

Student Essay on Puritian Values in Today's Society

Puritian Values in Today's Society by Nathaniel Hawthorne

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Essay

Some people think that today's society has no morals or values. But if today's society had the values of puritan times as in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, there would be less crime, less materialism and not as many unwed mothers.

If today's society had the harsh punishments of puritan times, it would act as a deterrent and less crime would occur. "At the very least they should have but a brand of hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead." (p.49) Or "This women has brought shame on us all, and ought to die." (p.49) The women of the town were saying this about Hester, whose crime was Adultery. This is something we don't consider a crime today. The public humiliation of having to wear an "A", having to stand on a scaffold in front of town, and the scorn and ridicule that would result would also help to stop crime.

Furthermore, society would be less materialistic. The puritans valued plainness and simpleness. They, in fact, had rules regulating the dress and adornment of clothing. Hester was looked down on even more because her letter A was so finely decorated. "It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy that...it was greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony." (p.51) In puritan times one was judged by how hard one worked and how good of a person one was. This is why Hester's devotion to helping the sick and needy had gotten people to interpret her "A" as meaning "Able" rather than "Adultery." "...many people refused to interpret the scarlet "A" by its original signification. They said it meant Able.." (p.158)

Finally if puritan values existed today there would not be as many unwed mothers. Besides her crime Hester was also looked down upon because she was a single mother and raising a child alone. This is another reason that the townspeople wanted to know the name of Pearl's father so that he could take some responsibility for her.

Therefore, society today could be a much better place if some of the values of the past existed today.