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**DECIPHERING THE LAYERS: AN IN-DEPTH STUDY
OF LITERARY DEVICES AND SYMBOLS IN
“*THE SCARLET LETTER*”**

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

the soul of the dearest person, whose presence added delight to every moment and whose absence brought pain. Whose memory continues to inspire and lead me. His belief in me will always be the driving force behind my accomplishment and would have been the happiest person to see this work accomplished: MY FATHER MOUHAMED ALHACHMI.

And to the candles of my life, whose nurturing spirit and endless sacrifices have shaped my life's journey. Her love has been a continual source of strength and inspiration, leading me through every victory and difficulty. MY MOTHER, DALILA

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To the one whom God crowned him with dignity and honor... To the one whose name I proudly carry... To the one who cleared thorns from my path to pave the way for knowledge by the grace of God... To the one who taught me that success only comes with patience and determination...

My dear father."

"To my life's guiding light, the embodiment of love and warmth, the dazzling joy of being, and the essence of existence. To the whispered prayers that fueled my victories, to the person who wore the crowns of mother, sister, and confidante... You were my constant tower of support and sanctuary of strength. My cherished mother, you are the beating heart of my soul."

To the steadfast allies of my soul,

In your belief, my courage finds its wings, in your efforts, my burdens light, you are the candles guiding me through the darkest night.

Sisters and brothers

To my lovely friends, never forget their support and help

Especially Chaima and Kheira

"To my support... To the source of my inspiration and the reason for my pride. To my hidden angel and eternal champion... My success is his success and my joy is his joy..." dear Zo

Thank you all

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Abstract

This study analyses Nathaniel Hawthorne's celebrated novel *The Scarlet Letter* through both Formalist and New Historicist lenses. Set against the backdrop of 17th-century Puritan New England, the New Historicist perspective places the narrative within the socio-historical context of its era. By examining themes, characters, and plot complexities, this research tries to enhance our understanding of Hawthorne's storytelling methods and the wider socio-cultural environment in which the novel emerged. Employing a diverse methodology that combines qualitative research with textual analysis, this study highlights the lasting importance of *The Scarlet Letter* in American literature and provides valuable insights for both scholars and students. The present work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical one which contains two parts, the first deals with the study of the theory of formalism, and the second with new historicism. The second chapter involves a contextual study of the Puritan origin and beliefs that changed the novel structure and influenced its themes, character, and plot, moving on to the exploration of the author's biography and works and how the backdrop of the 17th-century women in this masterpiece. The third chapter and final chapter which is the practical part, investigates the use of literary devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, and irony. It also delves into the different symbols used throughout the novel. All in all, this study aims to show Nathaniel Hawthorne's motive behind the use of different literary devices and symbols in his work *The Scarlet Letter* (1850).

Keywords: *The Scarlet Letter*, literary devices, symbols, puritanism, formalism, new historicism

ملخص Abstract in Arabic

تطرقت هذه الدراسة لتحليل رواية ناتانيل هوثورن الشهيرة "الحرف القرمزي" من خلال العدسات الشكلية والتاريخية الجديدة. يقع السرد على خلفية بيوريتان إنجلترا في القرن السابع عشر، حيث يضع المنظور التاريخي الجديد القصة ضمن سياقها الاجتماعي والتاريخي. من خلال فحص المواضيع والشخصيات وتعقيدات الحكمة، يحاول البحث تعزيز فهمنا لأساليب هوثورن السردية والبيئة الاجتماعية والثقافية التي ظهرت فيها الرواية. باستخدام منهجية متنوعة تجمع بين البحث النوعي والتحليل النصي، تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الأهمية الدائمة لـ «الحرف القرمزي» في الأدب الأمريكي وتوفر رؤى قيمة للعلماء والطلاب. ينقسم العمل إلى ثلاثة فصول: الأول نظري، يدرس النظرية الشكلية والتاريخية الجديدة؛ الثاني يتناول السياق البيوريتاني وأثره على الرواية وسيرة المؤلف؛ والثالث عملي، يبحث في الأدوات الأدبية مثل التشبيه والاستعارة والرموز المستخدمة في الرواية، بهدف إظهار دافع هوثورن وراء استخدام هذه الأدوات في "الحرف القرمزي".

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحرف القرمزي، الأدوات الأدبية، الرموز، البيوريتاني، الشكلية،
التاريخية الجديدة

Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Dedication..... | I |
| Acknowledgments..... | II |
| Abstract..... | III |
| Abstract in Arabic..... | VI |
| Dedication..... | |
| I..... | VI |
| Acknowledgments..... | |
| II..... | VI |
| Introduction..... | 0 |
| CHAPTER-I. The Theoretical Framework (Introduction To Formalism and New Historicism) | 8 |
| Introduction..... | 9 |
| I.1. Overview of formalism as a literary theory..... | 10 |
| I.2. Historical development of formalism (Early 20th-century Russian Formalism)..... | 12 |
| I.3. Key principals and concepts of formalism | 13 |
| I.3.1. Definition of Literary Devices | 14 |
| I.4. Overview of new historicism as a literary theory..... | 21 |
| I.5. Definition of New Historicism | 22 |
| I.6. Origin of New Historicism..... | 24 |
| I.7. Key concepts of new Historicism..... | 24 |
| CHAPTER-II. Contextual Overview Of <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>..... | 26 |
| II.1. Puritan literature | 27 |
| II.2. Characteristics of puritan literature | 29 |
| II.3. Authors of the Puritan era | 30 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| II.4. Puritan Religious Beliefs and Societal Norms in Early New England | 31 |
| II.5. Romantic elements in <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>..... | 33 |
| II.6. Nathaniel Hawthorne: Brief Biography and Work | 34 |
| II.7. <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (1850): | 35 |
| II.7.1. Characteristics | 37 |
| II.7.2. Characterization..... | 38 |
| II.7.3. Themes | 40 |
| II.7.4. Setting..... | 42 |

CHAPTER-III. THE USE OF LITERARY DEVICES AND SYMBOLS IN *THE SCARLET LETTER*..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| III.1. Introduction | 44 |
| III.1.1. Irony..... | 44 |
| III.1.2. Simile | 45 |
| III.1.3. personification | 47 |
| III.1.4. Metaphor | 48 |
| III.1.5. Symbols | 49 |
| III.2. Main Symbol..... | 49 |
| III.2.1. <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> "A" | 49 |
| III.3. the symbolism of characters | 51 |
| III.3.1. Hester Prynne | 52 |
| III.3.2. Arthur Dimmesdale..... | 53 |
| III.3.3. Roger Chillingworth..... | 54 |
| III.3.4. Pearl..... | 54 |
| III.4. symbolism in places..... | 55 |
| III.4.1. prison door | 55 |
| III.4.2. the scaffold | 55 |
| III.4.3. the forest | 56 |

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| III.5. Symbolism in colors..... | 58 |
| III.5.1. Red color | 58 |
| III.5.2. Black colour..... | 59 |
| III.5.3. Grey color | 59 |
| III.6. Symbolism in Objects | 60 |
| III.6.1. Rosebush | 60 |
| Conclusion..... | 61 |
| Works Cited | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

Introduction

In the field of literature, a large variety of tendencies and ranged expressions exist, involving numerous writers. Poets and critics alike, distinguished by their distinctive styles, viewpoints, and principles, exhibit individuality. This diversity not only mirrors the traits and evolutions of human life and society but also encapsulates their essence. Differences are caused by the differentiating element that separates literary works from one nation or period to another.

A literary work can be evaluated and studied from a multitude of perspectives. Each technique provides a distinct viewpoint and may concentrate on various areas of the text.

For example, formalism is an approach that focuses on the formal aspects of literature, such as structure, language, and literary techniques. Another technique, termed new historicism, may dive into the historical or biographical environment around the work, aiming to understand how external events impacted its development. Additionally, some approaches focus on themes, symbols, characters, and various other aspects of the text. (Lee 02).

First Formalism is a theoretical stance that prioritizes form over a text's thematic concerns or connection to the outside world. The formalists believed that literary analysis should only cover form, technique, and literary devices present in literary works. Formalism is well-known for its tendency to remove or minimize components from its analysis, such as the author's aim and the text's historical, cultural, and social context. This literary theory school gets its name from its interest in form, language, and literary methods (30).

Furthermore, writers use literary devices to help readers form a greater emotional relationship with the story as a whole, specific characters, or themes. Literary devices encompass a range of techniques employed by authors to craft a distinct and concentrated impact within their writing, thereby conveying information effectively and enabling readers to grasp the underlying layers of their work. Proficiency in comprehending literary devices is fundamental, as it increases the readability and captivation of written texts. (Muniz, 2020).

Second, New Historicism is an approach to revealing the meaning of a text by placing it in the context of the dominant ideas and social assumptions of the historical time from which the work originated. In contrast to New Criticism, which they claim lacks historical depth, New Historicists seek to understand literature using a historical framework (Bressler 182). For example, while studying Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* through a New Historicist perspective, researchers investigate how Hawthorne's description of Puritan society and its fixed moral norms reflects the historical backdrop of 17th-century New England. By applying New Historicism to Hawthorne's work, academics might discover how he explores and criticizes the cultural and ideological influences of his day, shedding light on deeper issues. Similarly, a historical-critical approach to *The Scarlet Letter* could involve researching Hawthorne's background and the events that influenced his writing, showing the author's connections to the narrative and its historical context. Using these critical techniques, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of Hawthorne's intentions as well as the sociohistorical context that shaped his great work.

The Puritans were a group of Protestant reformers who began in England before migrating to the American colonies in New England. Their primary

goal was to purify both religion and politics from corruption. However, the contrasting perspective presented in the novel reveals a different narrative: the Puritans, while striving to reform and purify religion, tend to condemn individuals who engage in sinful behavior. They pass judgment on every person who commits a transgression.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, born in Salem, Massachusetts on July 4, 1804, was an acclaimed American writer of short stories and romance novels. Throughout his career, he ventured into various styles and genres, showcasing his versatility as an author. His most renowned works include short stories and two widely read novels, namely *The Scarlet Letter*, published in mid-March 1850, and *The House of Seven Gables*, published in 1851.

Hawthorne is chiefly a moralist author, deeply interested in the internal thoughts and emotions of people when they sin (Zwierzyńska 81). His writings, which are frequently set in colonial America, frequently refer to Puritanism, a religion focused on holiness and devotion (Grellet 45). This passion is obvious in his deep admiration for the Puritan history of seventeenth-century New England, which serves as the backdrop for his magnum work, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), largely recognized as his most significant and greatest novel of the nineteenth century (High 5).

Our interest in Nathaniel Hawthorne stems mostly from his expert use of literary techniques and symbolism. We have picked *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) as Hawthorne's greatest opus and most symbolic masterpiece. The story is set in a little community in Puritan New England. The main character is Hester Prynne, a young lady who has given birth to a kid outside of marriage. Hester is surprised when her husband, Roger Chillingworth, returns to New England alive and conceals his actual

name since she believes he has died. As punishment for her infidelity, Hester is compelled to wear *The Scarlet Letter* A on her clothes. Despite pressure to give her lover's identity, Hester refuses, leading Chillingworth to become obsessed with discovering the truth. After learning that the person in trouble is Arthur Dimmesdale, a fine young pastor who is also pushing Hester to reveal the father's name, he decides to punish him. Dimmesdale's health continues to deteriorate as he becomes filled with guilt. Hester, on the other hand, emerges as a resilient protagonist who never fully repents for her adulterous affair with the pastor, claiming that their love for one other justified their actions. Despite first being mocked, Hester's compassion and decency eventually silenced many of her critics.

According to McDonald (1986), Chillingworth's constant pursuit of revenge eventually weakens his moral character. Dimmesdale, consumed by shame, is broken and freely confesses his affair before dying in Hester's arms. Only Hester has the bravery to face the future front, as she prepares to start a new life in Europe with her daughter, Pearl. Years later, Hester returns to New England, where she still wears *The Scarlet Letter*. Following her death, she is buried next to Dimmesdale, and their shared headstone reads "ON A FIELD, SABLE, THE LETTER A, GULES" (19).

Assessing a piece of literature necessitates a thorough examination of the author's writing style, literary methods, and language employed. Nathaniel Hawthorne's famed masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), is full of literary elements such as simile, irony, metaphor, personification, and, most importantly, symbolism. In this proposed research, we as researchers attempted to indicate the importance of using formalism as an approach to the literary work *The Scarlet Letter* by representing the analysis of the literary devices: simile, personification, irony, symbols, and metaphor

with a close study of symbolism in the novel. Also, by looking at the historical background of the 17th century and its influence on the structure of this literary text.

This research seeks to provide an examination of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* from both Formalist and New Historicist viewpoints. While the formalist approach focuses on the role of literary techniques and symbols in forming the novel's structure and meaning, the New Historicist position broadens the scope to include the sociohistorical environment in which the literature was written. This study aims to deepen our understanding of Hawthorne's literary technique and the lasting significance of his masterpiece by examining the historical backdrop of 17th-century Puritan New England, the societal norms and values of the era, and how Hawthorne's narrative mirrors these historical circumstances. Additionally, by investigating how Hawthorne's use of literary techniques and symbolism relates to his story.

This study is important for both novice literature educators and students since it gives a detailed analysis of the literary techniques and symbols utilized in the text from the New Historicist and Formalist perspectives. It also offers invaluable insights for those attempting to understand the nuances of literary analysis by breaking down how these techniques are intricately woven into the story of *The Scarlet Letter* and examining their role in shaping the text's broader meaning through the lenses of formalism, which focuses on the text's internal structure and elements, and New Historicism, which considers the socio-historical context of 17th-century Puritan New England. Furthermore, as an academic reference, this work is a valuable resource for future students interested in conducting comparable research.

4. Research questions

To achieve this goal, we strive to answer the following questions:

1. What is the historical development and theoretical foundation of Formalism and New Historicism, and how do they influence literary analysis and interpretation?
2. How does an assessment of the novel's themes, characters, and storyline reveal Hawthorne's exploration of Puritan ideas, human behavior, and societal standards?
3. What are the different literary techniques and symbols utilized in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*?

This research uses an analytical and descriptive approach to investigate Nathaniel Hawthorne's usage of literary techniques such as simile, irony, personification, metaphor, and symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter*. This study seeks to improve our understanding of Hawthorne's narrative technique and the long-term significance of his work by examining these elements through a formalist lens and contextualizing them within the socio-historical milieu of 17th-century Puritan New England through New Historicist perspectives. Furthermore, by investigating the link between Hawthorne's use of literary methods and symbols and their reflection on historical events this study intends to shed light on the text's multifaceted meaning.

This research is divided into two main parts: the theoretical framework and the practical analysis Theoretical aspect. Chapter One discusses the foundations and concepts of formalism and new historicism. Formalism is offered as a method for examining literature's fundamental structures, including narrative organization, language, and the usage of literary techniques such as metaphor, personification,

simile, irony, and symbol, On the other side, New Historicism is given as a way for interpreting literature in its socio-historical context, emphasizing the link between literary works and the cultural setting in which they are formed.

In Chapter Two of our literary journey, we immerse ourselves in the multidimensional world of Nathaniel Hawthorne, beginning with the discovery of the significance of Puritan beliefs and the love aspect in forming the characters and plot, providing significant insights into Hawthorne's society critique while also examining the profound ideas and discoveries contained within *The Scarlet Letter*. We will explore further Hawthorne's interesting biography and examine his stylistic approach as well as the literary works that had a significant effect. Moving effortlessly into the heart of our discussion, we meticulously examine his masterwork, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Within this fundamental literature, we unravel the complicated web of its plot, explore the complexity of its principal characters, and throw light on the profound ideas that flow across its pages.

The third chapter sheds light on the literary devices used in this novel and their interpretations, as well as the samples of symbolism selected from the novel. To conclude, the present study tries to find answers to our above-stated questions.

This study takes an eclectic approach, combining qualitative research methodologies, textual analysis, and literary evaluation. We give a full assessment of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, using the theoretical frameworks of New Historicism and Formalism. Our goal with this diverse approach is to provide insight into the novel's themes, characters, and literary techniques by investigating the complex link between the text and its socio-historical environment, notably the

historical setting of 17th-century Puritan New England. Our critique includes an examination of numerous literary methods, such as metaphor, personification, simile, and irony, as well as the symbols that appear throughout the story itself. Through careful textual analysis and interpretation, we discover the significance of these aspects and their contributions to the text's overall relevance and meaning. The research materials include the source text of *The Scarlet Letter*, as well as scholarly papers, books, websites, and dissertations retrieved from academic databases like as DSpace and Google Scholar.

Researchers have broadly explored Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, centering on topics, imagery, and scholarly strategies. For example, Jones explores the importance of *The Scarlet Letter* "A," claiming that it represents not only Hester Prynne's transgression but also her resilience and resistance to public judgment. Hawthorne underlines this symbolism, noticing, "On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A" (Hawthorne, 1850, 50). This expression represents the novel's wealthy symbolism and the variety of interpretations accessible to academics. In conclusion, there are a few basic perspectives and interpretations of "*The Scarlet Letter*" in academic discourse. This thesis looks for by analyzing these numerous points of view, this proposal hopes to better our comprehension of Hawthorne's masterwork and its proceeded significance in American writing (36).



CHAPTER-I. The Theoretical Framework

Introduction

During the 20th century, the emergence of literary theory as a field of study brought forth a challenge within the world of literature. This field offers remarkable insights into literary texts, aiming to utilize various theories derived from a multitude of factors. Its primary objective is to show a process of understanding and interpreting pieces of literature, adhering to systematic procedures and rules. By providing an interpretive tool, the literary theory allows students to generate numerous interpretations of a single literary work. Consequently, this research paper presents a flexible foundation for two prominent theories that have exerted a grand influence on the field of literary theory. Formalism approaches literature as a self-regulating system that emphasizes the form rather than the content. On the other hand, New Historicism sees literature as strongly connected to its cultural and historical context of creation.

Literary theory is a set of ideas and approaches utilized in the practical examination of the literature. It does not focus on the literal meaning of a literary work, but rather on the theories that uncover the possible interpretations of literature. Literary theory serves as an explanation of the foundational principles, or one might argue, the tools, through which we aim to understand literature.

Likewise, it serves as a set of diverse analytical tools that critics utilize to examine and discuss art, literature, and culture. These various perspectives enable critics to evaluate artistic works through the specific assumptions of each theoretical framework. Additionally, these theories enable critics to concentrate on specific elements of a work that they deem significant.

The Theoretical Framework | 10

The term "literary theory" refers to the collection of concepts and methodologies used in the practical reading of literature. Literary theory refers not to the meaning of a piece of literature, but to the ideas that explain what literature may signify. Literary theory describes the basic concepts by which we seek to interpret literature. All literary interpretation is theoretically based, yet it may be used to justify a wide range of critical activities. Literary theory defines the link between author and work; it develops the relevance of race, class, and gender for literary studies, both in terms of writer biography and thematic presence within works. Literary theory provides several ways to understand the function of historical context in interpretation, as well as the significance of linguistic and unconscious elements within the text. Literary theorists study the history and growth of several genres—narrative, dramatic, and lyric—as well as the more modern emergence of the book and short story, while also studying the significance of formal features of literary structure. Finally, in recent years, literary theory has worked to explain the extent to which the text is a product of a culture rather than an individual author, and how such writings contribute to the creation of the culture (Culler 01).

1.1. Overview of formalism as a literary theory

Formalism, a significant movement in literary theory and criticism, emerged in the early 20th century, particularly in Russia. It focuses on the essential elements of a literary work, such as form, structure, language, and style, rather than external factors like authorial intention or historical context. Formalists argue that the meaning of a text is derived from its formal properties and the relationships between its elements.

The Theoretical Framework | 11

This approach emphasizes close reading and textual analysis to uncover the unique qualities and patterns within a work of literature.

One of the foundational texts of formalism is Viktor Shklovsky's essay "Art as Technique" (1917), where he introduces the concept of defamiliarization or estrangement (*ostranenie*), suggesting that art's purpose is to make the familiar seem unfamiliar to renew our perception and engagement with the world.

Another key figure in formalism is Roman Jakobson, who contributed to the development of structural linguistics and semiotics. His work on linguistic and literary sign systems influenced formalist approaches to analyzing narrative structures and poetic language.

Formalism's emphasis on the autonomy of the literary text and its formal properties marked a departure from earlier approaches, such as historical and biographical criticism. While formalism reached its peak in the early 20th century, its principles continue to inform literary analysis and criticism today, particularly in the fields of stylistics, narratology, and poetics (Shklovsky 3-24).

In summary, formalism offers a method of literary analysis that focuses on the qualities of a text, emphasizing its form, language, and style. By privileging close reading and formal analysis, formalist critics seek to reveal the artistic dimensions of literature, independent of its historical or biographical context.

1.2. Historical development of formalism (Early 20th-century Russian Formalism)

Around one hundred years ago, a group of young rebellious Russian linguists and literary critics emerged in the two major cities of the Russian Empire, Petrograd and Moscow. Even after a century has elapsed, their impact on linguistics and literature remains unparalleled. The Russian Formalists not only criticized the prevailing trend of studying literature devoid of a linguistic framework but also endeavored to establish an autonomous field of literary science grounded in concrete linguistic theories and methodologies. Their groundbreaking ideas and thought-provoking inquiries concerning linguistics and literature continue to shape our approach to and analysis of literary texts in the present day.

However, Marxist-oriented critical theory emerged in response to formalism. V. I. Lenin argued against artistic formalism in the early 20th century (Al Fuadi 173), yet formalism was a dialectical critique movement. "Although inadequate in itself," Jay contends that Formalism provided a crucial safeguard that substantive rationality, whether in the legal or logical realm, disregarded at its own risk. In essence, Formalism represented a moment of complete dialectical unity that should not be summarily dismissed (145). According to Leon Trotsky, formalism offers a pathway, among several others, for the artist to connect with the world and comprehend the dynamics between the individual artist and the "social environment" (139).

Following the collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1920, Lukács published *Theory of the Novel*, a work that bore the strong imprint of Hegelian philosophy. The novel, according to Lukács, presents a challenge as a literary genre

The Theoretical Framework | 13

due to its insistence on a vision of coherence and completeness that does not correspond with the realities of contemporary society: "The novel represents the epic of an era where the inherent significance of existence has turned into a dilemma, while the mindset still revolves around the concept of wholeness." (56).

According to Shklovsky, the repetitive nature of everyday experiences causes individuals to overlook the distinctiveness and specificity of the objects around them. By highlighting its linguistic nature, literary language creates a sense of alienation from the familiar, thereby revitalizing the perception of existence(10).

Formalism experienced a period of unrestricted growth, particularly between 1921 and 1925, when the exhausted USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was recovering from the effects of 'War Communism'. This period of respite allowed for the flourishing of non-proletarian economics and literature, leading to the dominance of formalism in literary scholarship by 1925. However, the emergence of Trotsky's evolving criticisms of formalism in 1924 marked a shift towards a defensive stance, ultimately culminating in the formulation of the Jakobson/Tynyanov theses in 1928. Some scholars perceive these later developments as guidance of the decline of pure formalism and a surrender to the Communist 'social command' (Selden 31).

1.3. Key principals and concepts of formalism

Formalism, as a literary theory, is characterized by several key principles and concepts that emphasize the formal aspects of literature over its content. Here are some of the main principles and concepts associated with Formalism:

The Theoretical Framework | 14

Initially, the primary focus lies on the internal composition of a written work, with an emphasis on its structure rather than its substance. Formalist critics, in particular, give priority to the formal elements present within literary pieces, asserting that "the form of a work is an autonomous entity" (Barry 67). This approach suggests that the essential qualities of a text, such as its structure and style, are important in understanding its meaning.

Furthermore, Formalists carefully examine the narrative structure of a text, focusing on aspects like plot progression and narrative point of view. For example, Propp's structural analysis of folktales in "Morphology of the Folktale" identifies recurring narrative patterns that transcend cultural differences (1928).

Also, Formalist critics examine the language and style of a literary work to reveal its formal characteristics and aesthetic impacts. Victor Shklovsky, a Russian Formalist, asserts in his essay "Art as Technique" that defamiliarization, which is accomplished through stylistic methods, plays a crucial role in refreshing perception and encountering art (1917).

Lastly, Formalist scholars identify and analyze the use of literary devices within texts. For example, Jakobson's structural analysis of poetry highlights the importance of sound patterns and linguistic structures in creating poetic effects (Jakobson 1960).

1.3.1. Definition of literary devices

Literary devices are conventional techniques utilized by authors in their writings to effectively communicate their ideas to the audience. When utilized skillfully, these

various literary devices aid readers in understanding, interpreting, and analyzing a piece of literature. Presented below are some of the literary devices that can be used by authors to express meaning in their works.

Irony:

Irony, a rhetorical device deeply used in literature, operates through the intended contrast between the explicit and implied meanings of words or statements. As articulated by Muecke (80), irony functions as a tool in which the surface-level meaning differs notably from the underlying reality. This distinction between appearance and truth often manifests as a form of satire, as highlighted by Reaske wherein the implied meaning subtly mocks or critiques the explicit content (24).

Green, further clarifies irony as a mode of expression characterized by its inherent ambiguity and indirectness. They posit irony as a communicative strategy inherently intertwined with human nature, reflecting our nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of existence.

Types of irony:

Irony, a fundamental literary device, adds to narrative complexity and depth. In its various forms—verbal, situational, and dramatic.

Verbal irony appears when there is a contradiction between what is spoken and what is intended. It involves using words to express meaning that differs from their literal understanding.

The Theoretical Framework | 16

Situational irony occurs when there is a variance between what is expected and what happens. It refers to a difference between the anticipated and actual outcomes of a scenario.

Dramatic irony happens when the audience or reader is aware of something that the story's protagonists are unaware of. It entails building tension or suspense by exposing to the viewer something that the protagonists are unaware of.

Example:

1. "Great! Now I have to walk home in the pouring rain," said sarcastically. Here when someone's plans are ruined by rain. Here, the speaker expresses the opposite of what they truly feel.

2. A fire station burns down. This is ironic because a place that is meant to prevent fires is destroyed by one.

3. "You may trod me in the very dirt

But still, like dust, I'll rise " (Angelou 30 -31). Despite the dehumanizing act of being "trodden in the dirt," the speaker asserts her resilience and ability to rise again, comparing herself to dust. This irony emphasizes the speaker's unwavering strength and determination in the face of adversity, emphasizing her indomitable spirit.

Simile:

In academic discourse, simile is a rhetorical device where a comparison between two entities is drawn through the use of comparative terms such as "like" or

"as," aiming to evoke a visual representation of resemblance (Cuddon,1998, 73). An illustration of this rhetorical strategy can be found in phrases like "This man is like a tiger" or "hair as soft as silk," wherein the characteristics of the compared object are projected into the subject. This construction adheres to the format "X is like Y," assigning the semantic attributes of Y to X (Lee 2248).

The term simile comes from the Latin word 'Simile', which means 'resemblance and likenesses'. It refers to comparing two items with similarities. For Gibbs, a simile is a comparison between two objects based on one or two traits "Simile is fundamentally a figure of speech requiring overt reference to source and target entities, and an explicit construction connecting them" (40).

Example:

1. Her voice was as soothing as a lullaby, calming the anxious audience. This simile compares the soothing quality of the person's voice to a lullaby, which is known for its calming effect. Comparing the voice to a lullaby suggests that listening to her voice has a similar comforting and reassuring effect as listening to a gentle, melodious lullaby.

2. The flowers danced in the wind like ballerinas. In this simile, the movement of the flowers in the wind is compared to the graceful and elegant movements of ballerinas. By likening the flowers to ballerinas, it creates a vivid image of their delicate and rhythmic motion, enhancing the beauty and fluidity of their movement.

3. "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (Wordsworth 322). This simile, from William Wordsworth's poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (often referred to as "Daffodils"), compares the speaker's solitary wandering to the drifting and solitary movement of a cloud. By likening the speaker to a cloud, it conveys a sense of isolation and solitude, emphasizing the speaker's meditative mood.

Personification:

According to Perrine, personification involves attributing human characteristics to animals, objects, or concepts (64). It is essentially a form of metaphor, where the figurative term of the comparison is consistently a human being. However, to Reaske, personification refers to the act of attributing human qualities to nonhuman entities, concepts, or ideas (25). This practice of giving personal form to nonhuman objects and ideas is a commonly employed rhetorical technique in poetry. This entails endowing ideas or entities such as nature and animals with human qualities and emotions, or even treating them as living beings (Pickering and Hoepfer 80).

Example:

1. The door creaked as if it were complaining about being opened. The door is personified here by being described as if it were capable of complaining, a human attribute.

2. The stars winked at me from the night sky. Stars are personified in this sentence by being described as winking, a human action.

3. The book beckoned to me from the shelf. The book is personified by being described as inviting as if it were calling out to the reader.

Metaphor:

A metaphor, similar to a simile, is a rhetorical device that does not employ the words "like" or "as". It involves the act of perceiving one thing in terms of another object. Metaphors are used to draw comparisons between two dissimilar entities. For instance, one might say, "My baby sister is a doll," to highlight the similarities in size and sweetness between the sister and a perfect doll. Conversely, one could also say, "My brother is a rat," to emphasize negative qualities by comparing the brother to an unpleasant creature. Metaphors provide a direct comparison between unlike things, allowing for a concise and impactful way of conveying a message (Pickering & Hoepfer 55).

Example:

1. Leo is a lion. This metaphor compares Leo to a lion. Lions are often associated with characteristics such as strength, courage, and leadership. By likening Leo to a lion, it suggests that Leo possesses similar qualities.

2. Time is a thief. This metaphor compares time to a thief, implying that time takes away or steals moments, opportunities, and experiences from our lives without us realizing it. It suggests that time passes quickly and can sometimes feel like it's robbing us of precious moments.

The Theoretical Framework | 20

3. Life is a journey. This metaphor compares life to a journey, suggesting that life involves progress, experiences, challenges, and discoveries along the way. It implies that life is not static but rather a continuous process of growth and exploration.

Symbols:

Reaske assumes that a symbol can be categorized as private, original, or traditional. He means that symbols can embody all of these definitions. At times, it can be challenging to differentiate between images, metaphors, and symbols as they often overlap. Nevertheless, an image represents exactly what it is.

As Perrine states "A literary symbol is something that means more than what it is, it is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story but suggests or represents other meanings as well" (211).

Example:

1. Tree. represents both growth and the concept of eternity.
2. Sea. Symbolizes purity, innocence, and the sacredness of humanity.
3. "Singing " (Angelou 04). The act of singing symbolizes resilience, defiance, and inner strength. It represents the ability to find joy, beauty, and meaning in life despite challenging circumstances, echoing the human spirit's capacity to persevere and overcome.

I.4. Overview of new historicism as a literary theory

New Historicism is a critical approach within literary studies that seeks to illuminate the significance of a text by situating it within the broader context of the historical period in which it was produced. Scholars such as Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, and Jonathan Goldberg have been instrumental in shaping this theoretical framework, which emphasizes the interplay between literature and the dominant ideologies, power structures, and societal beliefs of its time. (Bressler 182).

At its core, New Historicism challenges the notion of literature as an autonomous entity divorced from its historical context. Instead, it asserts that texts are deeply embedded within the writing of the eras that produced them. This approach emerged partly in response to traditional Historicism, which often treated literary works as isolated artifacts, disconnected from the social and cultural milieu in which they were created (Ryan 128).

Led by figures like Greenblatt, proponents of New Historicism advocate for a nuanced understanding of history not merely as a series of factual events, but as a complex tapestry of human experience and cultural production. They think that literature is a great storage of historical insights, offering valuable perspectives on the ideologies, tensions, and power dynamics of the societies that produced it (266).

However, it's essential to acknowledge that New Historicism is not without its critiques. Some scholars have raised concerns about its tendency to oversimplify historical contexts or to overlook individual agency within historical processes. Moreover, there are ongoing debates within the field about the appropriate balance

between historical context and literary analysis, as well as the potential limitations of applying contemporary theoretical frameworks to historical texts (Howard 19).

Despite these challenges, New Historicism has played a significant role in revitalizing literary studies by fostering interdisciplinary approaches and encouraging scholars to reevaluate the relationship between literature and history. By foregrounding the historical dimensions of literary texts, New Historicism invites readers to engage with literature as a dynamic and multifaceted reflection of human experience across time and space.

1.5. Definition of New Historicism

The concept of New Historicism is articulated by various scholars, each offering unique insights into its nature and methodology.

Bhargavi defines New Historicism as a break from standard literary analysis that emphasizes writings' connectivity with their historical surroundings. Rather than divorcing a work from its socio-cultural context, New Historicists focus on understanding the historical and cultural conditions that impacted its creation, relevance, effect, and even later critical readings (158).

Furthermore, New Historicism is derived from modern theoretical frameworks such as structuralism and deconstruction. According to Lehman, it is based on the structuralist view that all human systems are simply symbolic and subject to language laws. Furthermore, it is informed

The Theoretical Framework | 23

by deconstruction's understanding that there is no privileged position outside of language and textuality. The emergence of theoretical viewpoints highlights New Historicism's emphasis on changing interaction between text and context (246).

Barry adds another dimension to our knowledge of New Historicism by highlighting the practice of parallel reading, which involves analyzing literary works alongside non-literary materials from the same period in history. This diverse method allows researchers to gain a greater understanding of the cultural dynamics and power structures of a specific historical time (765).

Montrose's definition of New Historicism as a "reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" captures the approach's dynamic interaction between literature and history. Rather than regarding writings as unchanging representations of historical reality, New Historicism sees them as dynamic products of their era, actively creating and denying dominant narratives.

However, it is essential to recognize that New Historicism has conflicts. Greenblatt's claim that New Historicism requires avoiding value judgments in historical studies appears to contradict the theory's emphasis on critically interacting with power dynamics and ideological forms inside historical texts. This paradox emphasizes the continuous discussion and complexities involved in defining and applying New Historicism (57).

Finally, the researcher's different opinions on new historicism demonstrate the literary theory's depth and variety. While each description provides useful insights into

the theory's concepts and methodology, it is obvious that New Historicism covers a diverse set of approaches and interpretations. New Historicism challenges traditional concepts of literary analysis by highlighting the interconnection of works and their historical settings, encouraging researchers to investigate the changing connections between literature, culture, and society (Singh 198).

I.6. Origin of New Historicism

The origin of New Historicism can be traced to the 1980s when it emerged as a significant literary and cultural studies approach. It developed in response to the dominance of New Criticism, which prioritized the close reading of texts and disregarded historical and biographical contexts. Scholars like Stephen Greenblatt played a crucial role in shaping and popularizing New Historicism during this period.

The term "New Historicism" was coined by Greenblatt to describe a modern approach to Renaissance studies. While its roots can be traced back to the 1980 publication of Greenblatt's influential work "Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare," where he introduced his critical method as "a poetics of culture," it gained further traction in the late 1980s.

Thus, the origin of New Historicism lies in the intellectual and academic landscape of the 1980s, characterized by a reevaluation of literary methodologies and a growing interest in interdisciplinary approaches that integrate literature with history, politics, and culture (Montrose 88).

I.7. Key concepts of new Historicism

After understanding the history and terminology of the new historical approach to literary criticism, it's important to examine the theory's distinctive characteristics.

The Theoretical Framework | 25

Context: New Historicism emphasizes the importance of understanding literary works within their historical and cultural context. For example, in Shakespeare's "Hamlet," New Historicists might examine how the play reflects the anxieties and political tensions of Elizabethan England. As Greenblatt argues in "Shakespearean Negotiations," "the task of historical understanding is to grasp the specificity of the past" (44). Critics like Greenblatt advocate for analyzing literature with the cultural environment in which it was produced, arguing that this contextual understanding enriches our interpretation of the text.

Cultural Poetics: To Montrose this concept explores how literature is intertwined with broader cultural discourses and practices. In "The New Historicism," he examines how literary texts participate in and respond to cultural norms and ideologies. Montrose argues that literature operates within a "cultural poetics," where it both reflects and shapes the cultural landscape, he highlighted the dynamic relationship between literature and culture, emphasizing how literary texts contribute to the construction of social meaning.

Power and Discourse: New Historicists analyze how power structures are reflected and perpetuated through language and discourse. Michel Foucault's concept of "power/knowledge" is often invoked in discussions of power and discourse. Foucault argues that power operates through systems of knowledge and discourse, shaping the way individuals understand and engage with the world (23). Critics draw on Foucault's ideas to explore how literary texts participate in and contest dominant power dynamics.

Intertextuality: Intertextuality refers to the interconnectedness of texts and how they reference, borrow from, and respond to one another. Julia Kristeva's concept of

The Theoretical Framework | 26

intertextuality highlights the fluidity of textual boundaries and the ongoing dialogue between texts (Kristeva 56). New Historicists examine how literary works engage with and are influenced by other texts, tracing how these intertextual relationships shape meaning and interpretation.

Ideology: New Historicism involves the study of ideology or the beliefs, values, and assumptions that underlie a society's dominant discourse. Eagleton's "Ideology: An Introduction" provides a foundational framework for understanding ideology as a form of social control (91). Critics draw on Eagleton's work to analyze how literary texts both reflect and perpetuate ideological frameworks, as well as how they may subvert or challenge dominant ideologies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter presented two literary theories – Formalism and New Historicism. Formalism concentrates on the inherent characteristics of texts, whereas New Historicism on the ties between literature and its historical background. These theories provide diverse lenses for analyzing and understanding literary works. greatly deepening our understanding of literature.



**CHAPTER-II. Contextual
Overview of *The Scarlet
Letter***

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 27

Introduction

Puritanism is a topic that is not frequently discussed in contemporary times due to its origins as a religious reform movement in the late sixteenth century. The influence of Puritanism has served as a source of inspiration for numerous writers, including Nathaniel Hawthorne. While many of Hawthorne's writings explore America's Puritan history, *The Scarlet Letter* captures the heart of the movement. This work accurately depicts the significant influence of Puritanism on people's lives and beliefs. Hawthorne's description of the Puritan town and its inhabitants demonstrates the strict moral code and the consequences of violating it in Puritan communities (History.com Editors).

In this chapter, we aim to investigate the lasting impact of the 17th-century Puritan tradition on Nathaniel Hawthorne. By analyzing Hawthorne's background, writings, and thematic interests concerning the cultural and religious context of Puritan New England, we will focus on his renowned work, *The Scarlet Letter*. The exploration is intended to provide a more profound understanding of the intricacies of Hawthorne's literary heritage and its ongoing significance in Puritan themes.

II.1. Puritan literature

Puritan literature plays a significant role as a foundational component in shaping the American literary legacy. Originating in the 17th century, Puritan literature was profoundly shaped by religious beliefs, societal principles, and the historical backdrop of the Puritans, a religious community that held an important position in the establishment of North America through colonization.

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 28

During the early colonial period, Puritans migrated from England to New England seeking religious freedom and economic opportunities. They settled in Plymouth in 1620 and Massachusetts in 1630, quickly spreading along the coast from Maine to suburban New York.

By 1640. With a population of 14,000 in Massachusetts alone by 1640, Puritans were able to develop their town governments, economy, and way of life largely free from English interference (Baugh 67). Puritanism, originally influenced by Calvinism, established itself in the New World, molding the distinctive identity of the region (Foerster, 182). The Puritans upheld the importance of adhering to biblical principles and societal hierarchies, expecting unwavering compliance from those less educated. They emphasized the interconnectedness of the mind and soul, contrasting with the emerging democratic ideals that questioned the role of intellectual authority. Rejecting scholasticism, Puritan culture emphasized rational, commonsense thinking, marking a departure from formal, unchanging traditions (Miller and Johnson, 90).

The Puritans, including those from well-educated English households, had a significant role in shaping American literature. The early writings of these settlers focused on Puritanism. 1. The Puritans held the belief that it was essential to interpret God's signs in everyday life and the natural world. They viewed the earthly realm as a testing ground for individuals who were considered deserving of gaining access to Heaven. According to Puritan ideology, being 'chosen' entailed renouncing worldly delights, engaging in diligent labor, and maintaining a sense of humility. Puritanism's emphasis on hard labor and achievement led to an association with capitalism. Puritan literature reflects its essential principles and doctrines. Traditional English forms were used to represent life in the colonies, which became the foundation of American

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 29

literature. "The literature of British America was seen as a mere prologue to the literature of the United States of America" (Edward 590). This genre of poetic expression, such as English metaphysical poetry, heavily relies on the use of symbolism and vivid imagery.

II.2. Characteristics of puritan literature

Puritan literary works, originating predominantly during the 17th century in America, serve as a reflection of the religious, social, and cultural beliefs held by the Puritan settlers. The following are key attributes of Puritan literature:

Religious Themes: Puritan literature is deeply connected with religious themes, reflecting the Puritans' devout Christian beliefs. These themes often revolve around God's providence, salvation, sin, and the individual's relationship with God. This illustrates religion's major importance in Puritan culture, as well as the Puritans' determination to live a moral life based on their understanding of Christian theology.

Plain Style: Puritan writing is known for its simplicity and directness. The Puritans felt that plain, direct language was best suited to communicating religious truths. This straightforward approach demonstrates their emphasis on clarity and accessibility when expressing their message.

Moral and Didactic Content: Puritan literature has a didactic intent, guiding readers in living a good and virtuous lifestyle. It frequently contains lessons, religious guides, and tales that teach moral or theological principles. These Puritans used these writings to spread religious beliefs and warn others about sin and temptation.

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 30

Theology: Puritan texts delve into theological issues, notably predestination, and election. These religious views had a significant impact on Puritan writing, defining its understanding of grace, salvation, and divine providence.

Self-examination and Personal Narrative: The spiritual autobiography, often known as the personal narrative, is a popular type of Puritan writing. Writers would describe their spiritual journey, including their conversion and continuous battle with sin. These stories help to demonstrate the workings of divine grace in the individual's life while emphasizing the significance of personal piety and religious devotion.

Overall, these features highlight the uniqueness of Puritan writing, which is distinguished by its religious passion, moral education, theological depth, and personal reflection ("Puritan Literature Characteristics")

II.3. Authors of the Puritan era

Several famous Puritan writers contributed significantly to American literature during the colonial era. Their books are still studied and appreciated for their insights into contemporary religious, moral, and social principles. Some of the most renowned Puritan authors and their works are:

1. As the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop (1588-1649) delivered a sermon titled "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630), in which he created the famous term "City upon a Hill." This speech focused on the notion of establishing a virtuous society in the New World.

2. Anne Bradstreet (1612–1662): Bradstreet was the first published American poet. Her work "The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America" (1650) included poetry on

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 31

her deep religious beliefs, personal problems, and reflections on life, death, and the natural world.

3. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was a preacher and theologian most remembered for his fiery lectures, including "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741). His lectures attempted to sensitize his audience to the consequences of sin and the importance of redemption.

4. Cotton Mather (1663–1728): Mather was a prolific author and pastor. His book, "Magnalia Christi Americana" (1702), is a theological history of New England. He also wrote about scientific matters like the smallpox vaccination and promoted study and education.

5. Mary Rowlandson (1637–1711): Rowlandson's tale, "The Sovereignty and Goodness of God" (1682), also known as "A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson," recounts her captivity by Native Americans during King Philip's War. It combines her own experiences with religious reflection (puritan-literature-characteristics-writers-and-their-works).

II.4. Puritan Religious Beliefs and Societal Norms in Early New England

The study of early English Puritanism reveals a fascinating tapestry encompassing religious interest, social norms, and values of culture. Initially part of the Church of England, Puritans attempted to improve religious customs and reduce disagreement, purifying beliefs and practices while limiting bishops' authority. Despite the lack of

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 32

well-trained clergy in early New England, a formal break from the Church of England was not originally planned. (Bradley, Beatty, & Needleman 132).

Puritanism was all about being good and pure and keeping things simple and under control. They were super committed to following God's rules, which they thought came from God's special favor to them. Their beliefs were based on Calvinism, which focused on ideas like everyone being born sinful, some people being chosen by God no matter what, Jesus only saving some people, God's grace being irresistible, and good people staying good no matter what (Bell 431).

In daily life, Puritans upheld biblical principles, striving to glorify God in every action. Marriage ceremonies were serious and humble., reflective of their dedication to simplicity, while divorce was uncommon, large families thrived due to high mortality rates. Despite difficulties, Puritans found comfort and companionship in community meetings and celebrations, which strengthened social relationships and cultural practices. (Foerster 5).

Exploring Puritan beliefs and practices provides significant insights into the complexities of religious life and social relations in early colonial America. (393). This nuanced comprehension enhances our reverence for the Puritan legacy and its enduring impact on American society and culture.

The majority of New England's populace consisted of immigrants from England. Puritans held diverse perspectives on society, religion, and family structure. Traditionally, males assumed the primary decision-making role in families, while women were tasked solely with household duties. This family framework enforced faithfulness to God and strict punishments for sexual actions, including adultery (43).

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 33

II.5. Romantic elements in *The Scarlet Letter*

According to Luo, *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne is a tragic romantic novel. that expertly combines themes of romance, symbolism, and social critique. While commonly regarded as a tale of Puritanical morality, a deeper look reveals a strong connection with Romanticism, a literary movement distinguished by its emphasis on individualism, passion, and nature (83).

According to Marjuni, The Romantics were drawn to Nature's numerous and varied features, notably her moral and emotional links to mankind. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne's forbidden love affair symbolizes the emotional connection with mankind, as she seeks real warmth and kindness in her heart. According to the Romantics, this warmth of the heart may be discovered and enhanced by a close connection with nature. They thought that the heart possesses wisdom that reason alone cannot comprehend. It functions as a source of knowledge, where concepts are "felt" as sensations rather than just thoughts. The Romantics associated intuition with strong emotions and sensations. They argued that people may acquire information not only via testing or rational procedures but also through intuitive flashes and learning to trust their intuition. The Romantics were profoundly skeptical of calculation and emphasized the limitations of scientific understanding. They contended that science's logic fails to capture the tremendous variety and diversity of reality. Rational analysis, they believe, lessens the pure sense of the constant flow of experiences, leading people wrong. This notion is powerfully depicted in *The Scarlet Letter*, while being limited by law, Hester Prynne gives up to the desire to commit adultery, which is morally wrong. Paradoxically, this violation might be

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 34

interpreted as a reflection of her need for love and freedom, a means for her to express her innate instincts. now considered a romantic literary classic in America and throughout the world (84).

II.6. Nathaniel Hawthorne: Brief Biography and Work

Nathaniel Hawthorne, born on July 4, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts, hailed from a lineage that included John Hathorne, a judge in the Salem witch trials of 1692. When he embarked on his writing career, he appended a "w" to his surname, becoming Hawthorne. Among his ancestors was William Hathorne, one of the early Puritan settlers who arrived in New England in 1630. Hawthorne, renowned as a prominent American short story writer and romance novelist, is best remembered for his works such as *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and "The House of the Seven Gables" (1851). He was the sole son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Clark Hathorne (Manning). Tragically, his father, a sea captain, succumbed to yellow fever at sea in 1808, leaving Hawthorne to be raised by his widowed mother.

Educated at Bowdoin College in Maine, Hawthorne forged significant relationships with individuals who would later shape his life, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a renowned poet, and Franklin Pierce, who eventually served as President of the United States. During his college years,

In 1842, Hawthorne married Sophia Peabody, and together they settled happily with their three children in the Old Manse in Concord. In 1846, Hawthorne secured an appointment as surveyor of the Salem Custom House. However, his dismissal from this position in 1849, a victim of political patronage, left him unemployed. During this period, he devoted himself to his magnum opus, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), describing

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 35

it as a "hell-fired story" that drew upon his suffering and imaginative intensity. After a prolonged illness marked by severe bouts of dementia, Hawthorne passed away on May 19, 1864, in Plymouth, New Hampshire. He was laid to rest in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, Massachusetts (02).

Hawthorne was a romantic writer from the nineteenth century in the United States. He was strongly influenced by Puritanism and transcendentalism. *The Scarlet Letter* is a romantic tragedy. The story takes place in New England during the 17th century, controlled by North American Puritans.

According to Wright, Hawthorne's literary career commenced with his first published work, "Fanshawe," in 1828, which he financed himself, only to later deem it unworthy and attempt to eradicate every copy. In 1837, he released the Twice-Told Tales. Subsequently, he produced his four most renowned novels: "The House of the Seven Gables" in 1851, "The Blithedale Romance" in 1852, *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850, and his final novel, «The Marble Faun," in 1860. Additionally, he authored various children's stories, including "Grandfather's Chair" in 1840, "A Wonder-Book for Boys and Girls" in 1852, and "Tanglewood Tales" in 1853(598).

II.7. *The Scarlet Letter* (1850):

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne opens with an unnamed narrator working at the Salem Custom House, where he discovers a manuscript that recounts the events of the novel. Set in seventeenth-century Boston, the story centers around Hester Prynne, who is publicly shamed for committing adultery and forced to wear a scarlet letter "A" on her chest as a symbol of her sin.

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 36

Hester's husband, Roger Chillingworth, arrives in Boston just as Hester is being publicly humiliated. He adopts the identity of a physician and seeks revenge on the man who impregnated his wife, unaware that it is the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, a highly respected member of the community.

As the novel progresses, the relationship between Hester and Dimmesdale becomes more complex. Dimmesdale struggles with the guilt of his secret sin, while Hester remains steadfast in her resolve to protect him. Meanwhile, Chillingworth becomes increasingly obsessed with uncovering Dimmesdale's secret and exacting his revenge.

Throughout the novel, Hester's daughter, Pearl, serves as a constant reminder of her mother's sin. Pearl is portrayed as a wild and unruly child, often causing trouble for Hester and symbolizing the consequences of her actions.

As the story unfolds, the community becomes increasingly suspicious of Dimmesdale's behavior, and rumors about his involvement with Hester spread. Dimmesdale's guilt and inner turmoil reach a breaking point, leading to his public confession of his sin on the scaffold where Hester was once shamed.

In the end, Dimmesdale dies shortly after confessing, and Hester and Pearl leave Boston to start a new life elsewhere. Chillingworth also dies, consumed by his obsession and hatred. The novel concludes with Hester returning to Boston many years later, still wearing *The Scarlet Letter* as a symbol of her past sin, but now revered by the community for her strength and resilience (Kestler 01).

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 37

II.7.1. Characteristics

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Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 38

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II.7.2. Characterization

Takalo and Vos define characterization as the process of revealing a character's personality through their ideas, feelings, expressions, and actions. The principal characters might be interpreted as metaphorical representations of human nature. The characters' names are listed below (87).

Hester Prynne

Hester Prynne is the central character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*. She endures immense hardship and ostracism after being publicly shamed for committing adultery and bearing an illegitimate child. Despite the stigma attached to her, Hester displays remarkable strength and resilience, eventually transforming from a symbol of sin and shame into a beacon of courage and compassion. Throughout the novel, Hester's journey is marked by her unwavering determination to live with dignity and integrity in the face of societal condemnation. Her character exemplifies the complexities of human nature and the power of redemption (Miah 73).

Arthur Dimmesdale

Arthur Dimmesdale is a character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, depicted as a tormented Boston minister. He grapples with inner turmoil, torn

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 39

between the desire to confess his secret sin of fathering Hester Prynne's illegitimate child and the pressure of maintaining his esteemed position in Puritan society. Dimmesdale's internal struggle is characterized by a longing for redemption through confession, juxtaposed with the weight of Puritanical expectations and the fear of public shame. His inner conflict drives much of the narrative tension in the novel as he wrestles with his conscience and the consequences of his actions.

Roger Chillingworth

Marjuni asserts that Roger Chillingworth is a fictional character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*. He is portrayed as a vengeful and cunning figure, the husband of Hester Prynne, who seeks retribution after discovering her adultery. Chillingworth, a physician, insinuates himself into the life of Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, Hester's lover, under the guise of caring for Dimmesdale's declining health. However, his true motives are malicious; he aims to torment Dimmesdale and revel in his suffering. Chillingworth's vindictive nature is highlighted as he is depicted as a greater sinner than Dimmesdale himself, actively contributing to the destruction of Dimmesdale's spirit (92).

Pearl

Pearl is a fictional character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, depicted as the daughter of the protagonist, Hester Prynne. Born out of wedlock as a result of Hester's affair with the minister Arthur Dimmesdale, Pearl is portrayed as a wild and ethereal child, closely connected to nature and the natural world. Throughout the narrative, Pearl serves as a symbol of Hester's sin and shame, yet also embodies innocence and purity in her untamed spirit. Her presence underscores the consequences

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 40

of societal judgment and the complexity of human relationships. Pearl's character adds depth to the novel's exploration of morality, identity, and redemption (McDonald,01).

II.7.3. Themes

Hawthorne argues that sin harms not just the body and mind, but also the spirit. He underlines that everyone is born into sin and only a few are predestined for salvation via God's mercy. The author uses Arthur Dimmesdale as an example of a person who sins passion, experiences self-torture, and finds relief when he confesses his guilt before dying on the scaffold.

Moreover, During Roger Chilling Worth's absence, Hester sinned, and society blamed her. However, no one examines Chilling Worth's irresponsibility as a husband and why he was missing for so long. No one asks if it's essential to sacrifice familial responsibilities. Furthermore, his desire to revenge Dimmesdale contradicts the Puritan vision of life. Chilling Worth's characters are characterized by corruption and sin, allowing readers to distinguish between those who redeem and those who do not feel shame (Sihite 03).

Puritans held the belief that sin was universally wrong, without any exceptions. They firmly believed that there was never a justifiable reason for engaging in sinful behavior. The Puritans did not believe in keeping sins hidden or secret under any circumstances. Instead, they advocated for the act of confession as the appropriate course of action when a mistake was made. The preferred approach was for individuals to voluntarily declare their sins or wrongdoings. In the case of Hester Prynne's lawlessness, the Puritans' strict interpretation of their principles deemed her actions as unequivocally wrong, necessitating social punishment. Both the religious authorities

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 41

and the entire community considered her behavior morally unacceptable (Womano 127).

The narrative of Hester and Dimmesdale mirrors that of Adam and Eve, as both instances illustrate how sin leads to exile and suffering, but also to enlightenment regarding the nature of humanity. Hester, marked by *The Scarlet Letter*, gains a unique perspective that allows her to question societal norms and her own identity more boldly than her peers. Dimmesdale, burdened by his hidden transgression, develops a deep sense of empathy towards fellow sinners, which is reflected in his moving sermons. Both characters grapple with their sins daily, seeking to reconcile their actions with their personal growth. In contrast, the Puritan leaders view sin as a threat to their community, opting to punish and isolate transgressors like Hester. However, the stagnant nature of Puritan society stands in stark contrast to the personal growth and understanding that can arise from a state of sinfulness, as demonstrated by Hester and Dimmesdale. This paradox highlights the incompatibility of purity with qualities such as empathy and personal growth (128).

Some scholars argue that suffering is necessary for education and human growth and that the concept of sin is less complex. They hold that sin is the origin of all wisdom, power, knowledge, and spiritual fulfillment.

Guilt is another central theme in *The Scarlet Letter*, particularly evident in the psychological turmoil experienced by Arthur Dimmesdale. Dimmesdale grapples with the guilt of his sinful act of fathering an illegitimate child, compounded by his failure to acknowledge his actions and the need to conceal his secret. He expresses a desire for someone to confide in, saying “Had I one friend...to whom... I could daily betake

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 42

myself and be known as the vilest of all sinners, methinks my soul might keep itself alive”.

Dimmesdale lives on his sinful nature, yet only publicly admits to fathering Hester's child in his final moments, when it is too late for any meaningful change. His vulnerability to manipulation by Chillingworth is attributed to his overwhelming guilt. Hawthorne, through Dimmesdale's character, implies that guilt lacks virtue if not accompanied by genuine efforts toward redemption or transformation (Ahmed and Kazi 35).

The novel explores alienation. It is obvious in Hester's lonely life in New England. Due to her terrible background, she isolates herself and lives alone in a cottage near the city's outskirts.

One of the novel's most apparent themes is revenge. Roger Chillingworth's attempt to ruin Dimmesdale in retribution for his wife reveals his true identity as her lover and Pearl's biological father.

II.7.4. Setting

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the narrative unfolds against the backdrop of a strict Puritan community in 17th-century Boston. The story primarily takes place in the austere environs of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where the protagonist, Hester Prynne, grapples with the consequences of her adulterous affair. The setting is characterized by its rigid social hierarchy, religious devotion, and oppressive moral codes. Throughout the novel, Hawthorne beautifully depicts the contrast between the town's strict Puritanical principles and the rich natural landscape that surrounds it (Sihite 03).

Contextual overview of the scarlet letter 43

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we tried to explore the Puritans briefly their influence on literature, and how Hawthorne's portrayal of Puritan beliefs is projected on his masterpiece *The Scarlet Letter*.



***CHAPTER-III. Literary
Devices in *The Scarlet
Letter****

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 44

Introduction

Literary devices are tools employed by writers to craft a distinct and impactful effect in their writing, to communicate ideas, or to aid readers in grasping their writing on a more profound level. These devices are frequently utilized for emphasis or precisions in writing. additionally, authors employ them to foster a stronger connection between readers and the overall narrative, specific characters, or thematic elements.

Seymour Chatman argues that a writer's style is influenced by their own choices and patterns of language use (30). Hawthorne authored renowned novels that not only influenced his literary style but also left a lasting impact on the romance novel and short story genres. His writing style reflected the norms of his era, yet it was his adept use of symbols and allusions to convey his perspectives on the darker aspects of human nature and religion that set him apart from his contemporaries (Novelguide). Drawing from sources like the Bible and literary classics, Hawthorne skillfully crafted his characters and imbued them with thematic depth. It is this distinctive approach that renders *The Scarlet Letter* an enduring and beloved classic. This chapter will delve into the analysis of these literary devices; providing insight into the story's context.

III.1. Irony

V As mentioned above "The irony arises from disparity between the literal meaning of a word or statement and the implied meaning. The underlying connotations frequently serve as a form of ridicule towards the explicit message being conveyed ".

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 45

"Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better were it so, than to hide a guilty heart through life"(Hawthorne,1859.463).

In this quote, the irony lies in the advice given to Hester by the mysterious stranger, who is later revealed to be her husband, Roger Chillingworth. He urges Hester not to protect the identity of her fellow sinner, Dimmesdale, under the idea that it would be better for him to face public shame and confession. However, the irony is that Chillingworth himself has a secret motive for seeking revenge against Dimmesdale. His advice is therefore self-serving, as it aligns with his desire for revenge rather than genuine concern for Dimmesdale's well-being.

Irony also can be found in the belief that God sent Chillingworth through the air to heal Dimmesdale, while Chillingworth wishes to exact revenge. Additionally, Hester is denied contact with society, while her fellow sinner is regarded as a "miracle of holiness" (147).

III.2. Simile

As mentioned also that a

" Simile is a comparison that establishes a formal similarity between two entities by using words such as "as", "seem ", "like", "then", or other similar constructions, while both simile and metaphor involve comparing things that are fundamentally different, then the key distinction lies in the explicit nature of the comparison in simile,

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 46

as opposed to the implicit comparison in metaphor" (Pickering and Hooper). An example of that would be in Hawthorne's words

"But she named the infant 'Pearl,' as being of great price—purchased with all she had—her mother's only treasure!"(Hawthorne,1850 .474).

This simile, however, serves as a devastating picture of Hester Prynne's profound attachment to her daughter Pearl, while also encapsulating the symbolic significance of Pearl within the narrative. Through the comparison of Pearl to a treasure of great value, the simile underscores the profound love and affection that Hester holds for her daughter. Like a precious gem, Pearl is cherished by Hester as her most prized possession, acquired at the cost of all she had, both materially and emotionally. This comparison not only emphasizes the depth of Hester's maternal devotion but also highlights the sacrifices she has made for her daughter in the face of social judgment and isolation.

Furthermore, the simile conveys the symbolic role of Pearl within the novel as a light of hope and redemption among the darkness of sin and shame. Despite being born out of Hester's illicit affair and bearing *The Scarlet Letter* of her mother's wrongdoing., Pearl embodies innocence, vitality, and a spirit of defiance against the constraints of Puritan society. Thus, the simile illuminates the complexities of the mother-daughter relationship, the transformative power of love, and the theme of redemption through the character of Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter*.

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 47

III.3. personification

Additionally, Personification is essentially a form of metaphor, where the figurative term of the comparison is consistently human being which involves attributing human characteristics to animals, objects, or concepts (Perrine64).

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, the function of sunshine is depicted in the statement "The sunshine does not love you. It runs away and hides, because it is afraid of something on your bosom," this function as a powerful literary device that enhances the story and enriches the reader's comprehension of the emotional and psychological environment surrounding the main character, Hester Prynne.

Personification, a literary technique in which inanimate objects are given human characteristics, invests the natural element of sunshine with feelings and actions typically associated with living beings. By assigning fear and avoidance to sunshine, Hawthorne communicates a deep sense of apprehension and isolation indicating that Hester's scarlet letter representing her wrongdoing, carries such a heavy burden of societal disapproval and disgrace that even nature itself shies away from it.

This personification not only introduces a layer of vividness and complexity to the narrative but also emphasizes the emotional weight of Hester's difficult situation. Through the use of personification, *The Scarlet Letter* exceeds its symbolic meaning to become a tangible presence that impacts the world around Hester, mirroring the profound psychological and existential consequences of her deeds. Therefore, the personification of sunshine in *The Scarlet Letter* contributes to the novel's examination

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 48

of guilt, shame, and societal judgment, while also increasing the reader's involvement with the complexity of the plot.

III.4. Metaphor

As mentioned above metaphor, similar to simile, is a rhetorical device that does not employ the words "like" or "as". It involves the act of perceiving one thing in terms of another object.

Hawthorne wrote:

"Pearl resembled the brook, since the current of her life gushed from a wellspring as mysterious, and had flowed through scenes shadowed as heavily with gloom"(Hawthorne 1850 .527).

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Pearl is symbolically likened to a brook, providing a vivid and expressive representation of her life journey. Described as brimming with life force, Pearl's existence resembles the continuous flow of a brook, giving her character an energetic and strong aspect. Moreover, the metaphor emphasizes the mysterious source of Pearl's life, hinting at a mysterious origin from which her essence springs forth. This picture captures the complication of Pearl's identity, as she represents both the effects of Hester's sin and a symbol of purity and resilience. Furthermore, the metaphor highlights the trials and sufferings that surround Pearl, as her life is portrayed as meandering through environments surrounded by darkness. Through this metaphorical device, Hawthorne effectively captures the essence of Pearl's character, shedding light on her dynamic persona, her hidden

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 49

beginnings, and the challenges she confronts within the strict moral confines of Puritan society.

III.5. Symbols

Reaske categorizes symbols as private, original, or traditional, highlighting the overlapping nature of images, metaphors, and symbols. While images directly represent subjects, metaphors imply comparisons, and symbols carry both literal and additional significance (45). Reaske's framework aids in understanding symbolism's complexities, as symbols draw from personal experiences and cultural contexts.

A symbol is a person, place, action, word, or object that signifies anything beyond its exact meaning. In the widest sense, all words are symbols (Norduist, 2019).

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), symbols are numerous, requiring a focus on key concepts for study. This section aims to examine principal symbols, revealing their several interpretations and urging readers to decipher their underlying meanings within the novel's context.

III.5.1. Main Symbol

III.5.1.1. The Scarlet Letter "A"

The Scarlet Letter "A" embroidered on the bodice of Hester's dress in Hawthorne's novel serves as the most prominent and noticeable symbol. This symbol represents Hester's act of adultery and the resulting illegitimate child, Pearl.

The Puritan society, which prides itself on being a model society governed by God's laws, is portrayed as a haven free from sin and crime. However, even within this religiously devout community, sin and crime cannot be completely eradicated. As a

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 50

result, Hester is punished for her deed and forced to wear *The Scarlet Letter* "A" on her breast, while standing on the scaffold to publicly display her status as an adulteress.

“On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore, and which was of splendor by the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony.” (Hawthorne, 1850 .49).

The Scarlet Letter "A" takes on many meanings throughout the story. The sign represents sin, loneliness, alienation, isolation, ability, admiration, and angelic qualities.

The Scarlet Letter "A" serves as a symbol of adultery, worn by Hester on her breast to signify her transgression involving Roger Chillingworth. Under Puritan punishment, Hester is compelled to wear this scarlet emblem, signifying her adultery and disgracing herself and the Puritan community.

"Any sin will be followed by isolation." (Gross 19). Sin often results in isolation from one's actions. Hester's wrongdoing isolates her from society, leading to the second meaning of *The Scarlet Letter*: aloneness and alienation.

In the novel, *The Scarlet Letter* takes on another layer of symbolism, representing Hester Prynne's profound sense of aloneness and alienation in the Puritan society of New England. Set apart from the community due to her shameful history of adultery, Hester lives in isolation in a cottage near the outskirts of the city. Her solitary existence

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 51

is emphasized by the absence of any friends or allies, with Pearl, her illegitimate child, serving as her sole companion in her lonely life.

In other words, Hawthorne stated:

"Lonely as was Hester's situation, and without a friend on earth who dared to show himself, she, however, incurred no risk of want" (Hawthorne, 1850. 69).

This quote underscores the depth of Hester's isolation, highlighting her lack of human connection and the absence of any support network. Despite her solitude, Hester manages to sustain herself without relying on others, demonstrating her resilience in the face of adversity. Through the symbolism of *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne explores the psychological consequences of society's judgment and exclusion, affecting the novel's themes of sin, humiliation, and salvation.

Finally, In Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, towards the end of the story, the symbolism of *The Scarlet Letter* "A" shifts from representing "Adultery" to embodying various meanings such as "Able" and "Angel." Initially a mark of shame and sin, as Hester Prynne endures her trials, the letter takes on new significance. It becomes a symbol of her resilience, capability, and eventual redemption, transforming from a badge of disgrace to a mark of her identity and personal growth.

III.5.2. symbolism through characters

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne skillfully employs symbolism through characters to portray complicated moralities and themes. The narrative succeeds in showing competing moralities in action, with each character acting as both a symbol and a mirror of the story's moral conflict (Gross 45). Four primary characters stand out

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 52

as significant symbols: Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, and Pearl.

III.5.2.1. Hester Prynne

"The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam; and a face which besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes." (Hawthorne, 1850 .455)

Roy reported that despite her societal judgment, Hester Prynne represents strength and courage, and after going through two years of loneliness and accepting her punishment for adultery, she displays remarkable resilience (Kirk 15). Her decision to keep Pearl's father's identity secret and endure abuse alone underscores her courage.

Hester is also a symbol of love and passion. She is a very loving and passionate woman whose heart is what matters most. She committed her sin through blind desire, which caused her to fall in love with reverend Dimmesdale and learn the true meaning of love, affection, and safety—things she had never experienced with her husband (32).

Additionally, Hawthorne portrays Hester as an emblem of beauty. describing her as an exceedingly beautiful woman with dark eyes in the Second Chapter Hawthorne wrote:

"The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance on a large scale.

She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 53

gleam: and a face which besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was ladylike, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days; characterized by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the dedication, evanescent, and indescribable grace that is now recognized as its indication.” (Hawthorne,1850 .445).

Hawthorne portrays Hester's physical appearance, emphasizing her tall physical stature, graceful shape, and remarkable features, such as her dark, shiny hair and deep black eyes. He also emphasizes her elegance and dignity, mirroring cultural expectations of women during the Puritan era. This description not only portrays Hester as a visually appealing figure but also implies her inner attributes of composure and tenacity in the face of tragedy. Furthermore, Hawthorne's portrayal of Hester as a beautiful and graceful lady deepens her character, stressing the complexities of her identity beyond societal judgments based only on her scarlet letter.

III.5.2.2. Arthur Dimmesdale

A religious man named Arthur Dimmesdale engages in adultery. He represents weakness because he attempted to cover up his transgression. Until the last scaffold scene of the book, the town is unaware of his transgression. He is weak in that he watches Hester suffer on the scaffold while concealing his transgression, leaving her to bear *The Scarlet Letter A* on her clothing on her own. Since they both committed the same fault, he is typically required to wear *The Scarlet Letter*, just like Hester had.

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 54

But Dimmesdale chooses to conceal his guilt, which causes him to suffer psychologically and torment himself by using a hot iron to brand an A on his breast.

Dimmesdale is also a figure of hypocrisy because he disobeyed religious regulations and covertly committed adultery, which is against the law in all religions, particularly in the Puritan faith, where the offender faces harsh punishment (Roy,222).

III.5.2.3. Roger Chillingworth

Hester's husband, Roger Chillingworth, sends his wife ahead of him to the Puritan settlement while he stays two years in Amsterdam to take care of some important matters. He is a representation of the devil and hell, returning to exact revenge on Dimmesdale. As a doctor, he applied his skills as a scholar to find and punish Hester's unidentified lover. He moved in with Dimmesdale as a way to exact revenge on his wife.

Because the devil seeks to harm and corrupt the most holy of people, Chillingworth's secret revenge against a devoted man raises him to the position of the devil. (222).

III.5.2.4. Pearl

Roy discusses Hester and Dimmesdale's illegitimate child, Pearl, who serves as the living embodiment of the hidden scarlet letter "A" worn by her mother. Pearl, as the only character unaware of the true significance of *The Scarlet Letter*, symbolizes the innocence of youth. This is evident when she mimics the letter "A" on her chest with eelgrass, as described by Hawthorne in the Fifteenth Chapter. Despite her actions, Pearl's innocence and lack of understanding are apparent, as she innocently imitates her mother's adornment without fully comprehending its meaning (223).

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 55

Pearl is also a sign of intelligence because of the intelligence that a kid her age cannot possess, as suggested by her actions she asks odd questions that no one her age can ask. Pearl asks her mother, "What does the letter mean, mother? -and why dost thou wear it? - And why dost the minister keeps his hand over his heart?" (Hawthorne,1850 .523).

III.5.3. symbolism in places

III.5.3.1. prison door

As mentioned by Hawthorne " But on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-bush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him"(452).

The prison door represents the punishment meted out to criminals and imprisoned prisoners. Different components of the prison door, such as iron spikes and bars, evoke the terrible techniques employed by Puritanical authorities to punish offenders and innocent people alike. The prison door therefore recalls the punishment meted out to Hester Prynne, who was subsequently released only to be outcast and forced to live in the wilderness.

III.5.3.2. the scaffold

Miglani asserts, that the scaffold, which is there for punishment at the beginning of the novel, symbolizes redemption at the extremity of the story. Dimmesdale is the only one on the scaffold, all set to escape Chillingworth and achieve salvation (1713).

According to Zheng, the scaffold represents several facets of human nature throughout the novel. It expresses the shame and guilt of sin, as well as love and

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 56

punishment. For example, when Hester commits adultery with Dimmesdale, she does it because she loves him. After the secret was out, she was cast out of society. When she stands on the scaffold, she hides her scarlet letter, which is seen as a sign of sin, humiliation, guilt, and retribution. The scaffold in *The Scarlet Letter* serves not only as a form of public punishment and humiliation but also helps to highlight the growth of the plot and people engaged in the sin of adultery. *The Scarlet Letter* includes three scaffold scenes that signify sin. The first scaffold scene occurs when Hester Prynne is accused of adultery. When Dimmesdale sits on the scaffold at night, this is the second scaffold that signifies public sin. His thoughts are so overwhelming that he shouts frequently. The third and last scaffold scene has Dimmesdale standing on the scaffold and calling for Hester and Pearl. He then confesses his sins and dies.

The last scaffold scene signifies the revelation and repentance of sin. The scaffold scenes are the book's fundamental structures, reflecting the themes of sin and guilt. It might be considered a dark and wicked location, yet in the perspective of some, the scaffold may be trusted (378).

III.5.3.3. the forest

In *The Scarlet Letter*, the forest represents much more than one may expect. Each figure highlights a distinct aspect of the forest. However, the forest reveals a distinct aspect of each character. It's dark and private. It's where people go to unwind and be themselves. The forest path leads away from the settlement and into the wilderness, where all traces of civilization vanish. The forest's pathway is precisely the escape route from the orders of law and religion to the Promised Land in the West, where mankind can breathe free air. For some, the forest represents bad ideas and wrongdoing, but for others, it represents pleasure and freedom.

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 57

The open air of the forest is both refreshing and chilling. Nothing is certain in the bush; everything is up for grabs. There is no one here to stop you from going to the devil. Furthermore, the forest provides Hester and Dimmesdale with an opportunity to find love and independence. It is a location where the letters on their bodies no longer affect them. It is a location where natural law stands in stark contrast to the strict manmade community with its Puritan regulations imposed by humans. The forest signifies the truth, good or terrible. However, in Pearl's perspective, the forest has a completely different concept: it is like a closest friend. She can run and play. She may run and play freely until her naive heart's content. The light follows her no matter where she goes. She can do this because her heart is pure, and the forest understands her. In the forest, a young girl, a middle-aged man, and a woman may let go of their fears and finally be themselves under protection, allowing them to express their private thoughts. The forest enhances the natural appearance and personality of those who use it correctly (379).

The forest place which has been represented as the background of the momentous meeting between Hester and Dimmesdale, is symbolic of moral wilderness.

Hawthorne mentioned in his literary work *The Scarlet Letter* the following:

"Hester looked, by way of humoring the child; and she saw that, owing to the peculiar effect of this convex mirror, *The Scarlet Letter* was represented in exaggerated and gigantic proportions, to be greatly the most prominent feature of her appearance. In truth, she seemed hidden behind it" (482).

A forest represents two opposing concepts. It signifies both natural love and wildness. In terms of its purpose in the novel, the forest is a dreadful place, a home of

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 58

Satan, as Puritanism believed, and Hester is abandoned there. However, the conclusion of the tale demonstrates a place where a person matures while simultaneously performing penance to remove his immoral past. For example, when Hester and Dimmesdale meet at the end to discuss their escape, they meet in the forest. At this point, it becomes a haven for them.

III.5.4. Symbolism in colors

III.5.4.1. Red colour

"She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. . . On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore, and which was of splendor by the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony." (455).

This passage clearly illustrates *The Scarlet Letter* "A" on Hester's breast, highlighting its vibrant red color and delicate embroidery. *The Scarlet Letter* is a key symbol in the novel, reflecting Hester's guilt of adultery and serving as a persistent reminder of her wrongdoing. The letter's brilliant red color stands out against the poor environment of Puritan culture, reflecting Hester's rejection of conventional rules and refusal to be defined by her previous errors.

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 59

III.5.4.2. Black colour

In general, the color black often represents darkness, mystery, and evil. In Puritan society, which valued strict adherence to religious doctrine and moral purity, black held various symbolic meanings. It was associated with sin, guilt, and the devil, reflecting the Puritans' belief in the presence of evil in the world and the consequences of straying from God's will. Additionally, black was often worn as a symbol of mourning or penance, emphasizing the Puritans' focus on repentance and redemption. Overall, in Puritan society, black carried significant moral and religious connotations, serving as a visual reminder of the consequences of sin and the need for spiritual purity.

As Gao (2018) states in *The Scarlet Letter*, black serves as a symbol of seriousness, mystery, and despair. It represents evil and the devil, as seen in Hester's association with the black devil and the black mark of sin. Conversely, black also symbolizes fear, as demonstrated by Reverend Dimmesdale's black attire, hiding his inner turmoil. The mystery surrounding black extends to Pearl's baptism, highlighting both its sacred and hypocritical aspects within religious doctrine (1729).

III.5.4.3. Grey color

Hawthorne wrote in the short story "In all her intercourse with society, however, there was nothing that made her feel as if she belonged to it. Every gesture, every word, and even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished, and as much alone as if she inhabited another sphere, or communicated with the common nature by other organs and senses than the rest of humankind. She stood apart from moral interests, yet close beside them, like a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside, and can no longer make itself seen or felt; no more smile with the household joy, nor mourn with the kindred sorrow; or, should it succeed

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 60

in manifesting its forbidden sympathy, awakening only terror and horrible repugnance"(Gao 52).

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne utilizes the pervasive gray imagery to symbolize the oppressive and somber atmosphere of the Puritan society. From the gloomy prison to the drab clothing worn by Hester, gray represents the stifling conformity and harsh judgment imposed by the community. It reflects the characters' inner turmoil, especially Hester's sense of isolation and guilt after her adultery is exposed. Gray embodies a blend of light and dark, symbolizing the complexities of human nature and the ambiguity of moral judgment. Ultimately, it underscores the novel's exploration of the consequences of rigid societal norms and human capacity.

III.5.4.4. Symbolism in objects

III.5.4.5. Rosebush

Close to the prison stands a rose bush, and every sinner on their way to the prison inevitably encounters it. This imagery is crucial in understanding Nathaniel Hawthorne's view of life as depicted in his novel. The prison symbolizes the burden of sin, while the cemetery nearby represents the finality of death. However, the rose bush symbolizes hope amid these dark circumstances.

The presence of the rose bush suggests that even in sin and its consequences, there exists the potential for redemption and renewal. The rose, with its vibrant colors and delicate petals, embodies the possibility of beauty emerging from adversity. It serves as a reminder that, despite the hardships and mistakes of the past, there is always the chance for growth and transformation.

Hawthorne uses the rose bush as a metaphor for the resilience of the human spirit and the power of hope to flourish even in the most desolate of environments. It

Literary Devices in The Scarlet Letter 61

foreshadows the eventual redemption of the characters in the novel, particularly Hester Prynne, who finds a path to forgiveness and redemption despite society's judgment.

Furthermore, the rose bush can be seen as a symbol of the natural world's indifference to human morality. While the prison and cemetery are man-made constructs representing society's judgment and mortality, the rose bush is a part of the natural landscape, untouched by human sin and capable of blooming regardless of human actions (Kolte 149_150).

Conclusion

In conclusion. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne adeptly utilizes a range of literary devices and symbols to express his criticism of the complex and oppressive Puritan society employing various symbols that represent the stagnant and strict Puritans alongside the sensitivity and kind-hearted nature of Hester Prynne, Hawthorne underscores the hypocrisy and limitations of the society in which his characters exist. *The Scarlet Letter* itself, the scaffold, and the forest serve as a powerful symbol that enhances the reader's comprehension of the novel.

Hawthorne's nuanced portrayal of Hester as a symbol of resilience and defiance implies his endorsement of individuality and compassion in the face of societal judgment. Through his skillful implementation of literary devices, Hawthorne offers a thought-provoking analysis of human nature and the constraints imposed by rigid moral standards.



Conclusion

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne is considered a masterpiece of American literature, it delves into the complexities of Puritan society in the 17th-century Massachusetts Bay colony. Nathaniel Hawthorne much like Charles Dickens not only crafted gripping narratives but also served as a keen observer of societal norms and constraints. Through his vivid characters and poignant storytelling, his work stands as a testament to his ability to illuminate the human condition and challenge prevailing moral standers, solidify his legacy as a literary giant and a profound observer of the human experience.

Nathaniel Hawthorne employs various literary devices and symbols to craft a multi-layered narrative that explores themes of sin, guilt, redemption, and societal judgment. Through the use of symbols like *The Scarlet Letter* itself, the scaffold, and the forest, Hawthorne depends on the reader's understanding of the characters and their inner conflict. These symbols not only serve as powerful visual images but also offer insight into the moral and psychological dimensions of the story. Through his masterful use of literary techniques, Hawthorne creates profound insights into the complexities of the human condition and the enduring power of moral conscience.



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