

ISSN 2071-1964

**Revue interafricaine de littérature,
linguistique et philosophie**

Particip'Action

Revue semestrielle. Volume 18, N°1 – Janvier 2026

Lomé – Togo

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Indexation SJIF 2025 : 3.66

ISSN 2071–1964

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LIGNE EDITORIALE DE *PARTICIP'ACTION*

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La Revue *Particip'Action* reçoit les projets de publication par voie électronique. Ceci permet de réduire les coûts d'opération et d'accélérer le processus de réception, de traitement et de mise en ligne de la revue. Les articles doivent être soumis à l'adresse suivante (ou conjointement) : participaction1@gmail.com

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Un titre qui indique clairement le sujet de l'article, n'excédant pas 25 mots.

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Une courte présentation en note de bas de page des auteurs (es) ne devant pas dépasser 100 mots par auteur. On doit y retrouver obligatoirement le nom de l'auteur, le nom de l'institution d'origine, le statut professionnel et l'organisation dont il relève, et enfin, les adresses de courrier électronique du ou des auteurs. L'auteur peut aussi énumérer ses principaux champs de recherche et ses principales publications. La revue ne s'engage toutefois pas à diffuser tous ces éléments.

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Un résumé de l'article ne doit pas dépasser 160 mots. Le résumé doit être à la fois en français et en anglais (police Times new roman, taille 12, interligne 1,15).

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Une liste de cinq mots clés maximum décrivant l'objet de l'article.

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-La structure d'un article, doit être conforme aux règles de rédaction scientifique, selon que l'article est une contribution théorique ou résulte d'une recherche de terrain.

-La structure d'un article scientifique en lettres et sciences humaines se présente comme suit :

- Pour un article qui est une contribution théorique et fondamentale :

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Résumé en français. Mots-clés, Abstract, Keywords,

Introduction, Méthodologie, Résultats et Discussion, Conclusion, Bibliographie.

Par exemple : Les articles conformes aux normes de présentation, doivent contenir les rubriques suivantes : introduction, problématique de l'étude, méthodologie adoptée, résultats de la recherche, perspectives pour recherche, conclusions, références bibliographiques.

Tout l'article ne doit dépasser 17 pages,

Police Times new roman, taille 12 et interligne 1,5 (maximum 30 000 mots). La revue *Particip'Action* permet l'usage de notes de bas de page pour ajouter des précisions au texte. Mais afin de ne pas alourdir la lecture et d'aller à l'essentiel, il est recommandé de **faire le moins possible usage des notes (10 notes de bas de page au maximum par article).**

- A l'exception de l'introduction, de la conclusion, de la bibliographie, les articulations d'un article doivent être titrées, et numérotées par des chiffres (**exemples : 1. ; 1.1.; 1.2; 2. ; 2.2. ; 2.2.1 ; 2.2.2. ; 3. ; etc.**).

Les passages cités sont présentés en romain et entre guillemets. Lorsque la phrase citant et la citation dépassent trois lignes, il faut aller à la ligne, pour présenter la citation (interligne 1) en romain et en retrait, en diminuant la taille de police d'un point. Insérer la pagination et ne pas insérer d'information autre que le numéro de page dans l'en-tête et éviter les pieds de page.

Les figures et les tableaux doivent être intégrés au texte et présentés avec des marges d'au moins six centimètres à droite et à gauche. Les caractères dans ces figures et tableaux doivent aussi être en Times 12. Figures et tableaux doivent avoir chacun(e) un titre.

Les citations dans le corps du texte doivent être indiquées par un retrait avec tabulation 1 cm et le texte mis en taille 11.

Les références de citations sont intégrées au texte citant, selon les cas, de la façon suivante :

- (Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur, année de publication, pages citées) ; - Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur (année de publication, pages citées). Exemples :

- En effet, le but poursuivi par **M. Ascher (1998, p. 223)**, est « d'élargir l'histoire des mathématiques de telle sorte qu'elle acquière une perspective multiculturelle et globale (...), d'accroître le domaine des mathématiques : alors qu'elle s'est pour l'essentiel occupée du groupe professionnel occidental que l'on appelle les mathématiciens (...) ».

- Pour dire plus amplement ce qu'est cette capacité de la société civile, qui dans son déploiement effectif, atteste qu'elle peut porter le développement et l'histoire, S. B. Diagne (1991, p. 2) écrit :

Qu'on ne s'y trompe pas : de toute manière, les populations ont toujours su opposer à la philosophie de l'encadrement et à son volontarisme leurs propres stratégies de contournements. Celles-là, par exemple, sont lisibles dans le dynamisme, ou à tout le moins, dans la créativité dont sait preuve ce que l'on désigne sous le nom de secteur informel et à qui il faudra donner l'appellation positive d'économie populaire.

- Le philosophe ivoirien a raison, dans une certaine mesure, de lire, dans ce choc déstabilisateur, le processus du sous-développement. Ainsi qu'il le dit :

le processus du sous-développement résultant de ce choc est vécu concrètement par les populations concernées comme une crise globale : crise socio-économique (exploitation brutale, chômage permanent, exode accéléré et douloureux), mais aussi crise socio-culturelle et de civilisation traduisant une impréparation sociohistorique et une inadaptation des cultures et des comportements humains aux formes de vie imposées par les technologies étrangères. (S. Diakité, 1985, p. 105).

Pour les articles de deux ou trois auteurs, noter les initiales des prénoms, les noms et suivis de l'année (J. Batee et D. Maate, 2004 ou K. Moote, A. Pouol et E. Polim, 2000). Pour les articles ou ouvrages collectifs de plus de trois auteurs noter les initiales des prénoms, le nom du premier auteur et la mention "et al" (F. Loom et al, 2003). Lorsque plusieurs références sont utilisées pour la même information, celles-ci doivent être mises en ordre chronologique (R. Gool, 1998 et M. Goti, 2006).

Les sources historiques, les références d'informations orales et les notes explicatives sont numérotées en série continue et présentées en bas de page.

Références bibliographiques (obligatoire)

Les divers éléments d'une référence bibliographique sont présentés comme suit : NOM et Prénom (s) de l'auteur, Année de publication, Zone titre, Lieu de publication, Zone Editeur, pages (p.) occupées par l'article dans la revue ou l'ouvrage collectif.

Dans la zone titre, le titre d'un article est présenté en romain et entre guillemets, celui d'un ouvrage, d'un mémoire ou d'une thèse, d'un rapport, d'une revue ou d'un journal est présenté en italique. Dans la zone Editeur, on indique la Maison d'édition (pour un ouvrage), le Nom et le numéro/volume de la revue (pour un article). Au cas où un ouvrage est une traduction et/ou une réédition, il faut préciser après le titre le nom du traducteur et/ou l'édition (ex : 2nde éd.).

Ne sont présentées dans les références bibliographiques que les références des documents cités. Les références bibliographiques sont présentées par ordre alphabétique des noms d'auteur. Il convient de prêter une attention particulière à la qualité de l'expression. Le Comité scientifique de la revue se réserve le droit de réviser les textes, de demander des modifications (mineures ou majeures) ou de rejeter l'article de manière définitive ou provisoire (si des corrections majeures doivent préalablement y être apportées). L'auteur est consulté préalablement à la diffusion de son article lorsque le Comité scientifique apporte des modifications. Si les corrections ne sont pas prises en compte par l'auteur, la direction de la revue *Particip'Action* se donne le droit de ne pas publier l'article.

AMIN Samir, 1996, *Les défis de la mondialisation*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

AUDARD Cathérine, 2009, *Qu'est-ce que le libéralisme ? Ethique, politique, société*, Paris, Gallimard.

BERGER Gaston, 1967, *L'homme moderne et son éducation*, Paris, PUF.

DIAGNE Souleymane Bachir, 2003, « Islam et philosophie. Leçons d'une rencontre », *Diogène*, 202, p. 145-151.

DIAKITE Sidiki, 1985, *Violence technologique et développement. La question africaine du développement*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

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NB2 : La quête philosophique centrale de la revue *Particip'Action* reste : **Fluidité identitaire et construction du changement : approches pluri-et/ou transdisciplinaires.**

Les auteurs qui souhaitent se faire publier dans nos colonnes sont priés d'avoir cette philosophie comme fil directeur de leur réflexion.

La Rédaction

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**HAWTHORNE'S LITTLE PEARL IN *THE SCARLET LETTER*: A PREMIER CHILD
ADVOCATE OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF AMERICAN
PURITANISM**

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Abstract

Nathaniel Hawthorne, one of the greatest American authors of his time, is renowned for his highly stylized writing. Among the themes developed in his fiction appear issues related to children's living conditions, which are worth investigating. Relying on reader-response criticism this study explores children's rights in Hawthorne's masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*, with the view of showing how Pearl, an adulterous little girl who is abandoned by her Puritan father, claims her rights and those of other children by confronting him with his own contradictions.

Keywords: *The Scarlet Letter*, children, rights, advocacy, Puritanism.

Résumé

Nathaniel Hawthorne, considéré comme l'un des plus grands écrivains de son époque, est bien connu pour son très beau style rédactionnel. Les questions de genre en lien avec les conditions de vie des enfants sont au cœur de sa fiction et méritent d'être examinées. S'appuyant sur la théorie de la réception, cet essai analyse particulièrement les droits des enfants dans *La Lettre écarlate* avec l'objectif de dévoiler comment Pearl, la fillette abandonnée par son père puritain, revendique ses droits et ceux des autres enfants en le confrontant à ses propres contradictions.

Mots-clés : *La Lettre écarlate*, droits, enfants, revendication, Puritanisme.

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Introduction

According to R. Baxter (in W. Orme, 1830, p. 30), “It is no small mercy to be the parents of a Godly seed: and this is the end of the institution of marriage.” R. Baxter underlines that being a parent is a great privilege and responsibility that God has afforded to parents. As responsible for vulnerable beings, godly seed, parents have the task of “erecting and establishing Christ’s glorious kingdom in their house” (in J. R. Beeke, 2008, n.p.). However, some parents, for one reason or another, neglect such an onerous responsibility God assigns them, leading sometimes their children into revolts against them. N. Hawthorne, one of the greatest American authors of his time, dramatizes this issue in his masterpiece and shows how Pearl, an adulterous little girl, who is abandoned by her puritan father, claims her rights and those of other children by confronting him with his own contradictions.

Writers such as F. Nudelman (1997), B. Garlitz (1957), and A. M. McNamara (1956), to name but a few, have elaborated at length on Hawthorne’s little Pearl, laying emphasis on her nature and redeemer function in her parents’ guilt, losing sight of her role as children’s spokesperson. Relying on L. M. Rosenblatt’s (1988) reader-response theory, this study intends to fill this gap. Reader response theory stresses the role of the reader in actively constructing texts rather than passively consuming them. Its proponents hold that texts contain blanks that affect the reader, who must explain them, connect what they separate, and create in his/her minds aspects of a work that are not in the text but are incited by it (K. Afagla, 2018, p. 21).

This essay is structured around three sections. While the first section examines parents’ duties towards children in Puritan society, the second one explores children’s duties vis-à-vis parents in the Puritan context. The last section addresses Pearl’s demand for her rights.

1. Parents' Duties toward Children in the Puritan Family

Parental duties in Puritan families are multiple. Yet, emphasis will be laid on those highlighted by the narrative. According to R. Baxter (in W. Orme, 1830, p. 179), parents in the Puritan family are tasked to speak gravitationally, seriously, and reverently of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Scripture, afterlife, or any holy duty. Accordingly, R. Baxter posits that parents' good talk of God and godly things to children positively influences their lives, for this will not only prompt them to fear and reverence God but live delightful lives as well. Such a parental duty is manifested in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* through the conversation between Hester and her little Pearl about the latter's origin. Bewildered by Pearl's strange behavior, Hester, her mother, questions her about her origin. Yet, Pearl's answer to such a query disappoints her mother. Still faithful to God despite her sin, Hester does not hesitate to reverence God before her child as their conversation reveals:

Child, what art thou? [...] Art thou my child, in very truth?
O, I am your little Pearl [...] Yes, I am little Pearl!
Thou art not my child! Thou art no Pearl of mine! [...] Tell me, then,
what thou art, and who sent thee hither?
Tell me, mother! [...] Do thou tell me!
The Heavenly Father sent thee!
He did not send me! [...] I have no Heavenly Father!
Hush, Pearl, hush! Thou must not talk so! [...] He sent us all into this
world. He sent even me, thy mother. Then, much more thee!¹⁰

Hester's answer highlights her revering God, teaching her daughter that God is the Creator of both sinful and righteous humans.

For R. Baxter (in W. Orme, 1830, p. 180), another parental duty in the Puritan family is parents' honoring of holy ministers and people before children. On the one hand, R. Baxter emphasizes that teaching children early to honor and praise holy ministers and people will prevent hasty judgment. Talking honorably and praiseworthy of them is obliging

¹⁰ Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 1960, pp. 96-97. Thereafter, shortened as SL in intra-text notes.

children to have a good opinion of them and hate those who defame them. On the other hand, hearing parents talking disdainfully of holy things and persons – and irreverently talking of God, the Scripture, and the afterlife, or speaking dispraisingly of godly ministers or people – is very awful for them. Proceeding so before them is inculcating in them sinful values, encouraging them to disrespect and sowing evil in them and therefore preventing them from benefiting from God's love and holiness, and making their salvation a work of much greater difficulty, and much smaller hope. R. Baxter concludes that wicked parents are the most notable servants of the devil and the deadliest enemies to their children's souls. Souls are damned more by ungodly parents than by any instruments in the world.

Hester is targeted by this parental duty. Victim of the townspeople's harshness, Hester could denigrate them before her daughter and set a barrier between them. But she refuses to venture there while she had opportunity to do so. She could likewise reveal her love affair with Dimmesdale and tell Pearl his subsequent treason: abandonment resulting in their scorn and humiliation by the community and, by this way, urges Pearl to despise him. However, she prefers preserving his reputation, leaving her child in uncertainty. She even vaunted his kindness to her daughter in the forest.

Additionally, *The Scarlet Letter* presents righteousness as one of the obvious parental duties in the Puritan society. R. Baxter (in W. Orme, 1830, p. 189) theorizes that parents should be models for their children. The good values — heavenliness, blamelessness of tongue and life— that parents intend to inculcate in their children must be embedded in them. R. Baxter contends that parents are role models *par excellence* for their children, both for good and evil deeds. Parents' fear of God will persuade children to do so. However, if they see parents live a carnal, voluptuous and ungodly life, and hear them curse, swear, and talk filthily, it will greatly embolden them to imitate. Children will have a dark vision of their parents if the latter address them wrongly.

Hester performs this duty magnificently in the narrative. She is mocked, scorned, defamed and humiliated by her community: “And, mother, the old dame said that this scarlet letter was the Black Man’s mark on thee, and that it glows like red flame when thou meetest him at midnight, here in the dark wood. Is it true mother? And dost thou go to meet him in the night-time?” (SL, p. 184). Because she is mindful of her child’s presence by her side, and wanting to drill her good values and prevent her from falling like her, Hester never battles with them or curses them: she prefers indifference to their attacks. Responding violently to them is prompting her child to imitate her. Her attitude demonstrates that in the face of calumny, parents should have a high sense of self-restraint, to be models for their children.

Furthermore, another parental duty consists in training up children with tenderness, affection and patience. Applying these virtues in child-rearing is not tantamount to weakness or destruction, but great love. He posits that rearing children with kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearance, patience, sympathy, a willingness to partake in their sufferings and a readiness to take part in their joys opens the way to their trust and love, while resorting to violence and harshness in their upbringing will make them distrustful and keep them away from their parents. J. C. Ryle insists that anger and harshness may frighten, but they will not persuade children that parents are right; and if they see parents often out of temper, they will lose their respect. He further advises parents to be watchful of their children’s affections, for being feared by one’s children is very dangerous. Fear puts an end to openness of manner (i.e., fear leads to concealment); it sows the seed of much hypocrisy, and leads to many a lie. About children’s weakness and tenderness, parents should be mild and patient with them: “We must handle them delicately, like frail machines, lest by rough fingering we do more harm than good. They are like young

plants, and need gentle watering — often, but little at a time” (J. C. Ryle, 2023, pp. 2-3), for without it, nothing is possible.

Hester outperforms this duty in the narrative. Pearl, Hester’s daughter, is a strange child whose character and behavior are extraordinary. In effect, born out of sin, she behaves wildly with her mother, i.e., she can spend a whole day running in every direction, singing and dancing in her mother’s cottage; or again gazing strangely at the scarlet letter on her mother’s bosom or trying to grasp it, or questioning her about the letter. On top of all these, she refrains from befriending the children of the settlement for an unknown reason, while children of her age like playing with their age-mates. Nevertheless, her wild nature does not prevent Hester from loving and cherishing her to the point of confronting the magistrates to have custody of her. Moreover, Hester is nice to Pearl and patiently supports her wild mood, as the following text testifies to it: “Child, what art thou? [...] Art thou my child, in very truth? [...] Dost thou know the mother now, child? [...] Wilt thou come across the brook, and own thy mother, now that she has her shame upon her, now that she is sad? (SL, pp. 96, 210). These words, the narrator confides to the reader, are pronounced with a subdued tone and not with anger or brutality.

Finally, life preservation and child nourishment are first-class parental duties. Since it is an embryo in the mother’s womb, both mother and father are tasked to pray and sanctify the child till his/her birth and independence, for when God has “curiously made” the babe “in secret, in the lowest parts of the earth,” it is to be regarded, even before it sees the light (R. Adams, 1844, p. 324). As for nourishment, the mother should be prudently careful; and the father, in special cases of a real longing appetite, should endeavor seasonable supplies: so there should be a joint care for a provision of things necessary and convenient to entertain the babe into the world, when brought forth. Child nourishment for the preservation of its natural life— and to seek that it may be spiritually alive once he/she comes

into the world— means for parents to make a good use of the means nature and grace have provided them with. In effect, breast-milk is ordinarily the most proper food given by nature. Consequently, the mother is required to breast-feed her own baby with, unless she is prevented by some involuntary circumstances. Shirking such divine responsibility thereof, R. Adams (1844, p. 324) holds, is violating those reasonable inducements which do oblige conscience.

I. Ambrose (1899, p. 128), in the same line of reasoning, asserts that the duties of parents to the bodies of their children are in many particulars, but may be all comprised under this one head: a provident care for their temporal good. The first age of a child is his infancy, i.e., when he remains in the mother's womb, who has the full responsibility to pray and provide him/her with special care, so that he/she may be safely brought forth. The next stage of a child's infancy is his/her birth till his/her sucking age. At this point, the mother is entirely responsible for her child's education. The next step is his/her youth, and parents' duty at this level is to nourish and nurture their children. Nourishment involves food and medical care. Parents' failure to perform these duties makes them infidels. Nurture entails good manners, a good calling, frequent admonition, reprehension, correction, the last remedy which may do good when nothing else can. Parent's duty to the souls of their children also extends to every developmental stage of the child, namely, their infancy and youth.

The above parental duty mainly refers to Hester, the protagonist of the novel. Adultery is a crime punishable by death in the Puritan community. Following her love affair with Reverend Dimmesdale that resulted in a pregnancy, Hester, aware of the law, could abort her child to be safe from the severity of Puritan law, avoid humiliation and scorn. However, she resolves to safeguard her baby till delivery and undergo the society's judgment at all costs. The humiliation she endures during the scaffold scene does not prevent her from preserving her baby's life from her

husband, Roger Chillingworth's vengeance. Being mistrustful, she warns him from avenging himself on her little Pearl: "Whouldst thou avenge thyself on the innocent babe?" (SL, p. 73). Regarding her abandonment by people and the ongoing humiliation upon her prison release, she refuses to be overcome by misery, to deprive her baby of food. Instead, she goes above and beyond, using her talent to provide for her: "Lonely as was Hester's situation, and without a friend on earth who dared show himself, she, however, incurred no risk of want. She possessed an art that sufficed, even in a land that afforded comparatively little scope for its exercise, to supply food for her thriving infant and herself" (SL, p. 81).

Exasperated by her child's eccentric behavior, Hester prays for her transformation: "O Father in Heaven, _if thou art still my Father, _ what is this being which I have brought into the world!" (SL, pp. 94-95). Such a moan is a prayer asking God to amend her child's behavior which causes her much trauma. Like parents, children have some obligations vis-à-vis their genitors.

2 – Children's Duties in the Puritan Family

Like parents' duties, children's in a Puritan family are multihued. Only those pertaining to this discussion are stressed. Children must love and fear their parents. Loving and fearing parents entail, on the one hand, enjoyment of their companionship and time devotion to them. On the other hand, it underlines reverence and respect to them. As opines R. Baxter, children must be more pleased in their parents' companionship to the detriment of their idle play-fellows, for they must be conscious that they owe their existence to their parents who have sacrificed themselves to provide for them at the risk of their own happiness. R. Baxter (in W. Orme, 1830, pp. 190-191) further sustains that children owe obeisance to their parents whatever the punishment they receive from them: "For this is their duty, which God requireth of them, and they do it for your good. It is a sign

of a wicked child that loveth his parents the less, because they correct him, and will not let him have his own will. Yea, though your parents have many faults themselves, yet you must love them as your parents still”.

Similarly, I. Ambrose (1899, p. 134) holds that the inner duties of children to their parents are love and fear, respectively assimilated to sugar and salt. Love—sugar— attenuates fear; while fear—salt— cheers up love. This love-like fear is inherent to children, that the awful respect which the saints bear to God is called a filial fear. Having received all from their parents, children owe them love and fear. That love and fear must outwardly be manifested through reverence, holy titles, meek, humble speeches and obeisance to the commands, instructions, reproofs, and corrections of their parents. Parents representing God, the Almighty Creator on earth, children must be mindful that whatsoever they do to their parents, they do it to God: when they disobey them, they disobey God; when they please them, they please God; when their parents are justly angry with them, God is angry with them: and they cannot benefit from His favor.

This duty is incumbent upon Hawthorne’s little Pearl. Unaware of her mother’s unfaithfulness, once he/she grows up, Pearl is never seen far-away from her mother. At home and in town, Pearl, like a shadow, always follows her mother, busy playing while the latter needles or delivers her commands or performs other tasks. Even though the other children come to their cottage and secretly gaze at her, Pearl remains indifferent and resumes her plays. She may think that abandoning her mother to play with the other children will cause her much pain as she has no friend with whom to share her sorrows. Therefore, though strange, Pearl’s attitude—closeness— to her mother highlights her love for her: “Now thou art my mother indeed! And I am thy little Pearl. In a mood of tenderness that was not usual with her, she drew down her mother’s head, and kissed her brow and both her cheeks” (SL, p. 210).

In addition, acceptance of the company chosen by parents is a duty assigned to children. According to R. Baxter (in W. Orme, 1830, p. 197), children should conform to the company their parents choose for them, as bad company leads to perdition. For sport's sake, children disobey their parents to be with their idle, licentious, and disobedient play-fellows who will teach them to curse, swear, lie, talk filthily, and draw them from their book or duty: this is the devil's highway to hell. Therefore, they should accept the company provided to them by their parents. Such a child's duty targets little Pearl. Upon her prison release, Hester isolates herself from society to settle in an abandoned cottage with her and never receives visits. She does not converse with the townspeople whenever she goes in town to deliver her products. When greeted by the latter, she keeps quiet, resuming her walks. By this act, Hester instructs her child to accept the companionship she chooses for her. In effect, as mentioned above, Pearl, whether consciously or not, is bound by her mother's decision. She never befriends people or stays far from her mother, even if she likes playing: "Pearl, whose activity of spirit never flagged, had been at no loss of amusement" (SL, p. 176). Seeing Pearl outside the cottage means her mother is not far.

Moreover, children are required to marry only with the consent of their parents. For R. Baxter (in W. Orme, 1830, p. 197), children should not get married without their parents' approval. They should include their parents in their choice to determine the suitable groom or bride for them. Inexperienced children may rely on passion and fancy to make their choices, while parents will choose with wisdom. Children should humbly accept their parents' say in their choices of life partners.

Little Pearl is targeted again. Following her biological father's passing (Reverend Dimmesdale's death), her mother moves to Old England with her. However, many years later, Hester returns to Boston without Pearl. Given their unbreakable bound, her return without Pearl presupposes

the latter's marriage. Thus, her marriage entails her mother's adherence to it. In reality, Hester, who courageously confronted the magistrates when they plotted to separate her from Pearl, will oppose her marriage if she disapproves of it. By all available evidence, Hester consents to Pearl's marriage: "In fine, the gossips of that day believed — and Mr. Surveyor Pue, who made investigations a century later, believed, and one of his recent successors in office, moreover, faithfully believes,— that Pearl was not only alive, but married" (SL, p. 260).

Finally, parents' caretaking is one of children's obligations. Providing for their parents when they are in want and maintaining them if they are in need is a duty incumbent upon children. Unable to completely satisfy their parents, they are required to provide them with the minimum in requital of what they have received from them. Abandoning parents in misery while they are wealthy is inhuman. Parents should be forever maintained. Drawing their existence from their parents, children owe them care, even when their riches do not emanate from their parents (R. Baxter, in W. Orme, 1830, p. 197). Pearl is concerned by this prescription. Thanks to her recognition by her father and the wealth she inherits from Chillingworth, her mother's husband, Pearl becomes a rich heiress. Mindful of the humiliations and the sacrifices her mother endured on her behalf, Pearl cannot abandon her in misery, sharing her wealth with her mother:

In the cottage there were articles of comfort and luxury, such as Hester never cared to use, but which only wealth could have purchased, and affection have imagined for her. There were trifles, too, little ornaments, beautiful tokens of a continual remembrance, that must have been wrought by delicate fingers, at the impulse of a fond heart. [...] Pearl was not only alive, but married, and happy, and mindful of her mother; and that she would most joyfully have entertained that sad and lonely mother at her fireside (SL, p. 260).

Despite the physical distance separating Pearl from her mother, she is mindful of her mother and cannot abandon her in misery. Though Pearl performs her duty toward her mother, she is somehow angry against her, the

society and her unknown father for refusing her to get a father and depriving her of her birthrights.

3- Pearl's Demand to the Puritan Society

Pearl, Hester and Reverend Dimmesdale's daughter, is born out of their passionate crime: adultery. Pearl's mother, Hester Prynne, is sent alone to Boston by her scholar husband Roger Chillingworth who remains in England to settle some domestic affair before joining her. Once in Boston, Hester never receives news from her husband. Two years later, she learns that he dies in shipwreck on his way to Boston. Entrusted to Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale for her spiritual growth, Hester falls pregnant of the latter and gives birth to a baby girl she names Pearl. Brought before the Boston court to reveal the name of her partner in crime, Hester refuses, depriving her child of any fatherly figure and her rights as a child. Deprived of a father, Pearl revolts against her mother, her unknown genitor and the society at large. Her revolt ultimately brings her victory.

First of all, blaming her mother for having refused her the right to a father, Pearl resolves to torture her with her eccentric behavior. Accordingly, she shows off her torturous trend during the first scaffold scene – “Even the poor baby, at Hester's bosom was affected by the same influence, for it held up its little arms, with a half pleased, half plaintive murmur” (SL, p. 68) – down to the last one, when Pearl tries by all means to discover her father. Neither her mother nor her father is ready to reveal the truth. To blame her mother, Pearl, once she grows up, tortures her with her wild and strange behavior: she can spend time running, singing or dancing. Whatever means Hester uses to rebuke her, Pearl will behave as she likes. Her attitude troubles her mother a lot, who only finds peace once she is asleep, as states the narrator: “From that epoch, except when the child was asleep, Hester had never felt a moment safety; not a moment's calm

enjoyment of her” (SL, p. 95). O. E. Eisinger (1951, p. 329) comments about her wild nature as follows:

Pearl is a symbol of natural liberty, perverse and willful, consulting her own impulses and following them wherever conflicts arose. She is antisocial. She will not be governed by any human will or law. She is as unruly as nature and is therefore unfit for civil society. Only when these natural qualities are washed away in Dimmesdale's salvation does Pearl become a responsible human being, ready for admission into the community of men and, when Chillingworth's money came to her, even into the Puritan community.

Besides being turbulent, Pearl tortures her mother with the scarlet letter. In effect, she has a steadfast gaze at the scarlet letter, a regard which deeply hurts Hester. As if this is not enough, Pearl will torture her with questions related to the scarlet letter on her bosom and the minister's hand on his chest: “what does the letter mean, mother? — and why dost thou wear it? — and why does the minister keep his hand over his heart? (SL, p. 95). Despite Hester's rebuke, Pearl stands up and tortures her with the same queries: “Mother, what does the scarlet letter mean? [...] Mother! — Mother! — Why does the minister keep his hand over his heart? [...]. But why does he wear it outside his bosom, has thou dost, mother?” (SL, pp. 180, 186). All these strategic questions fail to achieve their intended objectives: the revelation of her father's identity. With a dogged will driving her longing to know her father, Pearl will not abandon her struggle to discover his identity. She refuses, for instance, during the forest scene to acknowledge her mother unless she wears the scarlet letter and the cap. Her attitude substantiates C. L. Daniels' (2005, p. 232) following opinion: “Throughout *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne shows Pearl's actions and reactions in her formative years as a demonstration of outright rebellion.” Just the way she tortures her mother, Pearl tortures her unknown father to the point that he ends up recognizing her.

According to J. R. Beeke (2008, n.p.), Puritans believed that children's education is incumbent upon the father. In the same line of

reasoning, L. Ryken (1986, n.p.) contends that “Hierarchy in the family means first of all, that the husband and father is the accountable head for what happens and the one who is finally responsible for seeing that essential matters are happening in a family”. In the same vein, A. Ceka and R. Murati (2016, p. 63) opine that the father is a paramount factor for the good functioning of a household. His presence brings joy and a feeling of safety to his children. Nevertheless, Dimmesdale evades his fatherly role, leaving Pearl in charge of her mother. But Pearl will bring him to shoulder his responsibilities as a father vis-à-vis her. As a matter of fact, since the first scaffold scene, Pearl has tried by all means to have her father recognize her. But the Reverend, who worries more for her reputation than for her role as a father, slips away from Pearl’s demand. Besides, during their visit to Governor Bellingham’s mansion, Pearl has tried again to catch her father’s attention and he still remains stubborn. Indeed, when Hester begs Dimmesdale to plead in her favor for Pearl’s custody, the latter “stole—softly toward him, and, taking his hand in the grasp of both of her own, laid her cheek against it; a caress so tender, and withal so unobtrusive” (SL, pp. 114-115). Moreover, during the second scaffold scene, Pearl has renewed her demand to her father in these terms:

Minister! [...] Wilt thou stand here with mother and me, to-morrow noontide?
Nay, Not so, my little Pearl! [...] Not so, my child. I shall, indeed, stand with thy mother and thee one other day, but not tomorrow! [...]
But wilt thou promise, [...] to take my hand, and mother’s hand, to-morrow noontide?
Not then Pearl, [...] but another time!
And what other time? [...]
At the great judgment day! [...] Then, and there, before the judgment-seat, thy mother, and thou, and I, must stand together! But the daylight of this world shall not see our meeting! (SL, p. 152).

Visibly, the minister wants to acknowledge Pearl, but not in the community’s presence, whose will does not fit to that of Pearl, occasioning a mockery from her. Pearl’s incessant request to be publicly recognized is key to her. As D. Qin (2010, p. 37) asserts, “It seems that public revelation

of the real relationship among the three is to Pearl the only means of reconciliation”. However, all her pleas fell on deaf ears. Fed up, Pearl chooses to force him to confession and her admission to humankind. In effect, during their forest visit, upon forcing her mother to wear the objects of her shame, Pearl refuses to befriend with Dimmesdale despite her mother’s request, resuming her questions: “—Doth he love us? Will he go back with us, hand in hand, we three together, into the town?” (SL, p. 211). These questions remain unanswered. And when the minister kisses her, Pearl runs to wash her cheek in the river, signifying her rejecting this father who shows her sympathy only when they are out of the community’s sight, which cannot make her part of humanity, depriving her of all privileges and rights. Pearl’s attitude puts an indelible mark on Dimmesdale, obliging him to confess his sin, making so of her part of humankind: her wild nature disappears to make place for a disciplined and gentle woman. Therefore, Pearl stands up for her rights and those of other children: Ultimately, she gets her way.

Another parental duty is family worship which every family must perform daily in the mornings and in the evenings under the direction of the head of the family, the father (I. Ambrose, 1899, p. 126; J. R. Beeke, 2008, n.p.; J. C. Ryle, 2023, p. 5). It includes several elements, the essential ones being prayer, *Bible*/Scripture reading and psalms-singing.

Prayer, according to J. C. Ryle (2023, pp. 5-7), is the very soul of true religion and the prime evidence of man’s rebirth. Prayer is the mightiest engine God has placed in people’s hands. It is the best weapon to use in every situation, and the surest remedy in every trouble. If parents love their children, they shall do all that lies in their power to train them up to a habit of prayer. Show them how to begin. Tell them what to say. Encourage them to persevere. Remind them if they become careless and slack about it.

Scripture-reading is the father’s task as head of the household. The family usually read straight through the *Bible*, out of the conviction that

God gives a whole *Bible* to make a whole Christian. On special occasions, such as the Lord's Supper, the death of a loved one, or a National Day of Prayer and fasting, the father is asked to select an appropriate Scripture reading. He should likewise interact with his family about sacred truth on a daily basis by means of questions, answers, and teaching. This exercise must be done diligently and with passion (J. R. Beeke, 2008, n.p.).

Psalm-singing consists in daily singing. The sound of rejoicing and salvation should rise from Puritan family homes through daily singing. In such singing, God is glorified and families are edified. It promotes devotion as it informs the mind and warms the heart. Singing must be biblical and doctrinally pure, and it must be done heartily and with feeling. Failure to lead the family in worship was failure to be a father, for no father could neglect family worship and keep a good conscience. Whately (in J. R. Beeke, 2008, n.p.) says that a father who does not lead his household in the ways of God through family worship "keeps a household of fiends, a Seminary for the devil, a nursery for hell, and the kingdom of death".

Here again, Dimmesdale fails his fatherly duty, which earns him Pearl's revolt. As a matter of fact, intrigued by Pearl's wild nature as mentioned above, Hester teases her to know whether she is really a human or a demon. Ignorant about the family worship – prayer, *Bible*-reading and psalm-singing – she cannot answer her mother, obliging the latter to tell her that she has been made by the Heavenly Father. Unaware of the Scripture, Pearl denies being made by any Heavenly one: "I have no Heavenly father" (SL, p. 98). Following such an awkward answer, Hester admonishes Pearl to speak so and tries to catechize her. Rejecting her being without an earthly father whose task consists in enlightening her about the Scripture, Pearl refuses to memorize her mother's teaching. Once they go to Governor Bellingham's mansion to plead for her cause, Pearl is questioned again about her origin. Normally, Pearl should be able to answer the old minister with her mother's teaching. But blaming her parents (mainly her father) for

having failed to familiarize her with the family worship, she provides him with a squalid and vague answer which irritates the minister and hastens their decision to separate her from her mother for the salvation of her soul:

After putting her finger in her mouth, with many ungracious refusals to answer good Mr. Wilson's question, the child finally announced 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. [...] This is awful [...] Here is a child of three years old, and she cannot tell who made her! Without question, she is equally in the dark as to her soul, its present depravity, and future destiny! Methinks, gentlemen, we need inquire no further (SL, pp. 111-112).

With her unknown father Dimmesdale's intervention, the magistrates resolve to leave Pearl with her mother. They nevertheless conclude that she must be entrusted to Dimmesdale (her real father but unknown to them) for catechism class and be schooled later on (SL, p. 114). Therefore, Pearl's refusal to belong to a Heavenly Father has been beneficial to her: it has permitted her to be entrusted to her earthly father who will provide her with biblical knowledge and assure her schooling:

Care must be had, nevertheless, to put the child to due and stated examination in the catechism at thy hands of Master Dimmesdale's. Moreover, at a proper season, the tithing-men must take heed that she go both to school and to meeting. [...] Thereby, every good christian man hath a title to show a father's kindness towards the poor, deserted babe (SL, p. 114-115)

Her struggle will not only benefit her but other children as well. Her attitude herein might have sustained C. L. Daniels' (2005, p. 228) argument that "Pearl represents the future of all women".

Puritan children are included in Pearl's fight for her rights. One of the parental duties is to be examples for their children: parents must behave righteously and avoid using ill-words before their children. If they do otherwise, the children will be tempted to behave likewise. Another parental duty is to avoid talking badly of people before children, for as argue C. Ardita and M. Rabije (2016, p. 62), "Parents are their children's strongest role model and greatest influence". However, Puritan parents have

trespassed this duty and have consequently instilled bad ideas about Hester and her child in their children's minds to the point that they disrespect and provoke them at their sight:

As the two wayfarers came within the precincts of the town, the children of the Puritans looked up from their play, — or what passed for play with those sombre little urchins, — and spake gravely one to another: — behold, verily, there is the woman of the scarlet letter; and of truth, moreover, there is the likeness of the scarlet letter running along by her side! Come, therefore, and let us fling mud at them! (SL, p. 101)

If Hester is indifferent to these children's bad behavior, Pearl cannot stand their affront, for she “felt the sentiment, and requited it with bitterest hatred that can be supposed to rankle in a childish bosom” (SL, p. 93). Hester's silence may entail her admitting guilt of her deed, but Pearl is simply a victim of her parents' uncontrolled passion; she is innocent and cannot accept blame from children of her age who owe respect to elder persons. Remaining silent to their insolence is encouraging them to disrespect them; they can show such a bad attitude toward other persons in future. Therefore, to end their affront, Pearl chases them away until they disappear from their sight:

But Pearl, who was a dauntless child, after frowning, stamping her foot, and shaking her little hand with a variety of threatening gestures, suddenly made a rush at the knot of her enemies, and put them all to flight. She resembled, in her fierce pursuit of them, an infant pestilence, — the scarlet fever, or some such half-fledged angel of judgment, — whose mission was to punish the sins of the rising generation. She screamed and shouted, too, with a terrific volume of sound, which doubtless caused the hearts of the fugitives to quake within them. The victory accomplished, Pearl returned quietly to her mother, and look up smiling into her face (SL, pp. 101-102).

The victory she obtained is not only for her mother and her, but for eventual sinners and mainly other adulterous children. Puritan leaders must stop blaming adulterous women alone and grant children born out of adultery their rights, like any other children.

Conclusion

Against the commonplace reading of the nature and redeemer function of Hawthorne's Little Pearl, this study has highlighted her role as children's spokesperson. For this purpose, it has underscored parents' duties towards children in the Puritan family, emphasizing only the duties pertaining to the theme by demonstrating that parents should reverence God, be righteous before their children by avoiding criticizing holy ministers and people, train children with love and patience and preserve children's lives and nourish them. It has, likewise, addressed solely children's duties vis-à-vis parents as portrayed in the novel by showing that offspring must love and fear their parents, obey them by approving the company and life partner chosen for them, and taking care of parents in moment of want and need. Finally, the study has explored Pearl's demand to her society, a demand she has been granted but through rebellion.

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