

## **INTERCULTURAL AND CIVIC EDUCATION – GOOD PRACTICES**

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**Abstract.** The paper presents effective pedagogical practices that can be integrated into the foreign language classroom. Particularly, it tries to promote strategies used for teaching culture and language through Language through Literature Approach, new technology and cross curricular subject matter. The author has made an attempt to provide a general overview of the educational policies at international and national level concerning intercultural and civic education. Drawing on Byram’s model of intercultural competences and UNESCO’s Standards for intercultural competences, the author tries to give a plausible explanation for the choice of strategies for teaching intercultural competences. In addition, the author summarizes a number of in-class and out-of-class activities whose objective is to develop the intercultural competence and civic education competence of 11-grade students from Second English Language School “T. Jefferson”, Sofia.

**Keywords:** intercultural competence; civic education; FLL; literature

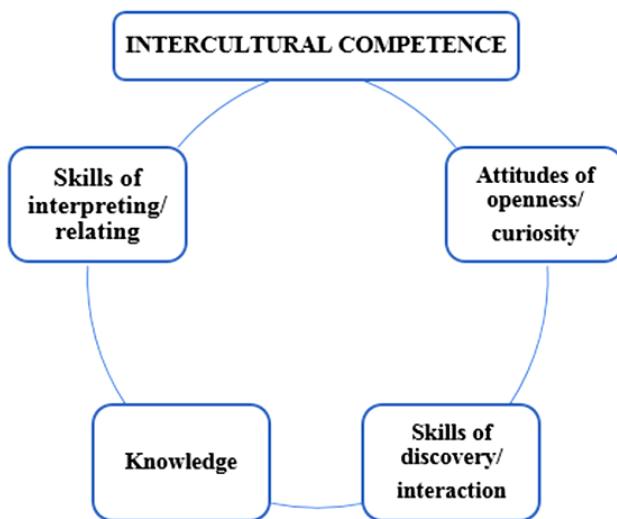
**Introduction.** Intercultural learning nowadays is linked to every sphere of human life – from politics and economy, through justice and human rights, to education and technology, just to name a few. And while it was used basically as a concept in theory or survey studies at the turn of the new millennium (Robinson, 1988; Byram, 1989, 1991, 1997; Kramsch, 1991, 1993; Moore, 1995) and as a goal to be reached during the following decade in a number of declarations, strategies, guides or programmes (UNESCO 2002, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013; Council of Europe 2000, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2013; European Commission, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008), today we can refer to it as an accepted practice, as well. This is most notably seen in education, since for the last ten years, encouraged by the EU authorities, lots of member countries have launched steps towards initiating reforms of their education systems and incorporating intercultural education across different curricula. This new trend can be traced in language learning where, together with integrating new technologies, intercultural learning has become an integral part of the process of acquiring a foreign language in the 21 century classroom.

**Intercultural vs Multicultural education.** In academic literature there are two concepts as far as education goes - multicultural and intercultural education. Many

researcher and social scientists have made an attempt to define them. Some think that these two terms are interchangeable because they are used to promote language learning and understanding between cultures (Nieto, 2006; Hill, 2007). For others the focus of intercultural education is mainly on dialogue and interaction; still others prefer the term multicultural education (Hadjisoteriou, Faas & Angelides, 2015). The division is most obvious from a geographical point of view: in the USA, Asia and Australia multicultural education is widely used as a term, whereas in most European countries, with the exception of Great Britain and Finland, intercultural education is more popular. In Bulgarian official documents the two terms are used very often as synonyms.

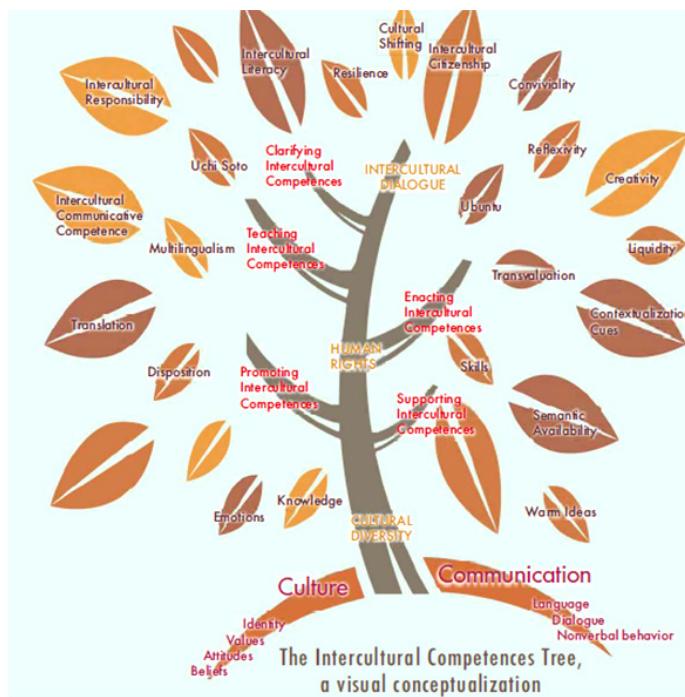
**The idea of intercultural competence.** The concept of intercultural competence (IC) is derived from Byram's model of foreign language education (1997) which was created with the idea to assist foreign language teachers in the process of teaching and assessing different aspects of culture. As seen from Figure 1, the IC model combines some of the elements present in the previous model, such as:

- a. knowledge of different social groups, their products (tangible or intangible) and practices in C1 and C2;
- b. skills of interpreting and relating products from the target culture (C2) and ability to explain them through similar ones from their own culture (C1);
- c. skills of discovery and interaction, i.e. gaining knowledge about a culture and its practices and using that knowledge in real-time communicative situation;
- d. attitude of tolerance towards C2 and C1;
- e. critical cultural awareness, i.e. applying a set of criteria to evaluate perspectives, practices and products in C1 and other cultures.



**Figure 1:** Intercultural competence (modelled on: Byram, M. (2008). *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters)

Another interpretation of the concept of intercultural competence comes from UNESCO. In the Intercultural Competences Framework that UNESCO issued, intercultural competences are defined as unity of communicative competences, i.e. language, dialogue, non-verbal behaviour, and cultural competences such as identity, values, attitudes and beliefs, where each of these competences is equally important and should be considered in relation to the other competences (UNESCO, 2013). This has been presented graphically as a tree with roots, a trunk and branches – ‘an organic system of concepts’ all of which ‘are distinct while nurtured by the same intellectual and moral sap’<sup>1)</sup>.



**Figure 2.** Intercultural Competence Tree, a visual conceptualization.  
(UNESCO, 2013: 23)

As can be seen from Figure 2, this model is a more detailed picture than Byram's model of IC since it includes elements like resilience, disposition, liquidity, conviviality, etc., whose ‘exact significance and interrelations have not yet been solidified’ (UNESCO, 2013) and need to be studied further. Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and human rights are central concepts that are supported by language and communication; operations like clarifying,

supporting, teaching, promoting intercultural competence are vital for shaping the tree crown.

**Intercultural competence in educational policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** Michael Byram's ideas of cultural awareness and intercultural competence have been adopted by European policy makers in education. Not only have they been used for designing new strategies, but they have become goals in various official documents of the European Parliament and European Commission (Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning, 2006) or the Council of Europe (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR, 2007), as well as national strategies of the EU member countries, including Bulgaria (The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2008 – 2013).

Intercultural education is a relatively new issue in Bulgarian education. In recent years our policy makers in the sphere of education have been encouraged by different European institutions and UNESCO to make changes in the subject curriculum in many disciplines and incorporate intercultural education. And the outcome, first issuing similar strategies on national level, and then designing and enforcing new education acts and orders, has been in tune with the guidelines of UNESCO's Programme for Cultural diversity (2011) and Culture of peace and non-violence (2012), as well as with the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2006, 2009) of the European Commission and Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). An overview of the latest education act and executive orders will be made.

The Education Act 2015 for pre-school and school education defines the basic goals of education and social and civic competences, which are one of the most important key competences to be acquired in general education. To fulfil this goal, National education standards for civic, health, ecological and intercultural education are designed and later applied. In accordance with them, new subjects in civic education are introduced.

With Executive Order 5 (30. 11. 2015) for general education Civic education has been added to the existing list of subjects and has officially become part of formal school education by. In accordance with it, Civic education is to be taught as part of the regular curriculum in secondary schools in grades 11 and 12.

Issued almost a year later, Executive Order 13 (21. 09. 2016) for Civic, Health, Ecological and Intercultural education defines the major goals of Civic education: gaining knowledge about the different dimensions of cultural identities and the basic characteristic features of intercultural communication; understanding civil rights and responsibilities; active citizenship - positive attitude towards intercultural diversity; civic skills to analyze, evaluate, etc. public issues and participate in social processes. Civic education is either integrated into the curriculum or taught as a separate school subject in grades 11 and 12.

**Good Practices.** The above-mentioned official documents of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education are a big step towards promoting the development of civic

and intercultural education. However, they are to be enacted as of 2020 – 2021 school year. What shall teachers be doing meanwhile in order to comply with the requirements of the National Education Standards in Foreign Language Learning, Kew stages 3 and 4 (Executive Order 2, 18. 05. 2000)? What better way than using the suggested in the Standards methods – the Communicative approach for teaching languages integrated with teaching across the curriculum, in combination with a technology-rich instruction (a modality in which apart from receiving traditional face-to-face instruction, students are taught in a digitally enhanced environment, i.e. IWBs, access to Internet devices, various digital tools, etc.). The present article focuses on implementing:

- first, some of Byram's ideas of teaching culture:
  - a. using authentic materials to raise students' awareness about products, practices and perspectives in the target culture and comparing/contrasting these with their own culture; this is done in the classroom by means of 'Language through Literature' approach, a relatively new approach round which the syllabus for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades with intensive classes in English is structured; b. learning by being involved in activities outside the classroom and experiencing culture/cultures
  - second, combining knowledge about C2 with knowledge gained from subjects across the curriculum, particularly History;
  - third, learning to do by participating in mock cultural situations in which students show understanding of civil rights and responsibilities and their active citizenship.

The good practices described in the article serve a twofold purpose; first, to help students to develop some of the Key competences for lifelong learning, namely communication in a mother tongue, communication in a foreign language, social and civic competence, cultural awareness and expression (European Commission, 2006), and second, to help students to reach a particular level of acquisition of intercultural skills and competences measured by the CEFR (2007).

**What factors have influenced the choice of strategy to teach intercultural competence?** Firstly, the fact that the students are following an intensive 5-year programme in studying English as a foreign language, which matches the recommendations made by UNESCO to internationalize schooling; the students are taught English by means of the popular 'Language through Literature' approach; all literary works belong to British and American literary canon, or the so called literature with a 'big L'; opportunity to discuss various cultural issues;

The second reason is connected with the same recommendation as the above-mentioned one but refers to enriching the curriculum with intercultural content, for example with historical sources that help to better understand various cultural issues;

Another reason why the author has chosen to use the Moot Court as a teaching and learning strategy is that it corresponds to the 'learning to do' approach, one of

the three steps (the other two being learning to know and learning to be) suggested by UNESCO to facilitate the process of acquiring intercultural competence. ‘Learning to do serves as the active step of interacting with cultural others; through such interactions people both apply knowledge already gained, and acquire more, learning from interactions with others in the past, and designing future interactions’ (UNESCO, 2013).

Still another reason is the possibility to integrate subject matter across the curriculum: for example, English through literature classes (*The Scarlet Letter* by N. Hawthorne – an authentic literary text on the topic of adultery) with History classes (*The Charter of Human Rights of the UN, The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the European Convention of Human Rights*) with the aim to increase students’ intercultural competence and understanding of products, practices and perspectives in Puritan times and modern times. This is related with another step of teaching towards building intercultural competence by UNESCO, i.e. ‘incorporating the teaching of intercultural competences in initiatives on human rights education..., as well as on intercultural education and education for global citizenship’<sup>5</sup>).

**Activities for building intercultural and civic competences.** Taking into consideration the setting, the activities in which the students from 11<sup>B, E, F</sup> and 8<sup>A</sup> classes from Second English Language School were involved to build intercultural and civic competences, can be divided into activities performed in the classroom and out of the classroom. A short description of the particular activities and the strategies used in the out-of-class cultural activities in foreign language teaching will be given. In the focus of attention will be in-class activities with specific examples from classes in English where Language through Literature approach is used. Suggestions for a Lesson plan structured around a particular literary piece and a Sample of a mock trial will accompany the article.

**Out-of-class activities.** One example is with an extracurricular activity in performing arts for students who attend the New Globe Drama Club at the school. This is a type of informal training in drama and intercultural skills done after classes with a mixed group of students from the 8<sup>th</sup> grades. First they study popular traditions from the target culture and their own culture and afterwards they participate in putting on stage a short play thematically connected to a particular custom. Another example is activities for the preparation for a Moot Court competition on Human Rights in the Hague. A group of students from the 11<sup>th</sup> grades underwent informal training on presenting a case in court developing both oral and written skills after classes. To facilitate the process of developing students’ intercultural communicative competences, the students participated in ‘The Devil’s Advocate’, a series of seminars on law run by university students at Sofia University. Later another method for learning was used, the so called experiential learning: in order develop their civic competence, intercultural competence (IC) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC), the students were given the

chance to witness rounds of the University Student Moot Court Competition held at the Palace of Justice in Sofia. The third stage of learning, learning to do, consisted of practicing IC and ICC skills during a mock trial session at 2ELS, Sofia with a bench of ‘judges’ (alumni from Sofia University) presiding the case. The final stage was a continuation of the previous ‘learning to do’ stage, where the team of students participated in the 2018 Moot Court preliminary rounds held at the Leiden Law School, the Hague.

**In-class activities.** As already mentioned, some effective teaching and learning practices for acquiring intercultural and civic competences will be presented. Only the part concerning lessons in the foreign language classroom will be discussed and presented in the lesson plan accompanying the article. The sources used in History classes to facilitate the learning process will just be mentioned but the strategies and procedures used in History classes will not be discussed. The classroom-based teaching and learning activities are targeted at 17 or 18-year-old students with B2+ or over proficiency in English as a foreign language. The activities are divided into three stages, each of which follows a specific approach to learning. The first stage is a typical example of learning by comparison, while the second is an excellent example of learning by experiencing, and the final one gives students the opportunity to learn by doing and creating themselves, actually reaching the highest level of learning according the Bloom’s taxonomy. The method of instruction used is Language through Literature since it is the best source of valuable authentic material for teaching C2, as well as for cultural and language enrichment and personal involvement.

The strategies used to build civic and intercultural skills in Stage 1 are designed around the topic of ‘Crime and punishment’, which can be traced on one hand, in literary works on the syllabus for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students at Language Schools in Bulgaria and on the other, Human rights in modern time presented in international documents. A particular example is presented with extracts from *The Scarlet Letter* by N. Hawthorne, which turns out to be an excellent source for raising students’ language and cultural awareness on the topic of ‘Adultery’ because it gives the opportunity to discuss the popular values, attitudes and beliefs in the new colonies in America during 17<sup>th</sup> century and the ways of punishment in Puritan society. This is done in a technology-rich environment and comparisons with C1 and students’ personal experience and knowledge gained from documents like *The Charter of Human Rights of the UN*, *The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU* and *the European Convention of Human Rights* (**Appendix 1**. Lesson Plan). During Stage 2, the students were involved in a Moot Court, a mock trial session with role play activities, and discussion on the punishment of Hester Prynne, the main protagonist in the novel. Suggestions for the role play, as well as presenting the arguments of the Defence and the Prosecution are given in **Appendix 2**. Stage 3 is a follow-up creative activity for a personal 21<sup>st</sup> century interpretation of the trial scene of Chapter 3. The

students were asked to use their digital skills and prepare a short up to two-minute video and upload it in Seesaw blog for other classmates or peer to give comments.

**Conclusion.** Teaching has always been a difficult job requiring lots of effort and dedication on the part of teachers, especially foreign language teachers. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom this has become even a greater challenge because of the great number of goals set for us to accomplish. One way of meeting those goals is to realize that learning intercultural competences is an ongoing process: it does not end with the first or second cultural activity, nor with the next lesson on cultural diversity, for example, or a number of planned projects on cultural issues. It is a ‘lifelong pursuit, evolving over time through the accumulation of experience, training, and thoughtful reflection upon both’<sup>6</sup> for both educators and students. Another way is working collaboratively with colleague teachers across the curriculum to reach a common goal. Still another is sharing ideas of useful teaching practices to be implemented directly in class or further develop for particular teaching and learning contexts.

**Appendix 1**  
**Second English Language School “Thomas Jefferson” – Sofia, Bulgaria, 13 March 2018**

**Subjects-across-the-curriculum Lesson:** English and American Literature & History and Civilization for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Topic:** ‘21<sup>st</sup> Century Interpretation of the Trial Scene: The State vs Hester Prynne’ (based on N. Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Charter of Human Rights of the UN, The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the European Convention of Human Rights*)

**Aim:**

Fostering Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (Communication in the mother Language, Communication in Foreign Languages, Social and Civic Competences, Cultural awareness and expression)

**Objectives:**

1. Increasing the level of students’ language competences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and their intercultural competences through Language through Literature approach:

– Interpreting extracts from N. Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* on the topic of moral values, crime and punishment in Puritan America

– comparing and contrasting moral values, crime and punishment in Puritan times and in 21<sup>st</sup> century

2. Facilitating the acquisition of key competences by making good use of the Learning through doing approach:

– Participating in discussions on human rights according to *The Charter of Human Rights of the UN, The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the European Convention of Human Rights*

- Participating in a Moot Court Session: the State vs Hester Prynne
- Raise students' awareness of common European values and active citizenship

**Methods:** Language through Literature, Experiential learning, Learning to Do

**Age group:** 17 – 18

**Proficiency Level:** B2 + – C1

**Sources:** Danova, M. (2013). Litups Part One, Prosveta, Sofia

**Time:** 3 classes per 40 min

**Stages :**

**Lead-in Stage 1:**

*OPTION 1: On-line reading: <https://www.questia.com/read/101083380/the-scarlet-letter>*

Skim chapter two (The Market Place), pages 62 – 63

Underline words/phrases describing offences or punishment in Puritan times.

Look up unknown words/phrases.

Complete the list of words/phrases below:

Or Option 2

Step1: Reading Comprehension (10 min)

1. Skim chapter two (The Market Place), pages 216 – 217
2. Underline words/phrases describing offences or punishment in Puritan times.

3. Look up unknown words/phrases.

4. Complete the list on the right

Step 2. Learning vocabulary independently (10min)

1. Go to Vocabulary on Punishment (pdf).
2. Complete exercise 1 from Worksheet 1.

2. 1. Rank the crimes from the most to the least serious.

3. Complete exercise 1 from Worksheet 2.

3. 1. Choose the crimes that should not be punishable by law and explain why.

4. Complete exercise 1 from Worksheet 3.

4.1. Think of a crime for each of the punishments from Worksheet 2.

5. Express your opinion on committing crime and being punished accordingly.

6. Compare punishment nowadays and in Puritan times.

Step 3 On-line Reading (10 min)

1. Skim chapter two (The Market place), pages 64 – 65 (On-line) or pages 143 – 144.

2. Make a list of the punishments the good wives suggest for Hester Prynne.

3. Look up unknown words/phrases on-line.

Step 4:

Comment on the severity of the chosen punishment.

Compare punishment nowadays and in Puritan times.

In small groups, discuss other suggestions

Rewrite the words of the good wives expressing different feelings and emotions about Hester Prynne.

Step 5: Practising reading, writing and speaking skills. On-line reading: (10 min)

Skim chapter two (The Market place), pages 66 – 67 (On-line) or pages 145 – 146.

Divide students into Pair A and Pair B.

Find examples from the text about Hester's personal characteristics (Pair A) and outer appearance (Pair B).

Complete findings in the table on the right.

Comment on Hester's behaviour and emotional state.

## **Stage 2: Moot Court Session**

While-class

Step 1: mock trial scene

Method: play-role, learning by experiencing,

Students: a team of 4 represent the State vs Hester Prynne

Time: 40 min

## **Stage 3:**

**After-class**

### **Homework Assignment:**

*Prepare a modern, 21 c. interpretation of Hester Prynne's trial in the form of a PowerPoint presentation (up to 10 slides) or a short video (1 – 2 min) using pictures, voice, etc. and as little text as possible.*

Work individually or in small groups of two or three.

Upload your presentations on Seesaw platform

Watch three other presentations uploaded by classmates.

Record your comments on them and upload on One Drive.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Moot Court – The State vs Hester Prynne**

### **European Court of Human Rights**

This Moot court is appropriate for high school students with C1 proficiency in English

### **Instructions**

- Time: Allow approximately 1/2 hours to complete the trial
- Room set-up: Set up like a court room;
- Roles:

Bailiff  
Judge  
The Prosecution  
Counselor for the Defence

**Bailiff:** All rise. [*Wait for everyone-except the judge- to stand.*] Department One of the European Court of Human Rights is now in session.

Judge (*first name*) presiding. Please be seated.

**Judge:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Calling the case of the People of the State of California versus (*defendant's first name*). Are both sides ready?

**The Prosecution:** Ready for the People, Your Honor.

**Counselor for the Defence:** Ready for the defense, Your Honor

**Counselor for the Defence:[ stand up and talk to the judge]**

Your Honour, my name is ..... and I will be presenting Ms Hester Prynne.

Mrs. Hester was ‘branded’ to wear the letter “A” letter on her chest; this is a common example of Puritan punishment for adultery. This clearly indicates that the Puritan code utilizes public humiliation. However, this act has a negative effect on the victim. My client was not only emotionally damaged, when forced to stand out and confess that she has committed the crime; Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights were violated as well. First of all, I would like to highlight the fact that no prosecution for adultery should have been commenced since there is no official complaint of Mrs. Hester’s husband. In fact, the community put my client on the pillory platform; this is violation of Article 8 - the right to respect one’s private and family life. The first proof of public humiliation, violating Article 3, is the scarlet letter itself; it focuses the attention on Hester and makes her “stick out like a sore thumb” in society. Regardless of the scarlet letter, raising a child with no father draws a great deal of attention towards Hester. And here comes the tragedy- in the eyes of society, Pearl is only the offspring of sin itself. Overcoming public humiliation is challenging; branding Hester with permanent shame affects the victim mentally, making the punishment as severe as physical one. In fact, letting Hester live means that she would suffer day by day with the heavy weight of her sin, which is even worse than imprisonment. Quoting Article 3: No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, I am sure for one: Public humiliation is not the way. And no human being deserves it. Everyone makes mistakes. Imagine having a big “L” on the chest for telling a lie, “T” for being traitor or “D” for drunkard. Public humiliation is

unacceptable, especially when it comes to one's personal life, and involves a small child, whose psyche is even more susceptible. I would like to ask the Honourable judge to close the case for no further mental trauma, suffered by Mrs. Hester and to consider a compensation for violation of fundamental rights in order to give my client the necessary tools to recover mentally, ensuring a quality life which closely resembles that which she would have before the public humiliation.

**Prosecution: [ stand up and talk to the judge]**

Your Honour, my name is .....and I will be presenting the Sate in the current matter. First of all, I will be addressing the charges of adultery against Mrs Hester Prynne and then move to Article 3 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In order for the crime of adultery to be present, a married person must have had sexual intercourse with another than his or her spouse. That is undoubtedly the current case, for Hester Prynne admitter herself to have had a sexual affair with someone else than her husband. It must be taken into consideration, as the opposing counselor stated, that at the time of this intercourse Mrs. Hester Prynne's husband was thought to be dead. I believe that this concern has been addressed in the first trial. The original punishment for the crime of adultery in the Colony of Massachusetts was death, and only by the factual circumstances of the act, mainly Mr Prynne's unconfirmed death, was the life of the accused spared. Furthermore, Mrs. Prynne was made an offer by the law, to tell the name of her secret lover in exchange for lifting all of the charges against her. However, she refused that.

Moving on to the articles provided by the European Convention and the supposedly unlawful and forceful wearing of a scarlet letter 'A' upon Mrs. Prynne's outfit. While the facts and arguments provided by the opposing counselor leave little doubt in their legitimacy, Articles 3 and 8 have not been violated in the present case. This is so, because they have exceptions that can be applied to the current matter. These exceptions state that the privacy of Mrs. Prynne can be violated if it is in accordance with the law and if it will help prevent further crime and disorder. The circumstances in the current case prove the necessity of the actions taken against the accused. Moreover, failure to punish Mrs Prynne would most likely lead to discontent among the populace and ministers, which would destabilize the colonial government and plunge the area into chaos. Thus in order to preserve the peace, some of the rights of the accused were infringed, but that does not constitute a violation of the above-mentioned articles.

Taking all of this into consideration, I conclude that (the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or in this case the one and that) the result of the original trial against Hester Prynne should stand.

**Honourable Judge.....:**

**Version A:**

The European Court of Human Rights took the view that these detention conditions caused Mrs. Hester Prynne mental suffering. Therefore representing “inhuman or degrading treatment” in breach of Article 3 of the Convention. The Court declares that there was also a violation of Article 8. The state violated the privacy of Mrs. Hester Prynne and her family. For those reasons this court holds that the respondent State has to pay the applicant 7.000€ in respect of non-pecuniary damage.

**Version B:**

The European Court of Human Rights held that there hadn’t been a violation of Article 8 regarding to the right to respect for private and family life of the European Convention on Human Rights, finding that there were interests for the protection of health or morals of the society. The Court took the view that the detention conditions had caused Mrs. Hester Prynne mental and physical suffering, together with a feeling that she had been stripped of her dignity, thus representing “inhuman or degrading treatment” in breach of Article 3 of the Convention on Human Rights. This court advises the state to revise the sentence of Mrs. Hester Prynne in conditions to the European Convention on Human Rights.

**Bailiff:** All rise. *[Wait for everyone-except the judge- to stand.]* Department One of the European Court of Human Rights is now released.

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