greater than men. The solidarity and support among women who seek Hester's counsel underscore the subversion of patriarchal order and the importance of collective feminine strength. Through Hester's journey, Hawthorne critiques societal structures that seek to control and define women, while celebrating the resilience and strength of women who defy these structures.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of radical feminism in the novel, the researcher can conclude that Hester Prynne's actions in defending Dimmesdale and her child illustrate her radical feminist resistance against patriarchal authority. By shielding Dimmesdale's identity and raising Pearl on her own, Hester subverts traditional expectations of female submission and maternal dependency. Her steadfast protection of her loved ones, coupled with her refusal to conform to societal norms, highlights her strength and autonomy. Hester's resistance is a powerful demonstration of radical feminism, as she challenges and defies the oppressive structures designed to control and silence women, asserting her right to make independent choices and protect her family's integrity.

Furthermore, Hester Prynne's resilience in "The Scarlet Letter" mirrors the modern fight for gender equality, challenging societal norms and advocating for women's rights and autonomy. Her story is a testament to the power of defiance against oppressive systems, inspiring contemporary activists to work towards a more equitable society where women's voices are heard and their rights are respected. Hester's legacy underscores the importance of solidarity among women and the ongoing struggle to dismantle the barriers that hinder gender equity.

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