

# Nathaniel Hawthorne and Charlotte Bronte: Depiction of Traumatic Sufferings of Women

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## Abstract

This research article at the outset written with an aim to depict the agonizing pains of women in the society to attain a reverend status in her life. It also pictures women as a significant pillar who plays the vital role in the development of nation. During Elizabeth era the women were not allowed to act on stage. Those roles were portrayed by men. In olden days, women were bounded with traditions and culture. So they were not treated independently and freely. This was later on reflected by many writers in literature. They started describing the sufferings and pain faced by women in their life. This research article sharply pictures the sufferings faced by women through the novels Jane Eyre and Scarlet Letter. In both the novels the protagonist suffers a lot due to society.

The American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne brings forth the sufferings of women Protagonist Hester Prynne and she was neglected by the people. He also brings forth the painful experience that not only Hester suffered. Her agony mirrors to her child pearl. Charlotte Bronte in Jane Eyre brings forth the hardship of protagonist. In the beginning of the novel Jane Eyre was an orphan girl she was under the control of her life. She faces several difficulties in her life. She faces several difficulties in her life. Throughout the novel she only faces hard situations.

These two writers bring forth the pain and sufferings faced by women in the society, they wrote these two novels in order to show how women breaks the huge mount or sufferings to reach a respectful status in society.

**Keywords:** Sufferings, agony, less of hope, positions of women, symbol A, self-discovery

This article is based on the adversities faced by women in the novels of The Scarlet Letter and Jane Eyre. Though women faced lots of plights and complicated circumstances, they have strong will power to overcome those problematic conditions. In early period women do not have power to write their own names, they hide their own identity and they cannot express their own

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feelings. Though their perspectives were valuable, and they do not have platform to express it independently. This was the pathetic condition of women in olden days.

In the novel *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne is described as a strong, tolerating, beautiful, Sacrificing women. She was sent to England by her husband. She also carried her three months old baby in her hand. During the puritan era, the people followed the rules and regulations and lead their life. So, this was considered to be a sinful act.

Hester was waiting for her husband, but during that time she got an affair with Arthur Dimmesdale. This resulted in the birth of pearl. This sinful act made Hester to wear The Scarlet letter 'A'. The letter 'A' denotes Adultery.

“when he found The eyes of Hester  
Prynne fastened on his own, and saw  
That she appeared to recognize him, he  
Slowly and calmly raised his finger, made  
A gesture with it in the air, and lad it on  
His lips”

- Chapter – 3

Hester was pushed to stand on scaffold because of committing sin. She was holding her baby and standing at the center of the marketplace. The marketplace was filled with the crowd of people and they started criticizing Hester for her sin. She was standing at scaffold more than three hours. The governor gave a chance to her to confess her lover. She in the midst of the crowd identified her husband. Then she was sent to prison again.

Hester was affected mentally and physically. Hester's daughter cried a lot and got fever. The Jailor Master Brackett came to know about the condition of pearl, He brought a doctor to diagnose the child. The doctor was none other, but Roger gave treatment to the child and enquired about the sin, but Hester refused to disclose the truth.

After few months later, Hester was released from prison. She was not allowed to live in Boston, So she went far away from Boston and stayed with pearl. Hester was not respected or valued by people even small children called her Adulteress, because of her sin.

Governor decided to Scrutinize Pearl. Wilson asked the child that 'who made her'? Pearl replied that she was not made by anyone but plucked from rose-bush near prison door by her

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mother. On hearing this statement, Governor was shocked and decided to separate pearl from her mother because of pearl lives with her mother she would also get immoral values. Because of Hester, Pearl also suffers a lot. Pearl was a small child not knowing about the world, but she is also being criticized by people a lot. When pearl goes to meet Governor, the nearby children started to mock at her and throwed sand on her. As a child pearl could not even bare the pain, so she started screaming.

One day Dimmesdale got some illness. Roger again became medical supervisor for Dimmesdale. Roger came to know that the illness, was caused due to the torment of mental pressure. Finally, he finds the red letter symbol 'A' or Dimmesdale chest also. This shows that he was also a sinner. He decided to confess the sin. He came to scaffold and holding pearl on his hand and Hester nearby and he confessed the sin. He showed the Scarlet letter 'A' which is inscribed on his chest and he dies.

“Death was too definite an object to be wished for or avoided”

- Chapter – 16

The letter 'A' stands for three purpose at the beginning of the novel 'Adultery', because of Hester's sin. In the middle of the novel letter 'A' stands for 'Able'. She was a able women who lives life after all distressed circumstances. Finally, at the end of the novel, she became an 'Angel'. Though she faced many problematic statue of affairs, she remained a good hearted person. This made the author Nathaniel Hawthorne to symbolize her as an Angel at the end of the novel.

Parallel, Jane Eyre explores several significant themes such as relationship between man and woman, women's equality, realization of selfhood, nature of true love. The female character Jane Eyre is central protagonist of this novel. She undergoes so many hardships to attain a respectful position in the society.

Those days women had to cross so many hard circumstances to attain a reverend position and to plot her identity. They toiled a lot and that was mirrored in most of women's writing. The position of women was not recognized. This was pathetic condition of those olden days.

Jane Eyre was an orphan girl. She was under the care of her aunt Mrs. Reed at Gateshead Hall. Mrs. Read hated Jane and tortured her, she locked Jane in the red room, where Jane's uncle died. She was scared. She underwent so many torments by her aunt. She was sent to lowood Institution. This institution is a religious boarding school for orphans. This school was maintained

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by Mr. Brocklehurst. This boarding school is not a comfortable zone for those orphans, because they do not have sufficient food to eat.

Jane at beginning spent her life lonely. Later on she got a pious friend Helen Burns. She cared Jane and spent time with her. Jane also got another intimate relation, with Miss. Temple. Both of them made Jane a bright and audacious student. Jane's happiness did not long-lasting. That soon got faded. Unfortunately, a disease typhus broke out at the school. Many students got sick, one of those student was Helen. Helen could not survive, she passed away. This was a heart breaking news to Jane. She then, because sad and started losing her hope. Later on, Miss. Temple encouraged to pursue her studies. But she still thinks of her best friend Helen. When Miss. Temple left the school, she completely loss her hope and decided to discontinue the school.

“I am very happy, Jane; and when  
You hear that I am dead you must  
Be sure and not grieve: there is  
Nothing to grieve about. we all  
Must die one day, and the illness  
Which is removing me is not painful;  
It is gentle and gradual: my mind is  
at rest. I leave no one to regret ne  
much: I have only a father; and he is  
lately married, and will not miss me.  
By dying young I shall escape great  
Sufferings. I had not qualities or  
talents to make my way very well in  
the world: I should have been  
continually at fault.”

- Helen Burns

A governess job was offered to the Jane by Ade'le Varnes. Jane accepted the job and moved out to the place Lowood. Jane was appointed as a governess at Thornfield house. Jane has an idea that she is going to work under Mrs. Rochester. Jane started to be comfortable at Thornfield house. She was standing at third floor, she heard a unusual laugh which comes from locked room. Jane meets Rochester and started liking him. On one evening Jane noticed that Rochester's bedroom curtain got fired. She soon rescues him.

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Jane's Aunt was very sick, though she tortured Jane. She forgives her aunt for mistreating her. Jane returns to Thornfield. Jane and Rochester thought of getting married. On that day of wedding, two men revealed that Rochester is already married. Jane was totally upset on hearing this truth. Rochester tried to explain about his wife Bertha. But Jane decide go away from Thornfield.

Jane was travelling to another place. But she has no money, foods etc. she was taken care by rival family, Moore's house. They accepted Jane and changed her name as "Jane Elliott". Here Jane started to lose her Identity. She hid her original identity because Rochester will not find her. She started working as a teacher. Then after few months, she leaves moore house and goes back to Thornfield.

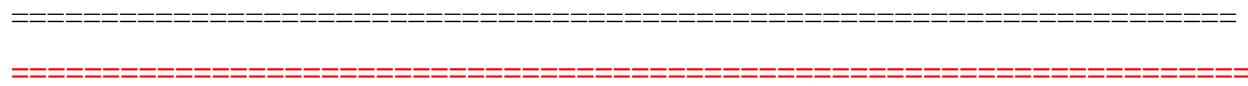
Rochester searched for Jane everywhere, but he could not even trace a clue about Jane. He then decided to lead a isolated life. Meanwhile the mad wife Bertha sets fire. Rochester saved all the servants, but he could not save Bertha. Rochester lost his one vision and also a hand. Now, he remained half-blind.

"Mr. Rochester, if ever I did a good deed  
In my life - if ever I thought a good  
Thought – if ever I prayed a sincere and  
blameless prayer – if ever I wished a  
righteous wish, I am rewarded now. To  
be your wife is, for me, to be as happy as  
I can be on earth."

- Jane Eyre

Finally, Jane goes to Rochester and takes care of him. They got married. He is also recovering to get back his vision. Jane throughout the novel faced lots of difficulties being an orphan girl. This made her feel hopelessness. But at the end she was happy.

In both the works the protagonist suffers a lot in society. But finally they discover themselves. In the novel "The Scarlet Letter, she was removed from sin and became an angel at the end of the novel. As well as in the novel "Jane Eyre" Jane was orphan but at the end of novel she got a family. Both of them discovered themselves in the midst of traumatic sufferings: To Conclude this article spots lights on the sufferings faced by women in literature and how they overcome those difficulties.



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