

[14] Years after the Spanish American war, Roosevelt expressed regret: "I have always been unhappy, most unhappy, that I was not severely wounded in Cuba . . . in some striking and disfiguring way" (qtd. in Jenkinson 77).

[15] Roosevelt codified this hunting ethic in the Boone and Crockett club, which he co-founded with naturalist George Bird Grinnell in December 1887 (Jenkinson 75). Among other requirements and qualifications needed to gain acceptance into the club, "members were sworn to maintain a strict code of honor—always to engage in a 'fair chase,' never to lie about a kill, and always to maintain a focus on natural history as well as hunting" (Jenkinson 75). Clubs such as this one also maintained a level of dignity by drawing on the rugged glamor of pioneers such as Daniel Boone and by sourcing inspiration from the refined hunting culture in Great Britain (Rico 173).

[16] Flipper believed that daily exercise routines called "plebe drill" transformed the "most crooked, distorted creature" into "an erect, noble, and manly being" (qtd. in Cusic 22).

[17] Flipper did see active combat in the Indian Wars (1866-1891). Flipper and his troop pursued the Apache chieftain Victorio and his war party (Cusic 45). In one skirmish, several soldiers were wounded and nineteen Indians were killed. Flipper recorded later, "This was the first and only time I was under fire, but escaped without a scratch" (49).

Hester Prynne's Individuality in a Puritanical Community

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During the nineteenth century, the theme of the individual in opposition to the community was prolific in politics, culture, and literature. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne, the bearer of the scarlet letter, struggles with her community's ostracization of her because she commits adultery, resulting in a pregnancy. Although the isolation is difficult for her, she maintains her dignity through her sustaining strength. Although the community solely blames Hester for the sin because she is the mother of her illegitimate child, Pearl, Hester is not the only one who suffers as

the individual excluded from the community. As one of the reverends in the community, Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale's unresolved guilt isolates him from his parish. The community isolates Pearl because she has an irrevocable connection to her mother and her mother's sin. Community is a singular thing, but it is made up of individuals. As soon as an individual rebels from the group, as Hester does, the entire group must denounce the individual because she mars their image as a whole, and as individuals. When it comes to religion, a community must disapprove wholeheartedly, especially of Hester's deviant sin. Ignoring the sin implies acceptance and therefore approval. The community needs to show God and its church that it condemns the sin and the sinner and are more devout Puritans than the individual.

Hester's punishment, assigned by her magistrates, is to stand on a scaffold for three hours with her shameful baby, and from that point on, to wear a scarlet letter A on her chest to signify her sin. The purpose of the A is solely to differentiate between the sinner and the innocents. When walking through town, visitors will know that Hester is somehow unlike the rest of the community without even knowing her story. By requiring her to openly display her difference, the community forces Hester into exclusion. The entire community gathered around the scaffold to show their solidarity against her and her sin, and to scoff and ridicule the sinner. An older woman, clearly influential among peers, disapproves of this punishment because she does not think it is harsh enough. She said that the church, the community, and Hester would benefit if the women, "being of mature age and church-members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as Hester" (Hawthorne, 48). These "self-constituted judges" are harder on Hester than they may be otherwise because they are her elders and are upstanding members of the church (Hawthorne, 49). They need to assert their authority over the younger woman in order to further elevate their standing in the church and the community. Not only is there an age gap between Hester and the older women, but she also separates herself further by committing adultery. The "shame" Hester brought to the church further inflames their hatred of her (Hawthorne, 49). In order to move that shame from the community to the individual, they must isolate the sinner. According to the elder women, since the magistrates' punishment was not harsh enough, they will have no one to blame but themselves when "their own wives and daughters go astray"

(Hawthorne, 49). In the extremely devout Puritan community, sin is infectious. If the community does not isolate Hester, other women will follow in her treacherous footsteps.

When the town-beadle brings Hester from the prison to stand on the scaffold, with “an action marked with natural dignity, ... [she] stepped into the open air, as if by her own free will” (Hawthorne, 49). This punishment is given to her and she must accept it, but it is her dignity, which allows her to accept it gracefully. Even as she faces humiliation at the hands of her community, she is not afraid to admit to her sin. As much as the community pushes her out, she pushes the community away from her as well. She stands on the scaffold, and “with a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile, and a glance that would not be abashed, looked around at her townspeople and neighbours” (Hawthorne, 50). She understands her sin, but she reclaims the power to ostracize herself by acting as if she is not afraid. If she were embarrassed, ashamed or uncomfortable, they would be able to make her feel worse. But her outward display of dignity shows her extreme individuality. If she begged for their forgiveness or acted ashamed to try to regain admission into the community, whether or not they accepted her, she would not be an individual. She is not conforming to their standards: a sinless woman, or, if a sinner, remorseful and ashamed.

This scarlet letter A on her bosom symbolizes her sin and the life of repentance she must endure because of her indiscretion. However, Hester made her letter in “fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread.” It looked as though it was “greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony” (Hawthorne, 50). By wearing the symbol at all and then making it ornate, Hester shirks many social norms and expectations: she admits her sin and proves she is not ashamed, she expresses her creativity and individuality, and she wears something that appears to be more expensive than what is socially acceptable to spend on personal items. Not only is her letter ornate, but it also seems to mystically “take her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclose her in a sphere by herself” (Hawthorne, 51). Because she wears her badge of dishonor with dignity and the community views it with disdain and relief that her soul is the condemned and not theirs, people cannot relate to her because she views her plight differently than they would view it if they were in her position.

Hester constantly accepts abuse when she could easily run away from her situation and the community. In order to purge her sin, she is required to remain in Boston. She is free to leave and live where she can “hide her character and identity under a new exterior” (Hawthorne, 72). She could make a new life with her daughter without the social and religious stigma and subsequent punishment. However, she has enough dignity and individuality to endure the abuse and punishment. Because of this choice to stay, she is a “martyr” (Hawthorne, 77). Her sin forces her to relinquish her place in society. Her community is bound to take her status whether she agrees that her sin is bad or not, but she could graciously hand over her status to them. Her remaining in the community – even if on the outskirts – and wearing the letter A maintains her dignity.

Hester’s graceful acceptance of her punishment to stand on the scaffold even though it makes her extremely vulnerable and uncomfortable shows her strength. From this strength comes her dignity. She is embarrassed of the A, but still wears it in elaborate form. Throughout the years, she still goes to the marketplace, embroiders linens for people, and is kind to her daughter – the most consistent and obvious proof of her sin. Although she is confined to the outskirts of the community, she still interacts as much as she can. All of these qualities require strength and dignity.

While exploring the woods, Pearl throws flowers at Hester’s letter A. Hester’s “first motion [is] to cover her bosom with her clasped hands. But, whether from pride or resignation...she resisted the impulse, and sat erect, pale as death” allowing the child to continue her game (Hawthorne, 87). The flowers ironically represent her lost virginity. Pearl, the result of Hester’s lost virginity, constantly reminds Hester of her sinful loss. The child laughs devilishly, “dancing up and down, like a little elf, whenever she hit the scarlet letter” (Hawthorne, 87), but Hester sits there and takes it out of “pride” or “resignation” because what is done cannot be undone.

Since Pearl is the direct result of Hester’s sin, Pearl is guilty by extension. Hester was beautiful and she performed the miracle of giving birth, but unfortunately, the birth had a “taint of deepest sin in the most sacred quality of human life.” Because of this sin, instead of the world benefitting from Pearl’s birth as with other children, “the world was only the darker...and the more lost for the infant that [Hester] had borne” (Hawthorne, 53). Pearl will always be a bastard child, no matter her personality, spirituality, or beauty. The sight of Hester holding Pearl on the scaffold even reminds

Dimmesdale of the “image of Divine Maternity,” (Hawthorne, 53) but since she came from her mother’s sin, Pearl will forever be the “sin-born infant” and nothing else she accomplishes will matter (Hawthorne, 59).

Because of her isolation, Pearl is a strong-willed, disobedient child. Hester sees her own “wild, desperate, defiant mood, the flightiness of her temper, and even some of the very cloud-shapes of gloom and despondency that had brooded in her heart” in Pearl (Hawthorne, 82). Because Hester knows that Pearl will not obey her, Hester finally gives up disciplining Pearl. Like Hester, Pearl is headstrong and stubborn. Hester finally “stands aside, and permits the child to be swayed by her own impulses” (Hawthorne, 82). Similarly, Hester will not reveal who impregnated her to the magistrates. No amount of “smiles and frowns” is going to persuade Pearl or Hester to do anything they do not want to do (Hawthorne, 82). Because of her mother’s sin, “Pearl was a born outcast of the infantile world” (Hawthorne, 84). Hester wants to see her child playing with other children, but because Pearl is not allowed in the community either, Pearl will grow up solely interacting with her mother.

Since the church controls the community, they do not allow Pearl to be baptized (Hawthorne, 84). Hester’s sin is sexually deviant, which is a much more serious sins because women’s chastity is extremely important in Puritan societies. Because this sin is so vile, the community is even forced to religiously ostracize Pearl, who did not actually commit any sins. Hester describes Pearl as “worthy to have been brought forth in Eden; worthy to have been left there, to be the plaything of the angels, after the world’s first parents were driven out” (Hawthorne, 80). Pearl was such a beautiful, innocent child, and more devout than Adam and Eve, she could have been left in Eden by herself to play with angels. Yet the religious leaders who ostracized Hester even exclude this innocent babe. Because of this palpable isolation, when Hester tells her the heavenly father sent her, Pearl touches the A and says “he did not send me...I have no heavenly father” (Hawthorne, 88). They are taking religion from her because she feels abandoned. She knows that, somehow, this scarlet letter A is forcing Pearl and her mother into isolation.

Pearl’s “singularity lay in the hostile feelings with which the child regarded all these offspring of her own heart and mind. She never created a friend,” (Hawthorne, 85). Hawthorne’s use of the word “created”

suggests that Pearl chose to not make friends. Pearl does not respect her peers because she had been born into isolation. Had she lived a normal childhood and then been sent into isolation, then she might have missed her friends and understood that her situation was abnormal. Since she never experiences friendship and her only interactions with the community are filled with judgment, anger and ridicule, Pearl does not want to be friends with her peers. However, Hester knows the feeling of acceptance and ostracization. Hester’s multiple experiences allow her to look at people with pity, sympathy, and sadness, whereas Pearl singular experience forces her to be hostile towards people.

Because of her isolation, Hester has the ability to view the community from a particular angle. She was once an insider, but is now an outsider. This angle is unique because most community members have never been isolated. From her perch on the scaffold where she is completely vulnerable and alone, she can see “her native village,” “her paternal house” (Hawthorne, 54) and “the intricate and narrow thoroughfares, the tall, gray houses, the huge cathedrals, and the public edifices...of a continental city” (Hawthorne, 55). She can see the community that once supported her and eventually ostracizes her. She also “looked from this estranged point of view at human institutions, and whatever priests or legislators had established; criticizing all with hardly more reverence than the Indian would feel for the clerical band” (Hawthorne, 174). Because of her removal from the community, she can perceive its politics from a different angle than other individuals who are completely engrained in the community.

Her cottage is “on the outskirts of town...not in close vicinity to any other habitation...comparative remoteness put it out of the sphere of that social activity which already marked the habits of the emigrants...shut out from the sphere of human charities” (Hawthorne, 73). She is physically removed from her community, but her sin emotionally isolates her from her community. An individual cannot be part of the community if she knows other individuals’ secret. This knowledge brings out the worse in people and does not allow them anonymity within the community. The letter A “gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts”, which people can perceive (Hawthorne, 78).

Even though the isolation is positive in granting her this different point of view, she is treated horribly because of her sin. The community views Pearl and Hester’s relationship as perverse. The townspeople view Pearl as a demon offspring and therefore “not

unreasonably argued that a Christian interest in the mother's soul required them to remove such a stumbling-block from her path" (Hawthorne, 89). Pearl's devilish behaviors could hinder Hester's path back to righteousness. Others argue if the child really is capable of "moral and religious growth," it was also their responsibility to transfer Pearl to a "wiser and better guardianship than Hester Prynne's" (Hawthorne, 89). In all, the general census agrees the pair should be split. However, Hester's only form of extended human interaction and feeling of purpose comes from Pearl. She approaches the magistrates "full of concern...but so conscious of her own right that it seemed scarcely an unequal match between the public on the one side, and a lonely woman, backed by the sympathies of nature on the other" (Hawthorne, 90). She knows she is independently against an entire community. Now that they want to take her child from her, she must manipulate the argument so that she can keep her only companion. While the church wants to save their souls, nature dictates the rights of the mother to her child, and the magistrates agree to allow Pearl to remain with Hester.

Not only does Hester suffer from her sin, but so does her companion in the sin. Pearl's father Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale's internal strife stems from his responsibility to lead the community. Ironically unlike Hester, Dimmesdale is awarded his individuality by the community through their deep commitment to follow him. The community appreciates his individuality because they need someone to lead them to heaven. Because of this, it is acceptable for him to stand out. Unfortunately, this individuality tortures Dimmesdale because he is overcome with guilt and cannot reconcile with his community and Hester. Dimmesdale isolates himself by allowing his guilt to consume his life. No one knows he sinned except Hester, and the entire community adores him and his sermons. Yet he imagines how the other ministers will receive him if they discover his sin. He always thinks about how hypocritical it is for him to advise his followers when his sin is oftentimes worse than theirs. His confident, learned preacher-self represents the community while his guilty sinner-self represents the individual. "He seemed to stand apart, and eye this former self with scornful, pitying, but half-envious curiosity" (Hawthorne, 194) because he cannot reconcile his two selves or overcome his guilt.

To further complicate Hester's situation, her husband, Roger Chillingworth, arrives in Boston the day

she stands on the scaffold. He does not want Hester to reveal they were married because he "will not encounter the dishonor that besmirches the husband of the faithless woman...it is [his] purpose to live and die unknown" (Hawthorne, 70). By shedding his identity and assuming that of a single man, he loses his individuality. The community does not accept a man whose wife committed adultery. If it knew his true identity, the community would ostracize him the way it ostracizes Hester. In order to be a member of the community, he must lose his individuality. From the moment he discovers Dimmesdale is the father, Chillingworth is consumed by his want for revenge. This strips him of his individuality as well. He loses all intrinsic qualities and motivation and focuses solely on the destruction of Dimmesdale's mental and physical health. This singular faceted purpose in life makes Chillingworth a one-dimensional person. The community accepts him, but he has no personality or depth.

The isolation caused by the sin affects every character involved. Hester's "life had turned...from passion and feeling, to thought" (Hawthorne, 143). Just as Chillingworth loses depth through his quest for revenge, Hester loses her personality. She once shared emotional connections with other individuals, such as her husband, her minister, and her fellow churchgoers. In her isolation, she is trapped in her mind because she is only allowed to interact with Pearl, a three-year-old child. Hester also lacks guidance and support. As she stood "alone in the world, – alone, as to any dependence on society, and with little Pearl to be guided and protected, – alone, and hopeless of retrieving her position," she had to rely on her own strength to raise Pearl (Hawthorne, 143). In Puritan law, men control their respective women. Hester has no one to depend on or follow. Because she lacks guidance for herself, she struggles to guide Pearl. Had she not sinned, Hester would have a man caring for her, accompanying her, protecting her, and providing for her. Since no one can do that for her, she must take on two roles in caring for herself and her child.

Hawthorne acknowledges that individuals make up the community when he describes how "the multitude [watching Hester on the scaffold] – each man, each woman, each little shrill-voiced child, contributing their individual parts" (Hawthorne, 54). The community in Boston is strong because it is composed of weak, dependent individuals. In order for the magistrates to maintain control over their followers, these followers must lose their individuality and abide by community

standards. They must give up their personal desires and live for the common good of the community. Hester strays from this conformity the first time when she has sexual relations with her minister, a major violation of community standards. She not only defiled herself, but she defiled the leader of the community, and therefore, the entire community. She does not conform again when she bears the scarlet letter A with pride and dignity. The community's intention for punishing Hester is to force her to fully repent. Hester seems to go through the motions of repentance. She stands on the scaffold, she wears the letter A, and she lives on the outskirts of town. However, Hester's "haughtiness," "pride," and "strong, calm, steadfastly enduring spirit" undermines the community's objective (Hawthorne, 213).

Works Cited

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Silhouetted Stereotypes in the Art of Kara Walker

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Kara Walker explores traditional narratives of race and gender power dynamics in her black and white silhouette installations. By presenting most figures in the same black color, racial and individual features are realized through detail. The theme of consumption is prevalent in Walker's work, such as the consumption of people as products in the slave trade as well as the consumption of breast milk in modern versions of the Madonna lactans. Walker's work draws on traditional intersections of race, class, and gender dynamics to create an original commentary on the cultural consumption of materials, beings, and art. Despite this commentary, Walker does not offer a clear stance on these issues and leaves the audience without a resolution to her shocking silhouettes.

Born in Stockton, California in 1969, Walker moved to Atlanta, Georgia, at the age of thirteen (Richardson 50). This move exposed Walker to the history of the "Old South" in comparison to her life in liberal California in the 1980s. Slave narratives are prevalent in Walker's work, and the stereotypes Walker draws on are typical of an Old South mentality, but

Walker insists that her work "mimics the past, but it's all about the present" (Tang 161). After her earning her B.F.A. at Atlanta College of Art and further study at the Rhode Island School of Design, Walker rose to prominence by winning the MacArthur Genius Grant in 1997 at the young age of 27 (Richardson 50). This prominent award poised Walker for great accomplishments, yet also exposed her to harsh criticism from fellow African American women artists, such as Betye Saar, who launched a critical letter-writing campaign to boycott Walker's work (Wall 277). Walker's critics are quick to demonize aspects of her personal life, like her marriage to a white European man, and even her mental state, accusing her of mental distress due to the graphic and troubling nature of her work (Wall 295).

Walker's silhouette installations involve black life-size silhouette figures on a white, often panoramic wall. Occasionally, colored lights are used to create an environment for the silhouettes, but most often the installations are strictly black and white. In this way, Walker explores stereotypes of race and gender, revealing individual and racial identities through details, yet forcing the viewer to acknowledge their complicity with stereotypes as the blank spaces of the installation are filled in with the viewer's own definitions of stereotypes, according to the social script. The black color of the silhouette figures is also the "color of all colors combined," commenting on the essential similarities between all human beings despite race and ethnicity. Walker states: "the silhouette says a lot with very little information, but that's also what the stereotype does. So I saw the silhouette and the stereotype as linked" (Kara Walker 1). Also, the shadows of the viewer interact with the silhouettes as each viewer closely examines the works, becoming part of the installation in a similar, black form and placing the viewer in direct conversation with the silhouette figures (Seidl). Walker's work questions binaristic social systems of black and white, male and female, light and dark, violent and delicate, and as such, contributes to the deconstructionist approach to feminist thought.

The use of silhouettes as a medium recalls the eighteenth and nineteenth century domestic tradition of silhouettes as female crafts. Similar to needlework and other craft mediums, silhouettes were used as a pastime for domestic women. Shadow silhouettes were particularly useful for women to record the figure of their lovers as keepsakes, as men travelled for business or military service. The ornamental style of silhouettes is