



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Persona, shadow, and the divided self: A Jungian reading of individuation in *The Scarlet Letter*****Syed Zamanat Abbas**Syed Zamanat Abbas^{1*} & Ashish Pandey²¹Department of English Language and Literature, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia²The English and Foreign Languages University of Lucknow, India*Correspondence: abbaszsyed@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This paper attempts a psychoanalytic reading of the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne using the Jungian framework of Persona or the social mask, Shadow or the hidden self, and individuation or the integration of the two elements of psyche. It moves beyond the traditional readings of the novel in terms of feminism and psychoanalytic readings that use Freudian framework of libidinal repression, and tries to see repression in broader Jungian terms of social, moral, and spiritual terms. By applying the Jungian framework of Persona, Shadow, and Individuation, the paper claims that being exposed is healthier than hiding the truth. It supports this claim by showing that individuation was possible in Hester Prynne partially as her guilt was exposed and her Shadow was visible to all, while it was not the case with Dimmesdale. Due to his social position, he is forced to wear the mask of virtue resulting in his Persona becoming, rigid pushing his Shadow in the background. As a result, he suffers psychic disintegration; his health suffers and ultimately dies. The paper also critiques the Puritan techniques of moral and social surveillance that turns the private acts into a public spectacle of morality. It uses qualitative textual analysis, comparative and contrastive study of the characters and psychoanalytic and historicist approaches to show that visible wound like that of Hester Prynne is easy to heal while a hidden wound like Dimmesdale's can be fatal.

KEYWORDS: persona, shadow, individuation, the scarlet letter, Jung, Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, repression, divided self, psychic integration, puritan

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1. Introduction

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne published in 1850 is a landmark literary work in American Literature. The novel which is set in the seventeenth century New England describes an event in the Puritanical society. The novel has been mostly read as a moral allegory regarding sin and redemption, a critique of the Puritanical hypocrisy, or as a feminist critique. (Bercovitch, 1991; Baym, 1986; Crews, 1966). Some of the studies address the differential treatment of the two sexes as well (Baym, 1986; Fryer, 1976; Leverenz, 1989). Aspects of Puritanical hypocrisy and authoritarianism invading the life of the individual in the form of surveillance society have been given by Perry Miller (1983), Sacvan Bercovitch (1986, 2017) and Michael J. Colacurcio (1984). There also have been studies that show how public punishment was used as a means to control feminine gender Baym (1986) in *The Scarlet Letter: A Reading*. The novel has also been studied through the feminist lens by Judith Fryer (1976) depicting Hester Prynne as an epitome of defiance against the patriarchal society. Gender differential in terms of punishment was explored by Madsen (2000) in *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*. Psychoanalytical studies that explore the themes of confession as well as guilt, repression of hidden desires have been conducted by Frederick Crews in *The Sins of the Fathers* (1966) and Roy R. Male (1953). Crews (1966) and Morton Cronin (1954) use Freudian lens to conduct a psychoanalytic study of the novel. Studies about use of allegory and symbols in the novel have been done by Waggoner, H. H. (1963) in *Hawthorne: A Critical Study* and Abel, D. (1988) in *The Moral Picturesque: Studies in Hawthorne's Fiction*. Brodhead, R. H. (1986) has analysed *The Scarlet Letter* in terms of masculinity, authority and discipline in *The School of Hawthorne*.

The above readings have contributed greatly to the scholarship on Hawthorne from the point of view of hypocrisy, gendered division and differential treatment of men and women. However, comparatively less attention has been paid to the psychological turmoil in the minds of the characters, especially their internal conflict, psychic fragmentation, divided self, difference between their outer public face and the inner self, and the emotional turmoil caused by the rigid Puritan society. This study tries to bridge the gap in scholarship by analysing the subject of moral bewilderment pointed out by Hawthorne in the novel. Hawthorne writes, "No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true" (Hawthorne, 1998, p. 194). The novel also questions the fact as to what happens when a person's inner life collides with a society that demands outward purity. This study proposes that *The Scarlet Letter* is fundamentally a story of divided subjectivity in which we see that the characters are forced to inhabit contradictory identities, torn between what society can see and what must stay hidden.

Through the narrative, we notice that the Puritan moral order produces subjects who must appear morally upright and normal while suppressing everything that does not fit the code prescribed by the society. For this reason, this paper turns to Carl Jung's theory of individuation that addresses the psychological division or the 'schism in the soul' to borrow the term by Arnold Toynbee (1987). The theory of individuation was developed by Jung in his journey after he parted ways with Freud in 1920. He developed the idea of a divided self in *Psychological Types* (2013) and over a period of time in the 1930s which was finally published in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959, 1968). The divided self is a product of his archetypes of 'Persona' and 'Shadow,' or the anima/animus and the conscious and the subconscious parts of the self. Jung asserts that the major conflict is between the Persona and the Shadow in the individuals. Persona according to Jung is that part which the individual tries to show to the world or the mask that a person wears. On the other hand, there is the Shadow or the dark part which the individual hides as they don't want the world to see. It includes desires one does not want to accept that he has like anger, imperfection, lust etc. Jung gives another concept here and that is the idea of individuation where both these opposing desires are reconciled. The paper argues that in Dimmesdale, individuation was not possible due to repression of the Shadow as he wanted to live up to the expectation of the puritanical society due to his position as a priest while it was partially possible in the case of Hester because she was made to wear the scarlet letter.

2. Methodology

This study uses qualitative textual analysis as the primary method in order to conduct a close reading of *The Scarlet Letter*. The theoretical framework used in the study is the idea of Persona, Shadow, and Individuation which is based on Carl Jung's analytical psychology. The study explores the idea of the divided self, or as stated earlier, the 'schism in the soul' caused by emotional and spiritual repression. It also explores the idea

of conflict between the outward appearance (Persona) and the inner self or Shadow. In the literature review section it has been mentioned that previous studies focus on the concepts of morality, gender, feminism, Freudian psychoanalytical approach among other approaches. The overall methodology is interdisciplinary as it combines literary criticism, cultural analysis in the historical sense, and psychoanalysis.

The methodology mainly focuses on a close psychological analysis of the two protagonists—Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne. It examines their response and course of action to the impulses of shame, guilt, fear, and condemnation in light of judgment of the Puritan society. It contrasts the hidden guilt of Dimmesdale with the public shame of Hester and compares the punishment each of them receives. The methodology comprises of close textual reading of the symbols in the novel like the scarlet letter, the scaffold and the forest. It also compares and contrasts the outer and inner suffering of the two characters in question and tries to establish that because of the outer public suffering Hester Prynne is able to accept her sin and achieve partial individuation. On the other hand, Dimmesdale suffers internally because his sin is hidden and is not able to achieve individuation. The effect of public morality imposed upon individuals by the Puritan society is also studied in order to establish psychological control over the individuals. It does not try to diagnose any psychopathology; rather it foregrounds Jungian psychoanalytical approach to understand the actions and suffering of the two major characters.

3. Theoretical Framework

This paper uses the archetypes of Persona and Shadow based on Carl Jung's theory of individuation in order to prove that *The Scarlet Letter* is a narrative of the divided self due to a repressive society i.e. seventeenth century puritan society in New England. The self, according to Jung is formed through negotiation between what must be shown to the world and what must be disowned to remain socially intelligible (Jung, 1959, 1966). It is based on Carl Jung's depth-psychological model of the psyche. Jung writes further, "The psyche is not a chaos of arbitrary whims and accidents, but an objective reality which the investigator can only come to know through its manifestations" (Jung, 1959, p. 45) meaning thereby that it is a whole not a division. In this framework the idea of archetypes also is useful which according to Jung are "universal patterns of behavior and images that are inherent in the collective unconscious" (Jung, 1968, p. 48). Persona and the Shadow are the most prominent among these archetypes. They represent the conflict between an individual's socially accepted face and the primitive self which the society does not want to see or censures heavily.

Persona is the mask one wears for the world, which Jung calls "a segment of the collective psyche" that "serves to make a certain impression on others" (Jung, 1966, p. 157). He defines it as "a mask for the collective psyche, a mask that feigns individuality, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply acting a role" (Jung, 1968, p. 157). Persona therefore "is a compromise between the individual and society as to what a man should appear to be" (Jung, 1968, p. 192).

On the other hand, there is the Shadow, which holds everything and individual cannot show like desire, rage, shame, imperfection. Jung terms it "the thing a person has no wish to be" (Jung, 1968, p. 76). He writes further, "the shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort" (Jung, 1968, p. 84). However, Jung asserts that the Shadow is not inherently negative even though it "is merely something inferior, primitive, unadapted, and awkward; but it is not downright evil" (Jung, 1968, p. 87). According to Jung, "One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious" (Jung, 1968, p. 99).

This brings us next to the idea of Individuation, which in Jungian psychology, is the slow, painful process of integrating these split parts into a coherent Self. Jung describes it as "the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual,' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or whole" (Jung, 1968, p. 275). Jung warns that "when we identify with the persona, we become unconscious of our own individuality and live out a role rather than a life" (Jung, 1966, p. 154).

Jungian author James Hollis (2008) does not see the Shadow as a problem that needs solving; rather it is truth that one needs to learn to live with. The Shadow is something that the individual needs to become aware of according to Jung for he says, "One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious" (Jung, 1967, p. 265). Enlightenment, therefore, is the integration of the self rather than living a fragmented life of a divided self. When the self is divided, troubles are bound to arise as they do in the case of Dimmesdale. This goes beyond the libidinal repression suggested by Sigmund Freud and expands the scope of repression to moral, emotional, and spiritual repression. This model is especially applicable in the case

of *The Scarlet Letter* since the characters do not suffer from libidinal repression; rather they feel emotional and spiritual guilt. This repression is the cause of psychic fragmentation and suffering and eventual collapse in the novel.

4. Hester Prynne: Persona, Shadow, and Controlled Individuation

Hester Prynne is one of the two major characters in *The Scarlet Letter*. Critics have been kind to her in the sense that instead of treating or labeling her as a 'fallen woman' like Tess or Clarissa, she is treated as a proto-feminist. Wang (2010) calls Hester a "representative of the new female image" as she refuses to be typically submissive woman, and rather asserts her identity as she "defies power and puts up a tenacious fight" (p. 893) by refusing to reveal Dimmesdale's name and bowing down before the Puritan authority. For Wang she is also a model proto feminist as she is an economically independent woman who survives on her needlework. Hedroug (2022) also calls her a proto-feminist and also considers her "as a forerunner of an advancing type of feminist ideology" (p. 1196), as she "defies and overthrows traditional limitations imposed on her as a woman," and praised for her silence because it is "one of her strategies for resistance against her oppressors" (p. 1187, 1192). In an oppressive society like the seventeenth century New England Puritan society, defying the governor and not revealing the name of the father of her child, taking the burden of the 'crime' upon herself takes a lot of courage. In a way she is much ahead of her times. Her plight is described by Hawthorne as "the unhappy culprit sustained herself as best a woman might, under the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated at her bosom" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 63). This act of facing the eyes of the public staring at the letter A, which suggests her adultery, is not only a social act but according to the Jungian Framework it is something deeper and serious. It is the act of the Shadow getting externalized to such an extent that it damages the Persona which in this case is reputation of a woman in the seventeenth century New England Puritan society. For Jung, Persona is "a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be" (Jung, 1968, p. 305) However, Hester's Persona is not a compromise but a punishment because she became "the figure, the body, the reality of sin" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 91). Unlike the conventional Jungian Persona, which is usually adopted voluntarily by an individual, Hester's Persona is the result of coercive social inscription forced upon her body by a moral order which seeks to define her entirely through a single transgression (Bercovitch, 1991). Crews rightly observes, "Hester is transformed from a person into a text ... that the community reads aloud every time it sees her" (Crews, 1966, p. 94). Thus, it is the society that forces Hester's Shadow upon her Persona and moves the Shadow from invisibility to visibility. Hawthorne writes that her "sin, her ignominy, were the roots which she had struck into the soil" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 92). This however was not very easy for Hester as is seen in the novel. Hester is described as 'terror- stricken by the revelations that were thus made' (102) She also doubts herself for having given into the "insidious whispers of the bad angel" (p. 102). The amount of social and psychological torture that she faces is also in a way rewarding to Hester in her growth as an individual because even though she "could not help believing, that it gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts. She was terror- stricken by the revelations that were thus made" (p. 102). She also realizes that people sin like her and their outward appearance "of purity was but a lie, and that, if truth were everywhere to be shown, a scarlet letter would blaze forth on many a bosom besides Hester" (p. 102). *The Scarlet Letter* hanging on her bosom destroys her social identity and alienates her from all the people. According to the Jungian framework this alienation is also an alienation from the collective Persona of the Puritan society. However, this alienation was not completely against her. It had its merits as well. The greatest merit of this according to the text is that the "scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread" (p. 246). In Jungian terms she gradually integrates the Shadow instead of repressing it like other women. This loathsome identity gives her an insight and slowly takes her towards individuation. She also does not reject herself but slowly accepts her own identity as to who she is. Slowly she negotiates between the identity that the Puritan society imposes upon her and between what she starts feeling inside, which is a sense of autonomy and mental balance not much affected by what others think of it. She does not have to struggle to keep up appearances like the rest of the society. This is because the punishment that she got completely destroyed her need to keep up appearances and be honest with herself psychologically. The punishment Hawthorne describes, "had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 60). She also did not feel guilt when she saw the letter as it became something "that reminded her of shame" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 78) causing her to retain her sanity unlike Dimmesdale.

The shame that was externalized set her mind free from feeling what was outside or what outsiders thought of her. She gets mental freedom because the “world’s law was no law for her mind” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 199). The psychological splitting that Jung suggests takes place due to shame or guilt does not take place in the case of Hester because of the above freedom. According to Jungian psychology the process of individuation does not require the subject or the individual to be absolutely perfect but taking the Shadow or imperfections head on and accepting who one is. Hester does the same in the novel. She stops striving to be perfect and accepts who she is or rather trying to conceal who she truly is. According to Bell, Hester doesn’t win over the society but “simply outlasts it” (Bell, 1962, p. 94).

There is another thing that Hester is seen to be doing in the novel; she converts the idea of shame into a meaning that stays with her identity. The letter is no longer a symbol of shame or guilt but has a meaning, it becomes a source of endurance and gives her insight. Hawthorne mentions this subtly when he writes, “*The Scarlet Letter* ceased to be a stigma...” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 321). By accepting who she is Hester does something which very few people would have been able to do —achieving psychological equilibrium. This was only possible because she lives with the Shadow rather than trying to fight it. In this way she begins the journey of self discovery according to Jung as he believed “the meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one’s own shadow” (Jung, 1968, p. 21).

Hester lives on the outskirts of the town in a cottage at a distance away from the society. In Jungian psychology this is seen as boundary between the identity that the society gives an individual and what they really are. Besides staying on the outskirts, Hester accepts her daughter as she is. She does not look at her as a symbol of her sin or a scarlet letter which is externalized but as someone or something which is her own. The Puritan society meant the letter to symbolize sin and humiliate Hester by making her wear it. On the contrary, for Hester, the letter eventually became something that she owned. It symbolized sin, but she realized that it was her sin. This acceptance makes her undergo the process of individuation and partial redemption. Thus externalization of the sin in the form of *The Scarlet Letter* makes Hester keep her sanity as the Shadow is not suppressed anymore and does not turn destructive.

5. Arthur Dimmesdale: Persona, Shadow, and Failed Individuation

Unlike Hester Prynne, the character of Arthur Dimmesdale is very complex and tragic in *The Scarlet Letter*. Although he is externally validated, well respected in the society, he has a dark secret with Hester Prynne. Hester’s secret is out, but his sanctified persona, as a result of being not only a minister but also the moral compass of the entire society, does not allow him to embrace his Shadow at all. The amount of respect he commands in the society is mentioned by Hawthorne in a single sentence “The people looked up to him as an angel of God” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 134). In order to maintain that respect or in Jungian terms, the Persona he was forced to abandon both Hester and Pearl. His Persona becomes the *raison d’être* for him leaving no scope to even acknowledge the Shadow, embracing it would be a far cry. Leverenz explains Dimmesdale’s plight as follows, “Considered as an American dream, Dimmesdale’s success is made possible by his flight from woman and child” (Leverenz, 1989, p. 274). Instead of striking a balance between the Persona and the Shadow, he overdevelops and overemphasizes his Persona and achieves Holiness in the eyes of the society, “at the cost of suppressing the anima...” (Khan, Ullah, & Qayyum, 2024, p. 72). Freud warned against the repercussions of repression and Jung also agrees with him when he remarks, “the repressed shadow grows in proportion to the rigidity of the persona. The more perfect the mask, the more monstrous the hidden face” (Jung, 1966, p. 145). The act of repression of the Shadow by Dimmesdale takes a toll on him as he suppresses his Shadow, the Persona grows stronger and stronger making him lose touch with his inner reality.

The stronger Persona does not let the Shadow reveal itself not only to the public that adores and reveres him, but the damage this does is internal. By failing to acknowledge the Shadow, Dimmesdale undergoes psychic fragmentation. This fragmentation is explained by Jung in terms of the rigidity of Persona. Jung writes, “the repressed shadow grows in proportion to the rigidity of the persona. The more perfect the mask, the more monstrous the hidden face” (Jung, 1966, p. 145). This is partly because Dimmesdale has the choice to bury it deep inside him, unlike Hester who has her sin stitched on her bosom for the world to see. The buried sin cannot be revealed by him because it is covered by various layers of respect of the people, their admiration and his reputation as a holy person. There is also an element of hypocrisy involved in this because he is aware that the society reveres him like an angel, which is not; he is a human being with human weaknesses which he fails to

acknowledge himself and keeps it buried deep in his psyche. This in Jungian terms is the Persona overpowering the Shadow and pushing it deep under so that the world may not see it. He happens to push it so much that it creates a wound, what was referred to earlier as a 'schism in the soul.'

Taking the argument further Dimmesdale's Persona is rigid, overdeveloped, and dangerously totalizing (Jung, 1966). He has become the mask he wears. As Khan, Ullah, and Qayyum (2024) write, "Dimmesdale strives to look pious and holy in the eyes of the public that is symbolic of overdeveloped persona. However, overdeveloped persona is achieved at the cost of suppressing the anima. When Dimmesdale loses connection with Anima; the spring of life, his personality becomes lop-sided and his life turns into hell" (p. 72). This does not leave any space for his Shadow to negotiate with the Persona in order to achieve even a small degree of individuation.

As mentioned earlier there is another hurdle in the path to achieving individuation and that is the community's idealization of him as a holy person which in turn reinforces this rigid Persona. Due to whatever their beliefs or insecurities or need for validation, the people need him to be holy and do not allow him to acknowledge even an iota of human weakness. This is mainly because they project their need for spiritual and moral perfection upon Dimmesdale. His position as a revered minister, therefore, depends on abandoning Hester and Pearl. Leverenz also suggests that "Dimmesdale's success is made possible by his flight from woman and child" (Leverenz, 1989, p. 274). He cannot give up that position because of which he buries his truth deeper and deeper. In order to maintain his social authority, "Dimmesdale strives to look pious and holy..." (Khan et al., 2024, p. 72).

Despite burying the truth, Dimmesdale's Shadow does not disappear. It goes underground because he hides it, but hidden things do not rest; they fester. Dimmesdale had hidden his secret from the world, and from himself too, so he is not just lying to others. He is lying to his own psyche. His desire, guilt, fear of exposure, and self-condemnation accumulate, producing increasing internal pressure. Dimmesdale never brings his Shadow into the light. Jung warns that "the repressed shadow grows in proportion to the rigidity of the persona. The more perfect the mask, the more monstrous the hidden face" (Jung, 1966, p. 145). Unlike Hester whose Shadow is externalized on her bosom, Dimmesdale's Shadow, which he tries to hide by burying it deep under invades him internally and does not let him rest. Hawthorne shows us the cost of this repression when he describes Dimmesdale, "He kept vigils, likewise, night after night, sometimes in utter darkness.... He thus typified the constant introspection wherewith he tortured, but could not purify, himself" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 174). Hawthorne describes Dimmesdale suffering, punishing himself, even whipping his own back in secret. He also fasts until he is weak, but none of it helps. Hawthorne shows that self-punishment is not confession and repression does not allow healing. He is also tortured by the visions of his mother, father, angels and dead friends. As a result of this he is unable to rest and find peace because of which his body begins to speak what the mouth cannot and he grows pale, thin, and weak. Frederick Crews writes, "Dimmesdale's physical decay is the somatic equivalent of his spiritual dishonesty. His body tells the truth his mouth cannot speak" (Crews, 1966, p. 112). Jung would call this the repressed returning as symptom. "The repressed content," Jung writes, "must be made conscious so as to produce a tension of opposites, without which no further development is possible" (Jung, 1959, p. 78). So, Dimmesdale refuses that tension. He pays for it with his life.

The difference between Hester and Dimmesdale's suffering is the locus of suffering. Hester suffers externally when she is made to stand on the scaffold in daylight in full public view and shamed by the society. Dimmesdale's tries to undergo the same amount and degree of suffering by standing on the scaffold alone at night when there is nobody around. He experiences a moment of emotional release, but the absence of the community prevents true integration. When he shrieks into the night, no one hears him. Hawthorne writes that as Dimmesdale went up the steps in the night he thought about the possibility of summoning:

...the same multitude which had stood as eye-witnesses while Hester Prynne sustained her punishment could now have been summoned forth, they would have discerned no face above the platform, nor hardly the outline of a human shape, in the darkgray of the midnight. But the town was all asleep. There was no peril of discovery. The minister might stand there, if it so pleased him, until morning...no eye could see him, save that ever-wakeful one which had seen him in his closet, wielding the bloody scourge." (p. 179)

Hawthorne questions as to why, “had he come hither? Was it but the mockery of penitence? A mockery, indeed, but in which his soul trifled with itself!” (p. 179) The act of confessing at night when there is no one around, makes a mockery of confession. Dimmesdale’s act of hiding in the dark further pushes the Shadow deeper and doesn’t help in its integration with the Persona.

Roger Chillingworth, the person who troubles Dimmesdale and is also responsible for his death can be seen as the externalization of Dimmesdale’s Shadow. Hawthorne calls Chillingworth a, “diabolical agent had the Divine permission, for a season, to burrow into the clergyman’s intimacy, and plot against his soul.” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 153-154). He suspects that the clergyman is Pearl’s father and keeps investigating and torturing Dimmesdale. This is the act of Shadow becoming externalized involuntary as Jung observes that when the Shadow is not integrated internally, it finds an external host, “That host is often a tormentor” (Jung, 1966, p. 142). Chillingworth is a parasite and tormentor who gives sleepless nights to Dimmesdale under the guise of a physician. Hawthorne describes him as, “A mortal man, with once a human heart, has become a fiend for his especial torment” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 208). Hawthorne describes him as someone who is guided by an obsession for revenge and associates infernal imagery with him. The Shadow when repressed for a longer period of time becomes destructive according to Jung and Chillingworth acts as the living embodiment of that Shadow. The effect and power that the physician has on the minister is derived from secrecy of the minister. The Shadow gains power when it is repressed beyond measure. Chillingworth represents the projection of the Dimmesdale’s hidden guilt and keeps tormenting Dimmesdale until he is left with no other option but to confess what he had done. Dimmesdale decides to confess as he tears open his shirt on the scaffold and reveals the mark on his chest. Hawthorne writes, “with a convulsive motion, he tore away the ministerial band from before his breast. It was disclosed!” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 310). Then, after speaking, “with a convulsive motion...” (310) he “... sank down upon the scaffold” (313). This final effort by Dimmesdale towards his redemption results in the collapse of his rigid Persona that had hitherto prevented him from acknowledging his Shadow, making partial individuation possible.

This collapse of Persona, however, comes too late in his life after it has done immense damage to his mind and body. In Jungian psychology this is not seen as a moral failure but a delay in acknowledging the Shadow or confronting it. Throughout his life, he carries his scaffold inside him while Hester carries hers on her chest. Nina Baym puts the contrast this way: “Hester’s sin is visible, and visibility, however painful, is a form of truth. Dimmesdale’s sin is invisible, and invisibility, however comfortable, is a form of poison” (Baym, 1986, p. 34). As Charles Taylor writes, “We become who we are only by acknowledging what we have repressed. The failure to do so is not a moral failure but an existential one — a failure of courage” (Taylor, 1989, p. 201). Dimmesdale does not have that courage which is shown by Hester in facing her Shadow. The lesson from Dimmesdale’s journey and his tortuous life is that the hidden wound always kills, whereas the visible wound, however painful, can heal. Hester makes the moral effort of recognizing the Shadow but Dimmesdale makes it only at the very end, when it is too late. Therefore, Dimmesdale does not die because he sinned. He dies because he could not admit his sin soon enough, could not embrace his Shadow.

6. Puritanism as a Psychic Technology of Repression

In the previous sections the psychological fragmentation and the ideas of Persona, Shadow and the concept of individuation were discussed. This analysis would remain incomplete without the proper understanding of the society that these characters were a part of. In order to do that a proper analysis or the depiction of the Puritan society in the novel by Hawthorne is essential. The novel opens with the description of the places that are neither a church nor a place of public meeting or any other neutral or happy setting like the greenery of a village, but a prison and a cemetery. Hawthorne writes, “The founders of a new colony, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison.” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 51) This is not by chance or any other coincidence but deliberate and has symbols attached to it. The author emphasizes the obsession of the Puritan society with the ideas of punishment and death. Ironically the society is supposed to be religious, but the idea in focus is not spiritual redemption but only punishment and death. While the prison acts as an instrument for the society to control the body of the individual, on the other hand the graveyard acts as the final place of punishment which is mortality. The two institutions are symbolic and foreshadow the fate of the two protagonists, one of whom (Hester) would be incarcerated for a while, and the other (Dimmesdale) would end up in the graveyard to achieve redemption.

The reason being, the obsession of the Puritan society with morality to such an extent that it fails to distinguish between the aspects of public life and personal morality. Berkovitch stresses this point while asserting, that the Puritan community used to turn every private act into a public spectacle and passed a judgment on the soul. (Bercovitch, 1991). The gaze of the society is always upon the actions of the individual. Everything that a person does is up for judgment by the society and this is the reason why Hester is publically punished on the scaffold for what she does in private. The gaze makes Dimmesdale live in constant terror of being exposed. This constant fear that the society puts in the minds of the individuals does not let Dimmesdale acknowledge his Shadow even in private. It also prevents everyone from having an authentic inner life for themselves in such an atmosphere. Such a setting keeps the individuals in a constant state of paranoia and they would be forced to watch their actions even within the four walls of their house or where no one was watching them. Life in such a society would become a performance rather than being natural or authentic. It is this state that makes Dimmesdale conceal his guilt from the society besides his position as a minister. Berkovitch also analyses the mechanism of Puritanism by which it extended the external surveillance into internal and inner self control and regulation (Bercovitch, 1991). The external punishment of people at the scaffold would not be much effective in controlling the society until the individuals were made to police their actions and even thoughts. Once this is established, the need for external punishment becomes obsolete and the individuals like Dimmesdale punish themselves on their own. The need for the society to expose and punish Dimmesdale is not required as he punishes himself every night for something he did in private and is well hidden.

It would be relevant to cite Jung to challenge the Puritan way of controlling the society through coercion in such a way that it damages the psyche of the individuals. Jung did not agree with the social self being the true and authentic expression of a person. For Jung the Persona was not an individual construction but something that was forced by the society upon him and by accepting this they neglect their real identity. Jung writes, "The persona is a mask for the collective psyche, a mask that feigns individuality, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply acting a role through which the collective psyche speaks" (Jung, 1968, p. 157). This is relevant in the case of Dimmesdale whose persona as the pious minister, an epitome of morality was not his own construction but something that was thrust upon him the society and he was expected to live up to their hopes and wishes. This confuses him so much that he is not able to demarcate between his real inner life and the mask he puts on before other, causing a breakdown of his psyche and ultimately leading to his premature death. On the other hand, despite the Persona thrust upon Hester by the society does not make her confuse it with her inner self. It is for this reason that the feminist scholars hail her and see her as a strong character. According to Jungian framework, such a society would not create healthy and balanced individuals but actors who are unaware of the fact that is merely putting upon an act not only before the society but also before themselves.

Taylor (1989) argues that identity is not natural or fixed and is constructed over period of time through social intercourse, mores, choices made by the individual and other factors like conditioning by the parents and peers. However, such an identity is not permanent and undergoes changes under duress or extreme pressure. The Puritan society exerts extreme pressure and changes the identity by deforming it in order to control it both externally and internally. There are two contrasting examples of constructed identities in the novel. These identities are a result of the Puritan society's obsession with the binary approach of classifying everything into the binaries of either virtue and sin or purity and corruption. There is no scope of reconciliation or integration between the two opposites to make room for psychic integration. The pressure of the society to conform and live up to its expectations makes him neglect his real self and crushes it so much that it causes mental fragmentation and his ultimate collapse. In contrast Hester's identity as an epitome of vice is also constructed by the society but the saving grace is that it is not hidden despite being deformed.

Puritan ideology and its extreme intolerance of any kind of deviation from the norms of morality is also addressed by Colacurcio, (1984). People are not forgiven even for 'small' sins because there are none as each act of deviation is treated as damning to the soul. This is an extreme binary system that forces the individuals to see the world in black and white. One is either pure or corrupt and there is no room for imperfection of any kind. One wrong act is enough for the individual to face the wrath of the society as in the case of Hester. There is only one identity of Hester by which she is known in the Puritan society—that of an adulteress. This kind of unforgiving nature of the society does not let an individual redeem himself as is seen in the case of Dimmesdale. Hawthorne depicts this unforgiving nature in the scene where the women who gather outside the prison demand

a more strict and harsh punishment for Hester. Their demand to brand her forehead, “At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on her forehead” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 56) shows that the community’s unforgiving nature and binary thinking. In contrast, the novel also shows the response of Hester, who does not hide the letter but embroiders it creatively. This act of transforming an ugly punishment into a piece of art also helps her save her sanity which is not the case with Dimmesdale. That is why Jung (1966) suggests that identifying with the Persona would make it psychologically destructive which is the case with Dimmesdale. The job of a minister in the Puritan society expected him to be of holy conduct in every deed and this in turn made the mask into a tyrant governing every action and thought of Dimmesdale, not allowing him the liberty of even a small imperfection. He was expected to be a perfect saint as the society projected its desire for purity onto Dimmesdale. Living in such a society is a no win situation for anyone because one is bound to make an error at some point of time despite taking all precautions and putting a lot of effort to meet the demands of holiness. Bercovitch (1991) points out that according to Puritan theology the entire humanity comes under only two categories viz. the people who are saved called as elect and the reprobate or the damned ones. This system does not leave any space for the individual to make any efforts and save oneself once they are damned. Basic human impulses such as pride, doubt, anger or even desire are branded as evil and sin by Puritanism. Since these impulses are a part of every human being, the only way for a person living in such a society is to suppress them and force them to hide in the unconscious part of the mind. According to Jung (1968) hiding would not destroy them and they would continue to fester there as in the case of Dimmesdale who deteriorates as a result of this. This is because repression makes the impulses return in much fiercer form later as is seen in the midnight scaffold shrieks of the minister.

The Puritan society forces individuals to repress their urges and darker impulses, but this is not the only reason that forced Dimmesdale to hide his Shadow. According to Jung, “The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort” (Jung, 1968, p. 84). However, in the Puritan society, it would not be an easy task to acknowledge or confront the Shadow because the system declares it evil and not something to be integrated. The society also gives individuals some roles to play and expects that these roles are performed with utmost care and sincerity. Puritan society in particular is unforgiving of any neglect in performing these roles. Dimmesdale is unable to redeem himself because he is expected to perform the role that is thrust upon him, the role of the minister. He believes that any deviation from the role would be death sentence to his carefully cultivated Persona of a pious clergyman. This becomes an internalized prison for him which is much more oppressive than the prison in Boston where Hester is incarcerated.

Traditional readings blame Dimmesdale for being a weak person, while Crews (1966) argues that it is not his weakness that causes the downfall but the result of the Puritan social system which is rigid and unforgiving. The Puritan society is also notorious for projecting their own repressed desires upon others. People who condemn Hester do so in order to maintain an illusion of their purity against the impurity of Hester by projecting their hidden desires upon her. Jung notes, “Projection is an unconscious, automatic process whereby a content that is unknown to the subject is transferred to an object” (Jung, 1968, p. 78). Thus the actions of the Puritan society may not be labeled as only an act of hypocrisy according to Jung because it is not a conscious act. The scene of the townspeople who come to witness the punishment of Hester show a strange fascination for the spectacle. This in turn exposes their own hidden desires which they see in the form of Hester proving that they are not really pure from inside. Hester is merely a scapegoat for their internal dark desires. Hester being made to carry the letter A is similar to the spectacle of a scapegoat in ancient times that was supposed to be laden with the sins of the entire community and made to enter the wilderness to give a sense of being cleansed to all. In such a dysfunctional society the process of individuation is very difficult if not entirely impossible. When one is forced to embrace the Shadow, it is possible to some extent as in the case of Hester, while in the case of others like Dimmesdale who are compelled to carry the Persona, it is not.

7. Discussion: Psychic Duality, Moral Order, and the Tragedy of the Divided Self

The Scarlet Letter has various favourable critical receptions in the past. It was called “the finest piece of imaginative writing yet put forth in the country” by Henry James (James, 1879, p. 67). Or ((James, 1879, Chapter 5) D.H. Lawrence termed it a “masterpiece. the most perfect American work of art. a perfect work of the American imagination” (Lawrence, 1923) while Hyatt H. Waggoner called its narrative “a profound and

complex allegory of the divided self and moral order” (Waggoner, 1963, p. 120). Attempts have been made in the past to study the element of duality in the novel in terms of the question of men versus women, or individual versus the society or Dimmesdale versus Chillingworth. In this paper, the core argument is that the level of conflict is not externally placed between individuals or groups; rather it is a conflict between the two parts of an individual’s psyche. The two parts being the Persona which is external and the other being the Shadow which is internal. The conflict is very subtle rooted deeply in the psyche. The visible conflict in the novel between the magistrates and Hester Prynne is not as serious as the war that goes on inside the protagonists and other members of the Puritan society. The major conflict is between the real self and the part that one wants to show to the society by hiding their true nature. This nature of Psyche is also explained by Jung as not a unified entity, but a mixture of opposites which the individual has to come to terms with in order to become whole.

Hester Prynne is forced by to society to bring out her Shadow which isolates her from the society, yet at the same time grants her a freedom which is not available to Dimmesdale. She is made to wear *The Scarlet Letter* in order to bring shame upon her and isolate her from the rest of the society. The author calls it a “spell” that was meant for, “taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 60). Ironically the sphere that is meant to isolate her starts functioning as her sanctuary. She does not have to pretend to be pure since the letter acts as a reminder that she is not pure. Her crime is already known to the world therefore her mind is free from any attempt to hide or cover up. The curse becomes blessing in disguise as wearing the letter, “makes Hester visible in a way that no other woman in the colony is visible. That visibility is her curse and her salvation” (Bercovitch, 1991, p. 78).

In contrast the mask worn by Dimmesdale is not a flexible Persona, but something that dominates his psyche and pushes his Shadow deeper, for which he cannot be blamed completely. He is bound to do this because of the society he lives in and also partly due to the position he holds. Sainthood is thrust upon him as the community projects its need to be holy upon him. Leverenz points out this helplessness by pointing out that Dimmesdale, “is trapped by the community’s need for his perfection. They will not let him be human because they need him to be holy” (Leverenz, 1989, p. 142). He is forced to toe the line according to the existing moral order of the society. He is respected and loved for his Persona and not his real self. This creates a split in his psyche each time he delivers a sermon. Even while dying, he is aware that “the reverence of the multitude placed him already among saints and angels” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 316).

By comparing the two cases it is seen that the Hawthorne attacks the conventional idea of morality propounded by the Puritans and reveals the harmful effects of bothering for this morality in real life. He also attacks hypocrisy because he shows in the novel that the visible sinner achieves psychic stability and relief, whereas the guilt that remains hidden turns into poison. Both Hester and Dimmesdale suffer, but she suffers in public whereas Dimmesdale suffers in private. This is not to seen with the lens of morality but through a psychological point of view, particularly the Jungian framework of Persona, Shadow and individuation. The Puritan system of morality demands complete submission of the individual and for that it requires simple minded people who do not question anything. This is not acceptable according to the Jungian model as Jung writes, “The psyche is not a simple unity but a complex system of oppositions. To demand that it be simple is to demand that it be dead” (Jung, 1959, p. 112).

The lesson that Hawthorne gives towards the end is, “Be true ! Be true ! Be true ! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 317). He describes the effect of this truthfulness in the death of the minister. Just as he confesses towards the end and dies, there is a dramatic effect on what was referred to as the projection or externalization of his Shadow in the form of Chillingworth. Hawthorne describes the effect of this act of Dimmesdale in the following words: “...almost immediately after Mr. Dimmesdale’s death, in the appearance and demeanor of the old man known as Roger Chillingworth. All his strength and energy — all his vital and intellectual force — seemed at once to desert him ; insomuch that he positively withered up, shriveled away, and almost vanished from mortal sight, like an uprooted weed that lies wilting in the sun” (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 317). This is dramatic of course, but it proves the point the Jung makes about Shadow that it loses its power once it is brought into light and acknowledged. The man (Chillingworth) who had become the externalized Shadow of Dimmesdale as he was hiding behind his guilt became powerful day by day because Dimmesdale’s guilt fuelled him like repression fuels the Shadow and makes it powerful according to Jung’s theory of individuation. This, however, was not the case when Dimmesdale tried to confess in the night by going to the Scaffold when there was no one watching him,

or even during the sermons by calling himself a sinner.

As soon as Dimmesdale confesses and dies openly bringing the Shadow into light, it loses its power. The divided self of Dimmesdale is no longer destructive internally or externally to anyone. As luck would have it, the effect of this vanishing of the Shadow reduces the malevolence on others also especially Dimmesdale and Hester's daughter, "Pearl — the elf-child, — the demon offspring, as some people, up to that epoch, persisted in considering her, — became the richest heiress of her day, in the New World" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 318). This is because Chillingworth bequeathed her with a "a very considerable amount of property, both here and in England" (Hawthorne, 1878, p. 318). This is as if the open confession of her father in the light of the day breaks the supernatural hold that the 'sins of the father' have upon her dissolving the generational curse that would have continued to haunt her for the rest of her life. This shows that the divided self needs to be integrated for the benefit not only of the individual but for the entire society. This is the message that Hawthorne's novel has in light of Jung's theory of individuation.

8. Conclusion

This paper conducted a psychoanalytic reading of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne in the light of Carl Jung's theory of individuation. After the analysis of the major characters in the novel under the lens of Jungian psychoanalysis, it is concluded that the major conflict in the novel is psychological in nature. The cause of the conflict in the novel is repression. It is seen that repression of the Shadow by Dimmesdale turns it into a destructive force causing his misery and ultimate death, as postulated by Jung. The paper finds that *The Scarlet Letter* describes in detail the consequences of divided identity. Jungian Framework gets to the heart of the actions and consequences in the lives of the characters in the novel. The causative action becomes strikingly coherent under the Jungian lens. Jung's observation about the Shadow "The encounter with the shadow is the 'apprentice-piece' in the individual's development" (Jung, 1963/1970, p. 206) applies to Hester's character development in the novel. By forcing her to face her Shadow out in the open, the Puritan society enables her to move towards psychic integration and partial individuation. She does not hide behind a Persona of moral integrity and her acknowledgment of imperfection becomes a stepping stone for betterment of her psychological health.

The consequences of not encountering the Shadow are also clear in the analysis of the psychological decline of Dimmesdale. Throughout the analysis, he is seen to repress the Shadow, the consequences of which he faces in the form of psychic fragmentation, hidden guilt, and somatic suffering. Jung's statement, "The repressed content must be made conscious so as to produce a tension of opposites" (Jung, 1953/1966, para. 78), helps the reader understand why Dimmesdale's attempts of punishing himself, fasting, and vigil fail completely. This is because these efforts fail to make the 'repressed content' conscious and the guilt remains hidden or repressed under the mask of a virtuous minister. The psychic division produced by lack of reconciliation between the outward Persona and hidden guilt continues to increase his misery expressed in the form of decline of health and eventual collapse.

By applying Jung's theory of individuation, it turns out that *The Scarlet Letter* is not a mere tale of adultery in a conservative society but a deep and complex tale of repression, guilt and divided identity. It brings to the fore the yet unexplored depiction of Hawthorne's portrayal of divided consciousness causing emotional suffering and psychosomatic decline in the life of Dimmesdale in a morally restricted society. *The Scarlet Letter* seen through the lens of Jung's theory of individuation, appears to be an avant-garde novel in terms of exploration of psychological phenomena like psychosomatic symptoms, repression, and psychic fragmentation. The study proves that *The Scarlet Letter* is not merely a Puritan tale of sin and redemption, but a rare exploration of psychological processes which Hawthorne explored much before the emergence of psychoanalytic theory.

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Disclaimer Statement

This article is original and complete. It is not a part of a thesis submitted to a university for award of any degree.

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

The 1st author has conceptualized the research problem and written most of the theoretical framework as well as the introduction. The first author has also written the discussion on Hester Prynne. The second author has written the methodology and discussion on Arthur Dimmesdale. Both the authors have participated equally in writing the abstract, discussion in section number seven and the conclusion.

Contribution/Originality statement: This article furthers a hitherto missing investigation of *The Scarlet Letter* through the lens of Jungian Psychology. Most psychoanalytical critical analysis of the novel examined idea of guilt and Freudian return of the repressed whereas Jungian lens offers a critical juxtaposition of the social roles of the protagonists with their painful work of becoming oneself.

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