

Hester Prynne: In and Beyond Discipline and Punish

HE Na^{[a],*}

^[a]School of Foreign Languages, Kashi University, Kashi, China.

* Corresponding author.

Received 5 March 2020; accepted 19 May 2020

Published online 26 June 2020

Abstract

The essay is to explore how Hester Prynne accomplishes subjectivity-construction in the ordinate and harsh puritan community, full of discipline and punish. In the process of the subjectivity-construction, Hester Prynne not only confronts and surpasses the sin and the shadow of her own self, but also transcends and breaks the invisible web of the inhuman and tough regulations filtering in every corner of the puritan community. She accomplishes a near-perfect transformation from a sinning object despised and chastised by all the community members to a new feminine figure who regains their applause, respect and love in the end. Through the heroine's glorious and admiring transformation, Nathaniel Hawthorne poses a suspicion upon the naive belief on the human nature: genuine and full of smiling aspects, upheld by the transcendentalists and prevailing at his time. He also chastises the inhuman regulations, disciplines and punish of the harsh puritan community which twist and crush the souls of the community members. But more important and inspiring point of the novel lies in that through the heroine's glorious and admiring transformation and subjectivity-construction, Hawthorne reasserts the shining and glorious human nature of Hester Prynne, which reflects his humane concern towards the ones tortured, disciplined and punished by the prison-like society.

Key words: *The Scarlet Letter*; Hester Prynne; Discipline; Punish; Individuation

He, N. (2020). Hester Prynne: In and Beyond Discipline and Punish. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 20(3), 33-39. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/11673>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/11673>

INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) was born on July 4, 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. He grew up and spent almost the rest of his life in his hometown, for which he had a very special affection. Old Salem is situated in the region of New England, which is the virginal colony established by the puritans from the UK. The ancestors of Hawthorne were among the first settlers and they also partook of setting up "a holy nation on the hill". Hawthorne has complicated feelings towards the first settlers and his ancestors. According to the minute descriptions of the Custom-House in *The Scarlet Letter*, vivid images of them are projected to the readers. The first ancestor, 'grave, bearded, sable-cloaked, and steeple-crowned... was a soldier, legislator, judge; a ruler in the church; had all the puritan traits...was likewise a bitter prosecutor; as witness the Quakers...of his hard severity toward a woman of their sect';¹ the son of the first ancestor, "inherited the persecuting spirit, made himself conspicuous in the martyrdom of the witches".² The notoriety and intolerance of his puritan ancestors haunts Hawthorne and makes him "take shame for their sake, and pray that any curse incurred by them...may be now and henceforth removed."³ Such kinds of complicated and guilty feelings filter in his works. Emile Montegut once remarks that,

'the marked love of cases of consciousness, this taciturn, scornful cast of mind, this habit of seeing everywhere and hell always gaping open, this dusky gaze bent always upon a doomed world and a nature draped in mourning... this pitiless analysis resulting from a perceptual examination of one's self, and from the tortures of a heart closed before men-all these elements of the puritan character...have filtered into him, through a long succession of generations.'⁴

¹ See Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet letter* (Shanghai, 2008), p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p.7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴ See Henry James, 'Early Writings', in James McIntosh (ed.), *A Norton Critical Edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales* (New York, 1987), p.353.

Henry James in *Early Writings*, remarks that “the old puritan moral sense, the consciousness of sin and hell, of the fearful nature of our responsibilities and the savage character...has been lodged in the mind of a man of fancy.”⁵ The fascinations with the puritan moral sense, the consciousness of sin and hell, a perpetual examination of one’s self and the tortures of a heart closed before men are fully represented in *The Scarlet Letter*.

The Scarlet Letter relates a tale occurring during the period between the early days of Massachusetts and the closure of the Seventeenth Century. It consists of 24 chapters. The romance is the record of the doings and sufferings of the sinful heroine, Hester Prynne. It focuses on how she confronts her sin, her shadow and the harsh persecution and punishments of the puritan community, how she overcomes all the scorns and stresses to accomplish self-redemption and gains from the puritan members the reverence due to an angel, and how she constructs a new self in the invisible web of the disciplines and punishments of the puritan society. Since its publication, *The Scarlet Letter* has been awarded blossoming acclaims and recognition. The Critics home and abroad analyse it from multiple perspectives, such as the feminist, religious, narratological, archetypal, psychological, mythological, intertextual and comparative fields; some Critics focus on the symbolism of the names, themes and allegorical meanings. A few apply Foucault’s power-discourse to analyse the restriction and fighting of the main characters. Based on the constructive and enlightening criticism the aforesaid Critics have made, the focus of the paper is upon exploring how Hester Prynne accomplishes self-redemption and reconstructs a new subject in the Puritan community from the perspective of Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* with the aid of Jung’s theory of Individuation. By the heroine’s successful transformation and subjectivity-construction, it is to reveal Hawthorne’s chastisement to the puritan moral regulations and disciplines which twist and crush people’s souls, as well as his admiring affirmation of the shining human nature of a sinner marked by society along with his human concern towards tortured souls disciplined and punished by the prison-like society.

1. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the essay is to explore the heroine’s successful transformation and subjectivity-construction in the puritan community and reflect Hawthorne’s chastisement to the puritan moral regulations and disciplines which twist and crush people’s souls, as well as his admiring affirmation of the shining human nature of a sinner marked by the society and his human concern towards the tortured souls disciplined and punished by the prison-like society, the

paper is to elaborate on these points from the perspective of Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* and with the aid of Jung’s theory of Individuation.

Michel Foucault was one of the most influential thinkers in the contemporary world. To some extent, he is one of the most rebellious scholars and stimulating thinkers who pose a heavy challenge towards the conventional ideas concerning civilisation, power and culture. Paul Ribinow, editor of *the Foucault Reader*, remarks that:

the particular achievement of Michel Foucault is to show the seemingly neutral descriptive terms used by doctors and judges, teachers and sexologists, are in fact weapons in the never-ending conflict between desire and power; as soon as an action is declared ‘unnatural’ or ‘sick’, it becomes legitimate to use force on deviants, or even imprison them, in order to try and make them ‘normal’.⁶

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows in fascinating detail the development of the Western system of prisons, police organisations, administrative and legal hierarchies for social control and the growth of disciplinary society as a whole. Punishment goes through a dramatic change from chastising the body by torture and other physical penalties to reform, which touches the soul for a more systematic control over the individual members of society. Whether it being the public exhibition, imprisonment, banishment and other penalties, or the art of distribution, the control of activity, and gentle means of correct training, the evolving forms of disciplines and punishments are aiming to produce docile bodies in the invisible web of regulations and moral systems and to prove the supremacy of the sovereign power disguised as the upholder of the social and universal welfare. In the disciplinary society, the authority resorts to the institutions of our society, from schools and factories to hospitals, prisons, asylums and clinics for restraining and training docile bodies. In the paper, the puritan authority and community to be analysed resorts to various regulations, disciplines and punishments for making the sinner normal and rationalising their unsurpassed power.

Carl Gustav Jung is a major influence in myth and archetypal criticism. Like Freud, he was a pioneer whose brilliant flashes of insight have helped to light our way in exploring the darker recesses of the human mind. One major contribution of Jung’s is his theory of individuation. Connected with individuation are those archetypes designated as the shadow, persona and anima. Individuation is a psychological growing up, the process of discovering the aspects of one’s self, favourable or unfavourable, a necessary step of becoming a mature and well-balanced individual. In the process, one must accomplish it with extraordinary courage and honesty. Because, the shadow (the darker side of the self, the inferior and less pleasing aspects of the personality), is

⁵ Ibid., pp.353-354.

⁶ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (London, 1977), p.340.

the one almost everyone wishes to suppress and project on others; while the persona, the mask that we show to the world, the social personality, cannot be too artificial or rigid but be brought into harmonious relationships with the other components of one's psychic makeup to achieve psychological maturity. In the paper, Hester Prynne's successful transformation and subjectivity-construction is to be achieved by the successful individuation, while Arthur Dimmesdale's tragedy lies on the contrary. In the following, all are to be minutely presented.

2. IN DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

2.1 The Puritan Society

Because of the religious persecution the puritans suffered in their old nation, they left Britain and settled in the expansive continent hereafter. The first settlers, most of them being the puritans, were dedicated to establish a city in the second Jerusalem after the glorious example of the Jews. The prevailing religious teaching, Puritanism became the top creed in the lives of the first settlers. Puritanism, like Calvinism, called for simplicity, severity, piety, repentance, submissiveness and self-control. This iron-face of puritans sought to set up an independent theocracy on earth with the aid of harsh discipline and punish. The first settlers and the descendants of the early settlers made use of harsh and tough measures to create and maintain an order and disciplinary society and to ensure every member behave like a humble and loyal subject. The early settlers proved that they had the same of temper as their forefathers, and showed the grim, dark features of an old king-resisting puritan. Hester Prynne, the heroine, who committed adultery, seriously violating the puritan moral sense and harsh regulations, actually became a symbolic threat and challenge to the power of the authority. The authority of the puritan society would resort to regulations, disciplines and punishments available to re-manifest its power and affirm the dissymmetry of forces.

2.2 Punishment: Torture, Public Exhibition and a Spectacle of Scaffold

According to the penalties executed during the Seventeenth Century, the guilty person is not only afflicted by the heavy penalty. As usual, the heavy penalty is accompanied by additional penalties that involved a degree of torture: public exhibition, pillory...branding and etc. Hester, apart from being sentenced to be banished, is punished to "stand a space of three hours on the platform of the pillory and then and hereafter to wear a mark of shame upon her bosom for the remainder of her natural life".⁷ Torture, actually forms part of a ritual: mark the victim either by

the scar it leaves on the body, or by the spectacle that accompanies it to brand the victim with infamy; torture traces around the body of the condemned; and signs, marks of shame will make the spectators remember public exhibition, the pillory, the torture and pain duly observed. The slowness of the public exhibition will dramatically make the guilty person unbearable, hastened by pain and with the public gaze. Take several sentences from the chapter of the market-place for example. They are to present vividly the intolerable sufferings the guilty person Hester Prynne undergoes in the public exhibition.

the crowd was sombre and grave...under the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened on her, and concentrated on her bosom...almost intolerable to be borne⁸

She "underwent an agony, as if her heart had been flung into the street...to spurn and trample upon."⁹ If put in Hester's shoes, perhaps one would rather die instantly than go through the intolerable pain in the public exhibition. What is the aim of such kind of penalty? Actually, the public exhibition is a "political operation".¹⁰ The condemned's example will "make everyone aware of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign".¹¹ The aim is to make people aware of the terror. Hester carried in the procession, exhibited and humiliated, was offered to the insults and attacks of the spectators. The vengeance of the people was called upon by the authority to become an unobtrusive part of the vengeance of the sovereign. The authority, through the means of the public exhibition of the guilty person, sends a message to the other people in the community that the torture and punishment is regarded as "a retribution that the guilty man makes to each of his fellow citizens, for the crime that has wronged them all".¹² Thus, the torture, the public exhibition and marks wearing on the bosom not only engrave the terror on the minds of the guilty person and other ones in the community, but they are good opportunities for the authority to bring useful instructions to the souls of the people and to affirm the dissymmetry of forces. The meagre sympathy the puritan members show to Hester Prynne in the scaffold once again proves the power of the authority and the effect of public torture.

2.3 Discipline: for Producing a Docile Body

Apart from the public exhibition the puritan authority uses to punish Hester Prynne, a harsher measure it resorts to make the guilty one submissive and docile is the strategy of discipline. According to Michel Foucault, disciplines are referred to these methods which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and

⁷ See Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Shanghai, 2008), p. 55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.50 .

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.48 .

¹⁰ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (London, 1977), p.53.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.48 .

¹² *Ibid.*, p.109 .

imposed upon them a revelation of docility and utility; a docile body refers to the one that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved; physical penalties only directly affect the body; for the authority, the ultimate aim is to let people become their own moral guide and observer; let people themselves become the submissive subjects whose behaviours abide by the regulations and moral system set up by the authority. How does it occur? The answer is to let the punishment and regulations engraved on the souls, and then they will be internalised and everything will become natural as breathing. So the severe penalty no longer addresses itself to the body but to the soul. The body only serves as an instrument and is caught up in a system of constraints, privations, obligations and prohibitions. If the punishment strikes the soul than the body, the people will more easily become a submissive and docile subject. In this sense, apart from the physical penalty Hester Prynne was afflicted, what are other disciplines and punishments which can strike Hester's soul and force her to become a normal and submissive member in the puritan community?

2.3.1 The Art of Distribution

According to Michel Foucault, discipline requires enclosure. The distribution means the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. In other words, to enable people, esp. the criminals to have a better control of their activities and minds, the procedures of segregation and isolation, which is regarded as efficient in striking the souls and transforming them into docile and submissive subjects, are widely applied. The positive reasons of segregation and isolation lie in that they provide a terrible shock, which while protecting the prisoner from bad influences, enables him to go into himself and rediscover in the depth of his consciousness the voice of good. Solitary work would become not only an apprenticeship, but also an exercise in spiritual conversion. Besides, solitude is regarded as necessary to both body and soul. And the authority believes that the guilty persons must, at certain moments, confront temptation and the severity of God alone.

In conclusion, segregation and isolation are not only beneficial for the guilty ones, but also calms down the fears of local people and conflicts with the civil authority can be avoided. For all the reasons listed above, Hester Prynne, after exhibited and tortured in the public, is forced to establish herself 'in a small thatched cottage on the outskirts of the town, not in close vicinity to any other habitation'.¹³ The remoteness puts the habituating place out of the sphere of all social activity and makes Hester without any friend on earth to seek a helping hand. Besides, the magistrates, the authority of the puritan community, will still keep an inquisitorial watch over her.

¹³ See Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Shanghai, 2008), p.71.

Through segregation and the powerful observation, the authority aims to make Hester repent her sin, purge her soul and work out a submissive and normal purity that which she had lost.

2.3.2 The Control of Activity

Besides segregation and isolation the authority resorts to discipline Hester Prynne, the other effective measure the authority applies to manipulate her soul and make her become docile is control of activity. Through the method, the body is manipulated by the authority; the body is required and forced to be docile in its minute operations. Through the technique of subjection, the condemned one will "obey whatever he is ordered to do" and his obedience must be prompt and blind. Thus, through the technique, the guilty person will become submissive and docile as expected by the authority. Hester Prynne is forced to establish herself in a small thatched cottage on the outskirts of the town, not in close vicinity to any other habitation. She, without any friend on earth to give her a helping hand, supplies food for her infant and herself by the art of needlework she possesses. The handiwork of embroidery not only provides her a living but also makes Hester directly or indirectly connected with other members of the Puritan community. Her needle work was seen on the ruff of the Governor; military men wore it on their scarfs, and the minister on his band; it decked the baby's little cap; it was shut up, to be mildewed and moulder away, in the coffins of the dead. Thus, her embroidery is almost seen in every aspect of people's lives. However, in a single instance, her skill was not called in to embroider the white veil which was to cover the pure blushes of a bride by her skilful hands. Such kind of exception indicates the ever relentless vigour with which the society frowned upon her skin. And the authority hopes that the control of activity will strike Hester's stained soul, make her remember the sin all the time and repent it. As a reminder, it will call on her to take heed to her behaviours and thoughts till she becomes a normal, submissive subject of the puritan community rather than being a taboo and sinner again.

3. BEYOND DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

Confronting the powerful authority and all the punishments afflicted on her, whether it being tortured in public or being banished and segregated from the other puritan members, Hester Prynne is cornered at the bay. With activity restricted, one can imagine what a hard and bleak life Hester is to lead. How can she surpass all these circumstances to work out a new self and establish herself as a revered lady and as an independent female in the disciplinary society?

3.1 Successful Individuation

As it has been mentioned before, individuation refers to a psychological growing-up, a process of discovering

all aspects of one's self, favourable or unfavourable. It is a necessary step for one to become a mature and well-balanced individual. In the process of individuation, it requires extraordinary courage and honesty, for the shadow (the darker side of one's self, the inferior and less pleasing aspect of one's personality) is the one almost everyone wishes to suppress and project on others. Hester Prynne accomplishes self-redemption and constructs a new self by a successful individuation. She confronts her shadow bravely and does not deny it but recognise it as a part of her own self. As a sinner tortured in the public exhibition and punished to wear A on her bosom, as a reminder of her sin and as a sign despised by all the other community members, how does Hester confront the intolerable torture brought by her sin in such a disciplinary and grave society? The followings sentences quoted from the romance will vividly present her inner struggles and give us the answers.

She must either sustain or carry it forward...or sink beneath it. She could no longer borrow from the future to help her through the present grief...for the accumulating days and added years would pile up their misery upon the heap of shame...give up her individuality, she would become the general symbol at which the preacher and moralist might point, in which they might vivify and embody their images of woman's frailty and sinful passion...over her grave, the infamy... would be her only monument¹⁴

...free to return her birth-place...as if emerging into another state of being—or the wilderness with a people whose customs and life were alien from the law that had condemned her...she said to herself, here had been the scene of her guilt, here should be the scene of her punishment; ... the torture of her daily shame would...purge her soul and work out another purity than that which she had lost: more saint-like, because the result of martyrdom.¹⁵

Hester Prynne goes through a fierce mental struggle to decide what she would do in the future. In the long contemplation, she clearly realises the hard toil ahead. She even wants to flee from the puritan community to her birth-place or the wilderness where she does not have to bear the intolerable condemnation. However, at last, she makes a resolute decision to stay for the rest of her life. One reason is her acceptance of the sin to work out a purity than that which she had lost; the other reason is her resolute decision to trample the inhuman disciplines and authority to prove that the shame they label on her could and will never be her authentic identity, and she could become a saint-like one because of her own efforts, rather than as the result of martyrdom.

From the typical example, one can see that Hester not only accepts her shadow candidly, but also has a great and resolute determination to purge the sinful soul and work out a new self rather than being trampled and marked as

a sinful and fragile woman forever by the authority and all the other puritan members. Such kinds of attitudes towards herself and the puritan society carry her through the scorns and indifference of the people and transform herself as an angel gaining all the reverence, love and sympathy from the former harsh puritan members in the end. Her successful transformation and new subjectivity-construction comes from her successful individuation: confronting her shadow and sin, recognising it and then working out and breaking through the restraints of the mark and the label to assert a new identity, independent, mature and respectful. Compared with Hester's successful transformation, Arthur Dimmesdale's tragedy is a failure of individuation. As an honoured clergyman with an elevated position in the puritan community, the persona, the mask he wears to show to the world and the social personality he presents to the puritan community is too rigid and artificial to have the courage and valour to tear it apart and confront his authentic being alone or in public. He is severely tortured by the ironical contrast between what he seems and what he is. He is admired and honoured by almost all the puritan members in his public service. But actually, when he is alone he despises himself as the vilest of all sinners. He torments himself by vigil and fast. He scorns himself that "what can a ruined soul like mine effect towards the redemption of other souls?—or a polluted soul towards their purification? As for the people's reverence, would that it was turned to scorn and hatred." The typical example reflecting the tortured soul is the scream he shrieked aloud in the night: an outcry that went pealing through the night, when he stands alone on the scaffold to confess his sin secretly. Besides the failure of individuation, another reason for his tragedy lies in the inhuman and harsh disciplines of the grave puritan society.

at the head of the social system, as the clergyman of the day stood, he was only the more trammelled by its regulations, its principles and even its prejudices. As a priest, the framework of his order inevitably hemmed him in.¹⁶

To some extent, he can be regarded as the model of the docile subject the disciplinary society tends to produce. All the regulations, prohibitions, morals and framework have been engraved and internalised on the minister's soul. Such kind of subjected soul is the prison of the body. Even though Hester wants to give him a helping hand, he could not flee from the restrained cage of the subjected soul. The strange, wild, wicked feelings and things he went through on his way home, not only reflect the extreme harm the inhumane and harsh puritan society inflicted on him, but also prove that he has always been the harshest observer of his own body according to the principles laid out by the puritan society. He cannot escape from the cage. Even though he knows that everyone is sinful and can only be rescued by the mercy of God,

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.69-70 .

¹⁵ Ibid., p.71 .

¹⁶ Ibid., p.183 .

he cannot step out the invisible web of the disciplines and punish of the society. He is a victim of such kind of disciplinary society.

3.2 Rebellions with Courage and Valour

The reason why Hester Prynne, the former sinner can surpass all the difficulties and overcome the cornered circumstances lies not only in her courageous confrontation of her shadow to work out a saint-like individual, but also in the fact that in the painful transformation, she can assert her own dignified and respectful identity by rebelling against the inhuman regulations, disciplines and punish of the authority. What are those rebellious actions?

3.2.1 Her Actions and Behaviours in the Public Exhibition

When she is forced to exhibit in public, she, a sinner as well as a helpless female is going to confront unbearable sufferings and stresses. In spite of all these things, she maintains her dignity in the prosecuting market-place, which, to some degree avenges contempt against the inhumane authority. The following quotations are to present her rebellious actions in the public exhibition.

When Hester was led forward by the grave puritans, “on the threshold of the prison-door, she repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air as if by her own free will”.¹⁷ She keeps her dignity as a human being, no trampled down as a wicked and guilty person by the authority. Confronting the stressful gaze of the authority and the other puritan members, “she took her baby on the arm... and with a haughty smile and a glance that would not be abashed, looked around at her townspeople and neighbours.”¹⁸ The haughty smile and gaze back at the authority and townspeople manifest her contempt at their inhumanity. Her most sarcastic actions against the inhumane society are the embroidered A and her resolute refusal to confess the name of the accomplice. The scarlet letter A is ordered by the authority to wear on her bosom as a reminder of her sin and shame throughout the rest of her life. She does not simply treat the label laid out by the authority as a symbol of guilty, abnormal and wicked separated from the normal and good citizens of the puritan community. She refuses the inhumane dual division by making A in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread. Besides the scarlet letter, she refuses to confess the name of the other accomplice. She would rather endure it by herself and let herself punished for sin than being crushed and trampled by the inhuman authority and all the sinful members on earth. This is an ironic rebellion against the disciplinary society.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.45 .

¹⁸ Ibid., p.46.

3.2.2 Pearl: Being Hester’s Rebellious Self

Pearl is regarded as scarlet letter endowed with life. The child’s appearance reminds almost everyone of the token Hester was doomed to wear on her bosom. Pearl is Hester’s rebellious self. Her actions, behaviours and words are actually the expression of Hester’s rebellion against the disciplinary society. In Hester’s words, pearl is the shadowy reflection of the evil that had existed in herself.

Hester brought the richest tissues that could be procured, and allowed her imaginative faculty its full play in the arrangement and decoration of the dresses which the child wore before the public eye. First, the exuberance and luxuriance of the apparel is not in accordance with the taste of the age but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuous regulations of the colony. According to the disciplines and regulations of the grave and severe puritan community, simplicity and sobriety are listed top in people’s everyday lives. They must be self-disciplined and always tough towards corporal desires and temptations. Only by this, they can be selected and lead a blissful and happy life hereafter. Pearl’s glamorous apparel is a chastisement of the harsh repression the puritan authority afflicts on the common people. Second, the splendid apparel and the living scarlet letter are ironical protests against the inhumane dual division of the people (normal or abnormal / guilt or innocence), which crushes people’s souls and ruins the dignity of the ‘abnormal’. Pearl’s wild, desperate, defiant mood and her flightiness temper facing up to the scornful treatments of the puritan members are sarcastic contempt against the inhumane regulations and disciplines of the puritan community. Since everyone is sinful according to the religious teaching, why Hester, being one of them, is severely treated by the other sinners in the puritan community? Her sin should be judged and punished by the Heavenly Father, rather than being inhumanely trampled by the other sinners on the earth. However, the puritan regulations, disciplines and all its moral systems are created and made out in the name of glorifying the god. The authority, acting as the loyal apostles will have the holy privilege of punishing and disciplining the sinners. And all the puritan members should also partake of the punishing and disciplining activities for establishing a second Jerusalem on the wild continent. As a matter of fact, the aim of the authority is to discipline all the puritan members for manifesting the power and affirming the supremacy of forces. Pearl’s ungracious answers that she had not been made at all, but had been plucked by her mother off the bush of wild roses that grew by the prison door, to Mr. Wilson’s question “who made thee”, is the most sarcastic rebellions against the inhumane authority.

Hester’s rebellions against the authority, either by the luxurious apparel or by the silent protesting, are the sarcastic contempt at the inhumane disciplinary society.

The authority applies to severe regulations and disciplines to enslave people and manifest the supremacy of the sovereign power.

CONCLUSION

Hester Prynne successfully accomplishes self-redemption, constructs a new self and gains reverence as an angel from all the puritan members. She makes it by successful individuation and rebellions against the inhumane disciplinary society. She also makes it by her love, sympathy and care. She tears off the shameful label the authority lays upon her and works out purity than that which she had lost. Her successful transformation and subjectivity-construction comes from her courage, honesty, love and forgiveness. Her long-journey sufferings are mainly from inhumane and disciplinary society. Arthur is actually a victim. Compared with the cruel and inhumane tortures and punishments the authority resorts to, the heavenly father is more compassionate, merciful and affectionate to his lambs. This reflects Hawthorne's humane concern towards the ones tortured, disciplined and punished by the prison-like society. It also reflects his affirmation of the glorious and splendid human nature shining in the labelled sinner and his serious contemplation and chastisement of the inhumane

disciplines and regulations the authority uses to crush the souls for producing docile bodies, manifesting and consolidating its power.

REFERENCES

- Colacurcio, M. J. (1985). *New essays on the The Scarlet Letter*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Hawthorne Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. Shanghai: WPC, 2008.
- James, M. (Ed.) (1987). *A Norton Critical edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Johnson, C. D. (2008). *Understanding The Scarlet Letter: A student casebook to issues, and historical documents*. Beijing: China Renmin UP.
- Lee, A. R. (Ed.) (1982). *Nathaniel Hawthorne: New Critical Essays*. London: Vision.
- Michel, F. (1977). *Discipline and punish*. tr. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Person, L. S. (2007). *The Cambridge introduction to Nathaniel Hawthorne*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ryskamp, Charks. (1959). The New England sources of *The Scarlet Letter*. *American Literature*, 31(3), 257-272.
- Selden Raman, et al. (2011). *A reader's guide to contemporary literary theory*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.